

Freeway Causing Congestion

"A costly taxpayer-funded project to fix traffic problems at one of Melbourne's busiest freeway junctions appears to have backfired, with cars banking up for kilometres across the Bolte Bridge because of the changes. The widening of the Monash, CityLink and West Gate freeways - at \$1.39 billion the most expensive state-funded road project in Victoria's history - was promoted as a means to reduce trip times and increase the number of vehicles using the corridor each day. ... Nicholas Low, head of the Melbourne University transport research centre, described the project as 'a monstrous waste of public money'. When you build a large freeway improvement like this, it simply shifts the congestion from one place to another, and it then becomes the justification for more funding to remove the bottleneck', he said. 'What it doesn't do is end up saving people time'."

Ref: Clay Lucas, The Age, 15/4/10

"The, motorised, chickens are coming home to roost. Investing, virtually in freeways only, is a disaster and always has been. Public transport, funded properly, is the only long term solution. The problem is not our governments, who regardless of which party lack courage and vision to act, it's the voters who only react to short term self interested stimuli."

Ref: 'Socrates', Comments, The Age, 15/4/10

"This is bad news for the Vic Roads empire. I recall Ken Davidson writing that the costs of the short South Morang rail extension had been overstated to make rail projects look less value for money than roads like this. Long live the rail empire."

Ref: 'w.ch', The Age, 15/4/10

"Yes, it is clear from the unbiased reports here that rather than spend \$1.3 billion on idiot motorists, the money should have been spent on public transport, where at least I would have been appreciative of the extra expenditure. And if more lanes means more travel time as suggested by one writer, then why not close off a few lanes to use the twisted logic, to improve travel time. What we do know is that as soon as you expand a freeway to give greater flow, you create a greater bottle neck somewhere else. We should stop throwing money at dumb motorists and spend it more wisely on sensible and beautiful people - who take public transport."

Ref: 'JeffK', Comments, The Age, 15/4/10

"This exit must have been designed on chaos theory."

Ref: 'kkn, The Age, 15/4/10

"Cars are so 20th century! Cities around the globe invest massively in public transport, as is the trend in this century. Why not shift the funding to public transport? Or are we afraid to take steps that actually make sense?"

Ref: 'Tom', Comments, The Age, 15/4/10

"Just goes to show that spending billions of dollars on roads is not the golden solution. Perhaps if the money spent had gone to making public transport more efficient and effective, some of users would have a viable alternative to using the car, which would make roads more efficient. Victoria has an unfunded \$38B public transport plan for the next 25 years. My view is that the Government will never deliver to public transport, but always find billions to waste on roads. If you are really adversely impacted by this current failing, remember it when next you vote."

Ref: 'GerryK', Comments, The Age, 15/4/10

"It's simple: if the government builds more freeways then more cars will use them. With thousands of new residents arriving in Melbourne every week the road system will never keep up with growing demand. Spending billions on one section of a freeway simply moves the congestion (or in this case,



Motorised chickens...

doesn't even do that!) to another point. The answer is public transport. Spend this money on creating an efficient metro system than serves all of Melbourne, both inner and outer suburbs, toll all freeways and the inner city (i.e. congestion tax). This will drastically reduce the amount of people driving into the city each day. Trains/trams/buses are the only way forward unless we want the city to end up like Los Angeles."

Ref: 'Jackson57', Comments, The Age, 15/4/10

"Don't be fooled, the research has been done, consultants paid, the Government knows exactly what it is doing. Everyone can see that two lanes would be better. Let the gridlock happen, let people complain, make them late for work, have car crashes then the night in shinning armour will elevate all chaos on our street and you will be happy to pay for the privilege of driving through their shinny new tunnel."

Ref: 'Bigger forces at work', Comments, The Age, 15/4/10

Congestion Charging for Gothenburg

"The second largest city in Sweden, Gothenburg, plans to introduce a road user charge in 2013 similar to the one adopted in Stockholm, it has been announced following a vote by the city council last week. The scheme – which will include some 40 toll stations around the city – is aimed at financing infrastructure investments, reducing greenhouse gases and cutting traffic in the city center by around 15%. Located on Sweden's west coast, Gothenburg, has some 506,000 inhabitants and has been evaluating the feasibility of advanced urban road pricing through a field trial as part of the EU's PRoGR€SS project. 'The issue will now be put to the government', a statement from the city council reads. 'A decision about a congestion charge will be taken by parliament this spring and the plan is for the congestion charge to be introduced in 2013'. The charge would be similar to the one levied in Stockholm in 2007, whereby motorists entering and leaving the city between Monday and Friday pay between SKr10 and SKr20 (US\$1.40 and US\$2.80), depending on the time of day, with an upper limit of SKr60 (US\$8.40) a day. A number of other cities have introduced similar toll schemes including London, Rome & Singapore."

Ref: Traffic Technology Today, 2/2/10



Gothenburg

Car Emissions in Brisbane

"Brisbane is likely to strike problems encouraging the use of more efficient cars and fuels to reduce greenhouse gas emissions because of the high number of older, larger cars in outer suburbs, according to a major investigation into the city's private car fleet. The inquiry found high rates of six-cylinder car ownership in suburbs more than 10km from the centre of Brisbane, while ownership of large cars in the city's inner-west and inner-south was low. Cars on Brisbane's outskirts also tended to be older, making them less fuel-efficient than cars in inner suburbs, the study by a group of Griffith University urban affairs experts found."

Ref: Craig Johnstone, Courier-Mail, 15/3/10

And Also ...

"Greater Brisbane area had only 17% green space compared to 42% in Sydney with a far bigger population."

Ref: Brisbane Times, 14/3/10

Car Emissions in Sydney

“The New South Wales Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water says Sydney's long-term record of improvements in air quality is threatened by increased vehicle emissions. A departmental report has forecast an increase in ozone levels over the next 15 years, especially in the city's north-west and south-west. The opposition's climate change and environment spokeswoman Catherine Cusack says the geography of south-west Sydney means air becomes trapped. But she says a lack of public transport there will make matters worse. ‘Tragically those are the areas targeted for greatest population growth’, she said. The department's deputy director-general Simon Smith agrees that Sydney's topography is partly to blame, as well as car emissions. He says the increased ozone emissions could affect those who are vulnerable, particularly asthma sufferers. ‘It mainly affects people who have respiratory vulnerabilities those people who are already sick or children or the elderly who have respiratory problems, ... So it may trigger the need to go to hospital with an extra asthma attack’. The Asthma Foundation says Sydney's air quality is deteriorating faster than any solutions being put forward.” **Ref: ABC News, 9/3/10**

“Even though vehicle emission standards have been tightened, any gains are being outrun by population growth, increased car use and the growing popularity of heavier cars, the report noted. Car emissions are the single largest contributor to ozone levels. Ozone is a prime component of smog, which is caused by the reaction of auto and industrial emissions with sunlight. Air with high doses of ozone causes eye, nose and throat irritations, along with respiratory symptoms and decreases in lung function. ... Overall, there has been no improvement in ozone levels across Sydney since 1998, it noted. Ozone is the third most important greenhouse gas after carbon dioxide and methane. ... Professor Chris Winder from the University of NSW school of science said: ‘We pay lip service to using public transport, but unless people abandon cars, or unless technology changes, we're stuck with it.’” **Ref: Brian Robins, SMH, 9/3/10**

More New Cars

“The number of Australians intending to buy a new car in the next four years is 2,164,000.” **Ref: Roy Morgan Research, 8/4/10** www.roymorgan.com/news/press-releases/2010/1048/

The American Utopia

“Planning centred on the automobile has been a great American problem for decades. During the post World-War II period, development after development were literally plopped into the suburban countryside. What followed was the exodus of city-dwellers to these new suburban utopias which offered their new residents everything the city supposedly could not: a small house with a front lawn and a backyard, good schools, lower crime rates and a virtual guaranty of economic homogeneity among neighbours.

“The only thing was that you needed a car. You needed a car to do just about everything. Need a quart of milk? Get in the car. Need to go the pharmacy? Get in the car. Need to go out for a cup of coffee or lunch? Get in the car. It wasn't long before the automobile manufacturers figured out that one car for these new suburban families was simply not enough. After all, if Dad took the only car to work, how was Mom going to be able to navigate the suburban landscape?”

“The two-car, suburban American family was born. This scenario repeated itself millions of times in the decades following World War II as America built its roadway systems and the American suburbs. Who understood then that the automobile, the singular item that was supposedly offering us so much freedom, would ultimately makes us fatter, make our environment dirtier, virtually ensure the death of Main Street U.S.A., and forever make us dependent on the automobile itself.”

Ref: Robert Cacciatore, New York Times, 11/5/09



American Dream
by Sarah Thomas,
Wellington's World of
Wearable Art 2009,
The Age 6/10/09

PT: Life-Blood of a City (Part 1)

“Melbourne is at present being expanded at its outer edges. Yet, as far back as the 1920s, it was known that the area (1123 sq km) within 21 km of the CBD could comfortably accommodate, not its present 2 million, but a population of 6 million, at an overall mean gross population density of 55 persons per hectare (not unduly high when compared with Barcelona’s up to 200 persons per hectare). We don’t need to be continually swallowing up for urban residential purposes the valuable agricultural, forest, grass and market gardening land at our urban fringes on which our local food supplies depend. The economic dis-benefit of Melbourne’s existing private car-dominated transport scene, and the economic benefit of having even a quite inadequate system of trunk and local-feeder public transport routes speak for themselves.

“Specific measures of the present system of trunk (suburban rail) routes show that it is only 20% of what it needs to be. With an existing length of just under 500 km of suburban rail reservation in service, this is one-fifth of the around 2500 km we would have had if the rail system had continued to be extended at the overall mean rate of 768 km per million population which it was from 1854 to 1929. The proposed 2 km grid of radial and ring trunk routes of the General Scheme requires, in all, around 2800 km of route reservation. Also, in the 18 municipalities within 20 to 21 km of the CBD the mean number of stations per sq km is 0.16 in an area of almost full urban development ; to be better than completely inadequate it needs to be at least 0.50, based on the fact that the area of influence around a suburban railway station extends as far as 800 m, covering an area of 2 sq km. However, when lines and groups of stations are taken into account, such areas, to be really satisfactorily served, need a 2 km grid of radial and ring trunk routes with stations at a mean spacing of 1 km. For such a configuration of lines and stations, the mean number of stations per sq km is 0.80. This amount, rather than the lower 0.50, provides the criterion for a trunk route system to satisfactorily serve a fully developed urban area.”

{Continued in #152}

Ref: Louis Fouvry, 3/2/10

And Also ...

“Norwegian customs officials were shocked to find a live alligator in luggage on board a train bound for Oslo, officials said. The reptile was found on Sunday on a train travelling from the Swedish city of Gothenburg. The reptile’s owner said he bought the ‘pet’ in Poland.”

Ref: The Age, 23/6/09

Transport Integration Bill (Part 5)

“The name of the Southern and Eastern Integrated Transport Authority (SEITA) is formally changed in the bill to the Linking Melbourne Authority, reflecting its broader role in the delivery of projects. ... The bill supports the ongoing role of V/Line in providing important passenger services to regional Victoria, but also its broader remit to operate the network in relation to below-rail assets and rail freight. In light of this role, the corporation will be renamed simply V/Line Corporation (as the term ‘passenger’ in its previous title does not reflect its broadened role). Milestone changes under the legislation significantly strengthen and refine the role of VicTrack in supporting the transport network. The changes are designed to properly recognise the crucial part that VicTrack has to play – as custodian of much of the state’s transport-related land, infrastructure and assets – in the delivery of quality transport outcomes. While VicTrack’s operations are diverse, the bill reflects the government’s intention that its core responsibility should be the protection of transport land, infrastructure and assets for the benefit of present and future transport users.

“The 2004 TFG International review of the role and accountability arrangements for public transport and marine safety in Victoria provided the framework -- implemented by the Rail Safety Act 2006 -- to establish the independent director, public transport safety, and the chief investigator, transport and marine safety investigations. However, the director of marine safety has not yet been given this same independence. The bill addresses this by merging the director of marine safety and the director, public transport safety. This is a significant change, creating a single independent transport safety regulator. It will provide a more integrated approach to safety regulation, while it is also likely to drive efficiencies by removing unnecessary duplication in systems and processes. In 2010, legislation will effect the

amalgamation of the Port of Melbourne Corporation and the Port of Hastings Corporation. The new Port Corporation, with the Victorian Regional Channels Authority, will be transferred into this statute, finalising the consolidation of all transport agencies under this new framework.

"The bill has two major sections:

- the new policy framework for integration and sustainability;
- alignment of transport bodies to the new policy framework.

"Part 1 of the bill sets out preliminary matters such as the purpose and definitions, and describes the agencies that have been declared transport bodies or interface bodies for the purposes of the bill.

"Part 2 sets out the new policy framework for transport -- the vision, transport system objectives and decision-making principles -- to deliver an integrated and sustainable transport system. It also includes the capacity of the minister to make statements of policy principle to provide support to transport and interface bodies in respect of the interpretation and application of the framework.

"Part 3 of the bill sets out the general powers of the minister and the secretary as well as the charter of the DoT to support the minister in the administration of the bill. It also provides for the establishment of a transport infrastructure development agent in the department to deliver projects under the Victorian transport plan.

"Part 4 sets out the planning requirements for the portfolio, including requiring the department to prepare or revise both the Victorian transport plan and corporate plans in line with the policy framework. The corporate planning provisions apply across the transport agencies established in the bill and enable a more integrated planning process led by the department and aligned to the policy framework in the bill.

"Part 5 continues the establishment of Victoria's transport system agencies: the director of public transport, who plays the crucial role in managing our public transport system; and the roads corporation, VicRoads, which plays a crucial role in road management, construction, maintenance and safety as well as supporting public transport, walking and cycling.

"Part 6 continues the establishment of the state's transport corporations, Victorian Rail Track and V/Line Corporation, and establishes the Linking Melbourne Authority (formerly SEITA).

"Part 7 provides for the state's independent safety compliance and investigation offices. This includes the director, transport safety and the chief investigator, transport safety. The director, transport safety is charged with public transport and marine safety regulation -- subsuming the roles of the director, public transport safety and the director of marine safety.

Part 8 of the bill relates to general matters, including regulation-making powers." {Cont. #152}

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

Investment in Tasmanian Rail

"[The Federal Government is] providing Tasmania with \$61 million in rail maintenance funding [and] is committed to [a further 133 million in] strategic investments in the State's rail network ... to put the rail network back on a secure footing."

Ref: Federal Government Media Release, 16/3/10

**Woodbury Bridge
Tasmania**



Sacrificing to Suburbia (Part 3)

Kim Jones' article starts in #149. Below continues some of the responses to the article:

"Suburbia was always ultimately about satisfying the very primal and powerful desire for personal territory over which one has control. It was always more desired than desirable, it was never the ideal way to live that people thought it was. Suburbs were never liveable. Suburbia is isolationist and anti-social, it is all about controlling personal space and excluding others from it. There is no need to fear density. Density is closeness, and opportunities for the sort of communication, interaction and community that suburbia is designed to inhibit. Quantity of space does not equal quality. You don't need a quarter-acre back yard to have enjoyable space - a well-designed and well-planted courtyard can be great. ... Most of the new houses we need are for singles and couples - perfect for more compact, liveable layouts. Fact is, suburbia as we know it was always unsustainable. It was always going to outstrip the capacity of infra-structure eventually, especially road space. Frankly, the suburban Great Australian Dream was doomed from the moment it was invented. It was always just a matter of how long we could string it out until reality caught up. Reality is catching up now - look at our roads and rails. Soon it will overtake, and it will leave us, and our quality of life, in its dust. Kim simply points out a very inconvenient truth - that we have to re-invent our cities."

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

"Do ... people want a back yard with all the maintenance costs and worries, are families better off living with a 150M2 backyard or having access to a community centre, walking tracks, exercise areas, ponds and swimming pools that are shared by all? We need to actually compare reality not our perception of good living. Multi storey is efficient living, good for community building and gives a cheap easy life style."

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

"Any arrangement where people must stock massive homes with multiple cars in order to drive to the most mundane activities of shopping, work and school, is grossly inefficient. Energy and water improvements, such as those offered in the business case for Armstrong Creek, are helpful, but the basic consumption, transport and sprawl problem remains."

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

"It's not just about saving energy and water. Sustainability should also encompass social concerns. People shutting themselves in large air-conditioned boxes and driving everywhere is not socially sustainable. There is precious little education/understanding of the built environment in Australia, having been cursed with precious little history (in terms of construction & cities) and blessed with swathes of land, we simply keep building outwards. We build over precious land that could be used to grow food nearby. Obsessed with quantity instead of quality, we want more: ever bigger houses with more stuff in it, despite fewer people living under the same roof. As a consequence, we are not doing nearly enough towards forming successful built environments.

How many people travel across the globe to look at suburbia? There's almost never anything worthwhile and significant to experience or look at in a typical suburb. Well designed cities on the other hand can be liveable and sustainable. Its not just about increasing densities- the infrastructure and public areas need to be there too. This talk by Kunstler summarises many of the issues rather well:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1ZeXnmDZMQ"

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

"I was starting to think I was the only person in Australia who could see the flaws in our suburban sprawl. I think 'That's Life' summed up the issues perfectly, and there's not much I can add to that. Other than to stress the social costs of the urban wasteland we have built. It is no coincidence that Melbourne is now grappling with rising violent crime, 'hoon' driving, alcohol related problems and the like. When you raise kids in an isolated and disconnected environment, this is what you get. Australians have been duped into believing that a large house and lots of land equates to quality of life. It doesn't. Community as a concept is breaking down in Australia, because we are all building gated fortresses with self-contained entertainment so we can lock ourselves away from the world. The social costs of this are now being realised."

Ref: 'Damien', Comments, The Age, 22/1/10

Doubts about Better Place

“The development boss of BMW [Klaus Draeger] has cast serious doubt on the viability of battery swapping as proposed by Electric Vehicle infrastructure developers such as California-based Better Place. ... Swap Stations - which are being touted not only by Better Place but several other private developers - were not a ‘real alternative’. ‘On one side you have many connections and inter-links between the battery and the vehicle’, he said. ‘On the electric side, on the data exchange side, on the coolant side. Then the battery has to be an integral part of the vehicle because it is dangerous in terms of crash. So all of this is not very much in favour of exchanging the batteries. And also we want to see further continuous development in batteries. If you fix the battery in its stage how it is, I am concerned you don’t see improvement in battery development’. Draeger also questioned how companies like Better Place could afford to own the batteries they would store for customer swapping. ‘Who is going to pay then for the battery’, he said. ‘Is Better Place going to pay for the battery? How are they earning the money?’ Better Place is building Electric Vehicle (EV) infrastructure in Israel, Denmark and San Francisco. Its Australian subsidiary, run by former Labor politician Evan Thornley, has announced plans to establish EV recharging infrastructure in Canberra.”

Ref: Toby Hagon, The Age, 4/3/10



Moving House – by Bike

“Geoff Browne and Tania Ivanka move house from Fitzroy to Brunswick by bicycle and the help of 21 friends and a ‘why not’ attitude. Their stereo, book-case and even couches were hauled aboard for the convoy – giving bystanders along the way something to cheer about. Browne says that apart from one abusive car driver who didn’t like the look of it all, the response was overwhelmingly positive and the day itself a big success. ‘It’s basically really a fun event to do with friends and a visible demonstration of how we can be independent from oil-based transport’ he says. ‘It’s also a really good way to warm the new house with every-one at the end of it’.”

Ref: Melbourne Times, 3/2/10

Interview with Oz Kayak (Part 21)

OK: A concept that should be considered in any transport discussion is: how much time do we spend in a health-benefiting environment? Whether it be on a railway station, whether it be on a tram or walking [or cycling] instead of sitting in a car in a sedentary environment. It is well known that the air inside a car is much worse than the air outside. That might surprise some people but that's so – and it is scientifically research documented. The amount of time [sitting in the car], influences the health outcome: if you are in a car for three minutes, the pollution of course is a lot less than sitting in a car for three hours, especially a diesel vehicle. So there is a lot of opportunity to organise transport in a health-benefiting way.

SI: What you are alluding to is that the more people are involved in active transport – walking and cycling – which includes catching trains or trams because hopefully there will be walking or cycling component at each end of the journey – the healthier they can become.

OK: Correct.

SI: But there is a secondary issue – apart from the air pollution – for people sitting in cars for long commutes, and that is reports of back problems.

OK: That is correct. The adverse impact of the sedentary nature of car driving is documented.
{Continued in #152}

And Also ...

“A Danish hotel is pioneering a pedal-power electricity generation scheme it hopes will catch on in other countries. The Crowne Plaza Copenhagen Towers, 15 minutes from the centre of the Danish capital and five minutes from Scandinavia's main airport, is installing two exercise bicycles hooked up to generators. Guests will be invited to jump on and start pedalling – and if they produce enough electricity they will be given a free meal [worth A\$47]. From June, they will be able to race against the 366-room hotel's solar panel system in a bid to produce the most electricity. ‘Anyone producing 10 watt hours of electricity or more for the hotel will be given a locally produced complimentary meal encouraging guests to not only get fit but also reduce their carbon footprint and save electricity and money’, the hotel said in a statement.”

Ref: Reuters, The Age, 15/4/10