

[Print this article](#)[Close this window](#)

Libs pledge action on Rowville line

Clay Lucas

August 25, 2010 - 3:00AM

A STATE Liberal government would move to build a railway line past Monash University to Rowville.

Opposition transport spokesman Terry Mulder yesterday said his party would commission a \$2 million study to confirm the feasibility of the long-promised railway line if it wins government in November.

The line would give Monash University's 28,000 students an alternative to driving or taking the often overcrowded bus service.

Mr Mulder said the report would be completed by external engineers, and not commissioned by the Department of Transport, which has long argued against construction of the rail line. He said his party "believes in the necessity for more heavy rail lines in Melbourne".

Public Transport Minister Martin Pakula's spokesman said the government had no plan to extend the rail network to Rowville, and the opposition was merely rehashing a promise made at the 2006 state election, instead of releasing a more comprehensive transport strategy.

"The Rowville area is well serviced by an extensive bus network, which also delivers excellent public transport connections for Monash University," spokesman Bill Kyriakopoulos said.

Up to 5000 people a day use the Wellington Road bus, which started running in 2006. *The Sunday Age* revealed in April that hundreds of Monash University students often had to wait up to 45 minutes for a bus from Huntingdale railway station.

The opposition pledge comes as eight eastern suburbs councils have tabled one of the largest transport petitions ever to go to the Victorian Parliament.

The 13,500-signature petition demands better rail services to the east, including the new rail line to Rowville via Monash along Wellington Road, as well as a new rail line to Doncaster along the Eastern Freeway.

It was presented to Parliament by the Eastern Transport Coalition.

The group's chairman, Mick Van de Vreede, said the government's 2008 *Victorian Transport Plan* had ignored public transport needs in the city's east. "A rail extension to Rowville is clearly one option that the community is crying out for."

The Rowville rail line was first promised in 1969 by then premier Henry Bolte. Labor promised a study into the line when it was elected in 1999, but abandoned it shortly after.

In 2004 Knox City Council published a study, co-written by influential Infrastructure Australia board member Professor Peter Newman, which showed the 12.3-kilometre rail line from Huntingdale to Rowville could be built for \$413 million. It found the trip from Rowville to Parliament station would take 30 minutes.

Public Transport Users Association president Daniel Bowen said better bus services would help, but too often buses still got stuck in traffic.

This story was found at: <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/libs-pledge-action-on-rowville-line-20100824-13qcr.html>