

New Victorian Transport Operators

The Premier, John Brumby, today announced Metro Trains Melbourne (MTM) as the preferred tenderer to operate Melbourne's metropolitan rail network and Keolis Downer EDI (KDR) as the preferred tenderer for Melbourne's tram network. Both consortiums will operate their networks for eight years with a contract option to extend their term for a further seven. The new train contract will also include a 50 per cent increase in funding for rail maintenance to keep the system at peak performance and also generating jobs. MTM is a joint venture between Hong Kong's MTR Corporation, Australian companies John Holland Melbourne Rail Franchise and United Group Rail Services. KDR is a consortium between Keolis, a subsidiary of the French public enterprise railway company SNCF and Australian maintenance provider Downer EDI.

Ref: Ministerial Media Releases, 25/6/09

"The new CEO of MTM is Andrew Lezala, who was formerly CEO of Metronet, which was given the job of modernising two-thirds of the London Underground. Metronet was foisted on to London Council and the mayor at the time, Ken Livingstone, by the then British chancellor and now Prime Minister Gordon Brown as a PPP. Only two years later, in July 2007, it crashed into administration, leaving the British taxpayers £170-410 million worse off."

Ref: Kenneth Davidson, The Age, 29/6/09

New Laws for Cyclists

"Cyclists found to have killed or seriously injured a pedestrian will face penalties of up to five years in jail or a \$68,000 fine, after tough new laws came into effect today. The new maximum penalties under the [Victorian] laws ... include:

- *\$284 or seven days' prison if property is damaged by a cyclist and the rider does not immediately stop and offer assistance.*
- *\$13,610 or prison for 12 months, or both, for dangerous riding.*
- *\$681 for careless riding.*
- *\$68,052 or five years in prison if a person is killed or seriously injured by a cyclist and the rider does not immediately stop and offer assistance*

"Under previous bicycle laws, cyclists could only be fined up to \$567 for riding in a dangerous, careless or reckless manner."

Ref: Clay Lucas, The Age, 18/6/09

And Also ...

"Cycling is becoming a legitimate form of transport, [Victorian Roads Minister Tim] Pallas said." **Ref: Clay Lucas, The Age, 18/6/09**

Plug for Electric Vehicles

"Leading automotive and energy companies have reached agreement on a common 'plug' to recharge electric cars.... The three-point, 400-volt plug, which will allow electric cars to be recharged anywhere in a matter of minutes.... The agreement on a common standard for the plug comprises several major automakers, including

Volkswagen, BMW, Ford, General Motors, Fiat, Toyota and Mitsubishi.... Berlin hopes that one million electric cars will be on the road by 2020."

Ref: AFP, The Age, 20/4/09



'Maybe get a longer cord?'

"Automakers are already committed to plug-ins and electric vehicles. ... But numerous questions remain about the cars. One of the biggest hurdles is whether their large lithium ion batteries are ready for mass production. ... Lithium ion batteries have been used commonly in cell phones and laptop computers, but the auto industry needs to ensure that the batteries will remain long-lasting and safe. Automakers have partnered with utilities and universities to develop recharging stations and a common way of communicating between the vehicles and the electric grid. ... Conventional petrol-electric hybrids account for less than 3 percent of the [US] car market ..."

Ref: AP, Ninemsn, 18/4/09



'Electric Vehicles: here now' is the theme of National Electric Vehicle Festival to be held in Canberra on the 4th of October, 2009, from 9am to 4pm – near Old Parliament House.

Photo: www.teslamotors.com

Making the Bay Connect (Part 1)

A substantial study of the potential for ferries on Port Phillip Bay dated May 2000 (though based on much earlier data) was presented to the then State Government. However had a ferry service proceeded on the basis of this 2000 study, it is likely that such a service would have failed. There are many reasons for this likely failure and these are related to demographics, cost of fuel, availability of suitable vessels, cost of landside infrastructure (eg car parks, jetties, breakwaters) right down to some of the fundamentally flawed recommendations such as: *"the service would be competing against efficient publicly funded public transport services (bus, tram and trains)"*¹.

My study is recommending that any ferry service must not only complement the existing public transport services it must be fully integrated with those services and encourage walking, cycling and carshare. Additional car parking spaces on bay-side land is *not* part of my recommendation.

Several key factors have changed since the 2000 study:

- Both Melbourne and Geelong have spread almost right around the Bay, including new developments at Martha Cove and Ripplside.
- Petrol prices – while variable - have escalated and will continue to climb.
- Infrastructure like the Westgate Bridge is reaching capacity (in spite of the current petrol prices).
- Greenhouse Gas emissions and other pollutant emissions (including noise) are continuing to rise.
- Congestion is increasing.
- Loss of amenity through over use of the motor car is increasing.
- Trains and trams are becoming more crowded even during off-peak times.
- The SmartBus services are being implemented.
- Larger events (eg the Point Nepean Music Festival and the Portarlington Mussel Festival) are being held around the Bay.
- Avalon Airport is competing against Tullamarine Airport.

In 2008 the Department of Transport commissioned a study entitled *Review and Analysis of Proposed Commuter Ferry Services on Port Phillip*.

¹ *Port Phillip Passenger Ferry Service Feasibility Study* – Central Coastal Board, Parks Victoria and Tourism Victoria - May 2000

This is an interesting report, not the least because the front cover is dominated by large photo of an empty (car free) freeway interchange at night. It's hard to know what the message is here, perhaps that there is massive embedded cost in an underutilised resource or that a lot of street lighting is being wasted? The report content is remarkable for what has been left out rather than what has been included.



Cover picture on the commissioned 2008 Report

We note that, in spite of being encouraged to do so, the authors of this September 2008 report did not bother to seek comment or input from this author despite the fact that we have been working on a ferry proposal since 2006. How you can conduct a 'Review' without doing a review?
{to be continued in #112}

Extract from *Making the Bay Connect*, my yet-to-be released study on ferries for Port Phillip.

Philippines Hovercraft Proposal

"Hovercraft are needed to save the victims when, not if, we have the typhoons, undersea earthquakes and tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, heavy rains, landslides, and floods ... In Southern Leyte, we desperately need to open the daily hovercraft services from Maasin City to Cebu City. From Cebu City in addition to Maasin City, the passenger hovercraft are the best type of sea transportation to Surigao City, Butuan City, Cagayan de Oro City and vice versa. There are thousands of residents in certain towns in Central Philippines without their own piers or seaports that would surely prefer to ride the convenient, fast, safe and very efficient hovercraft for them to do business in Cebu City." **Ref: Samuel Mercado, March 2009** www.7th-mil.org/Hovercraft.html

Australian Air Traffic

"In April Sydney Airport accounted for 22.3% of all domestic passenger movements, followed by Melbourne with 19.6%, Brisbane with 14.4%, Perth with 6.8%, Adelaide with 6.6% and Gold Coast with 4.2%." **Ref: BITRE Aviation Statistics, 04/09**

More on the Forthfast Hovercraft Trial

"It's a great idea and the numbers using it today (17/07/07) and yesterday show how universally popular the idea is. Some teething problems (long queues, etc) stemming from difficulties in predicting the popularity of the trial were to be expected and were handled well by the organisers and patiently by the users. Long waiting times today may have a knock on effect for the rest of the trial period. More frequent services, particularly at commuter times, would seem essential and a clear policy on carriage of bikes (or provision of secure bike storage either end) is necessary. There is obviously a clear opportunity for café / coffee shop facilities at each terminal. Stick with it, it was great."

Ref: Paddy, 17/7/07

"I've used the hovercraft for three days this week and although the morning crossing at 8 am is great (with the bus stopping outside my office door I get to work by 830) but I am less than impressed with the return trips which never run to schedule (we were left waiting for over 30 minutes in the freezing cold at Portobello on Wednesday waiting on the 530 service). The reason seems to be that they decided to 'scrap' the timetable and try and run as many crossing as possible. Although this is an admirable sentiment aimed at catering for the tourists, it really leaves us commuters (who will be the service's main regular clientele) pretty naffed off! I have booked my return trips for next week and have been assured they will be sticking to the timetable so fingers crossed as I really want this service to work!! Also, many people seem to be unaware that they can buy an Edinburgh megarider ticket for £18 entitling you to 7 return trips to Edinburgh (either by ferry or bus)!! An amazing saving for us commuters - I am basically travelling for free now!!"

Ref: Isla, 20/7/07

"To be viable once the initial novelty value wears off, it has to be competitive on (a) price, and (b) journey time. Point (a) means the cost has to be in line with bus/train fares. Point (b) means it's important for the 20 minute crossing time not to be undone by poor onward connections or prolonged queuing to get on the vessel. Convenient and customer friendly advance booking facilities should be regarded as part of the key infrastructure investment if a regular service gets the go-ahead."

Ref: Ian, 25/7/07

"I agree with most comments...having travelled to Edinburgh for years it is paramount that when you are working, you are able to get on the

hovercraft at the specified time and have the connections available as not everyone works on 'flex-time'..."

Ref: Mandy, 25/7/07

These comments on the hovercraft trial in Scotland are from the Forthfast Hovercraft Blog. See the full comments at:

<http://www.forth-hovercraft.s-and-w.org/blog/>

See also the hovercraft item in Newsletter #110.



Photo: www.stagecoachbus.com/fife/forthfastgallery.html

Comment: Most of the responses to the hovercraft trial across the Firth of Forth were positive although with its popularity there were clearly problems with provision of return services. A number of lessons can be distilled from the responses including:

- The need for timetable services.
- Provision of good integrated connections.
- Appropriate ticketing facilities and costs.
- Provision for bicycles.
- Provision of appropriate shelter and services at the landing spots.
- Opportunities for local businesses.
- Potential problems at landing sites if transfers are not handled appropriately.

The vessel (BHT-130) used in the trial had seating for 131 passengers and an onboard crew of four.

"Hovertravel have operated a service from the beach at Ryde on the Isle of Wight to Southsea beach for 42 years and have carried over 21 million passengers during that period. Three different types of craft have been used during that period as design improvements and engine developments have progressed. The culmination of all Hovertravel's operational experience has been embodied in the latest BHT-130 craft being used for the trial."

Ref: www.stagecoachbus.com

Sir Robert Risson (Part 3)

"The view has been frequently expressed that the retention of the Melbourne tramway system during this period, is due almost solely to Sir Robert's strong management and his very firmly held (and public) view that tramcars were the most appropriate urban transport vehicle for servicing the inner suburban areas of large cities. 'The logistical superiority of trams appealed to Risson... A Major-General in the Army Reserve, he managed the tramways like a military division, and brought the full force of his formidable personality upon politicians and the press.'

"There were other contributing factors that supported tramway retention in Melbourne:

- wide city streets
- an independent Tramways Board
- well maintained rolling stock
- a reasonable percentage of the tram fleet not life expired
- a majority of tram tracks were in reasonable to good condition.

"Meanwhile the decade between 1960 and 1969 saw costs increase, patronage continued to decline, while services were operated by a fleet of vehicles whose average age was increasing.

"There is no doubt that the Risson factor (strong management support for tramway retention) was a key dynamic in the retention of Melbourne's trams. Yet a recent newspaper editorial in the Melbourne morning newspaper The Age commented that Melbourne 'more by accident that design has clung to its trams.'

"Cole suggested, 'perhaps the simplest answer to the question of why Melbourne kept its trams is that no one in authority ever decided to get rid of them.' Cole also noted 'while I would not wish to minimise Risson's contribution, I believe the singular events arising from the replacement of Melbourne's central city cable trams are probably crucial to understanding how Melbourne kept its trams.' In effect, the longevity of the cable system, which in turn meant that Melbourne's electric tramcar fleet was not life expired in the critical 1950s, combined with the new Bourke Street trackage, were all very critical factors that supported Sir Robert's position.

"In April 1963 in his presidential address to the Institution of Engineers conference in Adelaide, Sir Robert spoke in favour of the need for modern transportation facilities in cities if they

were to retain their prosperity. In addition he reaffirmed the policy of retaining trams in Melbourne and spoke of the proposed underground tramway scheme under Bourke and Swanston Streets, the plans of which the Board had released a year earlier. The same year saw the establishment of the Metropolitan Transportation Committee. Sir Robert saw to it that he was elected to the steering committee and furthermore that a senior planning engineer from the tramways was on the working party.

"Sir Robert answered any challenge. In tragic circumstances in October 1963 a tram driver died

as a result of head injuries sustained after he fell from the roof of a tram in Spencer Street, whilst attempting to replace a trolley pole on the overhead after the rope had snapped. Tram crews at individual depots introduced a ban on the practice of climbing on to cars to retrieve trolley poles. On the day the accident occurred the Secretary of the employees' association concerned (Mr O'Shea) stated that he had not yet received any reply to a letter sent by his association to the Tramways Board on August 22 requesting

the fitting of pantographs following a mishap at Hawthorn...

"On October 14, the Chairman of the Board, Mr R.J.H. Risson announced that he had written to the association requesting that the ban be lifted forthwith pointing out that there was no risk to staff involved if the relevant instructions were adhered to. The next day officials demonstrated the correct method of replacing a trolley pole at Hawthorn Depot: the Chairman was in attendance and the proceedings were televised. Mr O'Shea then went on record as saying that it was only appropriate that Mr Risson (a Major-General) should 'lead his men into action' and demonstrate the correct procedure. The challenge was accepted on October 16 when the latter climbed on to the roof of class SW6 car No 960 in Collins Street at Spencer Street — this event received wide coverage by the press and also television. On October 18 the Board announced its intention to equip each tram... with an emergency rope..."

{To be continued in #112}

Ref: Graeme Turnbull, RMIT Sir Robert Risson Memorial Lecture 2001, 20/4/01

For the full article (including footnotes) see: www.hawthorntramdepot.org.au/papers/risson.htm#note6



Major-General Risson on top of the tram

Photo: The Age