

## Transport Emissions

*“Australia’s greenhouse gas emissions fell over summer, apparently because fewer people relied on cars to get around. But the fall was slight because the drop in car use was mostly cancelled out by the increasing amount of carbon released by coal-fired power stations. ... The amount of greenhouse gas pumped out by vehicles in NSW fell by 3.6 per cent on the previous year. During the year the trend towards less road transport, which was evident the previous year continued, even though petrol prices fell again after reaching record highs the year before.”* **Ref: Ben Cubby, SMH, 16/3/09**

*“The Victorian Government has lifted a ban on P-plates driving certain turbocharged and supercharged vehicles, citing environmental reasons. In a statement released yesterday, Roads and Ports Minister Tim Pallas said the rule changes were designed to recognise ‘moderately powered, greener, lower-performance cars’ that used turbocharging to improve fuel consumption.*

*“But Mr Pallas made an embarrassing gaffe in announcing the new regulations, holding up a powerful and relatively thirsty turbo four-wheel-drive as an example of an environmentally friendly vehicle. His statement said: ‘This is a commonsense approach, meaning young drivers won’t be able to drive the sports-type, six-cylinder supercharged Holden Monaro, but would be able to apply for exemptions to drive the family fuel-efficient Mazda CX-7.’ In fact, the CX-7 is more powerful than a Monaro and is one of the thirstier compact 4WDs on the market, using more fuel than a Holden Commodore wagon. A spokesman for the minister said he had made a mistake in the drafting of the statement and the new rules would single out only fuel-efficient turbocharged vehicles.”*

**Ref: Richard Blackburn, The Age, 14/3/09**

*“New York City has made it illegal to let your vehicle engine idle for more than a minute in a school zone. With the new ordinance, the city joins several other cities and states in going after idling engines as a pollution source and health hazard. Minneapolis ... is among the enlightened cities with recently passed or amended anti-idling ordinances on the books. The city even has a printable mock ticket/informational brochure on its website that vigilant citizens can use to remind violators of the law. How bad is idling, and how unnecessary is it? Let us count the ways:*

*“It spews greenhouse gases. In Sierra magazine’s March-April issue ... Mr Green*

*concludes that idling cars and trucks emit about 58 million tons of carbon dioxide each year, and U.S. fast-food drive-throughs cause customers to burn an extra 50 million gallons of gas annually. At Sustainablog, Robin Shreves notes that you don’t even have to give up drive-throughs to green up your act: Just shut off your engine when you’re in line at the bank or the burger joint.*

*“It’s a health threat. As Minneapolis’ ticket/brochure points out, ‘Exhaust is hazardous to human health, especially children’s; studies have linked air pollution to increased rates of cancer, heart and lung disease, asthma and allergies’. If you have any doubts, go suck on a tailpipe. The Environmental Defence Fund notes that children, the elderly and those with asthma and other chronic health problems are especially vulnerable to the health dangers of exhaust.*

*“Your car doesn’t need it. If you think you need to warm up your car before driving to avoid mechanical problems, think again. Slate’s own advice columnist, the Green Lantern, tackled several engine-idling myths last May and concluded that for modern fuel-injected engines, there’s simply no good mechanical reason to warm up a car for more than 30 seconds. ....”*

**Ref: Keith Goetzman, UTNE Reader, 9/3/09**

<http://ipost.com/rd/9z1zdlaa8l3v50rf1qks2uc4nc03d99a3gq02ubit50>

*“Idling your car has been illegal for ages here in Germany, we even cut our engines at railway crosses. Signs are posted to do so. As an American, living in Europe for many years, I’m always distressed to see cars idling when I visit the US, sometimes in front of stores, even without drivers in them.”*

**Ref: Denise, UTNE Reader, 13/3/09**

## NSW Ferry Chief under Investigation

*“The chief executive of Sydney Ferries, Rear-Admiral Geoff Smith, has been stood aside pending an investigation by the Independent Commission Against Corruption into alleged misuse of his corporate credit card to the tune of more than \$50,000. ... The Sydney Ferries annual report lists Admiral Smith’s salary as between \$284,000 and \$357,000. Appointed midway through 2006, he is the latest in a string of chief executives to head the troubled organisation. There had been 11 chief executives in 15 years before his appointment. ... The removal of Admiral Smith could scuttle the changes he had been instituting at Sydney Ferries Corporation, including a new industrial agreement with the maritime unions.”*

**Ref: Andrew Clennell and Linton Besser, SMH, 19/3/09**

## UTS Transport Study

*“Public transport spending must increase by \$1 billion a year if Sydney wants a world class transport network within three decades, a new report says. A study by the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) has found Sydneysiders and the NSW government spent more than \$40 billion on cars in 2006, making them by far the most expensive form of transport in the city. Almost \$23 billion was spent on fuel, maintenance, depreciation, insurance, tolls and parking in 2006. The city’s motorists generated a further \$18.1 billion in ‘externality costs’ such as congestion, pollution, accidents and subsidies for roads and parking.*

*“Garry Glazebrook, author of the report on the study, published in the Urban Policy and Research Journal, said the NSW government spent just \$3 billion a year on public transport each year. Dr Glazebrook said public transport spending would have to increase by at least one third if Sydney was to have a world class public transport system by 2040. ‘We’re actually spending, in cold hard cash terms, \$23 billion per year, plus we’re producing all these other externalities’, he told AAP. ‘If we switch out of the \$23 billion and we switch \$1 billion of that out of cars and into public transport, then within 30 years we would have a world class public transport system’.*

*“The study found that despite the high ‘visible cost’ to the state treasury, the CityRail train network had the lowest overall cost per passenger kilometre of any of the major transport modes. ‘The clear conclusion is that cars are in fact subsidised by society to levels similar to that of public transport when environmental and other externalities are considered’, he said. Despite rail’s high capital cost, buses were ‘more expensive overall’, he said. ‘Buses have lower capital costs but higher operating costs and often Treasury just looks at it in terms of big dollops of dollars for infrastructure that you need for rail systems rather than looking at the long-term costs’, Dr Glazebrook said. ‘I think we’ve built our city around the car to some extent and I think it’s going to take a while to move away from it’.*

*“A congestion tax, such as the recently introduced time-of-day tolling on the Sydney Harbour Bridge, could be effective if it was introduced in combination with building better transport alternatives, Dr Glazebrook said. The cities of London, Singapore and Stockholm had successfully introduced congestion charges*

*and encouraged people to switch to public transport. ‘In the long term, it’s actually going to save us money as well as reducing environmental impacts’, he said.”*

**Ref: Kim Christina, SMH, 17/3/09**

## Freeway Petition

*“Following the Sir Rod Eddington Report and the subsequent announcement by the Government to consider connecting the Western Ring Road with the Eastern Freeway by building a freeway/tunnel through the Banyule Council area, Friends of Banyule are petitioning local residents to register the complete opposition to such a project. We object to any freeway/tunnel being built through Banyule because:*

*“Banyule Flats and the Yarra Corridor (the area to be crossed by the proposed freeway/tunnel) is one of the last natural areas in the inner North East of Melbourne. It is utilized for relaxation and recreation by thousands of families in our community and across Melbourne increasing the health and wellbeing for all.*

*“Banyule Flats and the Yarra Corridor are one of the most environmentally sensitive areas within the inner region of Melbourne and needs to be protected for the*

*benefits it provides the community and future generations River Parks such as those in the Banyule wetlands and the Yarra Corridor are a vital area for wild life, rare migratory birds and protected species with large areas currently under protection by Banyule council. We the community of Banyule are its custodians and are responsible for its protection now and in the future. We believe that Building a Freeway through our suburb will compromise its liveability as beautiful Banyule – clean, quiet and unique - for ever.*

*“We believe that building a freeway through Banyule will not solve the congestion problems we currently have. How do we know a freeway will not attract more vehicles to our roads as they become the thoroughfare for those attempting to enter or exit the freeway feeder roads?”*

**Ref: Friends of Banyule Website, March 09**

See the petition at:

[www.friendsofbanyule.org/Petition.aspx](http://www.friendsofbanyule.org/Petition.aspx)



## Social Research on Cycling

"City of Sydney commissioned independent research to look into the attitudes of Sydney-siders to cycling and to find out how people travel into and around the local government area. A research agency conducted an internet survey of 1,150 people and then undertook a series of focus groups to look in-depth at the issues raised. The key findings of the research were as follows:

### (a) General

- 40% of current cyclists are male, only 13% are female
- Of potential cyclists, 43% are aged 18-24 and 40% are aged 25 to 34. The highest number of non-cyclists was in the 45-50 age groups
- 42% of students are potential cyclists (29% of students are cyclists)
- Cyclists make most of their current trips for physical fitness/leisure or to travel to work; only 8% are a member of a cycling club or group and 61% have been riding for 5 years or less
- The top reason for not cycling (generally) is simply not owning a bicycle, with safety concerns in second place
- Reasons for not cycling in the CBD centre around 1) safety, 2) provisions for cyclists and 3) not wanting to be 'sweaty when I get to my destination'
- Dedicated lanes/off road routes, increased driver awareness and bicycle parking/lockers would encourage respondents to cycle more regularly
- An open-ended question was also asked about the main benefits of cycling. 73% cited 'health and fitness' and 27% to help safeguard the environment.

### (b) Potential cyclists

- These are a younger group (18 to 34 year olds) with a slight female bias, living in the Sydney LGA (or inner west or lower north shore) and working outside the CBD
- Many are students or work in the hospitality, tourism, media and creative industries
- Safety concerns, high levels of traffic and lack of cycling infrastructure are the current barriers to them cycling
- Dedicated bike lanes/off road routes and a perceived increase in driver awareness and safety would help encourage them to cycle
- Fitness and leisure is the main motivator for cycling

### (c) Geography

- There is little correlation between cycling and distance to work. The average

distance that cyclists travel is 3km, but 20% ride between 5 and 10km for work.

- Regular cyclists tend to live in the eastern suburbs, with a pocket in the inner western suburbs and lower north shore."

Ref: City of Sydney website

[www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/AboutSydney/ParkingAndTransport/Cycling/SocialResearchCycling.asp](http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/AboutSydney/ParkingAndTransport/Cycling/SocialResearchCycling.asp)

## More on Melbourne's N-S Links

"On the matter of alternative routes for Swanston Street trams during marches and parades in this street, the current alternative route is via LaTrobe and William Sts and Kingsway. The Russell Street proposal for trams in this street could also serve this purpose as well as converting its current bus routes to electric tram (ie, the former cable tram routes to North Carlton and Collingwood via Lygon and Elgin Streets). The Herald cartoon of 1955, with its picture of 'General Chaos' the Herald's term here for [the then tramways chairman Robert] Risson saying, 'we've conquered Bourke St', - in those days, the Herald was violently anti-tram - we could then also say that we've conquered Russell Street!!

"Why put the N-S underground railway under Russell St when to put it in a broad curve from Victoria Market (Victoria/Elizabeth Sts cnr) to Southbank (Power/Queensbridge Sts cnr) via Melbourne Central and Flinders St stations would provide for a much better passenger service serving the centres of these areas and providing more efficient passenger interchanges?"

Ref : Louis Fouvy, 18/3/09

**Comment:** I was suggesting [see #102] Russell Street as a preference to Swanston Street because while (or before) constructing the N-S underground line (which will probably take 20 or more years) we can sneak in an alternative N-S tram route which would function as an adjunct to the La Trobe Street alternative. I agree that your suggestion (Victoria Market and Southbank) has a lot of merit - perhaps we need both plus the tram.



Russell Street, Friday, 4pm. Ideal tram land

## Cars and Congestion (Part 1)

*“Foreigners flying into Beijing, Shanghai or Guangzhou are impressed by the wide expressways from the modern airport terminals to their downtown hotels. Yet the journey from the centre of Beijing to the show in nearby Shunyi told a different story. As the four-lane highway leaving the city narrowed to a single lane, the show-bound traffic came to a grinding halt. An hour or so later, outside the newly built exhibition halls, chaos reigned. With nowhere to stop, coaches dumped their passengers in the middle of the road where they had to negotiate giant potholes turned into ponds by rain falling from a leaden, polluted sky. It made the show’s slogan – ‘Dream, harmony, new vision’- seem not just silly but almost mocking.*

*“It is not much different in the other main emerging car-markets. In the big cities where the growing wealth is most concentrated, any pleasure in car ownership is counterbalanced by the increasing awfulness of the roads, the choking fumes and the near-impossibility of parking. In São Paulo the traffic is relatively disciplined, but the morning and evening rush hours have merged into one. In Mumbai people often allow two or three hours to get to a business meeting in another part of town. In both cities the spread of slums makes any kind of rational town planning impossible. In Moscow the excellent Stalin-era metro takes some of the strain, but the two big ring roads that encircle the town are constantly jammed.*

*“Congestion, a mounting number of traffic accidents and worsening air pollution are the most obvious local problems associated with rapidly increasing car ownership. Given the will, government policies can ease some of them. In Brazil official encouragement of ethanol-powered engines has had some impact on air quality in the overcrowded São Paulo area. Both China and India hope to cut the emissions that cause smog and health problems by insisting that all new cars will have to meet the tough Euro IV standard within the next few years. Attitudes to safety in most developing countries are more casual than in the rich West, but China has been rigorously enforcing the wearing of seat belts, and consumers now expect at least a couple of airbags even in fairly basic vehicles.”*

**Ref: The Economist, 13/11/08**

{To be continued in #104}

## And Also... (Strange Laws)

*“In New York, it is against the law for a blind person to drive an automobile.”*

**Ref: <http://www.strangefacts.com/laws.html>**

## More on Stockholm

*“Stockholm’s congestion charge is working, new figures suggest. Traffic going through central Stockholm has been cut by 25% during the first half of the year. Wait times coming into the city have decreased by 33% during morning rush traffic and are 50% the size during the evening rush out of town, an analysis group appointed by Stockholm municipality has said. The effects on traffic safety are hard to analyse at this point due to the short period the tax has been in place, but analysts said the working environment for professional drivers such as bus, truck and taxi drivers in the city has improved. A preliminary guess at the effects on road safety led the analysts to believe personal injuries have decreased nearly 10%. The report said carbon dioxide and particle emissions have decreased, and businesses have only been marginally affected. The charge is thought to have increased use of public transportation by 4.5%.”* **Ref: Adam Ewing, The Local (Swedish News in English), 21/6/06**

## And Also...

*“A single cat has boosted the finances of a small Japanese city by millions of dollars ... Tortoiseshell Tama is the ‘stationmaster’ of the unmanned Kishi train station where she was born and raised on the provincial Kishigawa Line. But it is not her*



*labours on the platform which have seen the cash rolling in. It is rather Tama’s irresistible charm which has brought tourists flocking in their thousands to the western city of Kinokawa to see the feline worker patrolling in the uniform of her office - a Wakayama Electric Railway cap. With 55,000 more people having used the Kishigawa Line than would normally be expected, Tama’s contribution to the local economy is calculated to have reached as much as Y1.1 billion (\$A13.5 million) in 2007 alone, according to a study*

*announced last week.”*

**Ref: The Age, 6/10/08 Text & Photo: AFP**



**‘It’s jacked up. Wants a raise of 50 sardines a week.’**