



New Trains for Connex Melbourne

Today Connex introduced the first new train to operate in Melbourne in 21 years. The ALSTOM built X'TRAPOLIS train was showcased at the ALSTOM Bayswater Maintenance Depot where it is being prepared for an extensive 16 week trial.

Connex operates six suburban rail services in Melbourne's eastern and north-eastern suburbs - Alamein, Belgrave, Epping, Glen Waverley, Hurstbridge and Lilydale.

Connex Chairman Bob Annells said the new trains would change the face of public transport in Melbourne with the total fleet in service by the end of 2004. The X'TRAPOLIS train heralds a new era of rail transport in Melbourne and represents a \$332m investment by Connex in the future of passenger transport in our city.

"A total of 58, three car units, will begin passenger service from late 2002, replacing the aging, non-air conditioned Hitachi trains that customers have endured since the early 1970's", Mr Annells said.

"They will make commuting more attractive for people who aren't regular users and will give all travelers a quality standard of services, with the latest in customer amenity and safety features", he said.

"Features include increased passenger capacity, weatherproof interconnecting gangways between carriages, improved wheelchair access and accommodation, priority seating for senior citizens and wide, push-button operated doors giving easier access.

"All carriages will be equipped with CCTV cameras, on-board computer operated passenger information displays and announcements and emergency help buttons providing direct contact between the customer and the driver", Mr Annells said.

Transport Sector President of ALSTOM, Mr Michel Moreau said ALSTOM was proud to have been selected by Connex and the Victorian Government to undertake this demanding project.

"The new train provides great benefits for Melbourne commuters with the state of the art technology that will ensure greater reliability, improved amenity and comfort and a higher top-speed capability of 130km/h", Mr Moreau said.

In highlighting ALSTOM's commitment to investment in Victoria, Mr Moreau said it was ALSTOM policy to utilize local manufacturers and staff.

"The ALSTOM Ballarat Service Centre, acquired from the Victorian Government in 1999, will be responsible for the fit-out and testing of the entire 58 train units providing jobs and enhanced career prospects across regional Victorian and Australia as a whole.

ALSTOM will also maintain these new trains at our Epping and Bayswater facilities, where new specialist equipment is to be located", Mr Moreau said.

In concluding, Mr Annells said, that by 2004 Connex customers would experience a comfortable journey - particularly during summer, with air-conditioning across the entire Connex fleet of new and refurbished trains.