

<b>Member</b>	Matthew Guy	<b>Electorate</b>	Bulleen
<b>Period</b>	1 October 2024 to 31 December 2024		

<b>Regulation 6 - Expense allowance and electorate allowance</b>	
Total amount paid to member for electorate allowance	\$12,514.74
Total amount paid to member for expense allowance	\$3,458.00

<b>Regulation 7 - Motor vehicle allowance</b>	
Total amount paid to member for motor vehicle allowance	\$0.00
Member did not receive the motor vehicle allowance in the previous quarter and member has elected to receive the motor vehicle allowance for this quarter	No

<b>Regulation 9 - Parliamentary accommodation sitting allowance</b>	
Total amount paid to member for parliamentary accommodation sitting allowance	\$0.00
Suburb in which the member's parliamentary accommodation is located	n/a

<b>Regulation 10 - Travel allowance claims</b>					
Date from	Date until	Reason for travel	Total amount paid	Town or city in which accommodation was located	Value of the accommodation
23-Oct-24	25-Oct-24	Shadow ministerial business meetings in relation to rail to port and rail to road intermodal infrastructure	\$328.00	Darwin	\$328.00
06-Nov-24	07-Nov-24	Shadow Ministerial meetings with Steven Marshall, Chris Pyne and Vincent Torsia	\$189.00	Adelaide	\$189.00

Total number of nights for travel allowance claims **3**  
Total amount paid to member for travel allowance **\$517.00**

<b>Regulation 11 - Commercial transport allowance claims</b>					
Date from	Date until	Reason for travel	Total amount paid	Mode of transport	Value of transport
23/10/2024	25/10/2024	Shadow Ministerial business meetings in relation to rail to port and rail to road intermodal infrastructure	\$505.55	Flight	\$505.55
25/10/2024	25/10/2024	Shadow Ministerial business meetings in relation to rail to port and rail to road intermodal infrastructure	\$505.91	Flight	\$505.91
27/10/2024	27/10/2024	Shadow Ministerial business meetings in relation to rail to port and rail to road intermodal infrastructure	\$357.69	Flight	357.69
6/11/2024	7/11/2024	Shadow Ministerial meetings with former Premier Steve Marshall, Liberal leader Vincent Torsia, former Minister Chris Pyne	\$610.64	Flight	610.64

Total number of nights for commercial transport allowance claims **5**  
Total amount paid to member for commercial transport allowance **\$1,979.79**

<b>Regulation 12 - International travel allowance claims</b>			
<b>Date from</b>	<b>Date until</b>	<b>Reason for travel</b>	<b>Total amount paid</b>
29-Aug-24	09-Sep-24	Parliamentary study and research tour of transport and Victorian/South American engagement strategy (2019), and meetings with stakeholders in Chile, Argentina and Brazil in my role as Shadow Minister for Public Transport	\$1,645.64

**Total number of nights for international travel allowance claims** **11**

**Total amount paid to member for international travel allowance** **\$1,645.64**

See attached travel report for further details

**VICTORIAN MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT DELEGATION TO  
CHILE, BRAZIL AND ARGENTINA  
Thursday 29 August – Monday 9 September 2024**

**Matthew Guy MP  
Wayne Farnham MP**

## PURPOSE

For a number of years now I have sought to establish better trade and political relations between southern South American nations and Victoria. The economic opportunity that lies for Victoria in this region is immense and the possibilities considerable.

Before Covid, the Victorian government launched a South American engagement strategy. It had a clear focus on education, agriculture and infrastructure as key opportunities and or learnings for Victoria from South America. The document is broad but sets a reasonable way forward for our state to strategically engage this continent of more than 400 million people.

Despite the release of this reasonable document, it appears not a single Victorian government Minister has visited South America to engage, let alone promote Victoria to these growing, emerging economies.

Further, Victoria has just one government business office - in Santiago – for the entirety of South America, to do the ongoing work of promoting our state to these new and emerging economies.

In this political vacuum I sought to better engage our state with these economies and to build relationships that may be worthwhile for our state's economic future.

I have now visited South America three times. First on a delegation with two Victorian members of parliament, secondly by myself and on this occasion, for Shadow Ministerial business, accompanied by the member for Narracan, Wayne Farnham MP.

This trip for Mr Farnham and myself was primarily focused on infrastructure; rail in particular; and learnings about operation and construction in cities where rail networks are growing rapidly and with far, far greater value for money for the taxpayer.

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Chile is an APEC nation and thus, has a good relationship with Australia. It is useful to note that Chile views Australia as a guide to growth and development, and when meeting Chilean authorities, they are as keen to hear from us as we are from them.

Our two person delegation was provided high level meetings with contact direct from the Chilean Consulate in Melbourne who deserve specific thanks for their organisation and prompt help in establishing some productive links for us in Santiago, Chile.

Brazil is a harder nation to obtain meetings with officials as the language barrier is much more acute than Chile or Argentina. The proficiency of English is lower and the exposure of Australia much less than particularly with Chile.

However, the Brazilian Consulate in Melbourne, who referred us to the Embassy in Canberra and then directly to contacts with the Sao Paulo state government were exceptionally helpful to us in establishing meetings in the infrastructure field.

What was apparent is that Australians have rarely visited this part of the world in an official capacity, and when advice or contacts are sought, the Brazilian authorities were only too happy to oblige and help. They welcomed our engagement, and we were grateful for their help and support.

Having visited Buenos Aires twice before I have now established a number of good links, particularly in the transport fields, that were again useful for Wayne and my delegation.

Argentina has a long history of settlement from Europe, like Australia, and has obvious transport challenges in rail that are similar to Victoria. It was again helpful to visit this growing nation and introduce another Victorian MP to the possibilities for our nation should we have a greater, more permanent presence in this country of more than 45 million people.

Wayne and myself used the Victorian government's trade and engagement strategy for South America as a guide to whom we should see and whom we should meet; ultimately, it was of benefit and useful to ensure government and future government is following a similar strategy to engage this growing and dynamic continent.

In this report we have summarised not all but the most useful and noteworthy meetings and events of this delegation.

## **ITINERARY**

Thursday August 29

Arrive midday in to Santiago, Chile after 12 hour flight (on same day) from Melbourne.  
Afternoon meetings in Santiago, Chile.

Friday August 30

Meetings and tours in Santiago, Chile.

Saturday August 31

Tours around Santiago.

Sunday September 1

Flight to Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Monday September 2

Meetings in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Tuesday September 3

Morning meetings in Sao Paulo, Brazil.  
Afternoon flight to Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Wednesday September 4

Meetings and tour in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Thursday September 5

Meetings in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Friday September 6

Meetings in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Saturday September 7

Flight to Santiago, Chile.

Sunday September 8

Flight to Sydney, Australia; then connection back to Melbourne, Australia.

Monday September 9

Arrival back in Melbourne, Australia.

## **SANTIAGO**

Santiago is the largest city in Chile, with a metropolitan population approaching eight million people. As an APEC nation there is a strong presence on the ground of Victorian, Australian and APEC member states and Santiago's airport is indicative of this having many planes from various airlines that only use Santiago as their South American base and hub.

Chile also has a large number of Australian mining companies that have a regional headquarters located there, and thus, there are strong links to Australia in Chile and specifically through Santiago.

With direct flights from Melbourne via LATAM, it is the only city that can be accessed in the entire continent via direct flight contact with Australia; both Melbourne (LATAM) and Sydney (Qantas and LATAM).

### **Australian Ambassador to Chile**

In Santiago we left the airport after a long flight (12.5 hours direct from Melbourne) to then directly meet with the Australian Ambassador to Chile, Mr Andrew Martin. The Ambassador had not been in Chile for a long time, the posting having been a relatively new one for him. Despite this, Mr Martin was well versed in all issues relating to the Chilean economy and infrastructure issues, which was the great focus of our discussions.

While noting Victoria only has a presence in Santiago – and a commissioner who is based in San Francisco, United States of America, the Ambassador was complimentary of the work the Victorian Trade Office was doing in advancing Victoria's economic story to the Chilean business audience.

Topics in our discussion included Victoria's presence in Chile and broadly in south America, the opportunities around education for Victoria, tourism, direct flights to Australia and the agriculture sector and benefits to Australia and specifically to Victoria.

There are clearly huge opportunities for Victoria with the Chilean market, specifically Santiago, Valparaiso metropolitan conurbation, that views Australia in a hugely positive light, specifically our fresh produce.

Greater number of direct air flight links from Victoria and Australia in general would help boost connection in this regard greatly and would aid in much greater benefit for the Victoria-South American relationship and advancement of our state's engagement strategy.

### **La Moneda, Presidential Palace**

After visiting the Ambassador we were given a general tour of the Presidential palace/working location known as La Moneda.

While most aspects of La Moneda are removed from public tour or view we were lucky to be shown around areas of the ground floor that are of diplomatic and cultural use for the nation.

While Chile's parliament meets 100 kilometres away in Valparaiso, the Presidential Palace is located in Santiago – La Moneda. The building is sadly known as the last refuge of then President Salvador Allende, before the Chilean military bombed it and the then President took his own life, before the installation of the 1973 coup leader Augusto Pinochet as the national leader.

It is a period of much strain on the national psyche and there remains strong feelings nationally to either side of this period in Chile's past.

### **Santiago Metro**

We were honoured to meet the head of the Santiago Metro Authority, Mr Guillermo Munoz, who is also the Director of the Authority's Civil Engineering sector and has a long history in rail transportation in Chile. Our meeting was organised by the Chilean Consulate in Melbourne.

Mr Munoz and his team presented us with a fascinating and lengthy presentation about the history, present and future of the Santiago Metro; and as one of the largest urban carriers in the continent, how it plans to greatly expand.

It would be difficult to succinctly report the knowledge and findings of this meeting in such a standard report, given they were so detailed and the meeting so highly productive. In short the following points can be reported and the topics of discussion noted:

- The Santiago metro operates over seven underground lines of about 150 kilometres in track length.
- It is state owned, carries almost three million passengers daily and has around 142 operating metro stations.
- The system was built to standard gauge working, unlike the above ground network which operates on broad gauge (same situation as in Buenos Aires) and has no connectivity to the above ground network.
- Santiago metro is expanding over the next decade by a further 76 kilometres of tunnelled lines.
- The cost of this expansion is \$9 billion USD.
- The cost of construction for the Santiago Metro expansions is \$100,000 USD per metre. This compares to Melbourne's \$1.12 million USD per metre.
- In building their metro expansions all contracts are broken up and tendered to small amounts in order to get a better overall price.
- Procurement is not controlled by the Union movement (like Victoria) it is set by the Metro Authority, with national government approval.
- Systems of transparency and contract openness are world leading and show a great desire of business transparency, that Victoria does not have and is in sharp contrast to the disgraceful secrecy on Melbourne's Big Build projects that have stunningly blown out in construction cost, with no explanation why.

It was a hugely beneficial conversation and discussion, and eye opening around levels of transparency for infrastructure development. It would absolutely be worthwhile for Victoria to learn from Santiago's adaptation of transparency mechanisms that they have put in place, for any large infrastructure works that our state engages in, in future, post the disgraceful management of the so called 'Big Build.'

### **Metro rail control centre**

While in Santiago we were given a tour of the Santiago Metro Operation Centre by Mr Gabriel Olave Rodriguez and Ms Mariela Las Heras Bugedo, both senior staff with the Santiago Metro Authority.

Here we saw how the Metro control signalling, security and the complete operations of all seven lines from one central train control centre.

Each line is divided in to teams; and while in the same large room, each team operates separately to themselves under a set of policies and procedures for line operation. It should be noted that in Santiago, lines do not interact or converge together, unless shunting, stabling or marshalling.

The operational tour was greatly worthwhile to see how each panel operator can monitor security at all times both on and off trains. When incidents occur, security teams can be dispatched and even police if necessary. It means the security and safety of the network is hugely improved from some years ago and has seen great patronage growth as a result.

### **Barrio Bellavista**

One of our contacts at the Santiago Metro, Ms Mariela Buggedo, was good enough to give us a briefing on city matters such as Barrio Bellavista and the historical precinct that she had previously been involved with, during its heritage its preservation, as a Santiago government employee.

The barrio (neighbourhood) is of great significance to Santiago and is located close to the city central area; it has many buildings of heritage significance and tis home to the central university.

There has been huge debate locally about encroaching development across the city's central river to the barrio which would see commercial or residential highrise feature as part of the neighbourhood.

However, there are now mandatory height, setback and heritage requirements that have preserved the neighbourhood, plus city signage and tourist walks that have seen the promotion of the neighbourhood as a central city precinct that is avoiding modern encroachment. It is now a very, very centrally located heritage precinct which is within walking distance of downtown and has a huge tourist presence.

Melbourne could easily do something with the inner northern or inner southern suburbs, next to the CBD, if they were not subject to the government's one size fits all development plans.

### **Santiago General Cemetery**

Before departure from Santiago we took a guided tour of what is fast becoming a major tourist attraction for Santiago, its general cemetery. The guide was quick to advise us that while this may seem strange, the presence of so many resting places of significance, as well as the memorial to those who disappeared during the years post the 1973 coup are of major national and even international interest.

For Australians it is quite hard to comprehend the interest that falls at this location, but the large crowds that were taking similar guided tours attest to the interest. As later in this report will attest, Santiago is not the only city now pursuing this level of interest in central cemeteries.

Having heard of the growth in tourism numbers for this location the last time I was in Santiago, but not having visited it then, I was keen to return to see if Melbourne could adopt any of the same unique tourist interest.

Noting all of this, the Melbourne general cemetery is the resting place of many Australians of historical and national significance; Prime Minister's and former political, community and union

figures. While unorthodox to the Australian visitor, it could be a place of general interest if better promoted for a place like Melbourne.

## **SAO PAULO**

The biggest city in the southern hemisphere is daunting to arrive at and even more daunting to get around. Sao Paulo, Brazil's largest, is home to more than 22 million people and growing fast. Predictions are that by the end of the decade more than 25 million people will call the metropolitan area home.

Sao Paulo metropolitan is part of Sao Paulo state, which at 248,000 km<sup>2</sup> (Victoria is 230,000 km<sup>2</sup>) has a population of around 46 million people (Brazil's most populous state) - roughly twice the population of Australia piled in to Victoria's land mass. Forty-six million people is roughly 22 per cent of the national population in just one of Brazil's 26 states.

It's a daunting city. Everything about Sao Paulo is big. Big and wide boulevards, big buildings, big population, but big economic opportunity for Australia, and Victoria.

What was stunning to us as a Victorian delegation was the almost complete absence of Australians in this part of the world. And post our meetings across the brief time we were in the city, the almost complete absence of any Australian and particular Victorian presence in this market of almost a quarter of a billion people.

It appears that the only interest in Australia was education, and that was primarily directed toward Queensland. Yet there are so many opportunities in Brazil for Victoria, it is crying out for a Victorian Government business office to be located here and to realise the potential for our state of engaging such a growing and confident nation.

### **Secretariat of Urban Transport**

Sao Paulo Metro is by far the largest system by patronage in the South American continent. This is not unexpected from what is now the largest city in the Americas. While the network is smaller in size than Santiago, Mexico City and Buenos Aires – serving just over 100 kilometres of tunnels and 89 stations, it's daily patronage is over four and a half million passengers.

We had the great honour of a full briefing on the network from some of the state of Sao Paulo's Secretariat of Metropolitan Transport's senior officers.

Our presentation from around half a dozen senior officials was led by the Head of Civil Engineering Mr Pedro Lagonegro who gave a full briefing on the Metro but also passenger services on the Sao Paulo above ground network.

Issues covered were as follows:

- Patronage levels and growth on the network since Covid.
- Future plans to adopt driverless underground rail technology (see later point).
- Security systems on the network and monitoring disturbances and discouraging 'loitering' and 'lingering' in underground rail stations.
- Plans to reintroduce above ground passenger rail transport to provincial cities outside of Sao Paulo, specifically to transport people to major employment locations such as the Embraer Aircraft factory at Sao Jose dos Campos, 80 kilometres from Sao Paulo central.

- The regauging and rebuilding of once narrow gauge (3'3 3/8') above ground lines to fit a new state wide standard gauge network (similar issues to standardisation of 5'3" broad gauge lines in western Victoria).
- The operation and expansion of the new Airport Rail Link in Sao Paulo and its connectivity to the Sao Paulo Metro – which is at present limited.
- Cost of construction and transparency measures to improve contract value and value for money for the State of Sao Paulo.
- Replacement of ageing rollingstock.

Like Santiago, this was a fascinating and lengthy meeting that was full of information. Brazil, like Argentina, has issues relating to gauge compatibility that Victoria also has. The concept of building new lines on different gauges is only considered if a full network is being planned. To the Brazilians, the concept of building a single line on a different gauge would be short sighted, but converting a whole network to a new gauge is sensible.

In Melbourne, we are planning to build a Suburban rail Loop – a single stand alone line – on a different rail gauge.

### **Sao Paulo Metro Line 7**

Mr Ulisses Carraro from the Secretariat of Metropolitan Transport gave us a full briefing on the new Metro Line 7 in Sao Paulo which, unlike the other six lines, is run by a private operator but overseen by the Secretariat.

The new Line 7 is driverless. It has full passenger boarding gates at every station, its rollingstock is new and dwell time at stations is very, very minimal. There is a lot to learn here for potential projects in Melbourne.

With 25 kilometres of track and 19 stations it has a larger distance between stops than other lines across the network, meaning higher speeds can be obtained and maintained and thus, more people moved quicker.

Construction costs were around \$3 billion USD – higher than in Chile – but the network is of a larger loading gauge (size of trains) and the tunnels double track bi directional, not single direction, single track tunnels in parallel as with the Subte in Buenos Aires, Santiago Metro or indeed, Melbourne's underground Loop.

It also should be noted that the construction of Line 7 was at a rate of 30 metres of tunnel per day. For comparison, in Melbourne, we average around 30 metres of new tunnel per month.

### **Luz Station**

The main rail passenger station in Sao Paulo is Luz Station. It has four underground platforms and five above ground platforms, serving as the hub for commuter rail on the city network.

Touring Luz with Mr Bruno Berkiensttat from the Sao Paulo City government was insightful as the location is clearly in one of the cities more challenging areas, for law and order. As such, the very high security presence at the station was noted, particularly outside of the station.

Commuters are now predominantly using the station as a 'change location' rather than a destination at many parts of the day as a result.

Luz is an old station that has been well looked after and restored but is clearly over capacity. A city as large as Sao Paulo is relying on a five platform main above ground rail station for the Airport Rail line, commuter services and the reintroduction of regional and outer urban rail passenger services. It's a big challenge for the Sao Paulo government authorities; and one they are looking in to future expansion options.

In Australia, Sydney and Melbourne now both use Central and Southern Cross with partial platform movements (for example platform 8A or 8B) to accommodate multiple trains movements. This is being looked at for Luz, but is difficult and really only able to occur on one platform, which would possibly handle three train movements.

It was an interesting tour but shows the severe limitations on rail transport without adequate future proofing.

### **Sao Paulo state parliament**

We were pleased to be able to visit the Legislative Assembly of the State of Sao Paulo. As a 94 member parliament, it had many similarities to Victoria's parliament, both in operation and member services that are worth noting and pointing out.

While given access to the building, we met a number of deputies from three of the political parties, notably Deputy Gilmaci Santos from the Republican Party, part of the 8 party, 53 member government of the state.

It is apparent from our discussions with him and his staff that there remains a very low level of awareness of Australia, outside of mining and possibly education, as to what we can offer and what our economy specialises in. These discussions again highlighted the importance of developing much greater awareness of Victoria to Brazil if we are to have any meaningful engagement of such a large market with so many opportunities.

Issues to note from our discussions:

- Security issues are now of far more importance than they have been previously; the building is now surrounded by fencing, as is Victoria's parliament.
- An on site child care facility is now offered to members and staff, run by a private operator. However locally based parents can also use the facility, so it is not just for the benefit of those in the building and can access external clients.
- Parking is now located centrally and underground, so the gardens can be utilised as gardens and not as a car park, and particularly across the road from the legislature, this open space (in a city that lacks it) has been offered back for public use.
- Members have a global budget, not part of a parliamentary administered system.

While it was good to visit the Legislative Assembly and a pleasure to meet a number of deputies and their staff, both in offices and casually, it was also concerning to note how little awareness Australia and Victoria has to such an important future market as Brazil.

## **BUENOS AIRES**

Having been to Buenos Aires twice before and made a number of contacts in the city, particularly in the transport field, I was keen to bring Mr Farnham to the Argentine capital for us both to receive some further briefings on important aspects of the city which can assist Victoria and future policy development.

Buenos Aires is a big city; at once stage one of the world's largest and now home to almost 17 million people in its greater urban area. It is home to around 40 per cent of the national population of Argentina and is one of the premier cities of the central and south American regions.

Buenos Aires is a complex political structure; the City Administration is the inner ring suburbs but has the recognition of a national state; the outer suburbs are administered by the Province of Buenos Aires, which has a capital city in La Plata – 70 kilometres away, then there is a national government.

There are districts, barrios and zones.

There is huge economic opportunity in Argentina. The new national government is very, very keen to engage nations that have had limited contact with Argentina. There is a keenness to turn to Europe in a way that has not been there for decades and a great interest in Australia. The opportunities for us, now, to further the trade and engagement strategy, particularly in education, exist with great potential.

While Argentina's political and economic structures are complex, its transport system is also just as complex. Buses are privately and state government run. But there are also City administered lines. They all come through the city's central bus terminal which has its own administration to manage it.

The rail network has a below ground Subte (subterranean) system run by the City which extends to the City borders. It is on standard gauge (4' 8 ½") and has limited linkage to the above ground rail network, which is run by the state government and private providers, on some lines.

There is also the national rail carrier Trenes Argentinos that run a large amount of the metro and regional rail services. Trenes Argentinos (Argentine Trains) manage the main railway terminals of Retiro and Constitucion. They also manage the safety and operational oversight of the broad gauge (5' 6") and narrow gauge (3' 3 3/8") networks. As stated, it is a complex network.

### **Retiro Railway station**

Having previously met Mr Marcelo Befaro from Trenes Argentinos, we were pleased to again be briefed by him, for both our benefit on the management of rail security at Retiro station in Buenos Aires.

The *Comando Trenes Seuguros* is the central train command that oversees the operation of the the above ground network. It is in a very public location for all to see (behind a glass wall at Retiro) and gives a great level of security to the travelling public.

*Comando Trenes Seuguros* or Safe Trains Comand looks over almost 500 security cameras across the Trenes Argentinos above ground network. This is a huge system, on the five main northern lines there are dozens of stations and more than 200 security personnel that can be deployed at any time

should issues arise. It is a highly impressive system and has given rise to patronage increases, particularly at nights, due to the on train presence of security and surveillance systems.

It should be noted that the Baillieu government's deployment of PSOs across the Victorian transport system is a first incarnation of what could be a similar system for the Melbourne and VLine networks. The dramatic drop in crime instances was noted and is certainly worth expanding on Victorian initiatives.

### **The Subte**

Oscar Santos of private operator Emova Movilidad wags good enough to again provide a briefing on the operation of the Buenos Aires Subte, the underground rail network.

The Subte is the oldest underground rail system in South America, dating back 110 years, with six major lines and more than 100 stations. It is managed by the City of Buenos Aires but has a private operator of the actual rail network.

The system is highly efficient, highly responsive, operates long hours and is without doubt one of the best to ride. Lines are easily marked, connections easy and well laid out. There are many learnings for network integration when it comes to the Subte.

Lines are colour coded, the use of ground indicators such as colouring for connection and line access is easy to understand and makes the system accessible for non residents. Mr Santos advised that much of this was taken from London in the 1980s who began the colour code system for lines (a practice Sydney then adopted as well).

Some issues and learnings to note:

- Given networks are operated by different providers across the city a central coordination authority is essential.
- It is important that central coordination to just that, coordinate, not add to more confusion and bureaucracy in what is already a complex network set up from mode to operation to ownership).
- Subte expansion has ground to a halt due to economic conditions, but new expansion is being considered, possibly from private providers in a manner similar to Brazil.
- There remains a zero-tolerance approach to graffiti and vandalism which has been immensely important from deterring those who would commit such crimes away from the network and thus aid network safety overall.

### **SUBE ticketing system**

A later meeting and discussion with Oscar Santos was around the use and operation of the SUBE metro ticketing system. The SUBE card operates right across the metro system, in the same way the Myki card does.

It is a purchased specific ticket (card) that is then topped up and used on Buenos Aires rail, tram and bus systems. Revenue is then distributed via trip kilometre and tap on location. The SUBE is easy to use and the machines have multi language top up options. The ease of use is much, much greater than our own Myki system,

However, as we were advised at Carlos Pellegrini Subte station – there is now a move to modernise the SUBE system that is expected to take two years. This will mean that people can either purchase a

card or – in what would be a first for the continent – use their credit card – as a ticket. This also means phone tap technology is also being looked at with a prompt end date on the plans for operation and implementation.

It should be noted that Sydney has had card tap ticketing for years now. Melbourne has had this as part of our ticketing promises for years but has never seemed to make this system work. Myki still has not been rolled out to full regional locations, despite Myki readers being in place at locations like Albury Railway station.

### **Congreso Nacional**

Sadly our planned meeting with Deputy Santiago Sanutiro was cancelled on the day before we were planned to meet in the Congreso Nacional, due to some major challenges with his governing party – the part of President Javier Milei – being able to pass a Bill for privatisation of state assets, through the congress's lower house.

The debate was ongoing and lasted longer than was expected. As a result we were given a tour of the Congreso while in session; and noted the very large protests that we had to navigate through, at the front of the Congress before entry.

As such, security was very tight.

Our general tour of the Congress from one of the Attendants noted the following points about the magnificent building and its operation:

- It has a bicameral parliamentary system, with the executive elected separately (similar to the United States).
- The Senate has 72 members, and the chamber of deputies has 257 members.
- The system of election for both is proportional representation with a list system operating for the lower house, similar to an Australian Upper House method of election.
- Each state has three Senators, including the City of Buenos Aires – each state then has a population apportioned number of lower house deputies.
- The next chamber elections will be held this time, next years (October 2025).
- The President does not occupy any position in the Congreso, his work space is across the city at the Casa Rosada.

### **Puerto Madero**

Having previously looked across urban renewal in Argentina, both in Buenos Aires and La Plata, I was keen for this delegation of Mr Farnham and I to visit what has been done and is ongoing at Puerto Madero and the neighbouring Ecological Park as a magnificent example of urban parkland and urban renewal in a city of substantial size.

As I have noted in a previous report, Puerto Madero is on the eastern side of the Centro (downtown) Buenos Aires area. While it does not currently have Subte access, this is planned. It does have good walkable links back to Plaza de Mayo Subte station - next to the Casa Rosada - in the same way Docklands is walkable to Southern Cross.

Puerto Madero is, like Docklands, an ongoing, twenty plus year construction project. There are still major residential buildings being built here and many companies are still located and seeking to locate to this precinct. Unlike Melbourne's Docklands, it's not solely a destination, thee it through

traffic to the ecological park and there is a designated hotel precinct, that both attract visitors and patronage to the location, which Docklands lacks.

Previously briefed by Ms Liliana Hermida, a local architect who I was referred to by community contacts in Melbourne, we were able to be given a brief run down on the future of Puerto Madero by her again.

While crime issues seemed to be of her concern now, which were not the case twelve months ago, which had led for calls from both business and residents (like Ms Hermida) for more active policing and possibly a Police 'kiosk' that can be manned for longer hours to ensure people feel safe coming to the precinct. This could also be considered for Docklands.

It was again interesting to note, the disgraceful neglect by state and local government in Melbourne of our Docklands precinct has seen foot traffic there collapse. Docklands in Melbourne is in huge trouble. Despite similar challenges in Puerto Madero (Buenos Aires was the world's second most locked down city) the drive to get families and couples back to the precinct has been coordinated by government and largely successful.

### **E-bikes**

While Melbourne removes scooters and e-bikes, Buenos lares had engaged them with great enthusiasm. The presence of e-bikes and e-bike stations has been a huge reason for the return of patronage to Puerto Madero and the ecological park (mentioned later).

The *ecobiki* app is easy to install and once identification for a foreign national is obtained (passport) you can navigate exceptionally easily and cheaply the app and the use of bikes. Prevention of dumping bikes is maintained by fining the credit card on which the bike was hired if it is not returned to a bike station. Thus the incentive to use the bike properly and place in a designated storage location is maintained.

The *ecobiki* system we used and found it to be outstanding. It was a remarkably efficient way – beyond public transport - of getting to meetings and events. Melbourne should not be abolishing these systems but enhancing and upgrading them to suit our city.

### **Ecological Park**

The *Reserva Ecologica Costanera Sur* (Costanera South Ecological Reserve) is a fabulous use of old marsh land and port areas that has become a huge people attractor to the central city area of Buenos Aires.

The park is 860 hectares in size, and while Melbourne can't repeat this close to our city, the presence of nature reserve and or parkland so close to the central city area, or as part of urban renewal, is a huge point of attraction for people to Puerto Madero.

The Reserve features defined walks, trails for running, exercise equipment, *ecobiki* hire as well as revegetation and reintroduction of bird species in the watered areas. School children are taken through the reserve and can participate in many of the revegetation activities.

Elevated waterway paths have recently been opened and are now a key feature of the park. Melbourne does not have the ability to build something of this scale so close to our city, But we do have the ability to better utilise our river and the Docklands area on the waterfront for recreational

movement. Also the opening of the Ron Barassi Park in Docklands (a Naphthine government initiative) should be looked at as a precedent; urban renewal should always be accompanied by new open space.

### **Tren de la Costa**

In the northern suburbs of Buenos Aires we ventured to observe and use the Tren de la Costa. This is a 15 kilometre long light rail system in Buenos Aires' northern suburbs. It connects at one end to the heavy rail system and at the other to the Subte.

There are many discussions about light rail systems being put in place across Melbourne's suburbs – the East Werribee Employment area, to Rowville, to Doncaster and so on, but none have eventuated.

On this trip we wanted to make the effort to use urban light rail; as such learn from how important connectivity is, station access and, the ticketing system being the same as the broader network.

The line is part of an active transport network with cycling, jogging and walking paths accompanying the line. While it is slow (40 km/h operating speed) it does provide useful linkage for some of the coastal suburbs to the broader transport system where they have no other links.

It's a worthy concept, and the patronage success of the Tren de la Costa is a good example that a similar concept could work in Melbourne as well.

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In conclusion, our delegation was highly informative and successful, particularly in Chile and Brazil. However the overwhelming take out of this trip was that Victoria needs to do much more work in building a profile in the South American continent, both in economic and cultural terms. There is still a very low awareness of our state in South America.

We have huge opportunities here. Brazil has almost a quarter of a billion people and a growing economy. Argentina has 45 million people and is as multicultural as ourselves; Chile is an APEC nation of more than 20 million people and has direct flights to Melbourne, yet Victoria has a part time presence on the continent.

We should be aiming for targeted economic growth out of South America with a concerted focus on Brazil and Argentina. The presence of a new trade office in future in either Buenos Aires or Sao Paulo would be a big and serious step to address this economic gap that we are not filling.

**Matthew Guy MP  
Wayne Farnham MP**

## **Accommodation**

### **Santiago**

Two nights accommodation at Park Plaza Santiago.

Total \$312.54

### **Sao Paulo**

Three nights accommodation at Hotel Melia Sao Paulo.

Total \$910.67

### **Buenos Aires**

Four night accommodation at Novotel Buenos Aires, Corrientes.

Total \$862.65

### **Santiago**

One night accommodation at park Plaza Santiago.

Total \$156.26

## **Commercial Transport**

Uber and taxi receipts totalling: \$167.43