

News

On the basis that sustainable development requires a unified approach, this newsletter is committed to a multi-partisan policy. Helping to raise the profile of these issues is much appreciated.

We were pleased to see that Sustainable Cities Authority proposal was raised on the first day of sitting in 2007 (February 6) of the House of Representatives in Canberra. The Hansard report is reproduced in full:

“Sustainable Cities Authority

Mr Laurie Ferguson (Reid) (9.05 pm)—*In between the Daily Telegraph’s latest castigation of parliamentarians— this time it says we are too lazy to walk to work—and the Howard government’s blindness to the impact of global warming, I had the opportunity to meet with Mr Stephen Ingrouille from the Going Solar environmental consultancy and to talk about his proposal. He argues that climate change is leading to rising sea levels and increased weather extremes such as drought and mega fires. We have increased particulates in the atmosphere which lead to a phenomenon known as global dimming and could have a profound impact on our ability to produce food. These problems, coupled with increased oil prices and poor urban design, are likely to lead to significant social disruption and breakdown.*

Problems associated with our over-reliance on motor vehicles include resource depletion, spatial demand, global warming, global dimming, pollution, congestion, loss of amenity, social exclusion, waste creation, heat island effect, road trauma and, most particularly, the destruction of habitat and cultural values. To overcome these seemingly intractable problems, Mr Ingrouille proposes the setting up of a joint government task force to address the problems of greenhouse gases created by the transport sector. To this end, it is essential that we start reassessing our reliance on the motor vehicle, along with the building of roads and the allocation of valuable and scarce space for roads and parking. His proposal is to establish a sustainable cities authority that will work in conjunction with existing federal, state, territory and local government bodies and agencies to seek out and encourage innovative and sustainable transport solutions. In effect, this will be a ‘better cities program’ that also aids rural and regional areas.

We are essentially stuck in dysfunctional cities. The federal government presently funds the construction of roads but does not fund public transport. The federal government circumvents its responsibility by nonchalantly palming responsibility off to the states. Naturally, the states need to lift their act; however, given the enormous resources available to the feds, surely the buck stops here. The solution is not to throw money at the problem; rather, it is about the initial design of our new suburbs—I saw a figure of about \$60,000 per household in the south-west just for roads to those blocks of land—and the renovation of our existing suburban areas. This task is currently outside the expertise of our existing agencies.

Under this proposal a sustainable cities authority would ultimately have offices in every state and territory. The SCA would work with existing departments in each region, including transport, tourism, infrastructure, planning, environment, sustainability, health and regional development. Each regional SCA would interact with and seek advice from local technical and community organisations, as well as other relevant government agencies. Whilst the ALP is not committing to this proposal, we believe it is essential that we engage with the wider community in order to expedite the efficient outcome for the community, as opposed to the federal government’s current ‘hear no evil, see no evil’ approach, which has all but ignored the built environment since coming to power more than a decade ago.”

Forums

The first public presentation of the SCA proposal attracted over 100 people (at the Sustainable Living Festival at Federation Square on February 17) in spite of the 38°C heat wave. The concept appeared to be well received and over 60 people signed up to receive the Newsletter.

The presentation will be delivered (no charge) at:

- 60 Leicester Street, Carlton at 5.30pm on **Wednesday March 7** (RSVP: Jo 9348 1000)
- Council Chambers, Manningham Civic Offices 699 Doncaster Road, Doncaster at 6.15pm on **Thursday, March 29**, 2007 (Manningham Bookings: Kay Toussaint 9840 9348)

Also (for a fee) at the Senior Executive Lunch on March 30. (See attached PDF for booking details).

The presentation was also delivered to 16 members of the Building Regulations Advisory Committee meeting at the Building Commission (Victoria) on 21/2/07.

More Feedback on the SCA Proposal

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

"I haven't concentrated on urban design issues in the past, but from my observations the main problem is that we aren't putting enough money into public transport. It's hideously expensive to upgrade the infrastructure, but that's what needs to happen."

Confidential Feedback 13/2/07

"Nice ideas and pictures without nice (or any) numbers won't get policy changed. Here are a few numbers that, properly presented...."

John M. Legge 21/1/07

Melbourne-based Academic

John has provided a four-page article with facts and figures on **Quality Melbourne Transport**. With space restriction in this newsletter, I've published it on the web site under **Transport Extra #1**. The 'Big Idea' suggested by John "is a new 70 Km Outer (but now Middle) Circle Railway. The route should be an approximation of a circle 15 km radius, centred on Flinders Street Station, running Sandringham, Moorabbin, Huntingdale, Glen Waverly, Nunawading, Macleod, Thomastown, Broadmeadows, Keilor Plains, Deer Park and Newport". We would be keen to hear your feedback and also receive any similar articles.

John makes the point that: "Melbournians are six times more likely to get on a passing tram than a passing bus". I've observed that where trams and buses share similar routes (out of peak hour) the trams are often at least half full and the buses all but empty.

In the evening of February 22, I caught a bus from Manningham Civic Centre at Doncaster into the city. Actually I was lucky to catch a bus as the last one was scheduled for 8.06pm – presumably the good citizens of Doncaster go to sleep at an early hour? I'm not sure where the bus commenced its journey but there were typically no more than three or four people on board for the entire trip. For part of the journey the bus travelled along the same roads as tram #48 (Balwyn North). The bus driver was cheerful and helpful - I can't speak for the tram driver - and the bus, I believe, arrived in the city much earlier than the tram. In spite of the fact that the bus and tram stops were located in close proximity, there were people waiting at most tram stops but not one at any bus stop until we

turned off onto Studley Road. The bus was noisy and not particularly comfortable.

The subject of **Transport Extra #2** is **Letter from an Urban Villager**. It describes what life could be like from the point of view of a resident in a new suburb designed to be much more sustainable.

Future **Extras** will look at 'Aerial Trams' and the conventional tram loop proposed as a legacy program for the Commonwealth Games. The games are over but there is no legacy tram loop.

Cars & Car Share

I watched the much publicised Catalyst program *Beyond Petrol* (ABC TV 1/2/07). According to their website: "With petrol prices and global temperatures on the rise, the burning question is – what's going to replace petrol? Hydrogen or hybrid? Biofuel or battery? Or, the completely unexpected?" And the answer after all the hype: "No one knows what will ultimately win out. The car companies are hedging their bets – developing modular cars that will take any fuel plus electricity".

There is one very good car based solution known as 'car share' or flex car that can take up to twelve private vehicles off the road. But for it to work, council authorities must grant parking space priority (after disabled parking) to the flex cars even at the expense or revenue earned from private parking. Reserved spaces for flex cars need to be located in easily accessible, safe and secure locations.



Fuel-Efficient Flex Cars in Melbourne

General Feedback

"Steve thanks so very much for all your dedication to TRANSPORT. I look forward to working with you further to create greater awareness to the broader community about transport matters."

Annelise Peyton, 25/2/07

Design Coordinator

Sustainable Living Festival

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