

## Fringe Benefits Tax

*"Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) is recognised as needing reform. Many submissions argued that the FBT vehicle concession in its current form provides an incentive for car drivers to drive more. We often hear stories of people deliberately taking the long way home or even going on an interstate trip, to 'get their kilometres up', it's crazy that our tax system creates this incentive. FBT can be amended to reduce vehicle use on a yearly basis and influence vehicle purchasing decisions to reduce Australia's transport emissions. Many other countries have FBT calculations on the greenhouse rating of the car and how far it is driven, under these schemes - the more you drive fuel heavy cars, the more you pay. Travelling to and from work is a very large part of Australian vehicle use and results in congestion. Implementing FBT concessions for alternative transport, e.g. public transport and bicycle purchase costs, can create incentives that will result in reduced emissions and congestion."*

**Ref: Greenfleet News, Autumn 2010**

## More on the Grand Prix

*"This year it was claimed that the Grand Prix had over 300,000 attendees for the four days. Really? The television pictures showed this was wrong. There were a few thousand on the viewing mounds but vast lengths of track were largely deserted. The grandstands and corporate boxes together hold only around 30,000 and there were just a few lonely people in them on the first day. Our observations revealed a four-day crowd estimate of 157,680."*

**Ref: Peter Logan, 30/3/10**



*"Melbourne GP cancelled due to lack of grid girl cleavage."* **Ref: 'Headlines you won't see this week', The Age, 28/3/10**

*"Port Phillip Council will launch an investigation into the costs of the Australian Grand Prix to try and force the event out of Albert Park. ... Port Phillip councillors labelled the race as 'financially irresponsible' in a time of 'climate crisis' and soaring fuel costs."*

**Ref: Ben Preiss, Emerald Hill Weekly, 31/3/10**

*"I was a Save Albert Park (crowd count and tobacco promotion) observer at the track in 2000*

*and the worst example of irresponsible behaviour I saw was a family with a baby, under 12 months crossing over the track on the footbridge while the F1 cars were screaming underneath. That baby would suffer hearing damage as the cumulative noise level of several cars was many times the threshold for hearing damage. It is more crucial for the young, with ears still developing."*

**Ref: Peter Logan, 30/3/10**

## Victorian Election

*"[Victorian Premier] John Brumby is out to persuade Melburnians that he is their best protector against the loss of what they love about their city. The success of this project will go a long way to determining whether Brumby gets to preside over boom-time Melbourne beyond the 2010 state election."*

**Ref: Paul Austin, The Age, 8/4/10**

*"Mr Brumby put our money where your mouth is! ... Liveable and big sprawling urban forms do not go hand in hand. The most liveable places are compact and well connected. ... No one is fooled by those multi million dollar ads for the 'Transport Plan' - the projects aren't fully funded, they rely on uncommitted federal funding and they're years away - the system is antiquated, unsafe and uncomfortable. And yet you are hell bent on pushing development out into the fringe without a real fully funded commitment to public transport or other infrastructure."*

**Ref: 'Sceptical', Comments, The Age, 8/4/10**

*"While I like the idea of protecting the city of villages personally the only plan I see is for a city of freeways. I'd love to see a city that lived in local centres served by effective local public transport. So far the only plan for the future seems to be the 1970s freeway plan. This is the only pro-active planning approach that has been pushed. The provision of all other forms of infrastructure is always based on existing demand. Hence we are always playing catch up with deficient services. Nothing Team Brumby have put forward thus far have been anything but reactive to existing deficiencies. Where is the vision?"* **Ref: 'Yeah but how?', Comments, The Age, 8/4/10**

## And Also ...

*"One day while travelling at 160km/h the [V/Line] train hit a kangaroo. The driver had to stop and pull the kangaroo off the front but couldn't, so the conductor and a couple of passengers tried as well. As nobody could get the roo off, we had to roll into Spencer Street [Southern Cross] station with the kangaroo still stuck on the front of the train."* **Ref: Michelle, Mx, 12/11/08**

### Creating More Sprawl in Perth

*“Perth will sprawl further than New York City, be clogged with cars, and people will live in each other's pockets as the city groans under the weight of an extra two million residents over the next 40 years. ... The Australian Bureau of Statistics is forecasting*

*Perth's population to hit 3.8 million from its current 1.7 million by 2050. ... Already the city covers 5423sq km but statistician Phil Smythe found that if the population reached 3.8 million, and even if housing density increased, Perth would sprawl over 12,000sq km. New York City, home to 17.8 million people, covers 8700sq km. Perth would stretch from the coastal hamlet of Lancelin in the north to the Lakes turn-off in the Perth Hills and south to a point midway between Mandurah and Bunbury. The population density of Perth would increase to 710 people for every square kilometre, up from 319. Mr Smythe said the number of vehicles would swell from 900,000 to almost two million. Thousands of kilometres of roads would have to be built to cope with the extra traffic, and the use of public transport would have to increase dramatically. Mr Smythe said fewer than 10% of Perth residents used public transport now but that would have to increase to avoid serious congestion.”*

**Ref: Shane Wright, West Australian, 31/3/10**



**Perth's predicted sprawl by 2050**

### More Congestion in Brisbane

*“Brisbane's first underground toll tunnel ... is predicted to carry about 60,000 cars each day from the Story Bridge, the Riverside Expressway and a network of streets running through the central city. ... Lord Mayor Campbell Newman said the opening of the tunnel was the first step in tackling congestion. ‘This will not solve traffic congestion in Brisbane, but it is the first significant step to fighting the problem’, Cr Newman said. ‘That said, traffic congestion will continue to be a problem for Brisbane motorists unless we continue to tackle it with our plan to build several more tunnels and bridges to take cars around the CBD. ... Cr Newman also reminded motorists that motorised scooters, tractors and bicycles were not allowed in the tunnel. ... The \$2.2 billion tunnel will cost Brisbane ratepayers ... \$763 - \$773 million.”*

**Ref: Tony Moore, Brisbane Times, 15/3/10**

*“What a sad day for Brisbane. The highlight of years of wasted ratepayers money culminating in the opening of a dirty great tunnel to encourage more traffic congestion. However what is worse is Newman's sly comment in this article that this Clem7 [tunnel] will not fix our traffic problems after all. No. Now he is saying that he needs to build more of them to really do the job. Brisbane is being conned once again by this egotistical git. This city is already up to its eyeballs in debt because of Clem7.”*

**Ref: Comments, Brisbane Times, 15/3/10**

*“Will the introduction of the toll in the Clem7 deter you from using the tunnel? Yes – 71%; No – 19%; I wouldn't use the tunnel if it were free – 10%. (Votes: 1067)”*

**Ref: Comments, Brisbane Times, 7/4/10**

### The Solar Impulse

*“The Solar Impulse aircraft, a pioneering Swiss bid to fly around the world on solar energy, successfully completed its first test flight in western Switzerland on Wednesday.”*

**Ref: Andre Lehmann, SMH, 8/8/10**



**The Solar Impulse project aims to circumnavigate the world with an aircraft powered only by solar energy.**  
(AP Photo/Christian Hartmann, pool)

### Less Congestion in Melbourne

*“Yarra Trams Chief Executive Officer, Michel Masson, said Melbourne has the biggest tram network in the world but it was also one of the slowest because of traffic, trying to avoid parked cars, encroaching on to tram lines and blocking traffic flow. ‘Trams bring customers to the heart of the retail shopping strips, so greater priority for trams makes them a more attractive travel option for shoppers’, Mr Masson said. ‘On Sydney Road, between 9am and 10am when clearways have been extended, city bound trams have recorded an average 8% reduction in journey times. In the evening peak, trams in the extended clearway period are recording better average times than the off-peak hours when kerbside parking is permitted’, he said.”* **Ref: Road Uses Collective Media Release, 24/3/10**

## Transport Integration Bill (Part 4)

### The policy framework

“Comprised of a vision, transport system objectives and decision-making principles, the framework in the bill provides the guidance needed to achieve an integrated and sustainable transport system. The vision tells all decision-makers what we are working towards. The objectives centre on a triple bottom-line approach, highlighting the social, economic and environmental outcomes we are seeking. This is achieved by specific social, environmental and economic objectives as well as objectives related to 'transport and land use integration', 'efficiency, coordination and reliability' and 'safety, health and wellbeing'. The decision-making principles set out the other key considerations and processes which lead to good decision making. The policy statement, *Towards an Integrated and Sustainable Transport Future -- A New Legislative Framework for Transport in Victoria*, provides additional guidance for decision-makers on the context and intent of this framework. Context for integrated transport decisions is also provided by other transport policy documents including *Port Futures*, *Freight Futures* and the *Victorian Cycling Strategy*, together with a range of higher level government economic, environmental and social policy documents.

### Consolidation of transport agencies

“Enshrining these important objectives and principles in legislation will not alone achieve the outcomes we seek for our transport system. We also need a contemporary approach to the organisation of the transport agencies. At present, transport agencies tend to be -- scattered across a range of portfolio statutes; and created at different times with their own charter, which sets no objectives, or limited objectives, for the agency to achieve. This has been exacerbated by the absence of an adequate central statute with a common goal to unite transport agencies in a system-wide approach to transport policy and management.

“The bill reverses past practice and deliberately clusters all transport agencies under the one statute. At the same time, it makes appropriate changes to the charter of each agency. Clarifying these charters improves coherence within the portfolio by ensuring that bodies act within their remit (whether that be operational policy, system development, operations or regulation). The bill provides for a realignment of transport agencies so they are best placed to deliver the vision and objectives for an integrated and sustainable

transport system. It supports these agencies in performing their roles.

“A key focus of the bill results from the creation of the Department of Transport in April 2008. The bill reconstitutes transport agencies established by legislation such as the Transport Act, the Rail Corporations Act and the Southern and Eastern Integrated Transport Authority Act, bringing them within the same legislative framework. This allows the bill to:

- ensure that transport bodies are set up to deliver outcomes aligned to the vision and objectives for transport;
- address inconsistencies between the charters of the transport bodies and the new policy framework; and
- address existing overlaps, conflicts and gaps between the transport bodies across the portfolio.
- The department's leadership role provides an important context for framing roles for the other bodies in the portfolio and monitoring their performance.

“In particular, the bill clarifies that VicRoads is responsible for road safety-related strategic policy, while the department is responsible for all other strategic transport policy functions and advice. ...

“The bill identifies the broad roles that transport bodies undertake within the portfolio and aims to remove any conflicts, support coordination and provide greater clarity. Transport bodies have been defined and grouped as:

- transport system agencies (director of public transport and VicRoads);
- transport corporations (V/Line Corporation, VicTrack and the Linking Melbourne Authority, with the port corporations to come later -- including the merger of the port of Melbourne and port of Hastings corporations as recently foreshadowed in *Port Futures*); and
- transport safety agencies (the director, transport safety, and the chief investigator, transport safety).

“The bill supports the State Services Authority review such that VicRoads will continue to have a wide function, as the state's prime road authority, in providing, operating and maintaining the road system. Importantly, it reinforces the pivotal partnership between VicRoads and the director of public transport, as transport system agencies, in delivering broader outcomes for sustainable transport in Victoria.” {Continued in #151}

**Ref: Lynne Kosky, (Former) Victoria Minister for Transport, VicHansard, 10/12/09**

## Sacrificing to Suburbia (Part 2)

*"We have never really embraced density in Australia and have sacrificed much to live a suburban lifestyle. We have lost our proximity to the source of food production and the local produce markets that accompany it. Our commitment to massive scale metropolitan infrastructure systems has stymied the development of efficient local infrastructure serving energy, water and waste, together with the opportunity to develop a co-dependent relationship between adjacent urban and rural uses. We have lost large chunks of productive time to commuting. We cling on to what meagre public open space remains while our suburban subdivision patterns create vast wastelands of private open space. Even our recent attempts at density are constrained in their configuration by suburban notions of spatial form, such as backyards and excessive street setbacks.*

*"Residential zoning constraints ensure that suburban apartments do little to promote a genuinely diverse urban lifestyle. Initiatives, such as Sydney Council's Sydney City Farm project, which aim to educate and reconnect people to the source of food production, are significant in the message they convey. But they can only serve their aim as demonstration projects, being insufficient in number or scale to support a local trading economy. As demonstration projects they have great value, but equally important is their role in preserving open space. Indeed there does not seem to be any good environmental reason to build on open space in an existing metropolitan area. There is plenty of inefficient land use in the existing suburban fabric, which could meet the growth needs of our major cities were it not for the resistance of local councils and their constituents.*

*"There is an entrenched view that the suburbs are here to stay. But they are a very recent phenomenon in the history of cities that only really took off with the widespread availability of private transport. Their low density dispersion means that they will never be adequately serviced by public transport. It may be time to consider whether they have any place at all in a future urban environment. They are destroying our cities, our farmland and our coastline.*

*"Despite good intentions, it is probably not enough to simply introduce higher densities to the suburbs. The suburbs themselves may need to be transformed. If the transition towards much higher densities at transport nodes was*

*accompanied by a corresponding transition to much lower densities in the surrounding undifferentiated suburban fabric, the suburbs could be ultimately dismantled to be reconstituted as non-urban space. Under this scenario, a major metropolitan area such as Sydney would be recast as an efficiently linked network of maybe a hundred small high-density cities occupying one-tenth of the current urban footprint, with the featureless interstitial suburban fabric going under the plough. Like Transition Towns, suitable land would then be available locally for fresh food production, or for other non-urban uses such as forest, parkland, waste recycling, aquaculture and power generation."*

**Ref: Kim Jones, The Age, 22/1/10**

*"Contrary to your statement, this country has indeed 'embraced density' -- the terrace houses of the 1880s. All they needed was a decent bathroom and kitchen, as shown by their current prices and desirability."*

**Ref: Comments, The Age, 22/1/10**

*"We took all our post-WW2 wealth and invested it in 'a living arrangement that has no future'. But we don't have to wait for government to act first. There are urban alternatives that people can become involved in:*

- **Cohousing** is a 'lite' form of intentional community whereby you meet with 20-30 other households to build an urban neighbourhood with some common facilities and local gardening. Private dwellings remain private, and are bought and sold normally. Google: Cohousing Australia.
- **VillageTowns** are an inspired concept for a tight, walkable city of around 10,000 just out of the city, with homes built around pedestrian plazas. Village founders are currently seeking interested people to help get the ball rolling.

Google: Melbourne Villagetown."

**Ref: Comments, The Age, 22/1/10**

## And Also ...

An interesting photo (right) from WA Today (17/3/10) used with a story on a police car chase with the caption: "Kwinana Freeway motorists warned to beware of speeding car."



## Streets as Places (Part 5)

*"The term 'traffic calming' is a direct translation of the German 'verkehrsberuhigung'. It refers to a system of design and management strategies, developed in Europe and widely practiced there, that aims to incorporate vehicle traffic into communities in balance with other uses on streets. It is founded on the idea that streets are places for people to walk, stroll, look, gaze, meet, play, shop and even work alongside, but not dominated by, cars. Narrowing streets or extending sidewalks at corner curbs lessen the impact of motor vehicle traffic by slowing it down or literally 'calming' it. This helps create an environment friendly to people on foot. It represents a different approach from treating the street only as a conduit for vehicles. Its objective is not to speed traffic through town, but to help create human-scale places that foster a strong sense of community. Although traffic calming represents a complete shift in how we think about streets, it uses many traditional traffic engineering techniques.*

*"The difference is that it does this in reverse! For example, a standard approach to easing traffic is to widen streets to accommodate fast-moving vehicles, whereas traffic calming looks for ways to narrow them in a manner that increases the safety and comfort of motorists and pedestrians, as well as bicyclists and other users. But the broader goal is economic and social gain for the whole community.*

*"Traffic calming started in The Netherlands in the 1970s. The Dutch government was seeking a way to reduce the impact of traffic on small urban residential streets without banning vehicles completely. The*

*result was the 'woonerf', in translation, the 'living yard', a shared space where drivers move at the same speed as walkers. The 'woonerf's' design allows people to walk or relax, children to play, bicycles and cars to pass, all in the same space at the same time. It makes no distinction between sidewalk and street. Various pavement textures and physical structures, like seating, play equipment, trees, planters and parking spots, define and divert pathways and alter sight lines, slowing down vehicles while providing a pleasant and usable environment for those not in*



Woonerf, the Netherlands

*cars. A survey conducted by the Dutch government in 1981 showed that the 'woonerf' was a great success with residents. ...*

*"It is not enough to simply apply traffic calming tools to an area without considering what else is taking place. As has been noted, one important element to consider is transit. Transit should be looked at both in terms of determining how it fits in relation to where traffic calming improvements need to be installed, and in terms of how transit and traffic calming reinforce one another as ways to encourage people to get from place to place without driving. Transit is an important alternative to the automobile, providing an efficient, less polluting mode of travel that can move many more people at once. Still, as useful as transit can be, just having it as a mobility option will not necessarily make a place more liveable. People still need to get across the street safely to reach a train station or bus stop or other transit hub. And they need a pleasant and direct walking route on the way there."*

**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)

## And Also ...

*"UK councils are wasting thousands of pounds . . . by suing themselves over parking tickets. At least six local authorities have issued tickets against*

*their own vehicles - then refused to pay the fines to themselves. Some cases went through a staggering 14 stages before reaching a Parking Appeals tribunal. One farce saw Islington Council in North London issue a ticket, then take itself to an appeal hearing - where it asked for costs against itself. The costs process involves another four steps. Stunned adjudicator Gerald Styles said he could not make an order for costs because the council could not 'act wholly unreasonably*

*or vexatiously against itself'. Parking law expert Barrie Segal, who unearthed the crazy cases, said: 'This is a complete waste of taxpayers' money and illustrates everything that is wrong with unaccountable parking enforcement in the UK. ... Some fined themselves on multiple occasions. Each case is thought to have cost hundreds of pounds and countless man hours to pursue. Mr Segal added: 'Councils are so blinkered in their efforts to raise revenue from parking fines they even chase themselves for the money. The whole thing is ludicrous'."* **Ref: The UK Sun, 22/2/10**

## Area Based Planning

*“Unbalanced momentum of fringe growth drives both public and private development costs over the mid to long term. Newman and Kenworthy, internationally respected urban growth and transport experts, emphasise in ‘Sustainability and Cities’ that imbalanced urban fringe growth swallows public and private capital investment creating inefficient infrastructure and development growth, use and management costs that can otherwise be used to promote balanced urban form and a more productive means of economic development. ...*

*“The open-ended and unclear nature of current strategy achievement promotes within the current planning approach a ‘conflict culture’ of sector driven, organisational and personal interests. The issue of urban revitalisation must be coupled with an emphasis on a more collaborative forward planning and decision making approach. This produces planning processes and applied information that demonstrate how strategy objective achievement will best occur in development. If not, inefficient ‘traditional centre’ urban revitalisation efforts and further greenfield growth and sector-driven self-interest will increasingly conflict with, and continue to incrementally subvert a cities strategic, social and economic aspirations. In ten years time demonstrated effective achievement of the current strategy will be seen to be as irrelevant and non-transparent as the previous one. The comparative viability of the city may be undermined if other cities/regions grasp the more efficient way forward. ...*

*“There is considerable expert opinion that extending beyond the technical expertise and proficiency of key Council/Government agency staff within collaborative forward planning teams at a strategic level will better identify development priorities and strategy achievement decisions and outcomes. ... The area based planning method can help identify the role of development for each part of the city in a wider picture of desirable direction of urban development requirements. Targeted and managed implementation plans for urban place revitalisation will best enhance city attractiveness and competitiveness in terms of business operations costs, living quality and transport choice, recreation and education character amenities, when development occurs, rather than the much more costly approach of retrofitting. ... The planning mechanism addresses the questions why, where, when, how, key transport infrastructure and services shall be*

*identified, protected, prioritised, provided, and managed. ... The planning identification mechanism/area-based transport planning method provides improved planning tools and flexibility to enhance relationships between transport and land use planning and the communities within which the transport system is intended to serve.” Ref: Kevin Sharp, **Connecting Communities, 2010***

## More on the Thirst for Oil

*“The [Aust] Federal Government is considering allowing companies to drill for oil in a section of ocean off the Margaret River coast which has been earmarked for inclusion in a planned marine sanctuary. The region, less than 100km off the coast, has been short-listed in this year’s round of Offshore Petroleum Acreage Releases. It has also been identified by the Department of Environment as an area needing further assessment because of its high biological diversity, rich stocks of fish, sharks and dolphins and pristine ocean environment. Resources Minister Martin Ferguson is expected to announce next month whether the area will be released to oil companies for exploration and possible development. A decision on a proposed marine reserve covering much of the same area is expected later this year.” Ref: Jane Hammond, **West Australian, 12/4/10***

## Interview with Oz Kayak (Part 20)

Here continues our discussion:

**OK:** Melbourne, with 3.5 million people, has very different behaviour patterns in different areas.

**SI:** That’s not necessarily a bad thing.

**OK:** Absolutely not. But the planner, transport or land-use planner, has to ask why, especially if we believe that public space use is important. If an area is badly vandalised, a section of the public will feel insecure and they will go somewhere where it is not vandalised.

**SI:** On the other hand a place which is well designed will be well patronised and will suffer less vandalism. Which brings me to my favourite topic: ‘urban villages’ and my favourite urban village which is the one in Albert Park [in Melbourne]. There are things which make that place work – from early morning till late in the evening – it’s a place where you feel safe. Two things help to make the place work: the traffic is calmed (which encourages walking and cycling) and there is tram corridor running through the spine.

**OK:** I couldn’t agree with you more. {Continued}