

## Sustainable Cities Authority (SCA)

A common theme in discussions on the SCA proposal is the issue of duplication. Another very understandable concern is that the SCA will encroach on existing departmental activities or responsibilities.

Please keep in mind that there are two key proposed roles for the SCA. One is to collect and disseminate knowledge and the other is to disseminate federal funds - primarily to the States and Local Governments but also to other organisations as appropriate. Generally it is anticipated that the SCA will focus on significant Lighthouse projects that are outside the existing financial capabilities of regional governments.

There is no desire or need to duplicate or interfere with existing services. There are plenty of gaps to be filled and the focus will be on co-operation with existing agencies.

I think that it is fair to say that many existing agencies are constrained by various historical structures and methods of operation – this is the way that they have evolved and is in no way meant to be criticism. The contention is that we need to move much further and much faster than we are at the moment and a new agency – while probably sitting as a unit within an existing department – can bring fresh ideas to the table.

Another reason for a degree of independence is that decisions will have to be made on how to appropriately distribute substantial amounts of federal funding. The model proposed in the first draft of the SCA (page 7 - available [online](#)) envisaged a central Canberra based office working with existing federal departments with oversight by an independent board.

To ensure funds are utilised efficiently it is proposed that each state/territory would set up it's own independent office working in conjunction with the Federal SCA, local state /territory departments and seeking advice from a range of local advisory groups. Regional SCA boards would provide oversight. The boards themselves would report to the local parliament.

Some people have taken issue with the term 'Authority'. Ultimately such an organisation will need to earn respect by acting co-operatively. It is intended that any urban area could benefit from the dual activities of the SCA – information sharing and funds allocation. It is hoped that global warming can be arrested before the need for expansion in the role of the SCA.

## SCA Feedback

*"A short letter to the papers (Age, Herald Sun, Australian) signed by, say, 20 organisations, in support of a Sustainable Cities Authority, and with journalist briefed so that a story happens as well ... I think examples of other countries / cities which have a successful Sustainable Cities Authority or similar, would be helpful ... and key examples, such as 'Pearls-on-a-String' – urban villages linked by sustainable transport corridors, appear to also be presented as conceptual: would be more persuasive if real-life examples could be cited where the concept is working well."*

**Bernd Bartl** 28/3/07

*"I can imagine the struggle you must be having in trying to get the transit corridors up - but it's exactly developments like Cranbourne West that need to have a system in place. I'd certainly be interested in discussing your plans to advocate for a Sustainable Transport Authority - keep me in the loop as you see fit."*

**Dr David Sornig**

Victoria University - St Albans Campus

*"No vehicle will ever be more efficient than the trip that doesn't need to be made / doesn't require a vehicle. This is particularly relevant to greenfields situations, where great effort goes into devising 'sustainable' suburbs in locations that inevitably involve a transport demand in perpetuity that writes off all the internal merit."*

**Rod Duncan** 5/3/07

*"Good luck with your transport lobbying, in my eyes currently much more important than building issues in making our cities more sustainable."*

**Chris Barnett** 10/4/07



**Sustainable Transport was a key theme of the 2007 Sustainable Living Festival at Melbourne's Federation Square.**

**These signs were placed prominently at the entrance to the Festival which typically attracts over 100,000 people over three days.**

## 2007 UK Budget

The UK Government is setting a good example by *“encouraging fuel efficiency in the transport sector through reforms to vehicle excise duty and company car tax.”*

*“Surface transport is the second largest source of carbon dioxide emissions in the UK and, due in part to sustained economic growth, emissions from it are set to continue growing until around 2015, before falling thereafter. UK transport emissions are primarily priced through a taxation framework – mainly through fuel duty – which provides incentives to individuals and business to drive less and use other modes of transport. In setting fuel duty rates, the Government also takes into account other external costs of motoring, such as congestion and air pollution, and the need to maintain sound public finances.”*

*“Vehicle excise duty (VED) for cars was reformed in 2001 and is now based on graduated carbon dioxide bands, giving a clear signal to motorists to choose more fuel efficient vehicles.”*

*“The [UK] Government today announces VED rates for this year and the next two years to further sharpen environmental signals to motorists to purchase more fuel efficient vehicles and continue to support the development of low-carbon market, including raising the rate for the most polluting cars to £300 in 2007-08 and £400 in 2008-09; and reducing the rate for low-carbon cars to £35 in 2007-08...”*

## Federal Funding of Public Transport

*“The (Australian) Government needs to urgently remove incentives that encourage unnecessary driving. The Fringe Benefits Tax rules not only add to peak hour congestion, air pollution and oil depletion - they also cost the taxpayer \$1.5 billion annually.*

*It's time the Federal Government invested that money into public transport. It's simply unacceptable that public transport is out of reach for two thirds of Melbourne residents. Australia is the only OECD country that doesn't provide federal funding for public transport improvements. At a time when we are facing the devastating effects of climate change, and diminishing oil supplies, we urgently need to invest in sustainable solutions to our transport problems.”*

**Ref: Environment Victoria  
Sustainable Transport Campaign**

## Tram Jam

The proposed tram route improvements along St Kilda Road are to be commended but there are two major pinch points in Swanston Street that need to be addressed: the intersections with Flinders Street and with Victoria Street.

A defective tram near Melbourne University recently highlighted the problem of Victoria Street and the nearby Franklin/Swanston St intersection, both of which seem to prioritise cars over trams. The traffic light sequences seem to trap the trams outside the City Baths. Delays are evident in both directions in 'normal' conditions given only three or four trams because of the traffic light sequence.

Imagine then what a defective tram at the Melbourne Uni terminus can do at peak hour. Once the faulty tram was cleared away, the trams that were backed up continued to be trapped by the traffic light sequence. By 08:30 trams were banked up from Melbourne Uni to Victoria Street with only a trickle of trams making it through the trap despite the traffic in Victoria Street being relatively moderate at that time on that day.

The immediate solution is to give waiting trams priority, particularly at Franklin Street. Certainly on the day of the tram jam, police should have taken control of all Swanston Street intersections until the trams were running to schedule.

The long-term solution is a north-south rail link. A medium-term solution is to establish a tram route in Russell Street that could both service that part of the CBD and provide a backup for Swanston Street.



**Swanston Street looking towards the Victoria Street intersection around 0830 on 2/4/07**

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