

What moves you? What moves your vote?

pt4me2 online surveys
June 2010





pt4me2 is a project of the Metropolitan Transport Forum
mtf.org.au

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Executive summary

The Metropolitan Transport Forum (MTF) represents 19 Melbourne councils on transport issues. Since 2007, the MTF has used the pt4me2.org.au website as an opportunity to involve the public in community discussion about public transport.

From 27 January through to 30 April 2010, pt4me2 invited the public to complete a number of online surveys. The surveys were available on the pt4me2 website and promoted using local newspapers, council websites and email. The surveys closed on 30 April with over 10,500 responses received from over 5,000 unique email addresses¹.

The biggest vote winners

The biggest vote winners across all modes and regions were more frequent services, less overcrowding and greater reliability. There was also strong support for extending services to growth areas and extending hours of service.

Respondents who felt that public transport had improved generally attributed this to greater frequency, better rolling stock and better buses. The responses demonstrated a strong positive sentiment towards Melbourne's public transport system, especially trams.

Respondents who felt that public transport had declined generally attributed this to overcrowding, unreliability and infrequent services. There was a very strong sentiment that rail services had declined significantly in the past decade (55% declined/declined a lot vs. 11% improved/improved a lot).

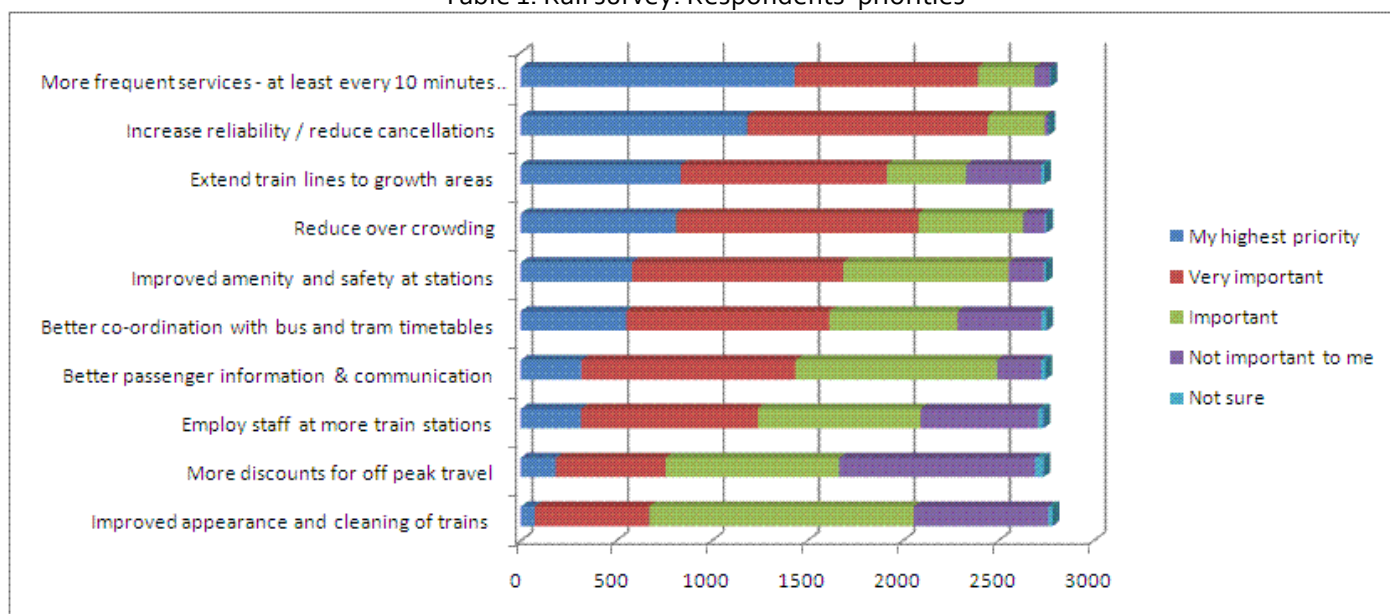
While safety, amenity, graffiti and aggressive ticket inspectors are frequently cited as concerns, the overwhelming negatives were overcrowding, unreliability and not enough services. The change most sought was more frequent services across a greater number of hours, especially evenings and weekends.

Priorities for improvement (quantitative)

The train, tram and bus surveys gave respondents the opportunity to indicate their priorities for improvement.

Rail: The highest priority improvement was 'more frequent services – every 10 minutes every day' followed by increased reliability to reduce cancellations.

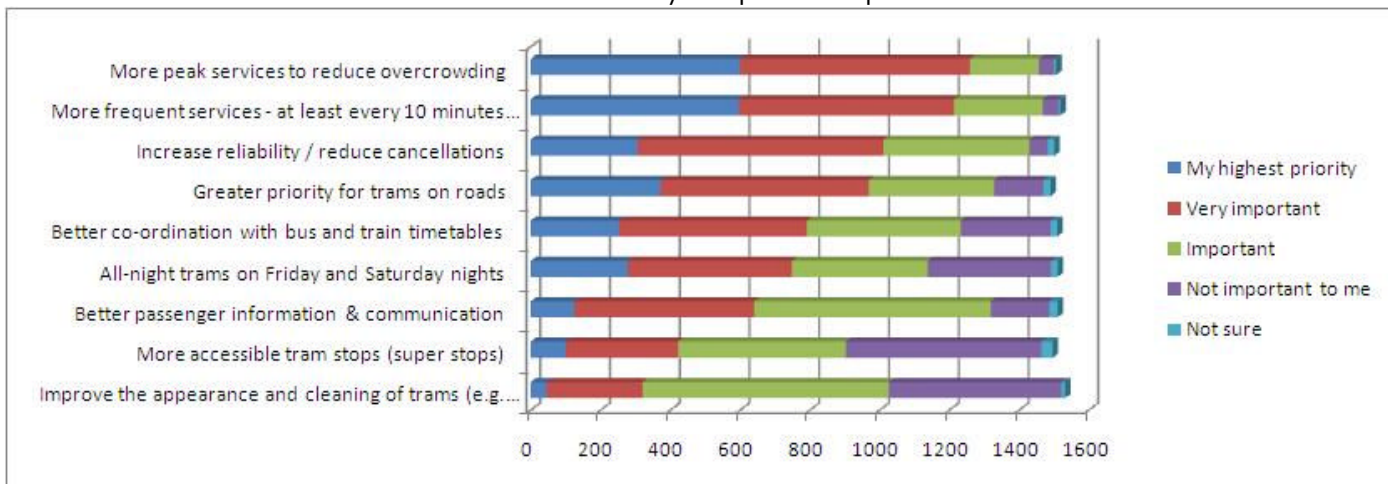
Table 1: Rail survey: Respondents' priorities



¹ Surveys were offered separately for train, tram, bus, local topics, Best & Worst and Premiers Challenge. Many people completed more than one survey.

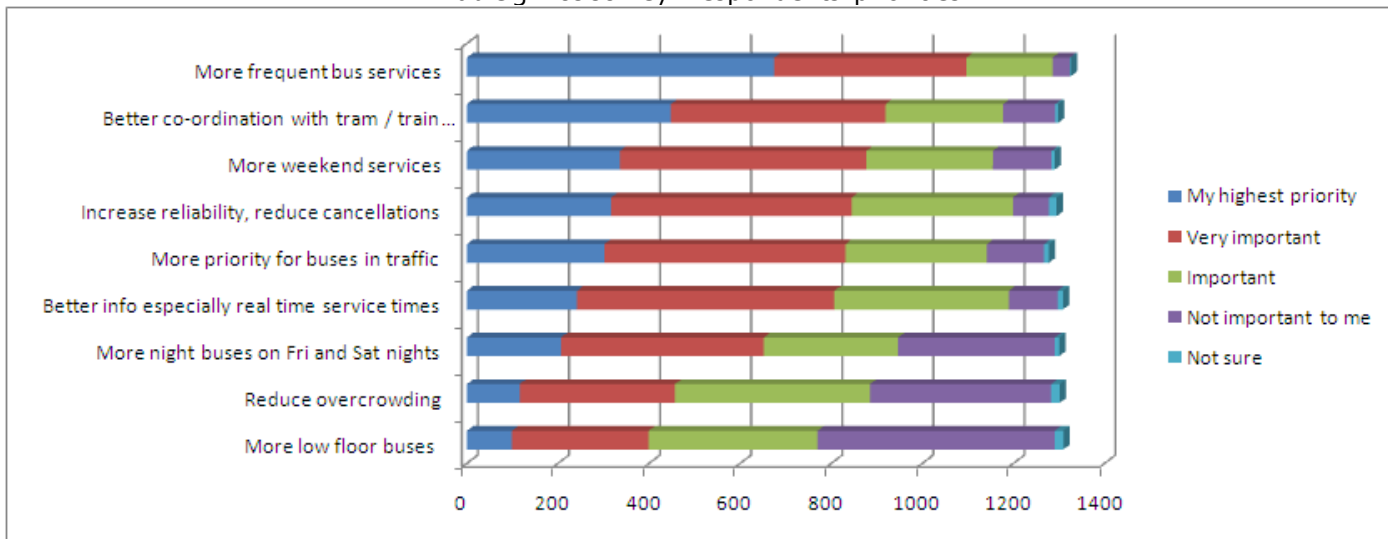
Tram: The highest priority improvements were more peak services, more services overall and greater priority for trams on roads.

Table 2: Tram survey: Respondents' priorities



Buses: The highest priority improvements were more frequent services and better coordination with trams and trains.

Table 3: Bus survey: Respondents' priorities



Priorities for improvement (qualitative)

One of the outstanding features of this research is the quality and thoughtfulness of the responses to open-ended questions. It is well worth the effort to spend a few minutes looking through the appendices. Even though this was an online survey, very few responses needed to be edited for publication.

With over 10,500 plus responses, there is a cornucopia of ideas, suggestions and criticisms. A number of issues, concerns and suggestions surfaced frequently.

More weekend and evening services:

Clayton: *So many services stop running so early in the evening – one can't rely on public transport to get home!*

Berwick: *People need to be able to travel places at many different times for a range of different reasons, and I find it ridiculous that trains are not run at night. It's not as though the world stops between 12 and 5am, so why should our transport?*

More accessibility improvements:

Doncaster: *Improved conditions for mums with babies, elderly and disabled.*

Mernda: *I have a disabled daughter and there is not enough disabled access transport especially trams.*

FACT: The tram line in front of the Royal Children's Hospital does not have disabled access trams running on it...

Affordable fares:

Spotswood: *It's only cheaper than driving if it's one person travelling somewhere, not for a couple or a family.*

Blackburn: *Ticket prices should be cheaper to encourage more people to catch public transport rather than drive.*

More parking at stations (including bicycles):

Pakenham: *Overcrowding, combined with a lack of adequate parking at my local train station means that I drive to work/uni*

Mernda: *not enough parking spaces at outer train stations. If the buses were faster and more frequent, wouldn't have to drive to the train stations in the first place.*

Link to Melbourne Airport:

Kew: *No train or tram service to our international airport.....this is outrageous for a city like ours.*

Camberwell: *Also not being able to take a train directly to the airport - this is a major omission and should be corrected as soon as possible.*

Faster implementation of promises:

Heidelberg: *Make all MPs catch nothing but PT and look out for a swift change in facilities!*

Lower Plenty: *Overcrowding, punctuality, cancellations, graffiti, crime and customer service. There is no one problem with Melbourne's transport system. And the worst part is the government have had so long to untangle the system.*

More customer service and security staff, including support for conductors:

Fitzroy North: *Bring back conductors and scrap ticket inspectors - they are menacing.*

Hawthorn: *Passenger safety - change inspectors into roving conductors.*

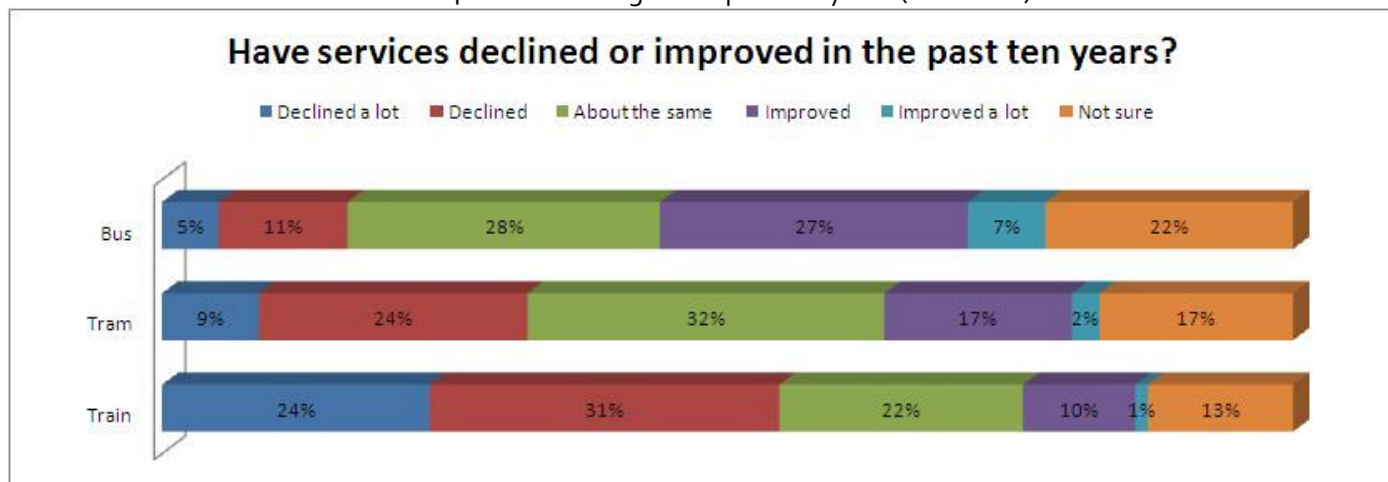
Mitcham: *Lack of human support i.e. conductors, ticket sales. Conductors were a friendly approach to ticket purchase and inspection. Plus they provide a friendly human face to the public transport industry - as opposed to an employee behind a plexi-glass screen.*

Public opinion about public transport

The surveys asked the respondents to say if public transport had improved or declined in the past decade. They were also asked to nominate the main reason for saying the service had improved or declined.

There was a marked difference between the modes, with about a third of bus users reporting an improvement. Train users presented a starkly different opinion, with over half reporting a decline.

Table 4: Service change over past ten years (all modes)



	Declined a lot	Declined	About the same	Improved	Improved a lot	Not sure
Bus	65 5%	148 11%	358 28%	353 27%	89 7%	284 22%
Tram	127 9%	352 24%	468 32%	246 17%	36 2%	254 17%
Train	654 24%	854 31%	595 22%	274 10%	31 1%	355 13%

The reasons given for the responses were:

Rail: Respondents who reported an improvement commonly nominated improved frequency, new trains and improvements to stations. Those who reported a decline predominantly nominated overcrowding and unreliability / cancellations.

Tram: People who reported an improved tram service commonly cited better trams, more accessible tram stops and more frequent services. People who reported a decline in services commonly cited overcrowding, removal of conductors, unreliability and lack of cleaning.

Buses: Respondents that reported an improvement frequently cited the introduction of SmartBuses, greater frequency and more routes. Declined responses frequently cited reduced frequency, increased travel times and overcrowding.

The responses indicate that the following statements would 'resonate strongly' with the community (as reflected in this survey):

Melbourne's public transport network has the potential to be great, but this potential is let down by overcrowded, unreliable and uncoordinated services.

Williamstown: *The options -- trams, bus and train -- and our history of a great system that was set out over a hundred years ago. What foresight! We had the makings of a good system with room to grow and good connectivity between different modes.*

Public transport is good because it reduces dependency on cars, reduces carbon emissions.

Chelsea: *When it works it can make travel enjoyable. You can sit with your family and enjoy each other's company. It is a greener alternative on a number of points.*

Braeside: *[public transport] gives me an option to be a one car family, reducing my costs and our impact on the environment.*

Richmond: *I can live a normal life without the cost of owning or running a car or the hassle of spending half my spare time sitting in traffic or looking for a park. I left my car when I migrated from Auckland and have never looked back!*

Kew: *....it helps the environment by reducing the number of private cars which carry only the driver.*

Travelling together can be a positive community activity.

Chelsea: *More people on public transport - I feel safer than I did 10 years ago and much safer than 20 years ago.*

Chelsea: *That it gives me independence as a secondary student to travel to and from school, catch up with my mates at a certain location; I do not have to rely on my parents as transport.*

Kew: *Meeting people you wouldn't usually meet. Having to work together. Connecting those who don't drive to the outside world. Fewer cars on the road. Shared experiences and responsibility*

Port Melbourne: *It is a viable alternative to choking our areas with traffic, pollution and impossible parking and as provides a chance for people to interact with others.*

Super stops, low floor trams and other access improvements have been welcomed.

Mulgrave: *I can get to most places in Greater Melbourne Metro in my wheelchair.*

Ringwood East: *The trains [are the best] for a disabled person. There is the driver, a ramp, personal connection.*

The reputation of the decision makers has been damaged by myki:

St Albans: *The absolutely obscene and immoral mess that is myki and the fact that no one is being held accountable for this.*

Camberwell: *myki offers no advantages to travellers.*

Heidelberg: *Where is the accountability for the myki disaster?*

Public transport has failed to keep pace with the growth of Melbourne and the outer suburbs face significant transport disadvantage:

South Yarra: *It is a tribute to early 20th century planners. Well planned. Then it stopped...and the population increased at least fivefold.*

Hoppers Crossing: *[we have] public transport where there are trams and trains and a sham service where buses are on offer - creating a self fulfilling prophecy of no demand for PT in new suburbs.*

Lynbrook: *Unreliable, overcrowded, and the nearest train station to my home is 50 minutes walk away. I moved here thinking the Lyndhurst Station would be built soon, but they still haven't started.*

Local 'vote winners'

There were also surveys relating specifically to the North, North East, South East, West, East and Inner areas of Melbourne.

The respondents were asked to rate a list of local projects as vote winners, important or otherwise. The highlight results were:

Eastern suburbs, including the cities of Boroondara, Manningham, Whitehorse, Monash, Knox, Yarra Ranges and Maroondah:

There was strong support for both the Doncaster rail, Monash - Rowville rail and an upgraded bus network with more frequent services. Nearly half of the respondents said upgrading the Box Hill and Ringwood transport interchanges and building more rail underpasses were 'vote winners' or 'very important'.

Inner suburbs, including the cities of Melbourne, Yarra, Port Phillip and Stonnington:

The standout vote winners were Doncaster rail, reducing overcrowding on trams and trains, and more separated bicycle lanes.

Northern suburbs, including the cities of Whittlesea, Moreland, Hume and Darebin:

There was very strong support for a fast train to Tullamarine, public transport for new subdivisions and buses every 10 – 15 minutes.

Western suburbs, including the cities of Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melton, Moonee Valley and Wyndham:

Better facilities and maintenance of stations, upgraded bus networks and more trains were nominated as the highest priorities.

South East suburbs, including the cities of Glen Eira, Kingston, Casey and others:

More frequent rail services (to reduce overcrowding), better coordination between bus and train timetables and new bus services to growth areas were nominated as the highest priorities.

North East suburbs, including the cities of Banyule and Nillumbik:

More frequent rail services was the standout priority followed by the duplication of the Hurstbridge line.

Under 18 survey

The U18 survey was promoted to schools and via Facebook to people under 18 years of age.

The responses pointed to frequency of services and the hours of services as the priority improvements. There is a stronger concern about the price in this survey than the others.

Fitzroy North: Much cheaper tickets. It is way too expensive. Most of us are only students, we don't earn any money and the \$3 used on a tram ticket could buy us a coffee or sushi after school, so we can catch up with our friends

Maribyrnong: Safety is vital for U18's. However, I believe that more frequent services, cheaper fares and more safety measures are great starts to improve public transport for U18s.

Doncaster Heights: More frequent services, throughout the night and weekends.