

Favouring Road over Rail is a Fallacy

"The state budget fails to mention that 84% of Melbourne households are now without available train services. Most have no real transport choice, as bus services run at 30 to 45-minute intervals, or not at all. The priority for John Brumby, Tim Pallas, and Martin Pakula is clearly to service trucks and cars with more freeways, beginning with the monster about to slice through Footscray and Sunshine. Westlink will increase truck and car movements by 20,000 a day, and also increase pollution, emissions, collisions, noise, hospital admissions, and the national fuel bill. Brumby is also planning to destroy Hoddle Street and its surrounds with concrete and steel flyovers and canyons, from Clifton Hill to south Richmond. Compare that with passenger and freight trains, which use less than one-third of the fuel per tonne carried, to the economic benefit of the whole state."

Brian Buckley, The Age, 6/5/10

"Premier John Brumby has said his government will press ahead with plans for WestLink, a multibillion-dollar freeway under Footscray and through Sunshine West, despite the economic case for the road being exposed as poor. ... '[He said:] we need to be investing in transport'."

Ref: Clay Lucas, The Age, 22/10/10

Bike Parking Problems in Auckland

"Auckland's main bike hire operator ... Nextbike is being forced to cull its fleet to comply with a city council resource consent about where bicycles can be parked. It is absurd that Auckland City is forcing Nextbike to reduce the number of bikes available. Fewer bikes mean fewer options for people getting around Auckland. The real problem here is not too many bikes, but a shortage of bicycle racks. Providing bicycle parking facilities is a core responsibility of Auckland City Council, and a simple cost-effective alternative to providing for more cars. Racks that support two bicycles each cost the Council \$1500 and have a minimal maintenance cost. They help to achieve the Council's goal of increasing cycling and they reduce congestion, noise and pollution in the city centre. In contrast, Auckland City has set aside millions of dollars in its Annual Plan to upgrade the public Civic Square car park, which has over 500 parking spaces. There are an estimated 100 public bicycle parks in the Auckland CBD, compared with tens of thousands of car parks. A big increase in the number of public bicycle racks will save the city and the community millions in parking, road maintenance & congestion costs."

Ref: Keith Locke, MP, Media Release, 20/4/10

Hidden Cost of Private Parking

"Two years ago, developer Paul Fridman would not have contemplated building an apartment block without a car space for each dwelling. But when 40 apartments without car spaces went up for sale in his company Fridcorp's lilli development in South Yarra last year, all sold out within two weeks. 'In the last couple of years it's really changed', Mr Fridman said. 'And where I see it changing is where there is good public transport'. Once considered essential for any development outside the CBD, a car space for each apartment is no longer a given. Where developers struggled to gain approval for projects with fewer than one car space per dwelling, inner-city councils are now encouraging moves to swap car space areas for bike racks and share-car parking. Developers say a combination of environmental concerns, lifestyle choices and the rising cost of homes is fuelling demand for apartments with no car spots. The

Article you won't see this week:

New Light Rail to Rowville

'If you look at all of these big projects ... they don't come up with big benefit-cost ratios, that is the nature of these big projects, because they are very, very long-term in their nature' said the Premier 'but we need to be investing in Public Transport.'

Real Estate

Institute of Victoria does not collate specific figures, but it said demand had grown in the past four years, with affordability a big factor.

"The REIV

estimated a car spot added between \$40,000 and \$100,000 to the cost of a new apartment, a significant expense in a market where the median apartment price has risen 25% in the past year. Developer Hamton, which offered car-space-free apartments in its Society South Yarra building, said an apartment with no car park could be as much as \$50,000 cheaper. Joint managing developer Paul Hameister said that while apartments without car spaces were harder to sell, 'there's a material and growing part of the market that's happy to not own a car'. The trend is being pushed by government policies, as councils and the state government grapple with balancing demand for new housing in established suburbs with groaning traffic congestion. The City of Melbourne planning scheme has changed to specify a maximum of one car space per apartment in developments of four storeys or higher in Carlton, Southbank and some other areas, down from the previous requirement for at least two. The changes, introduced in March, also make it easier for developers to build apartments without car spots."

Ref: Ruth Williams and Deborah Gough, The Age, 9/5/10

Biofuels in the Top End

"Norwegian company ENEnergy has reportedly identified land in the [Northern] Territory, Western Australia, and Queensland as sites to intensely cultivate the plant *Arundo donax* to produce large volumes of ethanol. ENEnergy spokesman Hans Olav Bjorenak told the ABC each plantation would be larger than 100,000 hectares. He said 20,000ha alone could produce enough energy to power a city the size of Canberra for a year. 'We think that the Top End of Australia effectively can become the Saudi Arabia of the renewable oil world', he said. Mr Bjorenak says the ethanol would be exported to Europe and Asia, but the company could also sell locally.



'Biofuel!'

"Environment Centre co-ordinator Stuart Blanch said there were some serious concerns about the growing of *Arundo donax*, which is a known weed. 'The big issues are land clearing, water use, and herbicides and pesticides', he said. 'I'm talking to people in the government, and I don't think there have been any serious discussions. There's too high a risk in planting weeds in the Territory. We already have too many of them and the giant reed is like a big brother of gamba grass. It grows very tall, to 6m, it grows 10cm a day. It's very flammable during the dry season and it also likes wet feet. It could be the wetter cousin of gamba grass, invading rivers and floodplains'."

Ref: Daniel Bouchier, NT News, 17/1/10



Arundo donax Photo: US National Park Service

Obesity

"The obesity problem is real. In America today, one of three children is overweight or obese. Between 1999 and 2005, the number of hospitalizations attributable to childhood obesity doubled. And obesity before adulthood is connected to a lifelong pattern of illness."

Ref: David Gratzner, City Journal, 10/3/10

"Public transport users get a daily average of 41 minutes physical exercise, compared with an average of eight minutes for those who only drive, according to an analysis of Victorian travel data. Research completed by the Bus Association of Victoria has found that those who use public transport in Melbourne are likely to get their recommended daily dose of physical activity as a 'side effect' of their travel. Exercise guidelines produced by the federal government recommend that adults spend at least 30 minutes a day walking, cycling or doing another activity that increases their heart rate. An Access Economics report prepared for

Diabetes Australia estimated the total economic cost of obesity in Australia was about \$58 billion in 2008. ... Bus Association policy manager Chris Loader said the study showed that improving public transport services was crucial. 'The research demonstrates that it brings significant public health benefits', he said."

Ref: Clay Lucas, The Age, 12/3/10

Interview with Oz Kayak (Part 26)

OK: Footscray (central) should be an urban village. There is a lot wrong with Footscray and a lot you could do [there]. Another place that is a failure is the railway development at Broadmeadows. And it's very interesting when you look at why these [sorts of] places might be failures – apart from obviously lack of enforcement of social norms – they are windy and aesthetically poor. ... City Square, Federation Square and Riverlands are doing well. If they've detracted from Southbank it's not noticeable and there are studies to show that it [Southbank] has been no impact on Lygon Street.

SI: More people are coming into; more people are living in [the city centre of] Melbourne.

OK: Going back to my starting point, which is healthy time use, I'd like to highlight the fact that we should spend a lot more time in the clean-air natural-light environment – and twilight is still natural light. {Continued in #127}

Brisbane Ferries

"New CityCat ferry terminals have been announced for Teneriffe and the Northshore Hamilton complex near Brisbane Airport. Lord Mayor Campbell Newman said the Northshore Hamilton CityCat stop would be running in two years 'at no cost to ratepayers'. ... Both new terminals will be 'double-header', allowing two CityCats to arrive and depart at the same time. CityCat terminals cost about \$4 million to build, with both upstream and downstream berths, and private sector investment via public tender being courted for the new terminals. ... The Northshore Hamilton areas is six kilometres from the Brisbane CBD near Bretts Wharf and covers 304-hectares of land, with a two kilometre river frontage. The second new CityCat stop, a \$4.5 million stop at Teneriffe, will be one-third funded by contributions from developers in the area. Four existing terminals - Bretts Wharf, Bulimba, Hawthorne and West End - will also be upgraded from early 2011."

Ref: Tony Moore, Brisbane Times, 4/5/10

"How about some new ferries as well. My girlfriend already keeps missing CityCats because they're loaded before they get to Sydney Street."

Ref: Comments, Brisbane Times, 4/5/10

"So they're building two new stops near existing ferry points to pick up more commuters, but not building stops anywhere these people might be trying to get to, like Milton or West End. Excellent decision-making. There's a reason peak hour on Coro Drive is gridlocked with cars and buses."

Ref: Comments, Brisbane Times, 4/5/10

Shunning the Clem7

"Brisbane motorists have continued to avoid the Clem7 tunnel, prompting its operators to extend a toll discount period to the end of the financial year. In figures released to the Australian Stock Exchange this afternoon, the tunnel's operator RiverCity Motorway revealed an average of just 21,178 vehicles used the toll road daily. The highest number of trips on a single workday during the month was 25,688. By the company's own admission, that was 'well below the start-up forecast of approximately 60,000 trips per day'."

Ref: Cameron Atfield, Brisbane Times, 4/5/10

"Will you use the tunnel now that the discounted toll period has been extended to the end of the financial year?"

Yes: 19%; No: 81%, Votes: 1,263"

Ref: Brisbane Times Poll, 4/5/10

<http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/business/motorists-continue-to-shun-clem7-20100504-u5l1.html>

More on the Clem7 Road Tunnel

"Lutwyche Road drivers face two years of worsening congestion as a result of the Clem7 tunnel. An Environmental Impact Study completed in 2005 found that traffic on the busy north-side road would have worsened by 10,300 vehicles a day by 2016 as a result of the Clem7 being built."

Ref: Tony Moore, Brisbane Times, 19/3/10

"Now how about we get rid of some traffic lights along the way? The pedestrian traffic lights between the pub and gym aren't needed."

Ref: 'Gavman', Brisbane Times, 19/3/10

"How the hell are pedestrians supposed to cross the road then, Geniuses? Mad dash across the speeding traffic? This is what happens when you build an entire city with cars as the focus and not people." Ref: 'Peter', Brisbane Times, 19/3/10

"Ironic, then, that the tunnel is named after the person who did just this. Let's celebrate short-sightedness with yet more ways to congest the city's roads."

Ref: 'Tim-e', Brisbane Times, 19/3/10

"The pedestrian traffic lights between the pub and gym are, by definition, only activated by pedestrians when needed. Traffic lights are needed to manage traffic. If you are driving around in a car, especially without other passengers, you are part of the problem."

Ref: 'Bob', Brisbane Times, 19/3/10

"Pumping the Clem 7 traffic into Lutwyche Rd is just foolish, same traffic problem, new location."

Ref: 'Timothyx', Brisbane Times, 19/3/10

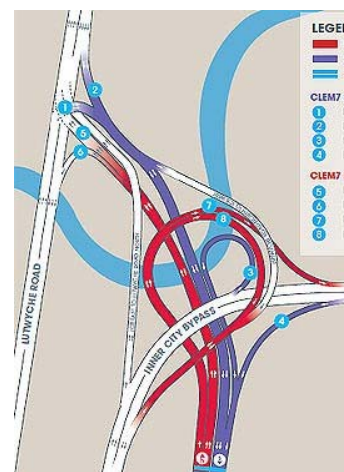
"There has been not one traffic engineer who has said that this tunnel will reduce traffic. At best it only displaces traffic. ... This tunnel is a civil engineers wet dream, but it will do nothing to fix traffic issues in Brisbane."

Ref: 'Dangerman', Brisbane Times, 19/3/10

"Brisbane's own 'Spaghetti Junction'.

Clem7's northern intersection at Bowen Hills."

Ref: Brisbane Times, 15/3/10



Clem Jones & Brisbane Trams (Pt 2)

“Jones, [was] Lord Mayor [of Brisbane] for 14 years from 1961 ... But along the way Clem Jones was also the man who pulled the trams out of Brisbane in 1969. By all accounts, no-one was particularly happy that last day of the trams, except a few of the traffic engineers. As a replacement, Jones and his administration embarked on the vast road-building schemes that now define the modern Australian city, and all to no avail. Brisbane is horribly clogged with car traffic, no matter what. ... As with most cities, the trams were a part of the urban infrastructure that resonated long after their demise. The great Brisbane writer David Malouf suggests that the city is still marked up with the ghosts of the tramlines. ...

“Jones did what he thought was necessary - albeit advised by American planners, apparently. ... Before Jones, many of Brisbane's roads 'even those just a kilometre from the GPO', reports The Australian, breathlessly - were 'uncurbed and unsurfaced dirt'. Admittedly the dirt roads weren't tenable and Jones's administration sorted all of that. But in doing so, it fully orientated the city towards the car. There's an in-built prejudice against public transport around this. Jones was quoted as saying that his ideal was for the working man to be driving his own car, not catching a tram. This is where Australia looked to American values ...

“There are clearly spatial similarities between Australian and American cities, but I'm yet to perceive the swing back towards public transport seen across the US west coast, from the Bay Area up to Portland and Seattle (never mind New York City, which might be a special case). It's not a party political issue either; Jones was solid Labor, though his sentiment was close to Margaret Thatcher's infamous statement: 'Any man who rides a bus to work after the age of 30 can count himself a failure in life'. Here we see not only Thatcher's near-psychotic levels of misanthropy but also, crucially, her lack of long-term strategic vision. The question now is, at what point will we be saying 'any man who doesn't ride a bus won't be getting to work'. Jones was far less destructive than Thatcher but either way, an entire car-centric infrastructure will now have to be taken apart, bit by bit, and

reconstructed with mass-transit systems in the ascendancy. As with Sydney, that realisation is not widespread yet, and the culture is so ingrained as to actually prevent people from thinking there could be another way. A recent Business Week article seems to assume that citizens have got the message: 'The size of a city determines its need for a metro system. Cities of a few million people - or those anticipating huge population growth - really can't do without a mass transit system. But cities of one or two million inhabitants can choose between a subway and a surface tramway, which costs far less but also runs more slowly'. But I'm not sure it's that well understood - simply a case of choosing between subway or tramway. Of course, there are now plans to for the trams to return to the 1.8m strong Brisbane along with bus systems weaving underground and around the centre. Bike lanes are emerging, albeit threaded through some of the busiest and most dangerous roads in the country. These are usually seen in addition to road-schemes, rather than as progressive replacement. So it's a start, but hearing the currents in everyday conversation in this city, people have yet to understand the scale of

change required to the city, that quite shocking sense of dismantling the entire infrastructure.

“It's too simplistic to blame Jones or his administration - as a New World city boss of the 1950s and 1960s, almost anyone would have seen cars as a first order object to organise around. Only the already dense cities of the Old World were fortunate enough to have the right form for mass transit (even then Paris, New York, London, Boston, Barcelona et al did their best to slice their fabric apart with roadways, turning their backs on rivers or harbours, only to have to now re-build.) Yet even with a shift towards private ownership of cars, there was no real reason, strategic or economic, to pull the trams and light rail systems out of cities, and certainly no need to go as far as Jones or Thatcher suggested. So Brisbane is potentially beautiful and Clem Jones seemed like a good man. He helped shaped what's emerging as a great city ... Yet it's symptomatic of the lack of understanding of the ills of the modern Australian city that few people are pointing out the flaws in building Brisbane around the car.”

Ref: Dan Hill, City of Sound, 21/12/07
<http://www.cityofsound.com/blog/history/>



Cars and trams travelling along Victoria Bridge, Brisbane, 1952
Photo: State Library of Queensland

The Rubbish Trams of Zürich (Part 1)

“Students of tramway history will recall that, not very long ago, many major and even some minor tram systems carried noteworthy freight as well as passenger traffic. Tram tracks were often the best way to access industries that were built away from railway lines. Fuel shortages during World War II gave further incentive to move goods by tram. Yet the subsequent development of road haulage put an end to this activity. Today the practice continues low key in some Eastern European cities, and has recently been revived in Dresden with the introduction of the much publicised tram freight shuttle serving the Volkswagen factory. Nevertheless, it came as quite a surprise to learn of the introduction of a freight tram in Zürich.

“Zürich's urban network never saw much movement of freight, although the interurban lines in their heyday moved cargo ranging from mail to meat, milk and beer. The last such service was discontinued in 1966. So why reintroduce freight trams?

“ERZ (Entsorgung und Recycling Zürich) is the city refuse disposal service. In Zürich, items too bulky for the dustcart can be collected at a charge, or left for free at one of the two ERZ yards. Yet 300 tonnes of bulky waste items are dumped illegally every year. ERZ has been brainstorming on how to provide a more attractive yet inexpensive service. Zürich has an extensive tram network serving most neighbourhoods. There are also many suitable sidings not used by regular services. ERZ approached the tram company, VBZ, with the revolutionary idea of using this infrastructure to collect bulky refuse in the neighbourhoods, so making disposal much more straightforward for residents. The idea was met with enthusiasm and Cargotram was born.

“Cargotram took only a couple of months to realise, and cost ERZ some 30,000 Swiss Franks (about £14,000, €20,000 or US \$22,000).



An equivalent road vehicle would have taken much longer to acquire and been far more costly. The key to the low price is the creative use of existing surplus vehicles combined with standard parts. The payload is carried in two standard refuse containers. These are carried on four-wheeled flat wagons. These flat wagons are, incidentally, former works wagons dating from 1929. Their trucks are Peckham originals dating from 1898. The two wagons are hauled by works tram number 1922. This started life as standard tram number 1351 in 1940 and was converted to a snow plough in 1980. It has been repainted in Zürich's traditional blue and white, but with the colours reversed to clearly distinguish it from passenger trams.

“Cargotram runs four times a month, each time from a different pick-up point. From 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. residents can leave bulky items free of charge. After this, the tram runs to Werdhölzli terminus which is in the immediate vicinity of an ERZ yard. The pilot phase was commenced on 15th April. On that day 7.7 tonnes of refuse were collected, which ERZ considers quite a success. ERZ will be carefully monitoring this trial, which will be completed on 18th December. Then a decision will be taken as to whether the service will be continued or even extended to other destinations.

“Cargotram not only makes a contribution towards reducing congestion and pollution, it also provides a valuable service to residents. Together with exemplary public transport, attractive local amenities and the 'Mobility' car sharing pool it can be seen as part of a wider concept offering residents a

higher quality of life without having to own an automobile. But even beyond this, it is a symbol of innovation which the public can greet with enthusiasm and sympathy: qualities not shared by the unimaginative, noisy obtrusive and polluting road hauled alternative. Zürich has often led the way in innovation. If Cargotram holds its promises, why shouldn't other cities implement similar schemes or other cargoes be carried?”

Ref: All About Zürich's Cargotram
www.proaktiva.ch/tram/zurich/cargotram.html

Problems with a Guided Busway

"It is Cambridgeshire's very own soap opera, with more twists and turns in the plot than the 15-mile concrete track now stretching starkly - and emptily - across the Cambridgeshire countryside. The guided bus has been promised for so long, and delayed so many times, that some reckon it has become a standing joke. By now, the buses should have been whizzing back and forth between St Ives and Cambridge [in the UK]. But at this time last year, when the busway was due to become operational, the county council revealed it was not quite ready, and announced it had been delayed until springtime.

"As spring approached, the news came through that it was behind schedule again, with flooding and other bad weather to blame. A new date of 'later summer 2009' was set. Summer came . . . and went. Contractor BAM Nuttall said it could not hand over the busway until October. The council then said it would need to spend November carrying out final checks, but that everything was on course for a launch date of November 29. With sickening inexorability, passengers have now been told that this is not going to happen either. As the News reported yesterday (Tuesday, 17 November), 'finishing work' has yet to be finished - and that means the contractors and the council are unable to sign off the job.

"In between all the hold-ups, there has been double-decker loads of additional controversy - rows over how much the scheme is costing, anxiety over flooding, anger over crushed toads, and an endless parade of trespassing trucks, cars, cyclists, scooter-riding teenagers, and cows. No doubt fearful of exposing themselves to further opprobrium by making another promise they fail to keep, the powers-that-be at Shire Hall have now opted not to set a new opening date....

"BAM Nuttall is as keen as we are to get buses running and has said it will put in the resources

needed to do that. One immediate side effect of the latest delay is the impact it will have on other bus services. Coinciding with the planned start of the guided bus, Stagecoach had planned changes to its 5, 15 and 21 [bus] routes, as well as creating a new link to the St Ives Park-and-Ride site, route 20. Andy Campbell, the firm's managing director,

told the News: 'These will now be shelved until the eventual opening'. ... Cambridge MP David Howarth said: 'I am extremely concerned about the situation with bus travel generally in Cambridge. Passengers have been left facing huge uncertainties about the future of services across the city, and it would appear decisions are being made about the city on the back of the guided bus project. Passengers deserve answers.

They rely on regular services, not only to take them into the city but for appointments at Addenbrooke's Hospital. They need to know if these services will be sacrificed to make way for the guided bus'. ...

"While the debate continues over exactly when the bus system will begin operating, other problems are looming on the horizon. ... As part of the busway scheme, a park and ride car park has been built at St Ives, and because it is free, councillors on the district council fear drivers will 'migrate' there from the town's other car parks, where charges are made. The result could mean a big drop in income for the council. A report being considered by a panel of the council today 'This could have a detrimental effect on town centre parking, with users switching to

the availability of free parking, given the close walking distance to the town centre. It could have a detrimental effect on overall parking income'."

Ref: Chris Elliott, Cambridge News, 18/11/09

"This just underlines the incompetence levels on a project that should never have been given the go ahead to be built. It would have been a lot cheaper to have reinstated the original railway - and much less hassle - and it could have been joined up with the main London to Scotland line. That would have taken the real problem traffic off the A14, the container lorries."

Ref: Robert Caldercoat, Comments, Cambridge News, 18/11/09
> More: <http://www.noguidedbus.com/>



Cambridge Busway

Photo:

<http://anonw.wordpress.com/2009/11/17/camb-ridge-busway-pictures-swavesey-to-st-ives/>



"Stagecoach has clearly got fed up with the busway delays - the slogan on the buses used to read 'I'll be on the busway soon, will you'?" Ref: Moblog, 15/2/10