

## Review of 2006

It is now just over six months since I embarked on a campaign to increase the emphasis on sustainable transport having spent the previous thirty years in helping to establish the renewable energy and sustainable building industries.

Those industries are finally on track, but it seems to me that the occasional renewable energy system or sustainable building will mean nothing unless we can substantially change the way we design our cities. Given that in some states the transport sector accounts for around 25% of our greenhouse gasses, it is essential that we seek to utilise more sustainable forms of transport.

We have, I estimate, about one year to make some positive decisions. We then have, perhaps, ten years to implement those changes. Of course this is not nearly long enough to reconstruct our cities, but I doubt if we have a choice. In Australia we live a relatively comfortable lifestyle, but we also are living on the knife's edge, and history tells us how easy it is for societies to collapse if we choose not to act responsibly.

The good news is that we know many of the answers for more sustainable societies – we just lack the will to implement them. There are of course many good people in the public, private and voluntary sectors already striving towards these goals but the reality is that our communities will have to triple or quadruple our efforts. Hence this campaign, which started in a small way, but is gaining momentum.

The campaign highlights for the year have been:

- Visiting the West Coasts of Canada and the US in November, conducting a month long study of sustainable transport systems and providing in return a series of presentations on sustainable development.
- Meeting parliamentarians, particularly at Parliament House in Canberra in August, and taking heart that they had a grasp of the consequences of climate change and were prepared to consider funding public transport through a Better Cities program (or similar).
- Having the opportunity to quiz VicRoads on their rationale of, and justification for, the development plans and policies regarding city fringe suburban sprawl.

We need to focus attention on sustainable cities, we need to extend the knowledge base, and at the Federal level we need to allocate substantial resources to sustainable cities built around sustainable transport corridors.

## Sustainable Transport Authority

We are starting to formulate an idea around the establishment of a joint federal-state taskforce to encourage the design of sustainable cities around sustainable transport.

The proposal does not advocate a new super-department that duplicates existing bodies but rather a streamlined structure that works with current agencies while filling in the gaps. Key tasks of such an agency would be seeking out the innovative solutions and disseminating that knowledge across the Commonwealth.

## Spreading the Sustainability Message

We are keen to make sure that the process of getting ferries onto Port Phillip Bay is as inclusive as possible. Recently sustainable transport and the ferry topic have been mentioned to:

- ◆ Peter Newman, Murdoch University
- ◆ Paul Mees, University of Melbourne
- ◆ Graham Currie, Monash University
- ◆ John Stone, Swinburne University
- ◆ Annette Kroen, RMIT University
- ◆ Lawrence Doctors, University of NSW
- ◆ John Legge, Swinburne University
- ◆ Frank Fisher, Monash University
- ◆ David Sornig, Victoria University

## News

The cost of a program encouraging motorists to switch their cars to LPG introduced when petrol rose above \$1.40 litre is **\$766 million** according to The Age (29/12/06) . *"But the price of LPG will rise in coming years, with Government plans to introduce an excise of 12.5 cents a litre by 2015".*

## Views from Overseas



**The brilliant elevated SkyTrain in Vancouver**

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