

## Peak Oil

*"The UK report, [The Oil Crunch], the second instalment from the Industry Taskforce on Peak Oil and Energy Security, warns the British Government of an economic upheaval on the scale of the recent credit crunch if they ignore that supplies of 'cheap oil' are diminishing. 'The next five years will see us face another crunch – the oil crunch', the report says. Peak Oil, the controversial point at which volumes of production begin to decline because the world's accessible reserves are finite, has been inching closer. In December, the usually conservative International Energy Agency assessed that if no big new discoveries were made, the output of crude would plateau and begin declining in 2020. More worryingly, last month three scientists from Kuwait, one of the world's top 10 oil producers, declared global reserves were estimated to peak in 2014."*

*"[In contrast in] the oil-addicted chapter on transport in ClimateWorks' Low Carbon Plan [released in Melbourne on 19/3/10] despite [the] admission that Australia's road transport sector produces four times more carbon emissions per person than the world per capita average, the measures it suggests for reducing fossil fuel dependence are lame beyond belief. In the same breath ClimateWorks recommends mandatory fuel efficiency standards of 140g of CO2 per km by 2020, it reveals this standard was introduced in Europe in 2008 & will continue to be adjusted downwards there over the next two years."*

*"A ClimateWorks author flippantly wrote: '(Australian) customers consider many criteria when choosing a car -- safety, comfort, aesthetics, price -- and fuel efficiency is only a small part of the decision process'. What utter claptrap. The Australian Association for the Study of Peak Oil predicts fuel imports could cost our economy around \$100 billion each year within the next decade. This could equate to paying five times more for petrol. In warning that the next UK government may need to steer the economy through a period of unusually high oil prices, [The Oil Crunch] report recommends policymakers wean transport from its dependence on oil and promote technological developments such as hybrid engines and vehicle electrification. Amazingly, despite the growing push around the world to roll out hybrid and electric vehicles, the ClimateWorks report barely mentions them as a solution for Australian drivers. When it does, it is to understate their appeal."*

**Ref: Olga Galacho, Herald Sun, 19/3/10**

*"In 2015 we will be importing 80% of our oil mostly from the Middle East. That's a \$66 Billion oil import bill. This eclipses our total coal export revenue, both Metallurgical and Steaming Coal. What is [Federal Minister] Martin Ferguson doing?"*

**Ref: Matthew Wright, Herald Sun, 19/3/10**

*"ClimateWorks takes a US-centric view, rather than a European view. We must start preparing for Peak Oil. ... If the fuel excise were raised, say 10c every year, we would not notice it in the price cycles, but it would warn people to prepare for the fuel shortages and big price rises which will come when Peak Oil hits us (soon). The money raised should be used to improve the health, education systems and public transport. Petrol tax was reduced when the GST was introduced, and will be again in the CPRS. It is impossible for us to continue to have cheap petrol and to assume that there will be oil available when we want it. ClimateWorks avoided the serious questions about our oil vulnerability. Already 80% of the fuel for our vehicles is imported either directly, or as crude for Australian refineries. Australia is far more vulnerable to future oil crises than we think."*

**Ref: Bruce Robinson, Herald Sun, 19/3/10**

## Peak Oil & Electric Vehicles

*"This week, Shell CEO Peter Voser joined a growing chorus of voices announcing the end to cheap oil. When asked about whether the theory of 'peak oil' was dead – the theory that oil production will no longer be able to keep up with demand – Mr Voser said 'I think what is dead is cheap oil'. [The NZ] 'Government is placing all their bets on electric car technology to keep us moving in the future. But the new cars are expensive, their uptake will be slow, and they don't solve the problem of congestion or where the power will come from' said [MP Dr Russel] Norman. In response to a Written Question, Transport Minister Steven Joyce has estimated that there will be 300 light electric motor vehicles in the [NZ] fleet by July 2013. By 2020, this number is estimated to reach 5% of the vehicle fleet according to the New Zealand Energy Strategy. [Dr Norman said:] 'In the short-to-medium term, we should be investing in proven technology like light rail, busways & better walking and cycling facilities. We need to move smarter and build resilience into our transport systems'."*

**Ref: Media Release, NZ Green Party, 10/3/10**

## And Also ...

*"A redneck Missouri car dealership is ... giving away a free shotgun ... worth \$2175 with every new Hummer it sells."* **Ref: MXNews, 17/3/10**

### Self-Defeating Bus Fares

*“Further increases to bus fares are short-sighted and will drive more Wellingtonians to use their cars. If the Regional Council is genuine about wanting to grow bus patronage, increasing fares by as much as 50% will be a disaster. Lower numbers of people using the buses will lead to further fare rises, and you quickly spiral into a vicious cycle of patronage loss, service cutbacks, and further congestion on our roads as more and more people take cars rather than public transport. Increasing fares at a time when actual service levels are falling is another slap in the face for Wellington’s commuters. Buses frequently don’t run on time, and we’re still waiting for real time information at bus stops to tell passengers how long they will have to wait for the next bus. And a single ticket that will cover multiple trips on different modes is still a pipe dream. ... The Green Party is concerned that hidden subsidies for car drivers make driving a comparatively cheaper option over more sustainable commuting alternatives like public transport, walking, and cycling. Until the cost of driving reflects the true costs of pollution, urban sprawl, and land used unproductively for car parking, public transport will struggle to be competitive with driving.”*

**Ref: Sue Kedgley, MP, Media Release 10/2/10**

### Floating Bus

*“It was not a sinking feeling exactly. But Stagecoach’s hopes that its trials of a new amphibious bus would go off without a hitch were dampened on Monday when the vehicle had to be dry-docked for repairs. ... Stagecoach is testing the Dutch-built £700,000 amfibus as a possible replacement for passengers who face the loss of the existing ferry service between Renfrew and Yoker from the end of March. While such buses are already in use for tourist ‘splash’ tours, Stagecoach chief executive Brian Souter said the proposed service would be a ‘Scottish and UK first’ – the first amfibus commuter service. ‘It is a great example of the potential for new transport links using the country’s rivers and estuaries’, he said. The bus, which can carry 50 passengers, is based on a Volvo bus chassis that incorporates a hull, so allowing the vehicle to float. It can travel at 8 knots in the water and has a maximum road speed of 60mph.”*

**Ref: Alistair Osborne, (UK) Telegraph, 8/2/10**



**‘It floats alright but ...’**

### Transport Integration Bill (Part 2)

*“The government’s vision for our transport system has been articulated over a number of years, most recently in the Victorian transport plan -- the government’s \$38 billion program of action to modernise our transport system over the next decade and beyond. The bill is a key part of the plan. As the plan stated (p.146):*

- *The Transport Integration Bill will set a strong new direction for transport policy and legislation in Victoria, aimed at building an integrated and sustainable transport network. It will establish new overarching principles to provide transport decision-makers with a clear legislative framework and enable more effective planning and coordination of transport services, as well as consolidate existing legislation and remove duplicate and redundant provisions.*

*“The vision enshrined in law by this bill guides the unprecedented investment set out in the Victorian transport plan. For the first time, the bill brings together all elements of the transport portfolio -- those responsible for all land and water-based transport, historically segmented as roads, rail, ports and marine -- under one statute. By unifying all elements of the transport portfolio, the bill ensures that transport decisions and activities are complementary and work towards delivering the*

*common vision. It is important to note, however, that the bill cannot do this alone. It sits at the top of an extensive new legislative structure.*

*“The Transport Integration Bill provides the broad policy and agency settings,*

*while various subject-specific statutes contain the policy and regulatory detail relating to particular transport system activities. Regulations and other subordinate instruments support each act as required. This is a comprehensive and contemporary structure that responds to the current and emerging challenges facing*

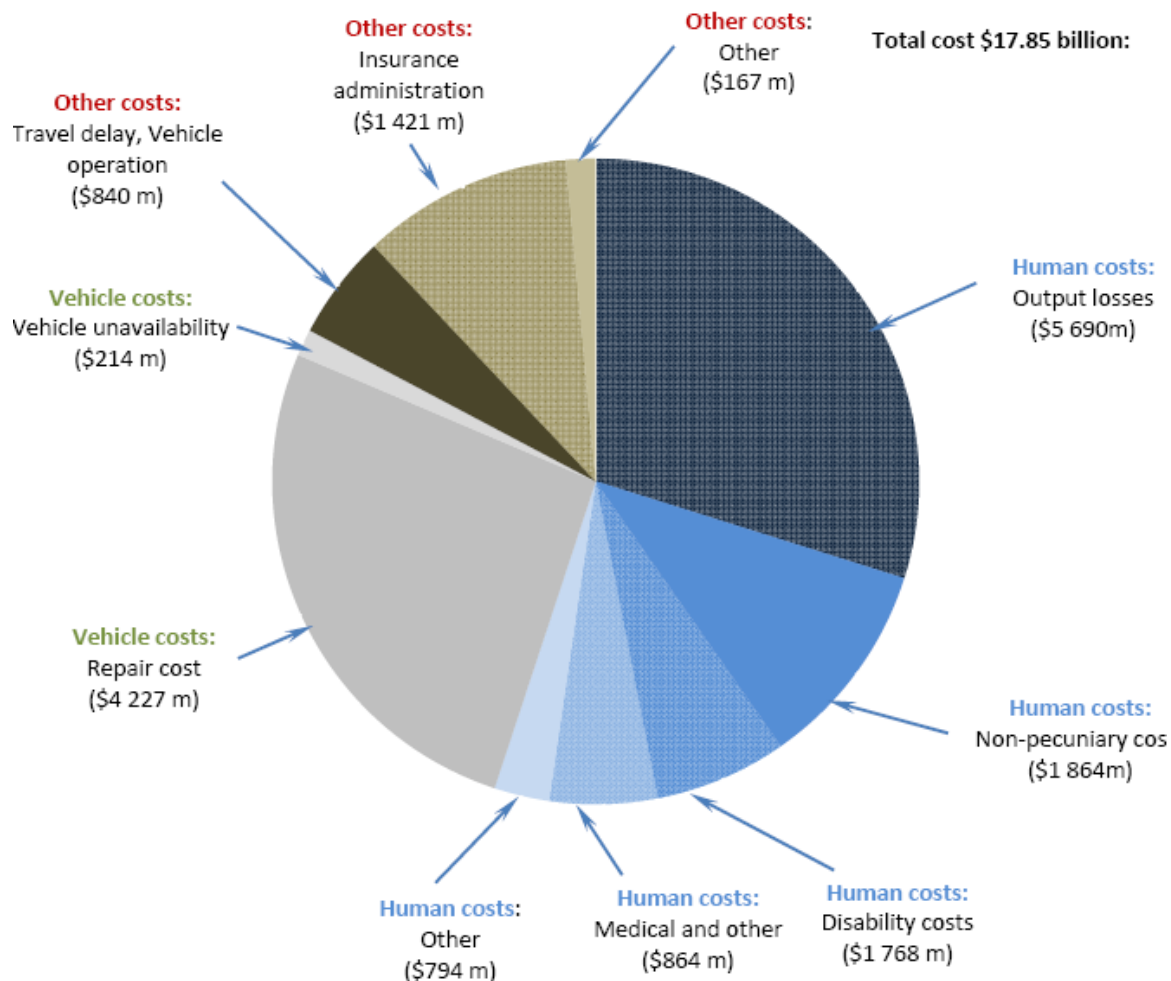
*transport in the early 21st century, rather than the challenges that existed when the Transport Act was introduced 26 years ago.” {Continued in #149} Ref: Lynne Kosky, (Former) Victoria Minister for Transport, VicHansard, 10/12/09*

**The Cost of Road Crashes**

*“The social cost of road crashes [in Australia] was an estimated \$17.85 billion in 2006 (1.7% of GDP). This was a real decrease of 7.5% compared to 1996 estimates. Fatal crashes cost an estimated \$3.87 billion; injury crashes an estimated \$9.61 billion and property damage crashes an estimated \$4.36 billion. Human losses – workplace and household losses, non-pecuniary losses and disability-related costs – were 61.5% of the cost of crashes There were an estimated 653,853 road crashes in 2006 involving an approximately 1.16 million vehicles, compared with an estimated 618,600 crashes involving approximately 1.13 million vehicles in 1996. In 2006, 1602 people died as a result of crashes, down from 1970 people in 1996. In 2005–06, 31,204 people were admitted to hospital, of which 20,958 stayed one night or more – down from 21,189 who stayed one night or more in 1996. BITRE estimates that a further 216,500 people injured in road crashes saw a general practitioner or were treated but not*

*admitted to hospital. Major costs were workplace and household losses (\$5.69 billion), vehicle repair costs (\$4.23 billion) and disability-related costs (\$1.86 billion). The latter includes specialised equipment and care costs for people with a permanent disability.*

*“The estimated human losses from a road fatality were \$2.4 million. Losses from a hospitalised injury were approximately \$214,000 (including disability-related costs) and a non-hospitalised injury cost an estimated \$2100. BITRE estimates that 4619 (14.8%) of the 31 204 people hospitalised due to road crash injuries suffered a disability, of which 1270 people (4.1% of people hospitalised) had severe or profound limitation. Estimated losses from a person suffering a profound impairment were \$3.82 million and losses due to a severe impairment were \$1.78 million. Losses due to a moderate impairment were \$542,000 and mild impairment were \$126,000.” Ref: Cost of Road Crashes in Australia (2006) BITRE, November 2009*



Social cost of road crashes by component, 2006 (BITRE estimates)

## Cycling in Victoria

"Almost a year after the release of Victoria's first dedicated cycling strategy, many major bicycle routes into the city still don't connect with each other, and riders remain exposed to traffic. But despite these safety concerns, the number of cyclists in Melbourne is increasing because of road, tram and train congestion, climate change worries and personal health concerns. Melbourne and Stonington council figures show that cycling accounts for between 4% and 10% of all trips in the inner city, with the number of bicycles entering the CBD during the morning soaring from 2053 to 4602 in the three years to March 2009. But cycling's popularity here trails that in European cities such as Amsterdam and Copenhagen, where almost 40% of all trips are made by bike.



"Bicycle Victoria's Jason den Hollander said cycling would be more popular if government invested more in improving conditions for bikes. Inaction on this front was preventing Melbourne from enjoying the environmental, social and economic benefits that came with being a cycle-friendly city. The State Government's cycling strategy, released in March, promised to 'build a cleaner, more sustainable future for Victorians' by spending at least \$18 million a year until 2013 on improving cycling conditions and upgrading priority routes to provide a linked inner-city network. But Mr den Hollander said an upgrade to Epsom Road, North Melbourne - identified in the strategy as a priority route - would not feature bike lanes, and other opportunities were also missed. He said this lack of commitment was compounded by the Government's failure to identify how or when its priority routes would be upgraded. 'This strategy needs to be backed up with the actual network laid down on the ground', he said. Mr den Hollander said the quickest way to boost cycling numbers and create a cycling culture would be to expand the number of separated bike lanes in the inner city, like the networks throughout Europe.

"Bicycle Victoria figures show that since the bike lanes in Rathdowne Street, Carlton, were upgraded in 2008 to include raised 'vibra-lines' separating bikes and cars, cycling numbers had increased by about 40%. Vibra-lines, which cost at least \$50,000 a kilometre, would offer extra

protection to thousands of cyclists each day who already use lanes along priority routes identified in the cycle strategy, Mr den Hollander said. ...

'There are thousands of latent cyclists out there who would love to ride to work but prefer a car-free environment' ... Melbourne Lord Mayor Robert

Doyle said vibra-lines provided excellent incentive for cycling but the cost was problematic. The head of Melbourne University's transport research centre, Nicholas Low, said it was remarkable the inner city was still dotted with patches where bicycles were forced into regular traffic. In the long term, he said, Melbourne must consider traffic-calming measures such as 30 km/h speed limits on dedicated bike routes, but less radical safety improvements were an immediate priority. Professor Low said Melbourne must also follow Europe's lead of providing on-street bike parking and bike cages at train stations so bicycles were secure

during the day. Melbourne could have a European-style cycling network within five years if government started investing \$100 million annually, a fraction of what is spent on other transport projects, he said."

Ref: Reid Sexton, The Age, 24/1/10

## Cycling in the UK

"The UK National Cycle Network was started with seed funding of £43 million in 1995. The Network now consists of over 10,000 miles of signed cycle routes carrying 386 million journeys in 2008. That usage realised £270 million in health savings and offered potential carbon emissions savings of 493,000 tonnes. For every £1 spent on the UK's cycle network, they're now realising up to £18-£40 in benefits, particularly where the cycleway runs through urban areas."

Ref: Kevin Hague, MP, Media Release, 10/2/10

## Fuel-Saving Device Does Not Work

"A so-called fuel-saving device sold in WA and which claims to improve efficiency and reduce emissions does not work, a consumer protection investigation has found. The Fuelstar Combustion Catalyst ... claims to reduce fuel consumption by 6% and tail pipe emissions by 20%. However, an investigation by the Department of Consumer Protection found that the device, which is fitted inside the engine bay of a car, does not deliver any improvements."

Ref: West Australian, 24/2/10

### Streets as Places (Part 3)

*"The typical solution to traffic problems has been to move vehicles through communities, including downtowns, as quickly as possible. To facilitate this movement, so-called 'transportation improvements' have been made, vastly changing streets' appearances and the way they function. One technique, widening streets and traffic lanes, already has been discussed. Other problematic 'cures' include:*

- **One-Way Streets** *Two-way streets are converted to one-way, or broad new one-way streets built, to allow for greater traffic flow. But people in communities now have to contend with dangerous speedways that disconnect people on one side of the street from the other. ...*

- **Elimination of On-Street Parking** *This adds more traffic lanes to the street and encourages more speeding traffic. ...*

- **Traffic Signal Timing** *Generally, traffic lights are synchronized, so that drivers can keep moving steadily without having to stop at red lights. This, along with a longer green time for vehicles (meaning less 'walk' time on the signal) makes it difficult for pedestrians to get across a street, particularly older people, children and those with physical disabilities. ...*

- **Broad Corner Turning Curves** *One can see how much easier it is for a car or truck to turn around a curve with a large radius, say 25 to 50 feet, than around a radius of 15 feet or less. But anyone who has ever started to cross a street at an intersection*



*and suddenly been confronted by a car whizzing around the corner knows what such a broad corner radius can mean: higher speeds for vehicles; longer crossings and less warning time to see oncoming cars (in other words, danger) for pedestrians.*

- **Speed Limits and Street Design** *The design of a street affects how fast motorists drive much more than the posted speed limit. The higher the speed limit, of course, the faster motorists will drive their vehicles. However, even when speed limits on a street are low, driving fast still frequently happens when streets are designed in a way that makes speeding easy: very wide, very straight and very flat. ... One thing is clear - the greater the speed, the greater threat to pedestrians.*

*"The above so-called 'solutions' focus narrowly on traffic and how it can be expedited instead of addressing how traffic can fit into a vision for building liveable communities. Because of this, motor vehicles have become true 'road hogs' or, more aptly, 'space hogs'. They greedily gobble up more and more public space, leaving less and less for people to enjoy.*

*"Up to now, despite our grumbling, most pedestrians have stepped aside and accepted this inequitable state of affairs and, in doing so, have given up a large part of the public realm to cars. Before we give up any more of this valuable public space, it might be helpful to remember that it rightly belongs to all of the people in the community." {Continued in #149}*

**Ref: Streets as Places – Using Streets to Rebuild Our Communities, Project for Public Places, 2008** See 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)

### Revitalising Urban Areas: Small Steps

*"The importance of small ideas to urban revitalization isn't widely appreciated. ... But profound change is more likely to result from a deeply considered idea that alters an essential component of an urban environment than from an elaborate master plan that requires abundant*

*resources and considerable political capital. While some large-scale plans, like Rockefeller Centre, are successful, most become impersonal, overbearing failures - or, even more often, are stillborn, the victims of the long process of assemblage, environmental remediation,*

*community participation, zoning adoption, and the securing of financing. ... Above all, small ideas for revitalizing urban areas work ... Why? Because, as [William] Whyte (and Jane Jacobs as well) understood, people in public spaces respond to thousands of subtle visual and aural cues, and successful places manipulate these cues (often without premeditation) to provide familiar assurances of comfort and well-being. The cues prompt a person who encounters a new place to predict a positive experience there - above all, that he will be safe. The most important cues transmit a sense of order and social control. And the best new or restored spaces ... provide their patrons with the premonition of an enjoyable experience."*

**Ref Andrew Manshel, City Journal, 19/10/09**

<http://www.city-journal.org/2009/eon1019am.html>

## More on the Grand Prix

*"[There are claims that] the event delivers an economic benefit to Victoria [but] the Victorian Auditor-General determined it doesn't, and found no evidence of an increase in tourism caused by the Grand Prix."*

**Ref: Save Albert Park Media Release, 23/3/10**

*"Melbourne Ports MHR, Michael Danby ... said attendances had fallen substantially since the first event was staged in 1996 and financial losses to Victoria had surpassed \$250 million."*

**Ref: Ben Preiss, Emerald Hill Weekly, 24/3/10**

*"Australian GP chairman Ron Walker said earlier this week that the massive losses on hosting the race are to be expected. 'As long as we have the race at Albert Park we will lose \$40 million' ..."*

**Ref: AAP, The Age, 26/3/10**

<b>'The grand prix is also on this weekend. How interested are you?'</b>	
<i>Will try to avoid it as much as possible</i>	42%
<i>Will not take any special notice</i>	28%
<i>Will stay up to date via coverage</i>	14%
<i>Will watch/listen to the race</i>	13%
<i>Will visit the racetrack</i>	3%
<b>Ref: Sunday Age Readers' Poll, 28/3/10</b>	

*"Seven in 10 readers say they are not interested in the big race with 42% saying that they will go out of their way to have nothing to do with it. 'It's a loud, inconvenient bogan magnet', sniffs one. It's environmentally unfriendly, disruptive, promotes hooning and stuff tax dollars into the pockets of Bernie Ecclestone, say others."*

**Ref: Gary Tippet, The Age, 28/3/10**

*"As Police warned that Victoria was heading for its worst road toll in five years, motor racing driver Mark Webber attacked speeding laws."*

**Ref: Paul Miller/David Rood, The Age, 28/3/10**

*"In order for [motor racing driver] Lewis Hamilton to have his car impounded, he had to be caught breaking the hoon laws twice. I agree that the first time he could claim ignorance, but the second time? No way. He was driving like a hoon and he knew his actions were illegal."*

**Ref: 'Carina', The Age, 28/3/10**

*"The Grand Prix is past its use-by-date. Let's pay Sydney to take it off us and move on. Sure the petrol heads will have a cry but they'll get over it."*

**Ref: 'Richard', The Age, 28/3/10**

> Does anybody know of any EPA noise restrictions for the Melbourne grand prix?

## Interview with Oz Kayak (Part 18)

Here continues our discussion:

**OK:** There is another dimension to our society and that is aesthetics. An area that is full of bicyclist and walkers is more aesthetically pleasing than one with parked cars. ...

**SI:** ... And safer as well ...

**OK:** .... Of course ...

**SI:** ... A sense of safety ...

**OK:** .... A sense of safety, yes. And I think that when we reach the next level, we will even consider shade, sunshine, wind breaks – to make our urban environment just that much more pleasant and desirable. In particular, the issue for me, is the aging population. The elderly can't use bikes. ...

**SI:** ... Tricycles? ...

**OK:** .... An excellent response!

**SI:** If we had safe and wide enough paths, tricycles are an ideal solution. ...

**OK:** .... Wonderful, and they don't have to be motorised. The electrically energised vehicle that has pedal power as part of its solution is already there; it's just in our country, to have an electric bike is not sexy. You've got to have a large car to pick your kids up [from school]. If you went there on a tricycle, even electric powered, even one costing \$10,000 ...

**SI:** ... So this is a social-change thing as well? ...

**OK:** .... Yes {Continued in #149}

## Feedback on the Cost of Congestion

*"Your graph on traffic and transport increase [#146] shows a massive drop in increase 1999-2008, but this is not reflected in the projections. Does this mean that we have already reached the limit and use of public transport, bicycle and other modes are increasing (they are). Some detailed analysis of recent figures may show that policies of encouraging mode change are in fact working. This would assist in getting yet more funding for non-car travel. The Network Operations plan, if it is the one that designates roads according to their priority is a case in point. It designates roads as preferred traffic routes, tram priority routes, bicycle priority, pedestrian priority and bus priority. Of course more than one priority may be applied to a particular spot, such as pedestrian and tram priority in a shopping centre, or a principle traffic route crossing a priority tram route. At least it gives the non-car use some extra status in the share of time available at a possibly over saturated intersection."*

**Ref: Name Supplied, 22/3/10**