

Federal Budget Rolls Out Roads

"The rollout of the biggest road building program in the nation's history is approaching its halfway point, with a further \$4.2 billion committed in the 2010-11 Budget to begin, progress or complete a long list of large and smaller scale projects. Upon coming to office, the Rudd Labor Government doubled road spending. ... All up, our Nation Building investment is \$27.7 billion over six years (2008-09 to 2013-14) to maintain and upgrade the nation's highways and major arterials, with the states and territories contributing a further \$6 billion. ... Never before has a Federal Government invested so much with such urgency and purpose." **Ref: Federal Media Release, 12/5/10**

Article you won't see this week:

Federal Government Delivers on Urban Transit

'After three years in power we've delivered urban transit equal to the needs of the 21st century – one which supports social mobility and higher national productivity. The 2010-11 Budget continues this work. We've reduced over crowding on trains with the provision of new rolling stock manufactured in Australia. Port Phillip Bay in Victoria has marvellous fast ferries. Even our regional cities are starting to roll out tram networks. All of these modes are running on renewable energy.'

Living Car-Free

"When [Nikki] Roberts crunched the numbers, she realised she could save between \$150 and \$200 a fortnight doing without a vehicle and its associated upkeep, registration, fuel and toll costs. She channelled the spare cash into a new apartment - one unencumbered by a car space. ... The most recent figures show that within the City of Melbourne, one in 1.9 dwellings went without a car in 2006, up from one in 3.3 dwellings in 2001. 'What the market is saying is that where the public transport is good, and where the local amenity is good, where there are activities, and I can walk to the IGA and I have the facilities all easy distance, then I'm happy to go without a car', says Callum Fraser, a director of architects Elenberg Fraser. For some, affordability is the big factor. Others are motivated by a combination of lifestyle and environmental concerns. ... Not owning a car in the past had been seen as a sign of social exclusion

Big Money Allocated for Roads

"The highly anticipated Gold Coast Rapid Transit project takes a further step towards reality today with Premier Anna Bligh and Federal Transport Minister Anthony Albanese opening bids for \$110 million worth of roadwork contracts. ... The works would include road widening, the relocation of public utilities and accommodation works such as the reinstatement of driveways, fencing and car parks. Premier Bligh said the project is the first light rail network in any regional Australian city and [it] will take 75,000 cars off Gold Coast roads when it is completed in 2014. This will provide a fully integrated public transport system and a more affordable and reliable alternative to car travel for all Coast residents, boosting public transport from 4% to 10%." **Ref: Fed/State Media Release, 13/5/10**

"It's now 80 years since any Victorian state government built a new suburban railway line. In that time the population of Melbourne has grown from 1 million to 4 million."

Ref: Robert Humphreys, The Age, 22/5/10

And Also ...

"Woe betide anyone who gets between [Premier] John Brumby and a new freeway. The report on the cost analysis of the Westlink freeway would have taken the snap and crackle out of his rice bubbles." **Ref: Rod Oaten, The Age, 22/5/10**

and poverty, says Monash University chairman of public transport Graham Currie. But in the new era of inner suburban growth and environmental concerns, car ownership did not have the same cachet. Professor Currie says car ownership is not the same predictor of wealth and social advantage it once was, given the increase in apartment and high-density living, and the introduction of car share companies. In the City of Melbourne, there are three car share operators, with 26 on-street parking bays and six off-street in the City Square car park. Other arrangements exist in other car parks not operated by the city."

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



'Wow, I like your car.'

Bike Share

“London is introducing a public bicycle system ... similar to the successful Velib scheme in Paris. The bikes will be available from 400 docking stations around inner London from July 30. They will be available 24 hours a day, year round, with neither bookings nor helmets required. Docking stations will be within 300 metres of each other and most will be within zone one of the London Underground. Regular riders will be able to use a chip-enabled card to hire bikes, while casual riders will pay at terminals at the docking stations. There will be an access fee of £1 (\$1.66) for 24 hours and £5 for seven days - as well as a timed hire fee ranging from £1 an hour to £50 for 24 hours. The first 30 minutes will be free. The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, considers the scheme to be one of his top transport priorities.”

Ref: The Sydney Morning Herald, 22/5/10

“Melbourne's first ever public bike hire scheme is underway - with the early roll-out of the first 100 bicycles - although the government will not say how many people are expected to use the scheme. The distinctive electric-blue bicycles will be available at 10 docking stations across the CBD. Subscribers will be able to join the scheme for \$50 a year, \$8 a week or \$2.50 a day. Users will then be able to take the bicycles for 30 minutes without charge. ‘We now have ten stations operating along the Swanston Street/St Kilda Road corridor and over the coming weeks we will progressively add the additional 40 stations – with the full system to be in place by the middle of the year’, [said Roads Minister Tim Pallas]. Melbourne is the only city in the world with compulsory helmet laws to have launched a bike share scheme.”

Ref: Clay Lucas, The Age, 31/5/10

More on CNG for Transport

“American Honda has announced that dealers in Oklahoma now have the compressed natural gas powered Honda Civic GX ... because CNG claims to be a clean, sustainable, domestically sourced alternative fuel. ... In 2006 the Civic GX became available for the first time to retail customers in California. Since then retail sales have expanded to New York, Utah and now, Oklahoma.”

Ref: Peter Barnwell, Leader News 25/5/10

Problems with Oil

“A group of 300 hardy souls braved the cold in the South West at the weekend to protest against the prospect of oil development in the region. They've been joined by more than 5,000 people who have signed up to Facebook groups which are implacably opposed to developing an oil industry off the coast of Margaret River after the Federal Government approved the area for exploration. The same area, 80 kilometres off the coast in the Mentelle Basin, had been earmarked as a potential marine sanctuary. ...

Article you won't see this week:

Federal and State Ministers notice the Sun

‘When we went outside we noticed the Sun was shining’ said the Ministers in a joint statement ‘and that reminded us that we can supply the whole world’s energy needs by harnessing the Sun in just a small portion of our desert’.

“The Government's approval of the exploration lease came at a tricky time for those pushing for oil development. The Montara oil spill in the Timor Sea off the northern coast of Western Australia and the more recent disaster in the Gulf of Mexico have triggered widespread criticism and a plunge in the public's confidence in the oil industry. ... But, WA's Mines and Petroleum Minister Norman Moore has backed the

Federal Resources Minister, Martin Ferguson's, decision to approve the lease. ‘I do find it interesting that people who complain about these things drive to work in their motorcars and I just wonder what they think is going to fuel those if we don't have an ongoing supply of oil and those sorts of petroleum fuels in the future’, Mr Moore says.”

Ref: Charlotte Hamlyn, ABC News, 31/5/10



Louisiana, sunrise [that's a clue], May 23, 2010
Photo: John Moore, National Post, 23/5/10

Fuel Efficiency over Performance

“Of 31 automotive attitudes asked of more than 15,000 Australian drivers in the latest Roy Morgan Research survey, the largest majority of Australian drivers agree ‘fuel efficiency is more important than high performance’ (79.9% agree).”

Ray Morgan Media Release, 11/3/10

On Melbourne's Transport

"Our transport has to meet the needs of a growing population (which in Melbourne's case is very rapid), be economically viable and minimise environmental harm. Professor Garnaut had several interesting points to make [at the Metropolitan Transport Forum event at the Sustainable Living Festival]. He drew attention to the grim reality that Australia leads all developed countries in total greenhouse gas emissions per capita (yes, we're even ahead of America). We use more private transport (mainly cars) than most of the developed world and all of our larger cities (Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Perth) are in the bottom third of developed cities when it comes to using public transport, walking or cycling. He described how only 27% of Melbournians regularly commute to work via public transport, walking or cycling (and in doing so, lead every other Australian city) compared to 82% of Hong Kong's population. Astonishing when you consider the fact that Hong Kong has approximately 3 million more people than Melbourne. Clearly, we have a long way to go.

"And it may come as a surprise to hear that if we all changed to electric cars tomorrow, this would actually increase our greenhouse gas emissions significantly. The reason, Professor Garnaut explained, is that Melbourne (and most of Australia) still relies heavily on coal for electricity. So electric cars are good but only if they are powered by clean energy such as solar, water or wind. He also spoke of reviewing the distribution of finance between the states and territories. Funds that could be used to improve infrastructure are often diverted away from our biggest cities, Melbourne and Sydney – the ones that need them most. This is in contrast to well-known international cities like London.

"As a proud Melbournian, I feel passionately about the health of this city. I believe that moving people onto public transport is more achievable than a mass switch to electric cars and simultaneous overhaul of our electricity supply to clean energy (at least in the short term anyway). It would also combat the growing congestion on our roads. But encouraging public transport use starts with a reliable and sustainable system that can be used by all. Unfortunately this description does not currently apply. Governments, at all levels, often overlook long-term planning for the 'quick fix' to impress voters. Over time, the lack of investment in Melbourne's infrastructure has become all too apparent. For example, it's ludicrous that rail workers may have to hose down the train tracks on hot days because they start to buckle. I only hope it isn't drinking water

*they use while the rest of us observe the 155L target set by the government (that would be very ironic indeed). We have seen the subsequent train cancellations bring the city to a grinding halt on more than one occasion. In short, on hot days our public transport becomes a game of chance and in a city where the mercury often heads north of 35°C, that's a game we play too often. How long are we prepared to put up with a third-world public transport system? Professor Garnaut concluded his talk by saying Melbourne must be re-designed in order to move forward. It's a huge project that will take decades but it needs to happen. Given that our population is projected to grow a further 1.5 million by 2036, it's clear that Melbourne needs rescuing now. Not tomorrow. Not next year. This great city just won't cope otherwise." Ref: **Brandy Munro, Wellmark Perspexa, 26/2/10** <http://www.peopleproductivityplanet.com/2010/02/urban-decay-the-slow-death-of-melbourne/>*

Question to the Minister

We have submitted the questions below to the Victorian Public Transport Minister Martin Pakula and Department of Transport Secretary Jim Betts. It will be interesting to hear their responses.

Question for the Minister: Can the Minister define the spending allocation of state funds for each of the past five years under the follow categories: (1) Public Transport; (2) Roads; (3) Level Crossings; (4) Freight Rail and Ports; and the new money allocated in the recent state budget under the same headings?

Question for the Secretary: There appears to be a prevalent view within the Department – enunciated by two DOT staff at a workshop as recently as the middle of May 2010 – that:

- (i) urban sprawl is not only acceptable but desirable;
- (ii) provision of an occasional bus service is a perfectly adequate public transport response in fringe suburbs;
- (iii) attracting less than 6% of the local population to public transport ridership in outer suburbs is acceptable;
- (iv) rail-based modes of transport are not appropriate as they "cost too much" even though this does not seem to be a deterrent to building more freeways; and
- (v) rail-based modes of transport are not viable in low-to-medium density areas (even though Albert Park and Middle Park can support two tramlines with typically one and two storey buildings).

Does the Secretary share these views? If not, what is being done to rectify this archaic thinking within the Department?

Telebus in Melbourne's Far East

"TeleBus was originally developed to provide an effective bus service to new estates, where the road network made it difficult for normal bus routes to access the new areas. The success of TeleBus has been due to the 'keep it simple' philosophy, and to the enthusiasm of all of the staff involved over the years. Although we started small, now there are 12 Telebuses operating in Mooroolbark, Lilydale, Croydon Hills, Chirside

Park and Rowville, with the possibility of more to come as suitable areas are investigated. The original aspect of the service (i.e. servicing new

estates) is still important, but small buses have recently been 'rediscovered' as a cost effective way of providing service in areas of low passenger demand. At the current stage of development, TeleBus passengers can use the service in two ways. Firstly, they may board or leave the bus at one of the Telebus fixed stops in the area, and pay the normal MET fare. Alternatively, they may telephone and request to be picked up from home, or may ask the driver to be dropped off at home. In either case, passengers pay a small surcharge for this personalised service."

Ref: Grenda Transit Management website
http://www.grenda.com.au/default.php?doc_id=103

Interview with Oz Kayak (Part 27)

SI: Let's have a chat about the taxi industry [in Victoria] where there seems to be enormous problems. Not just the drivers, not just the cost, but even the selection of vehicle types – it seems to be a mess.

OK: Well to buy a [taxi] plate today is close to half a million bucks. Who gets the return? Is it the owner? Or the big owner (many who own more than 100 taxis)? And the street rate of the driver: they've got to pay \$600 per week.

SI: What do you mean they have to pay ...?

OK: To the [taxi vehicle] owner they have to pay \$600 per week, out of their earnings. And then there's a split. So they are working long hours and I observe that some of the service is not up to scratch because they [the drivers] are tired. And I don't think that any work practice audit should permit what is going on.

{Continued in #158}

On the Melbourne Airport Rail Link

"The subject of a Melbourne Airport rail line is again a matter of public discussion. But we talk about an airport rail line as though one type of line is all that's needed. Such a line is usually thought of as a dedicated line from Southern Cross to Tullamarine without intermediate stations. On this basis of the typical government notion of what an airport rail service is supposed to be, transport consultants are called in to investigate and report

on its viability. So far, the answer has been that under these circumstances, such a rail line would not generate sufficient passenger loadings to make such a service financially viable. The

lack of sufficient passenger loadings has occurred because the line proposed had no intermediate stations to make it accessible to a sufficient number of travellers, and also for lack of a northerly extension to, eg, Sunbury. And so governments, breathing a sigh of relief, are let off the hook. They then tell us that the present Skybus and taxi services are all that is needed at present.

"Yet, many of us are still convinced of the need of an airport rail service, because, as less costly alternatives to road-based systems, they are both high-capacity and space-efficient. What, then, is wrong with the current consultative process? For, obviously, there is something very wrong in our current thinking, especially when there are accompanying comments that private car travel on the Tullamarine Expressway [tollway-freeway] has reached its traffic capacity, financial and spatial limits. The whole question must be thoroughly rethought. When we do this, we begin by asking where the airport rail passengers come from and go to: the answer being that they come from and go all over urban Melbourne, Geelong and further afield. This immediately alerts us to the wider problem that the Melbourne Region's trunk [suburban rail] lines do not form a comprehensive system but cover only around 20% of Melbourne's developed urban area ...

"That these travellers come from and go all over Melbourne and beyond, simply means that only one particular type of rail service cannot satisfy this widely distributed passenger demand [but that] several types of Melbourne Airport rail service are needed to serve the wide variability in passenger demand, and that these rail services together form part of an efficient integrated electric rail system within and beyond the Melbourne Region."

Ref: Louis Fouvy, 15/3/10



The Rubbish Trams of Zürich (Part 2)

"Cargotram is a service transporting freight on the tram network of Zürich (Switzerland).

- 1898 – 1966 - Goods operation by tram in Zürich began in 1898 when mail was carried between Zürich and Höngg in a special trailer hauled by a passenger-carrying tramcar. Ventures to carry different types of goods came and went over the years. These include beer from Dietikon to Zürich from 1900, refuse to a landfill in Heuried from 1921 (this idea was short-lived), groceries to LVZ shops (now Coop) from 1941 to 1945.
- April 2003 - After an absence of 37 years, freight returns to the Zürich tram network. A trial service is introduced collecting waste from Laubegg, Letzigrund, Tiefenbrunnen and Wollishofen (each destination served once a month).
- November 2003 - Cargotram wins an innovation prize. The service becomes permanent.
- January 2004 - Four further destinations are added (Albisrieden, Hirzenbach, Seebach and Wartau).
- January 2005 - Irchel is added as ninth destination.
- Spring 2005 - A siding is built into ERZ Werdhölzli recycling yard. This is the first track to be purpose built for Cargotram. It greatly simplifies operations.
- January 2006 - E-tram is introduced for electrical and electronic goods. The same destinations are served as Cargotram but on different days — taking the number of monthly round trips to 18!
- March 2007 - The extension of passenger route 5 to the Laubegg loop mean Cargotram and E-tram can no longer serve this location. They are substituted by lorries. The goods tram still has 16 monthly round-trips.
- July 2007 - Burgwies is added as ninth destination, taking the number of monthly round-trips back to 18."

Ref: All About Zürich's Cargotram

www.proaktiva.ch/tram/zurich/cargotram_index.html

For the 2010 calendar (in Swiss-German) for the Cargo and E-Tram see:

http://www.vbz.ch/vbz_opencms/opencms/vbz/deutsch/Dienstleistungen/Cargotram/



Cargotram Wins Award

"VBZ and ERZ have been jointly awarded the ÖV Innovationspreis for CargoTram. This prize is awarded every second year by VCS and SEK for innovation in public transport. Cargo-Tram was selected from among 15 submissions. Since the inauguration of the trial phase in April, Cargo-Tram has carried 200 tonnes of refuse. Its success is widely acclaimed."

Ref: Zürich Tram Newslog, 12/11/03

www.proaktiva.ch/tram/zurich/newslog/2003.html#121103

The Cost of Sprawl

"There is outrage that a tax should be levied on developers' land on Melbourne's fringe. But the real scandal is that the levies will cover only about 15% of the cost of infrastructure, with the rest being borne by you and me for decades to come. Get ready to pay thousands of dollars in tax to pay for the urban sprawl while landowners reap a windfall." **Ref: David Beattie, The Age, 9/1/10**

Need to Know

"There are three things most cabinet ministers and their public service advisers don't yet understand:

- 'Cheap' land on the fringes of cities is not 'cheap' when it means young families need 2 and sometimes 3 cars at a cost per car of up to \$200,000 over 20 years.
- Car and truck journeys do not begin and end on Freeways, but on minor roads and streets, where people walk, shop, go to school, cycle, share a coffee, visit chemists and doctors etc.
- Motor Vehicles are heavily subsidised (more than rail) by State and Federal Governments (cf NSW Independent Pricing & Regulatory Tribunal)."

Ref: Brian Buckley, 12/1/10

"The main reason that Victoria's public transport system appears to need a large subsidy is an entirely fictitious 'asset utilization charge' of \$875 million plus. The fares collected in Melbourne are \$100 million more than the direct operating costs of the train and tram network. Buses cost a lot and don't carry many passengers, and all capital expense on train and tram purchases and permanent way improvements is also treated as an operating cost. (Under the Kennett privatizations the new trains and trams were bought on hire purchase and the charges keep coming.) Even removing the Middleborough Road and Springvale Road level crossings seems to be treated as a charge against public transport, in spite of the whole benefit going to road users and train passengers having to endure extensive disruption."

Ref: John Legg, 19/1/10

Le Corbusier

“Charles-Édouard Jeanneret-Gris, who chose to be known as Le Corbusier (1887–1965), was a Swiss-French architect, designer, urbanist, writer and also painter, who is famous for being one of the pioneers of what now is called Modern architecture or the International Style. He was born in Switzerland, but became a French citizen in his 30s. ...

“For a number of years French officials had been unsuccessful in dealing with the squalor of the growing Parisian slums, and Le Corbusier sought efficient ways to house large numbers of people in response to the urban housing crisis. He believed that his new, modern architectural forms would provide a new organisational solution that would raise the quality of life of the lower classes. His Immeubles Villas (1922) was such a project that called for large blocks of cell-like individual apartments stacked one on top of the other, with plans that included a living room, bedrooms, and kitchen, as well as a garden terrace.

“Not merely content with designs for a few housing blocks, soon Le Corbusier moved into studies for entire cities. In 1922, he also presented his scheme for a ‘Contemporary City’ for three million inhabitants. The centrepiece of this plan was the group of sixty-storey, cruciform skyscrapers, steel-framed office buildings encased in huge curtain walls of glass. These skyscrapers were set within large, rectangular park-like green spaces. At the very middle was a huge transportation centre that on different levels included depots for buses and trains, as well as highway intersections, and at the top, an airport. He had the fanciful notion that commercial airliners would land between the huge skyscrapers. Le Corbusier segregated pedestrian circulation paths from the roadways and glorified the use of the automobile as a means of transportation. As one moved out from the central skyscrapers, smaller low-storey, zigzag apartment blocks set far back from the street amid green space, housed the inhabitants. Le Corbusier hoped that politically-minded industrialists in France would lead the way with their efficient Taylorist and Fordist strategies adopted from American industrial models to reorganise society. As Norma Evenson has put it, ‘the proposed city appeared to some an audacious and compelling vision of a brave new world, and to others a frigid megalomaniacally scaled negation of the familiar urban ambient’. ...



Le Corbusier

“Theoretical urban schemes continued to occupy Le Corbusier. He exhibited his Plan Voisin, sponsored by another famous automobile manufacturer, in 1925. In it, he proposed to bulldoze most of central Paris, north of the Seine, and replace it with his sixty-story cruciform towers from the Contemporary City, placed in an orthogonal street grid and park-like green space. His scheme was met with only criticism and scorn from French politicians and industrialists, although they were favourable to the ideas of Taylorism and Fordism underlying Le Corbusier designs. Nonetheless, it did provoke discussion concerning how to deal with the cramped, dirty conditions that enveloped much of the city. ...

“After World War II, Le Corbusier attempted to realize his urban planning schemes on a small scale by constructing a series of ‘unités’ (the housing block unit of the Radiant City) around France. The most famous of these was the Unité d’Habitation of Marseilles (1946-1952). In the 1950s, a unique opportunity to translate the Radiant City on a grand scale presented itself in the construction of Chandigarh, the new capital for the Indian states of Punjab and Haryana.”

Ref: Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le_Corbusier

Chandigarh, Northern India

“Known internationally for its architecture and urban planning, it is the first planned city of India. ... The initial plan had two phases: the first for a population of 150,000 and the second taking the total population to 500,000. Le Corbusier divided the city into units called ‘sectors’, each representing a theoretically self-sufficient entity with space for living, working and leisure. The sectors were linked to each other by a road and path network developed along the line of the 7 Vs, (a hierarchy of seven types of circulation patterns). At the highest point in this network was the V1, the highways connecting the city to others, and at the lowest were the V7s, the streets leading to individual houses. Later a V8 was added: cycle and pedestrian paths. Chandigarh has the largest number of vehicles per capita. Wide, well maintained roads and ample parking space all over the city, make it convenient to use private vehicles for local transport. Public buses run by the Chandigarh Transport Undertaking, provide local transport as well as inter-state transport services. ... Chandigarh has a railway station located 10 km from the Inter-State Bus Terminal.”

Ref: Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chandigarh>