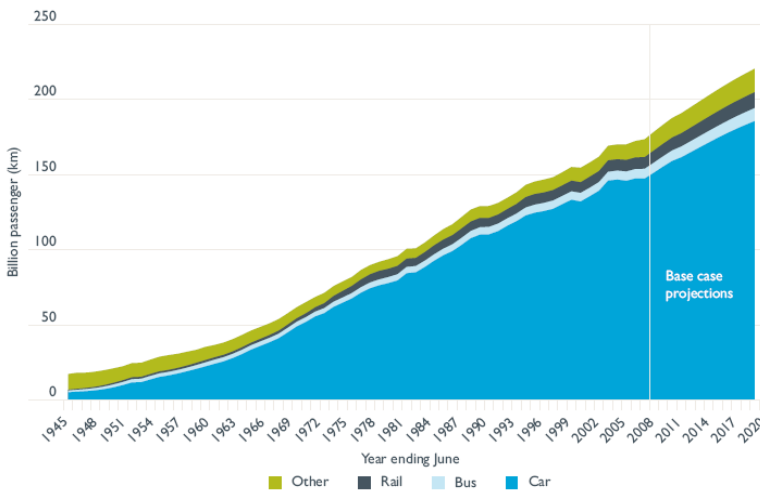


The Cost of Congestion

"The cost of bumper-to-bumper traffic in Melbourne is set to double by 2020, with gridlock sapping \$20.4 billion from the national economy by then if action isn't taken. This bleak assessment is contained in a new government report that paints a picture of increasing traffic congestion and high transport emissions, urban sprawl and surging population growth in the first half of this century. Melbourne's congestion cost - currently estimated at \$3 billion - is projected to be \$6.1 billion by 2020, a 103 per cent increase. The cost is a measure of productivity lost when people are stuck in traffic. ... Transport Minister Anthony Albanese says car dependency in cities is increasing at a rate faster than population growth, creating gridlock and making households hostage to rising oil prices."

Ref: Katharine Murphy, The Age, 5/3/10



Motorised Travel in Australia's Capital Cities

Source: BITRE 2008 Ref: As below

"Urban car use has grown almost thirty-fold since 1950 when it began to replace rail as the main mode of passenger transportation. The levels of car dependency in Australian cities have increased at a rate faster than population growth, creating traffic congestion problems, particularly in the larger capitals of Sydney and Melbourne and in Brisbane and Perth where infrastructure and public transport provision have not kept pace with growth rates. In addition, the heavy reliance on private vehicles makes Australia's urban transport system structurally vulnerable to increasing oil prices." **Ref: Major Cities Unit, State of Australian Cities, March 2010**

And Also ...

"You know it's not summer until the steering wheel is too hot to handle."

Ref: Irish in Australia, St Kevin's GAC

Annual Road Deficit

"RACV General Manager of Public Policy, Brian Negus (Royal Auto Dec 2009/Jan 2010) in commenting on possible road user charges (RUC) asserts that motorists are already paying more in taxes and charges than they should for the costs of their road use. Although the article refers to the broader costs of road use in terms of environmental impacts and congestion, it should be recognised that on a proper cost analysis including externalities, motorists do not, in fact, pay their way. As table 3.4 of the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission final report on congestion (September 2006) set out, revenue collected from motorists totalled \$26.95 billion while the costs of car use totalled \$42.1 billion, leaving an annual road deficit of \$15.2 billion. Further, this data did not include the costs of vehicle congestion, estimated at \$9.3 billion in 2005, nor the adverse health costs of sedentary travel. The annual road deficit is thus estimated at over \$30 billion nationally. It is essential that the full marginal costs and externalities of road use are identified to provide a proper basis for informed analysis." **Ref: Cr Jackie Fristacky, Royal Auto, Feb 2010**

'D' is for ...

"Victoria's train system has been branded a dunce, scoring a D grade. A damning industry report also assessed the state's overall infrastructure as 'barely adequate'. Despite the State Government's multitude of transport plans, the scathing report card from

Engineers Australia said the train, water and electricity systems have been going backwards in the past five years. The report says billions of dollars must be spent to bring Victoria's crumbling train and rail system up to scratch."

Ref: Stephen McMahon, Herald Sun, 4/3/10

Noise Camera

"Trucks or motorcycles letting off a sound greater than 80 decibels and a car that reaches more than 74 decibels will be detected by [a Melbourne] roadside camera. ... Critics claim the penalty system will allow noisy drivers to escape a hefty fine as they will be given a chance to fix the problem ... Drivers will only be issued with a notice asking them to appear before an approved EPA noise testing station. If they fail to attend then they could wind up losing their vehicle registration.

Over the next 12 months, the [Victorian] Government plans to introduce automatic infringement notices using the noise cameras." **Ref: Lucy van den Berg, Herald Sun, 23/2/10**

Charging Trucks for Pollution

“A new report from the European Commission’s in-house Joint Research Centre (JRC) shows the overall benefit of charging trucks for the pollution they cause outweighs the limited negative price impact on consumers. The study was requested by EU ministers, who are currently seeking ways to break the deadlock over the Commission’s proposal to recast the EU Eurovignette Directive. Peripheral countries such as Portugal, Malta, the Baltic countries and Ireland are opposed to the plans, as they fear that additional road charging would impose higher costs on their trade, while the EU’s central transit countries would get most of the financial benefit. Some member states, including Italy, the Netherlands, Finland and Bulgaria are willing to accept congestion charges, provided that they are applied to passenger cars as well.

“The aim of the JRC analysis was to calculate the cost for international transport operations of the proposed Eurovignette Directive. The EU executive’s in-house research facility concluded that while the range of external cost charges for each corridor depends on the length of the corridor and the specific characteristics of the zones it crosses, the impact of the planned green charges on final product prices is ‘negligible’. The report argues that 20% to 30% of the total external cost charges can be absorbed by operators themselves ‘in the form of improved efficiency and/or technology’. Even if the total cost were passed on to the user of the transport services, ‘they would still have a very limited repercussion on final prices,’ the report continues.

“The JRC’s calculations show that the introduction of Eurovignette would reduce CO2 emissions from road freight transport and fuel consumption by 8%, and that ‘if an average increase in transport costs of 3% is assumed, a decrease of 13.5 billion tonne kms in road transport volumes would be expected’. JRC estimates suggest that the internalization of road freight transport costs at EU level on Europe’s main roads would result in a total net welfare gain of €1.8 billion (US\$2.5 billion) per year. Extending congestion charging to passenger cars would increase the net welfare gain to a yearly €2.3 billion (US\$3.2 billion).”

Ref: Traffic Technology Today, 29/1/10

Roads Australia (Part 1)

“Roads Australia (RA) is a not for profit industry association that embraces public, private and community sector organisations with an interest in Australia’s road transport system. Roads Australia represents the industry’s common interest on road transport issues, as they relate to Australia’s economic and social well-being. ... Roads Australia makes this submission to the inquiry into the investment of Commonwealth and State funds in public passenger transport infrastructure and services because of the important role public transport plays in the efficiency of the road network. ...

“An effective public transport system is a vital to ensuring the best use of Australia’s total road system. Efficient and accessible public transport will play major role in solving Australia’s urban congestion issues, which hamper the most effective use of the road system. Urban congestion is an increasing problem in all states and territories. The Bureau of Transport and Regional Economics (BTRE) estimated the avoidable cost of traffic congestion - that is the increase in net social benefit if management schemes enabled optimal traffic flows. Estimated increases in costs from extra travel time, increased unreliability, higher vehicle operating costs (especially fuel use) and poorer air quality, were based on the aggregate ‘avoidable’ (or excess) costs of congestion under a ‘business-as-usual’ scenario.

“Roads Australia supports measures that will reduce congestion, including increased investment on public passenger transport infrastructure and services. ... Effective public transport must be efficient and reliable. Road-based public transport is made less efficient as a result of urban congestion. Congestion mitigation options provide priority for more efficient movement, such as providing priority for movement of people and goods rather than simply vehicle movement. Making best use of capacity may involve allocating lanes for ‘high value’ travel, such as providing high occupancy vehicle lanes (eg T2 or T3 lanes) or bus priority lanes or facilities to improve bus travel times such as priority for buses at intersections and could also include providing priority for freight movements on key links. ...” {Continued in #147}

Ref: Roads Australia, Submission to Senate Rural and Regional Affairs & Transport Committee, 27/2/09

http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/rtrat_ctte/public_transport/submissions/sub108.pdf

And Also ... *“Road safety chiefs, worried about the ‘despairing’ number of accidents, have put up signs warning Romanian drivers to be careful of drunken pedestrians lying on roads. ... The signs contain the phrase ‘Attention – Drunks’ and show a person crawling on their knees while clutching a bottle in one hand.”*

Ref: The Age, 12/3/10



Active Travel & Adult Obesity (Part 2)

“Analysis of national travel survey data from countries in North America, Europe and Australasia found that countries with the highest levels of active transportation had the lowest obesity rates). Research on commuting, for example, suggests that those who walk or bicycle to work are significantly negatively associated with overweight and obesity. US research found that each additional kilometre walked per day is associated with a 4.8% reduction in the likelihood of obesity, whereas each additional hour spent in a car per day is associated with a 6% increase in the likelihood of obesity. The amount of time spent in cars appears to be a key factor and has been reported in a number of studies. Walking and cycling for a healthy lifestyle Prevention is better than cure, and in the case of obesity it is important to help people prevent and reverse weight gain, as reducing and maintaining weight loss once obese is harder to achieve & maintain.

“There is now widespread agreement that the simplest preventive measure for obesity is to incorporate physical activity such as walking or cycling into the everyday routine. The Foresight ‘Tackling Obesities’ report put it like this: ‘The top five policy responses assessed as having the greatest average impact on levels of obesity [include]: - increasing walkability / cyclability of the built environment.....’ As noted above, in order to maintain a healthy weight, the Chief Medical Officer for England recommends a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week; for many people, 45- 60 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity a day is necessary to prevent obesity. In general, the more physically active people are the better. It is clear, however, that preventing and reversing the future obesity trends outlined in the Foresight report cannot be achieved just by telling people to live healthier lives. Advice on physical activity and active living must go hand in hand with changes to our transport infrastructure and built environments, making it easier for people to incorporate walking or cycling into routine journeys. Examples of, and guidance on, how this can be achieved are easily found.

“European countries and cities which have already successfully promoted active travel have done so by investing at a level commensurate with the priority they attach to clean and healthy transport. For example, in Copenhagen in 2002, of a DKK 60 million budget for roads (approximately £5.4 million), one-third was allocated to improving cycling condition).

Amsterdam, many people’s vision of a cycling city, is spending €26.95 per capita per annum on cycling between 2006 and 2010 (even in these more advanced cities, it is often difficult to identify spend on walking). By comparison, the total spend on cycling in England for 2006 – 07 was £60.3 million, £1.20 per capita and just 0.3% of total transport spending; spend on walking was not identifiable. In Scotland, walking and cycling accounted for around 1% of the transport budget in 2006/07 – around £4 per capita.” {Cont. in #147}

Ref: Sustrans (UK) Information Sheet FH14

http://www.sustrans.org.uk/assets/files/AT/Publications/PDFs/FH14_activetravel_and_obesity.pdf

Jan Gehl on Western Cities

“Mark Colvin: How important is town planning to reducing a nation’s carbon footprint, given that a nation like Australia contributes so much just by exporting coal?

“Jan Gehl: Certainly in city planning you can do a lot to minimise the use of fossil fuels and the problems of pollution and whatever. One of the things I mentioned was that what we call green mobility; much more could be done to make it attractive to walk and attractive to bicycle. Sydney, [the] CBD in Sydney is quite famous for being an awful place to walk. They do everything to discourage people from walking. In some routes 50% of the walking time [is] spent waiting for the lights to be green. So it certainly is not a comfortable city which invites people to walk.

“MC: That’s just the CBD. Sydney, like all of our cities really is a great sprawling city. How are we ever going to do the kind of things you want to do given the great sprawl that we are already faced with?

“JG: That of course is a question which is raised worldwide because it’s bad here, it’s bad in many European countries. It’s bad, very bad in North America. And I mentioned that a number of cities have started now and Sydney also has started now a great campaign to have more extensive bicycle networks and inviting people to bicycle more, inviting also people to walk more as part of their daily day. That’s partly for the sustainability issue but also for their health

“MC: But an awful lot of people are frightened to ride their bicycles.

“JG: Of course!

“MC: Can any of these models work unless you actually separate the cycles and the motor traffic?

“JG: I come from Copenhagen where we have a complete separated bicycle lane system. They are

... in the ordinary streets. They just have a curb to the traffic and that keeps the traffic, the car traffic out of the way of the bicycles and makes it pretty safe to bicycle with your children on your bicycle. And children [are] transported enormously frequently on bicycles in Copenhagen.

“MC: There's some very high percentage isn't there of children who ride bicycles to school?

“JG: Oh certainly there is. I ... will return to your question about the suburbs in a moment's time. But I'll just mention that as I have been consultant to Sydney about improving green mobility in Sydney, also I am a consultant in New York, city of New York where they have decided to be the greenest metropolitan in the world. And they're putting in 6,000 kilometres of separated bicycle lanes all over New York to have the New Yorkers bicycle instead of commuting in motor cars...

“MC: Australians should do that? Australian cities should do that?

“JG: I think that they have one advantage in New York. It's very compressed and it's very dense which helps a lot.

“MC: So we come back to the question of sprawl.

“JG: Sprawl, yes.

“MC: And I don't want to pigeon-hole you as the bicycle man because...

“JG:: No.

“MC:: You're also interested in public transport.

“JG: Yeah. And what we call holistic city planning where we try to solve many problems at the same time. And of course public transportation will in the next 20 years as the petroleum prices go up and the last drop of oil is being extracted, we will see a great improvement in the quality of public transportation; also in the frequency of lines and system worldwide. And also in the suburbs of the Western cities, Western world cities we will see better and better public transportation and we will see a concentration of the settlements and the developments around the station in what is



called transport oriented developments where people can walk or bicycle down to a station and be transported to another place. Or maybe like in Copenhagen where we have, we can take the bicycles on all the trains and the subway and we can combine so we bicycle to the metro and then we take the bikes along and then we go on in the other end so you can combine...

“MC: So it's about coordination?

“JG: It's about coordination and it's about changing the mindset from all these years where we had the cheap petroleum and have got a lot of bad habits actually.

“MC: Jan Gehl, professor of urban design at the School of Architecture at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen.”

Ref: ABC Radio National: PM, 15/12/09
www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2009/s2772645.htm

Walking to School (Part 1)

“Since the early 1970s there has been a dramatic decline in the rate of children walking to school. Then, 40% of children walked, in 1994 it was 24% and it is now thought to be as low as 15% This decline represents a lost opportunity for children to achieve the one hour of physical activity required a day for good health. To put it in perspective, activities such as walking to school can use more kilojoules than organised sport and other activities outside school. Little wonder we face a childhood obesity epidemic and increased incidence of type 2 diabetes. Patterns established during childhood tend to carry into adulthood. Those who when young take up healthy behaviours, such as walking, are more likely to continue these practices as adults.

“As every parent knows, children tend to model their behaviour on their parents. Children are more likely to walk if their parents walk - and parents are best placed to teach them to negotiate their neighbourhood safely. All children can be taught safety, but it is an incremental process that can take many months and years. Parents working together can achieve even more. There is something to the saying ‘safety in numbers’. Without learning how to walk their neighbourhood, children are more vulnerable to traffic injury when they do start walking independently, when they start secondary school for example. Unless something is done to change people's behaviour, we will be creating another generation of children who are driven everywhere.

“Children's independent mobility (travelling without adult supervision) is important as it provides a range of social and cognitive developmental

opportunities that may not be provided by other forms of play. Independent mobility helps them to learn how to deal with situations, make decisions, explore and have fun. More children being driven to school also means more traffic congestion and pollution. The school run accounts for 17% of the morning peak travel. We cannot keep building or expanding roads to cater for this when most children live within two or three kilometres of their school. Providing infrastructure for cars encourages and results in more cars. What we need is to use our existing road network more effectively."

Ref: Ben Rossiter, The Age, 1/2/09

Streets as Places (Part 1)

"There was a time in our cities and towns when getting from here to there was a pleasant and often enriching experience. Streets were places where people liked to be, to walk, to shop, to meet, to play, and even just to people-watch. It was easy to get across the street to sidewalks where children were playing; where all kinds of folks were socializing; where an array of stores, services and special community places, like parks, plazas, libraries, train stations, markets, theatres and public squares, were all within easy reach. In a way, the street was like a stage where the community came together and performed a variety show of activities.

"Then, as the automobile encroached upon our communities, people and the places were shunted aside. Walking from here to there became risky business, and the friendly quality of streets began to disappear. Impersonal thoroughfares came to dominate our towns, taking over the spaces where people used to meet each other. Businesses closed and left town. The places that made communities special deteriorated and, in some cases, vanished, as people retreated from an ever emptier and alienating streetscape. What once was the essence of community got lost in the hustle of traffic. How did this come about? Once the automobile hit the road, a one-sided view of the street took over. The overriding priority was moving traffic as speedily as possible. This translated into wider streets, often going only one-way, timing on traffic lights that favoured motorists over pedestrians, higher speed limits, broader corners for quicker turns and smaller or no sidewalks. 'Capacity' became the watchword, and the goal was making more room for cars.

"Increased road capacity was supposed to ease traffic congestion. Instead, wider streets kept attracting more and more cars. As a result of this

mad rush to serve motor vehicles, U.S. cities now typically devote as much as one-third to one-half of their land to automobiles, whether for roads, parking or other auto-related uses. This trend has served to diminish our public spaces and, as a result, our public life. The road leading back to reclaiming our communities is long and difficult, but not lost.

"Another way to use our streets is now emerging in which speed is not the be-all and end-all; taking care of people and place is just as important as pandering to the car. It already has begun to take root in Europe and is starting to blossom in other cities, including some in the United States.



George Street, Sydney Photo: Project for Public Places

"For example, traffic calming, which concentrates on slowing down traffic and creating a more balanced urban environment where everyone feels safe using the street, is becoming more prevalent. By balancing the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists, traffic calming gives us a chance to recapture public space for rebuilding our communities. This helps foster attractive places that welcome all kinds of activities & serendipitous chance encounters. In a sense, this represents a different way of thinking about what should come first in our communities. When used with other community-building tools, traffic calming can be a potent force to help reshape the places where we live, work and play." {Continued in #147}

Ref: Streets as Places – Using Streets to Rebuild Our Communities, Project for Public Places, 2008 See the full report at: [www.pps.org/pdf/bookstore/Using Streets to Rebuild Communities.pdf](http://www.pps.org/pdf/bookstore/Using_Streets_to_Rebuild_Communities.pdf)

"Maybe is time to take the travel perks off our politicians and make them use public transport at all times – my, my, wouldn't we see some fast track changes made." **Ref: Herald Sun, 4/3/10**

And Also ... The Ford Nucleon

“The Ford Nucleon was a nuclear-powered concept car developed by Ford Motor Company in 1958 ... and featured a power capsule suspended between twin booms at the rear. The capsule, which would contain a radioactive core for motive power, was designed to be easily interchangeable, according to the performance needs and the distances to be travelled. The passenger compartment of the Nucleon featured a one-piece, pillar-less windscreen and compound rear window, and was topped by a cantilever roof. There were air intakes at the leading edge of the roof and at the base of its supports. An extreme cab-forward style provided more protection to the driver and passengers from the reactor in the rear. Some pictures show the car with tailfins sweeping up from the rear fenders.



“The drive train would be integral to the power module, and electronic torque converters would take the place of the drive-train used at the time. It was said that cars like the Nucleon would be able to travel 8000 km (5,000 miles) or more, depending on the size of the core, without recharging. At the end of the core's life, it would be taken to a charging station, which research designers envisioned as largely replacing gas stations. The car was never built and never went into production, but it remains an icon of the Atomic Age of the 1950s, when concerns and dangers such as radiation poisoning, nuclear waste & the possibility of nuclear meltdown were not completely understood or acknowledged. The mock-up of the car can be viewed at the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan. It would be hard, if not impossible, to build a vehicle in the size of a standard car with a reactor as a feasible propulsion system. Reactors emit neutrons, which require very thick absorption plates to prevent leaks. It is also not possible to build a reactor under a certain size, and certainly not the size of an automobile engine.” **Ref: Wikipedia,**
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ford_Nucleon

Interview with Oz Kayak (Part 16)

Oz Kayak started as an engineering cadet with the Victorian Roads Authority, later worked with Victorian Railways and today is passionate about active forms of transport, community health and urban design. Here continues our discussion:

SI: The other issue with the bike hire scheme for Melbourne is the need for helmets. If you don't have a helmet you get fined. Perhaps we need to legislate an area – Melbourne CBD – where bike helmets are optional but traffic has to travel at no more than 40kph?

OK: The regulation should be significantly less than that for speed control. But we must ask ourselves: why are Australia (excluding the Northern Territory) and New Zealand, the only nations in the world that have mandatory wearing of bicycle helmets in place? There must be a little bit more than just a safety issue. I would suspect that the decision making was politicised at the time and it's now not easy to undo.

SI: But also there is an antithy between car drivers and cyclists in this country. You even hear of cyclists been targeted by car drivers and many cases where helmets have saved lives and prevented serious injury. On the other hand the argument is that with the rise of obesity and diabetes you don't want to do anything to discourage people from cycling. Again, perhaps the solution is to have an 'optional helmet zone' accompanying the bike-share program.

OK: You could have helmets in the system – without advertising – for \$2. The issue for some will then be 'lice in hair'. People don't worry when they put their head back on a seat but someone will make an issue of it with a bicycle helmet. The other issue will be: 'how do I know that it hasn't already been crushed – does it still have its full resilience?' This is difficult, but it's an acceptable risk. The bottom line is: do people want the system to work or are they going to torpedo it for another set of reasons ...

SI: ... The public do you mean? ...

OK: ... Those that have an interest. Just imagine for a moment that the bicycle station is going outside your private home – I'll think that you'll find that there is going to be some negative reaction ...

SI: ... To the bicycle station? ...

OK: ... Absolutely! We can not even put seats – for the elderly – outside some places because the citizens abutting them believe that it will be attractive to undesirables, and antisocial behaviour. {Continued in #147}