

Lord Mayors on Transport

"Lord Mayor Robert Doyle's push to return cars to Swanston Street appears scuttled. A report on five options for the strip prepared for Melbourne City Council is likely to support greater access for pedestrians. While the report, expected to go to the council next month, will not make specific recommendations, its analysis of options ranging from more traffic to increased pedestrian use is believed to support the latter.

"Options canvassed in the report are also believed to include reduced access for delivery vehicles and taxis and block-by-block recommendations on parking restrictions. Separating tram tracks to allow a bike path down the centre of the street is also believed to have been considered. ... The first change will be the removal of tour buses from the street by March 31, with a new home secured for the buses at Federation Square.

"During the council election campaign last November, Cr Doyle called for the return of cars to the street and described the current mixed-use arrangement as a 'failed experiment'. But his idea never had the support of a majority of councillors. ...

"Meanwhile, Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore briefed a Bicycle Victoria dinner in Melbourne last night on her plans to turn Sydney's centre into a bicycle-friendly environment. Sydney has committed \$70 million over four years to build 55 kilometres of mainly separated cycling routes in and through the city centre." **Ref: Kate Lahey & Jason Dowling, The Age, 27/2/09**

Senate Public Transport Inquiry

"Councils, motoring bodies and cyclists are giving evidence at the Senate inquiry, which is examining the federal and state funding of public transport. The inquiry, due to report in June, is looking into the benefits of more efficient public transport, the use of cars and bikes, and ways to improve the transport system, including new charges, subsidies and legislation. It will also examine transport systems used overseas and how the best elements of these can be used in Australia." **Ref: The Age, 3/3/09**

The Hearing Dates:

Brisbane 3/3/09; Sydney 6/3/09;
Canberra 19/3/09 & 20/3/09; Perth 20/3/09;
Melbourne 30/3/09; Hobart 30/3/09

Ref: Senate Public Hearings & Transcripts

www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/rrat_ctte/public_transport/hearings/index.htm

Problems with Public Transport

"Dear Mr Brumby and Ms Kosky: You win. After four years of train cancellations, delays and overcrowding, I cannot take it any more. I am driving to work again. Perhaps that is part of your plan - to get more people back into cars so you don't have to worry about fixing up a joke of a public transport system. I cannot wait until election day because, for me, it will be a single-issue election. No prizes for guessing what I will vote on. Bring it on!" **Ref: Verica Jokic, The Age, 2/3/09**



Cyclists ride to work

A: "I normally drive but I thought that I would do the right thing and use public transport."

B: "It's dreadful."

A: "I was thinking that I would like to cycle to work, it would take the about the same time as driving but I don't think it's safe."

B: "There's nowhere to park bikes at work."

A: "I used to catch the bus but it only runs on the half hour. One day it didn't it didn't run at all and I had to wait another half hour. I've never used that bus since." **Conversation overheard on a jam-packed tram crawling up Swanston Street towards Melbourne University, 3/3/09.**

Back in mid 2007 I heard that VicRoads had scheduled the synchronisation of the traffic lights on Franklin and Victoria Streets where they intersect Swanston Street. Presently the light sequence traps the trams. By November 2007 when nothing had happened I quizzed the CEO of VicRoads, Garry Little, and was told that due to the labour shortage the work was delayed. Here we are in 2009 and single-occupant cars are still delaying overcrowded trams. Clearly, in spite of the rhetoric neither VicRoads nor the government are serious about reducing greenhouse gases or congestion, both of which could be achieved by speeding up the trams. The car is still king.

We also have to ask: 'Why do we have a traffic sewer - Victoria Street - running along the northern boundary of our city?' Enlightened governments would be thinking about traffic calming and traffic reduction. Think about the concepts of 'road diet' and 'disappearing traffic'. Imagine a grand boulevard. It's easily achievable.

And Also ... (Strange Laws)

"The law states that more than 3000 sheep cannot be herded down Hollywood Blvd. at any one time."

Ref: www.strangefacts.com/laws.html

More on the Division of Spending

"Track Record, published quarterly by [the Victorian Department of Transport] DOT, does definitely and openly include farebox revenue numbers and has done so for some time. Indeed Track Record clearly shows all the recurrent payments made to the public transport operators. That is not total public transport spending as other things, especially certain capital projects are funded directly and entirely from within DOT. And Roads spending is also done either by DOT or VicRoads. I think a careful and well-researched effort using Track Record and VicRoads and DOT Annual Reports, along with State budget papers can reveal spending relativities. It may need care and attention but should not be all that difficult."

Ref: Bernie Carolan, CEO, MetLink, 3/3/09

More on Government Spin

"A contract posted on the [Victorian] Government's Contracts website shows that, last July, it commissioned research firm Ipsos-Eureka to complete a \$250,000 study on community attitudes to transport. The study is separate from \$2 million the Government is spending on advertising to promote its \$38 billion transport plan. Branded as an information campaign, the Government has recently taken out billboards on the facade of Southern Cross Station to promote its purchase of new trains and trams as part of the plan. But Ms Kosky said the study had helped the Government find out what the community viewed as the priorities in development of the transport plan. A Department of Transport spokesman also said the research had helped shape the transport plan."

"News of the research comes as Monash University's Professor Graham Currie, whose position is partly funded by the Transport Department, described the Government's transport strategy as a 'road expansion' plan. In a speech to Engineers Australia, Professor Currie said the first four years of the plan - the only period the community could have some certainty would be delivered - promised to invest \$8.4 billion on expanding roads and freight routes. Over the same period, the plan pledged \$6.8 billion on public transport, with most going on regenerating existing transport infrastructure. 'These are not new rail lines we are talking about in the next four years', he said. 'It is getting the existing system to be better than it is. But it is not expanding it'. Melbourne needed to stop building new roads at the expense of better public transport, Professor Currie said. 'We need to redress the balance'."

"Elsewhere, Roads Minister Tim Pallas yesterday announced the early opening of the Deer Park bypass, a 9.3-kilometre link between Sunshine West and Caroline Springs. The new road will open on April 5, eight months ahead of schedule. 'The Brumby Government, in partnership with the Rudd Labor Government, is taking action now to improve Victoria's roads', Mr Pallas said."

Ref: Clay Lucas, The Age, 5/3/09

Walking and Health

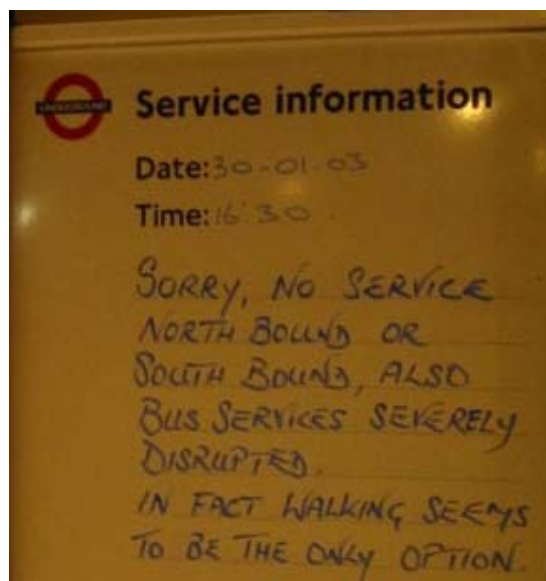
"Walk for half an hour, brisk walk for half an hour ... that's fantastic advice for anyone with depression. Force yourself to do that every morning, every morning, as soon as you get up, put on the walkers and go out for a brisk walk, and ... you'll notice a change, it's very, very good."

Ref: Gary McDonald, Enough Rope, ABC TV, 12/4/04

"If we are truly setting out for sustainable transport then walking should always be pleasurable and a first choice for movement rather than an occasional recreational pursuit. This walking will occur within our streets rather than within parks or along foreshore routes and deserves to be rewarded with a much richer experience than usually offered. Probably our greatest reward in walking is having our natural human curiosities and need for reassurance satisfied continuously and even rhythmically. Curiosity and reassurance needs lead to inquisition, exploration and investigation and which is satisfied mainly by observation and experience. A perfect walking scenario."

Ref: Greg Dowling, The Flyer, March 2009 www.scapestrategy.com.au

And Also ...



Ref: www.jokefile.co.uk/odds/tubeposter.html

Legume and Bio-Fuel

"A trial planting of legumes to produce bio-fuel is underway on the Sunshine Coast. The pongamia pinnata plant has seeds that can be used to make bio-diesel. Esma Armstrong from the Maroochy Landcare Group says the crop will be grown on disused cane fields. 'The purpose of the launch is awareness, an educational theme, to let people know that there is this trial happening', she said. 'There is some funding available to get the land holders to try and utilise the land that has been growing cane for years but has been lying dormant for a while and information on how the trees will be grown and the usefulness of it'." **Ref: ABC News, 15/2/09**

Monash Freeway Expansion

"The additional traffic lane on the Monash Freeway East of Warrigal Road has been built on the rail reserve originally designed into the median strip in Sir Henry Bolte's day. Increasing the capacity of the reservation by 2000 people per peak hour has been done at the cost of permanently foreclosing a rail development capable of carrying 20,000 people per peak hour." **Ref: John Legge, 3/3/09**

Cars Sales Waning

"Nissan's Executive Vice President, Carlos Tavares, told Reuters Television times are tough. 'Two years ago, the total worldwide market was 68 million cars. We are running now at a pace of around 50 million cars. If you take the United States, two years ago it was in the range of 16 to 17 million cars. We are running now at the pace of 9 million cars, so you see this is a tremendous downturn', he said." **Ref: SkyNews, 5/3/09**

"A scheme to pay motorists to scrap their old cars makes economic and environmental sense. ... The Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries wants the Federal Government to pay car owners to scrap their old cars and buy new cars that have up-to-date emission and safety standards. The car industry is suffering more than most industries as the global economy declines."

Ref: Adelaide Advertiser, 5/3/09

Comment: Perhaps they could pay them in public transport vouchers which would help take more cars off the road, reduce congestion and pollution?

Trams are Back in Fashion

"Trams are back in fashion after an age when many cities removed them so that their streets could be given over to the terrorism of the motor car. The need to contain greenhouse gases, the consequent demand for public transport, and the fumes from diesel-powered buses, have made the electrically driven light rail system popular with many cities such as Seattle, which runs refurbished W-class trams on its waterfront line, and Edinburgh, which used to have a cable tram system like Melbourne and is now building a new electric line from the city to the port of Leith. Modern trams have drivers seated in front of a control panel that would do justice to a jumbo jet." **Ref: Trevor McAllister, Ockam's Razor, 22/2/09**
Read the full transcript on the history of trams at: www.abc.net.au/rn/ockhamsrazor/stories/2009/2495901.htm#transcript From ABC Radio National.

Shared Use of Railroad Infrastructure

"Railroad corridors can be shared between public transit and freight rail operations. ... The focus of this research is ... sharing track with lighter public transit vehicles (e.g., light rail vehicles) that do not meet current [US] Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) crashworthiness regulations. This 'co-mingled' use of track has enormous potential for public transit expansion because freight rail corridors that crisscross the nation often provide the only transportation corridors left to connect suburban development to many urban communities. Each prospective shared-use corridor will give rise to a unique set of operating issues that requires development of new techniques, operating rules, and technology applications to allow the safe sharing of privately owned corridors that are becoming increasingly attractive as a latent community asset. In

other instances, transit agencies have acquired rail corridors but are required to maintain pre-existing freight services, or public transit operators have been able to reach shared-use agreements (under 'temporal separation' restrictions) with existing railroads."

Ref: Gwen Chisholm Smith, Transportation Research Board, Shared Use of Railroad Infrastructure with Noncompliant

Public Transit Rail Vehicles See full Report: http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/tcrp/tcrp_rpt_130.pdf



FESTIVAL SUNDAY
Sunday 8 February

10 MINUTES

BY TRAM

2 HOURS

BY CAR

Plan ahead and leave your car at home
You'll thank yourself and so will the environment

2009 St Kilda Festival Ad

Cars & Cities (Part 2)

“Only a few months after his election in the summer of 2000, [the Mayor of London Ken] Livingstone began courting Robert R. Kiley, a former C.I.A. official, business leader and transit expert, who as head of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority in New York in the 1980's was credited with resurrecting the city's graffiti-scarred subway system, now considered one of the best in the world. Kiley, given the new title of London's transport commissioner, brought with him another former top New York transit official, Jay Walder, who had become an expert on road pricing at Harvard and in Singapore, where a smaller but much more costly congestion-charging system in place for more than 25 years has cut car ownership to 1 in 10 city residents.

“When Kiley arrived in London, most of the attention focused on his transit credentials and how he would use them to rescue the ailing London Underground, an effort in which he and Livingstone, fighting Blair's government, have been largely unsuccessful. But Kiley told me later that he was equally interested in coming to London because of Livingstone's determination to try to right the relationship between the city and the car. If it worked, Kiley knew, it would be seen as a model around the world, and especially back in New York, where more than 250,000 vehicles crowd into the 8.5-square-mile heart of Manhattan in three hours every morning, roughly the same number that enter the eight square miles of central London over the course of an entire workday.

“As the leader of a business alliance in the 1990's, Kiley advocated road pricing for Manhattan, but he received no support from Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani, whose voting base in Queens and Staten Island practically lived in their cars. In many ways London was an interesting parallel, more like New York than any other American city in its atypical transportation landscape. In both cities, as packed as the roads can be, more than 80 percent of workers take some form of mass transit into the central city every weekday morning. In London, as in New York, some drivers are poor. But most tend to have money - enough to generate political pressure to protect their choice. They are also affluent enough, Kiley points out, to be persuaded to spend a little money to save them something much more valuable: their time. We knew all along that the motorist advocates and writers for the newspapers and libertarians and people who are really locked into cars would be critical, but I think the majority of Londoners

supported congestion-charging right up to opening day’, Kiley said later in his office, with a poster of the Brooklyn Bridge behind his desk. ‘Would I call it a popular measure? Probably not. But I think that Londoners have long since concluded that someone had to take this dragon on’.

“Sitting there that day [of the introduction of the London Congestion Charge], as the dragon was being cowed on the streets below, Kiley told me that he had spoken at length about fighting it with another very important potential St. George, one in some ways a lot like Livingstone - a political outsider who takes the subway to work, who strongly supports the idea of road pricing and who views the prerogatives of driving from a much more jaundiced 21st-century perspective. His name was Michael R. Bloomberg, and he was the mayor of New York City.”

Ref: Randy Kennedy, New York Times, 20/4/03
{To be continued in #102}

Stockholm's Congestion Charge

“The Stockholm congestion charge is a congestion pricing system implemented as a tax which is levied on most vehicles entering and exiting central Stockholm, Sweden. The congestion tax was implemented on a permanent basis on August 1, 2007, after a seven-month trial period between January 3, 2006 and July 31, 2006. The primary purpose of the congestion tax is to reduce traffic congestion and improve the environmental situation in central Stockholm. The funds collected will be used for new road constructions in and around Stockholm. A referendum was held in September 2006 a couple months after the end of the trial period. In the referendum the residents of Stockholm municipality voted yes and in 14 other municipalities voted no to implement it permanently. On October 1, 2006, the leaders of the winning parties in the 2006 general election, declared they would implement the Stockholm congestion tax permanently. The parliament approved this on June 20, 2007, and the congestion tax came into effect on August 1, 2007.” **Ref: Wikipedia**
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stockholm_congestion_tax



And Also ...

“London Mayor Boris Johnson has admitted being fined for failing to pay the city's congestion charge. The mayor said he ‘totally forgot’ to pay the £8-a-day charge in the required 48 hours after he drove into central London last month [triggering a £60 fine].” **Ref: BBC News, 8/1/09**