

Friends of Banyule - North East Link Public Meeting 6 October 2010

Darren Peters

The slogan of the South Morang and Mernda Rail Alliance is “Cut the crap, give us back our track.” People of South Morang and Mernda have been betrayed many times by governments promising and then renegeing on public transport commitments in their area. The Alliance has won the extension of the Epping Line to South Morang by (DATE) at a projected cost of (CHECK). The group is now campaigning for the extension of the line to Mernda by 2014 instead of 2027, as currently promised by the Victorian government.

A series of promises have been made since 1999 to upgrade public transport in the Whittlesea corridor, initially by Peter Batchelor as transport minister, and also the member for Mill Park, Lily D’Ambrosia .

Without the necessary upgrade and expansion of public transport in the north the outlook for residents of Banyule and surrounding municipalities to the south are potentially dire. It is projected that the population of Mernda and Doreen is set to grow by 40,000 by the year 2031.

Darren outlined several key requirements for successful local campaigning:

- The absolute requirement to confront official “spin” with well researched and robust facts and statistics. Good facts will win every time;
- Seek and use government reports to acquire relevant information;
- Use the Freedom of Information legislation to secure relevant documentation;
- Write continuously to the local media. This is the cheapest and most effective method for getting the campaigning messages out to your local constituency;
- Run polls through the local media to promote the relative strength of your cause;
- Develop an effective slogan to encapsulate the objectives of your organisation;
- Know and understand the transport and related policies of the political parties competing for attention in your area and refer to them constantly.