



Reece Waldock

## Chief Executive Officer's overview

This was a year of unprecedented change in the operation and management of public transport in Western Australia.

The Public Transport Authority of Western Australia (PTA) was established on 1 July 2003 with the enactment of the Public Transport Authority Act. The PTA provides a central point to manage public transport services in the State. The transition from a fragmented system to one in which all key functions are meshed together in a single organisation has been an exciting experience that is already delivering benefits to the travelling public.

In particular, there have been important synergies in the incorporation of Transperth into the PTA. Transperth coach/bus procurement and fleet management skills proved beneficial to Transwa in the acquisition and operation of its new, high-quality coaches for country routes. Likewise, the skills developed in the PTA for the impending application of smartcard or SmartRider technology across the metropolitan train, bus and ferry systems will be extended to the country rail and bus network. There are also important synergies in the provision of infrastructure.

Our Network and Infrastructure Division now handles the design and construction of facilities for both the rail and bus systems, providing a "critical mass" previously unachievable. We now have access to a much broader body of skills and are able to apply those across the various transport services, thereby improving efficiency and service standards.

Considering all these improvements, the PTA can claim with confidence to be a national pacesetter for the delivery of public transport services. New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia have shown strong interest in the Western Australian model.

The benefits of the new structure are clear where they matter most – in the perceptions of our customers. The latest Passenger Satisfaction Monitor reveals customer satisfaction to be very high at approximately 90 percent across the board. This is the best result of any public transport system in Australia and it comes at a time when we are experiencing unavoidable disruptions through the major capital works being undertaken for the New MetroRail project and the Building Better Train Stations program. It is pleasing to see such enormous loyalty among our customers.

Our staff have warmly accepted the transition to the new era in public transport. With the creation of the PTA and subsequent addition of Transit Guards to the rail network, there are now nearly 950 people in the organisation. I perceive our staff feel at home in the new environment and the working relationships being developed are extremely strong. There will be further significant staff increases as elements of the New MetroRail project are completed and new services are introduced.

All major contracts have been let for the New MetroRail project and preliminary works have proceeded on schedule. The extension to the Northern Suburbs Railway is almost complete and the Thornlie spur development is well under way. While it is early days, the way in which we have minimised traffic disruptions resulting from work on the Perth foreshore and in the city's streets has drawn a very positive response from the community, the City of Perth and Main Roads WA. This gives us enormous confidence as we press forward with the largest public transport development project ever undertaken in WA.

The New MetroRail project is already transforming the landscape for the better, with the old fly-over bridge on the Esplanade and the old Myer building in the central city largely demolished. Communities in the Peel Region which have always been solid supporters of the project, now have more reason to be pleased following the decision of the Government to bring completion of the Mandurah section of the railway forward 12 months to late-2006.

The expansion of the suburban rail network is not the only reason to look forward with excitement. The PTA's growing focus on people, training and customer service represents a paradigm change in culture that will allow us to deliver excellent standards in public transport. Standards in the delivery of school bus services across WA will continue to rise on the back of improved training, resourcing and contract management. The move to compressed natural gas (CNG) powered buses will bring us in line with the latest Euro4 environmental standard, utilise a local energy resource and insulate the PTA against rising energy prices. Approximately 450 of these latest CNG buses will be purchased over the next seven years, rejuvenating the Transperth fleet at a cost of \$250 million. The SmartRider card system, scheduled for introduction in Perth in July 2005, will do away with the need for cash ticket purchases for trains, buses and ferries, resulting in greater convenience for passengers and faster loading.

For these and many other reasons the Public Transport Authority looks forward with great anticipation.

Reece Waldock  
Acting Chief Executive Officer