

Bus timetable leaves "gaping hole" in public transport

BY STEFANIE MARKIDIS

PORT Phillip commuters will know by the end of the year if much-needed transport links between St Kilda and Port Melbourne will be upgraded.

The state government last week pledged to finalise its review of Melbourne's metropolitan bus program, including the infrequent 606 bus service.

The 606 route is the only bus link from east to west of Port Phillip but runs just nine times each weekday and does not operate between 9am and 2pm. The route was originally used to transport shift workers to Port Melbourne's industrial areas.

The route passes schools and community services, including the Middle Park Library and Middle Park Community Centre along Richardson

Street and the Bayside International English College on Acland Street, St Kilda, but its infrequent timetabling makes it an unviable option for many residents.

Port Melbourne Primary School vice-principal Darren Crawcour said the limited service forced many students to catch trams into the city only to then commute back into the area.

"You miss the bus and you might as

well not come to school. There's no point finishing school at 3.30pm if there's a bus out the front that leaves at 3.27pm," he said.

The school is just metres from the 606 bus stop at the corner of Poolman Street and Williamstown Road.

Last month, Albert Park MLA Martin Foley called on the Minister for Public Transport to expand the route to reflect the needs of the com-

munity. He said the route left a gaping transport hole.

Stephen Moynihan, spokesman for Public Transport Minister Martin Pakula, said Port Phillip bus services were under review.

Have your say about public transport in Port Phillip at MW's public transport forum at St Kilda Town Hall on Wednesday, September 8 from 7pm to 8.15pm.

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