

More Feedback on the SCA Proposal

The Sustainable Cities Authority proposal can be viewed online: www.goingsolar.com.au/transport

"In terms of its language I think it tends initially toward being a little alarmist - especially in the diagram which lists pandemic in the four issues confronting society. While this might be a real scenario, I'm thinking about the political reception of this - especially from conservative governments and parties of the right and left in Australia which might read it as a little too four-horsemen of the apocalypse.

This follows on page five with the short version of the case for needing the Authority. I think the introduction requires a great deal more development. The case for the necessity of such an authority - which rests on the notion that our cities are not working - needs to be communicated comprehensively to those in government, the major parties, media who do not necessarily see the problem so clearly.

The problem with cities to me has that double edge - it is about both environmental and social sustainability. These should be linked to make a stronger case. A good starting point is the child-friendly cities movement.

The outer-urban transport corridors are excellent and show the kind of vision that we need to impose on Melbourne at least. Janet Bolitho made the point that this overlaps with Meeting our Transport Challenges but there's no reason not to challenge that policy.

The detailed discussion here seems to be on transport - understandable as this was the origin of the document and is an important aspect of sustainability. I think that if we consider cities as being more than just a collection of nodes in a transport system - not that I think this wholly your intention - we can focus on them as human places in the first instance.

So perhaps more on the design of the urban environment. Just first impressions - I'll be interested to see how this develops."

Dr David Sornig 24/1/07

Victoria University - St Albans Campus

[Response: By including 'pandemic' I was trying to make the point that social upheaval associated with Climate Change or Peak Oil could create the conditions that allow such a pandemic. I note the comments (Age 5/2/07) by Robert Glasser, CEO of CARE Australia:

"Has the Australian public become complacent about a new flu pandemic? Governments must continue preparing for a catastrophic outbreak."

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*"With regard to the proposal there are a few issues that might be considered,*

- 1. The social dysfunction resulting from the separation of home, work and recreation (topical in the 1970's).*
- 2. Radial fixed line transport, generating the demand for car access in the outer suburbs as the urban area expands.*
- 3. Commercial development that took advantage of flexible private transport.*
- 4. The perception of status associated with multiple vehicle ownership.*
- 5. The opportunity to plan for shorter trip cycles.*
- 6. Re-establishing community scale across the urban fabric.*

*I would be happy to catch up and review the above."*

**Peter Baker** 24/1/07

Applied Development Research

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"I have read the proposal and spoken to our transport guys and I am told they are coordinating a response to your organisation. I thought it was a great read with some very interesting and innovative ideas as to how we may proceed forward with the issue of climate change and how business and government may begin to take a stand on planning and development issues.

I had one question around the Pearls-on-a-String...what I wanted to know was if this style of development was something mainly for medium/high density areas or is this idea for communities in suburban areas of wider Melbourne as well - eg Lilydale etc??"

Confidential Feedback 9/2/07

[Response: 'Pearls' is very much intended for suburban areas. Part of the process is to encourage greater densities but this does not have to be high density to make the system work - witness how well those suburbs work that are on a transport corridor and that were planned before the dominance of the motor vehicle. Obviously large greenfields sites provide tremendous opportunity to plan for Pearls-on-a-String. For the homeowner, greater densities allow for the use of party walls which assist with energy savings. What the homeowner needs, if not available in the local village, should be available in a nearby village.

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*"Impressive, proposal, keep up the great work."*

**Jason Wood (MP)** 13/2/07

Federal Member for La Trobe

## Comment

Apparently 900,000 people viewed "what was billed as the first big debate of this election year...on climate change on the ABC's 7.30 Report" but according to Tim Flannery "Kerry (O'Brien) asked the question that neither of them answered and that is: what is the way forward'....'Both of them (Malcolm Turnbull and Peter Garrett) need to get their parties to formulate policy that is going to be meaningful – and that is actually going to address the problem. And neither of them are at that point yet'." [Ref: Michael Gordon, The Age 10/207]

This Newsletter maintains that there is no single solution to climate change and it is certainly not going nuclear. Part of the solution is in the way we design our cities. We take a multi-partisan approach to increasing sustainability. When I was in Sydney at the end of January 2007, I offered to present the SCA proposal to both Peter Garret and Malcolm Turnbull at their electoral offices. If, as Tim Flannery suggests, we need to find the way forward, then the SCA can be served up on platter as meaningful policy that is going to address a significant section of the problem. I'll wait by the telephone.

## Public Transport?

*"On Thursday evening I was forced to wait 30 minutes in 35-degree heat on Richmond station because Connex cancelled my normal train and had "withdrawn" the next scheduled train for the summer holidays (I do hope it is having a nice time on a beach somewhere). The result was no train on the Cranbourne line from 3.40 pm until 4.20 pm. But at least I was comforted by the sound of announcements of other trains being cancelled as well. Maybe if the Minister for Transport and the Connex CEO were forced to stand for 30 minutes waiting for a train in similar heat, the service would improve. It is patently clear that nothing is being done to resolve the constant failure of Connex services, which, despite the endless spin, remain appalling."*

**Chris Benham**, Carnegie  
The Age 6/1/07

*"To take public transport into the city or to drive is a nightmare, (Public transport) is never on time, it's always overcrowded, they bump up the prices and you get horrible service, it's always breaking down ... it's just a miserable experience."*

**Shannin Scullin** quoted in The Age 5/1/06

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## Presentations

The program to present the ideas of the SCA to a wider audience for community consultation and feedback is about to begin, starting appropriately, at Melbourne's Sustainable Living Festival. [See Newsletter #13]. Please let me know if you would like a presentation to your organisation.

## Transport Sector and GHG

*"...Australia's transport sector produces a higher share of total energy emissions than anywhere except the US."*

**Ref: Australian Govt Media Release 26/9/97**

*"In Australia, the transport sector:*

- *comprises private cars, fleet vehicles, freight and public transport*
- *is a major source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, as it is heavily reliant on liquid fuels*
- *is responsible for the fastest-growing proportion of emissions in Australia and around the world, making it vital to address in the endeavour to reduce GHG emissions.*

*The strategic importance of transportation to the country, to business and the community means that solutions that safeguard the national interest must be found. The sector is geographically wide spread and is supported by an ever-growing range and breadth of infrastructure.*

*In addition to the issue of GHG emissions, local oil production is declining and future imported oil dependence is poised to increase and weaken our balance of trade. Further, road transport comes at a substantial social cost to the community because of the cost of infrastructure, traffic congestion, community health issues and vehicle accidents."*

**Ref: CSIRO Website**

[www.csiro.au/csiro/content/standard/ps12m.html](http://www.csiro.au/csiro/content/standard/ps12m.html)

## Views from Overseas



**Hybrid Electric Articulated Bus in Seattle**