

Victorian Election

"If John Brumby was looking for a few consoling words after bowing out as premier yesterday, he wouldn't have found them on the 4.11 train to Frankston. ... 'Diabolical' was how [Laurie Lesley] rated the service, and dangerous after dark. The Frankston line runs through five seats that switched to the Liberals on Saturday; it is an arrow shot through the heart of the Brumby government."

Ref: Adam Carey, The Age, 30/11/10



"I'm starting a campaign to rename this the FrankSTAN Line."

Governments Behaving Badly

"The Tourism and Transport Forum (TTF) says traffic congestion will cost Australia nearly \$13 billion this year. It says while major cities choke, the Federal Government is encouraging people to drive by offering tax concessions for people who get cars as part of their salary package. The more people drive, the bigger the tax benefit. TTF's Kary Peterson says it does not make sense for the Government to promote car use while claiming to be conscious of climate change. 'What we need is a level playing field between people commuting to work by public transport, who get little or no tax breaks, with those who are driving into work and reaping the benefits of FBT benefits or exemptions', he said. 'There's no need to wait until next year's tax summit. What we want is it to be phased out in the next budget'. Mr Peterson says congestion would ease if the tax concessions were scrapped. 'With 2 million people using this at the moment it would make a massive difference', he said. The scheme was introduced more than 20 years ago to help the struggling local car manufacturing industry. It costs the government nearly \$2 billion a year, which the TTF says would be better spent investing in more public transport."

Ref: Kylie Simmonds, ABC News, 15/11/10

"It is common sense really. If it is free to drive (not really free but already paid for) and part of the 'free' requires the owner to build up as many kilometres as they can and it costs for public transport then people will drive."

Ref: Reader's Comment, ABC News, 15/11/10
www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/11/15/3065970.htm

New South Wales Election

"A new State Government report confirms what everyone on the northern beaches [of Sydney] already knows – driving into the city during the morning peak is a nightmare. The trip along Pittwater Rd, Military Rd and the F1 is the most congested in Sydney ... with cars travelling at average speeds of 25km/h, ... And it's only set to get worse, with the report finding that traffic had gradually slowed over the past four years. The bus trip isn't much better, with some services from Pittwater taking more than two hours to travel into the city. Manly State Liberal MP Mike Baird said the Opposition would address the issue of transport as a 'burning priority' if it wins power at the March State Election. He could not offer an exact date, but said he would aim to establish a Bus Rapid Transit System as a matter of urgency. The plan would allow the implementation of median bus lanes from Mona Vale into the city, and has already

been backed by the peninsula's four councils. 'The one way to fix this problem is to have dedicated public transport in the corridor that's regular, reliable, attractive and affordable'."

Ref: Carleen Frost, Manly Daily, 3/12/10

"The only way to reduce congestion is to get more cars off the road. If you are going to spend money on a public transport system it must be convenient and frequent. I can't see how buses will achieve this even with dedicated bus lanes. Just look at the harbour bridge in the mornings, where the slowest lane is the bus lane. The only real long term solution I can see is solution is fixed track rail, either light or heavy rail, preferably below ground."

Ref: Reader's Comment, Manly Daily, 3/12/10

"People of the Peninsula and Manly Daily, please ask Mr Baird and his colleagues to give specific plans to fix the public transport here. Vague and empty promises about a Rapid Bus Lane sound suspiciously like the current Government's public transport empty promises."

Ref: Reader's Comment, Manly Daily, 3/12/10

And Also ...

"Roads today don't look anything like an engineer at global technology firm Honeywell envisaged them. He predicted by 2000, roads would be replaced by a network of pneumatic tubes through which you would be sucked to work or your friend's house." **Ref: MX News, 29/11/10**

Problems with Melbourne's Bikeshare

"VicRoads figures show an average of 183 trips a day are being made on the 450 blue bikes, which are costing taxpayers \$5.5 million over four years. Melbourne's scheme lags far behind those in overseas cities. About 140 cities have introduced shared bikes; only Melbourne and Brisbane have compulsory helmet laws. Dublin City Council's bike share scheme also has 450 bicycles. Launched last September, it now averages 3020 trips a day. Dublin councillor Andrew Montague, interviewed recently on bicycle blog situp-cycle.com about the success of Dublin's scheme, said more than 1 million trips had been taken on Dublin's 450 existing bicycles without a fatality, despite helmets being optional."

Ref: Clay Lucas, The Age, 29/11/10

Bikeshare in Bangkok

"After a year in limbo, the city administration has resumed a free bicycle service for the public wishing to explore tourist attractions around the historic Rattanakosin Island, the original Bangkok that formed the nucleus around which the city grew. The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) has re-launched the service with a fleet of 140 new bikes as part of a campaign to encourage a more environmentally friendly means of transport around town, cut air pollution and beat traffic jams....The service is available at five points in Bangkok's old quarter."

Ref: Bangkok Post, 28/10/10



Bikeshare in Bangkok, November 2010

Like Melbourne, this is good initiative, and like Melbourne they appeared to be underwhelmed by demand. The likely reason in both cities, I believe, is motor traffic (though helmets and climate are factors). One difference is that the Bangkok booths each had a couple of helpful staff.

Stephen Ingrouille, 7/12/10

Parry People Movers

"The [UK] West Midlands-based company is a leader in low-carbon transport having supplied railcars now used in full passenger service on the short Stourbridge Town branch line, part of the London Midland franchise and operated under subcontract by Pre Metro Operations Ltd. Since their introduction in 2009, over 600,000 passenger journeys have been made on the two railcars at Stourbridge with reliability of over 99.4% throughout 2010. The new railcars have enabled service frequency to be increased, costs to be halved and carbon emissions cut by two-thirds. Passenger numbers on the branch have increased significantly in the same time."

"Parry People Movers' concept of lightweight, energy-efficient rail vehicles is proving how to minimise the environmental impact of transport and permits the revival of branch lines. It has created a new category of 'super-hybrid' system, with a secondary power system more powerful than the prime mover. The same technology can be applied to street tramways without needing electrification – a major driver of cost and complexity. The logic behind branch line revival is emphasized by figures recently released by the Association of Train Operating Companies showing that on some branch lines passenger numbers have risen by up to 55% in twelve months alone. A key factor in making branch lines more attractive to passengers is making the service better. As demonstrated at Stourbridge, Parry People Movers technology can achieve improvements leading to passenger growth highly cost-effectively (and at the same time can release main line trains from the branches so that capacity on the main lines can be increased)."

"The technology's application to urban tramways – which will be much less expensive and disruptive to construct than conventional tram systems – has been boosted by the UK Government's recent vote of confidence in light rail systems, deciding to support extensions and improvements to those in Greater Manchester, the West Midlands, Nottingham and Tyne & Wear supported despite the current financial climate." **Ref: Parry People Mover, Press Release, 9/11/10**

Greek Green Wave Trams Feedback

"I'm annoyed I can't get bikes on local rural buses any more to take them to the city on trains, as bikes are faster than trams in the city (easy to average 21km/hr city traffic speed). Your mode races prove bicycles are better way to move people; trams would be good too if it weren't for all the cars." **Ref: Paul Judd, 2/12/10**

How Do We Move Forward? (Part 2)

"An alternative solution would be to discriminate for the most skilled driver. As contentious as this may appear, a more rigorous driving test (perhaps with compulsory refresher lessons/tests every 5 or 10 years), with a lower pass rate, would result in fewer cars on the road and those left would be the most skilled and safest. Local pass rates could be pre-determined to coincide with the local area network capacities. Of course people will migrate from place to place, but forecasts for determining adequate capacities are never perfect and so the criteria for determining an acceptable pass rate would have to be agreed between all the relevant authorities.

"There is, of course, the danger of further exacerbating the non-licensed driver problem with this type of scheme. It becomes clear that, in light of this issue, this type of scheme may require more advanced enforcement measures to be in place than we currently have. There has been much debate in the recent past about the practicalities of implementing new technologies, capable of identifying a registered driver to the vehicle they are driving. Obviously, for any such scheme to work well, better enforcement (whatever the operational details are e.g. passcode ignition systems, automatic vehicle/driver identification and matching etc) would have to be in place and this would require cost-benefit analysis of the various options.



"Another, perhaps (slightly) more socially acceptable solution, would be to ration road space based on scores gained in driving tests. This would then allow those that need to drive (e.g. single parents in inaccessible areas), but are not the most skilled drivers. Of course the major barrier against this type of measure is the technology needed for enforcement (and deciding what is a necessary journey or deserving case!). The mention of rationing road space and the enforcement measures that would be required to operate such a scheme, of course, invoke thoughts of George Orwell's 1984. It should, however, be acknowledged that drastic measures will be necessary in order to ensure a safe and efficient transport system into the future. That said, we should make more widespread use of existing, 'softer' measures (such as staggered working hours, car sharing etc), before implementing these 'harder', more permanent measures in the future.

Enticing people to alternative modes!

"The key to answering this third question is in trying to understand why we have become so attached to our cars. Transport Psychologists suggest that it is a mixture of Geography (land-use in the last 60 years has been largely shaped around private car use) and Economics (individual wealth has increased, whilst mass production techniques have improved, making private cars more affordable).

"I believe that it is also the feelings of autonomy, security, convenience, reliability and personal image that strongly influence a person's car use. A lack of one or more of these positive feelings is a major discouraging factor for alternative modes.

Of course, a person's relative accessibility to amenities and alternative transport (geography) and whether they can afford to make the journey by these alternative modes (economics) are important factors too. But, the current overall land-use arrangements are not something that can be changed overnight (although incremental changes are already being made) and it would be wrong to deny people the wealth and trappings of wealth which they have earned." {Continued in #180}

Ref: James Bailey, Sustainable Transport - How Do We Move Forward? 7/1/10 Full article: <http://stilwellpartnership.wordpress.com/2010/01/07/sustainable-transport/>

Round the World in 120 Days

"Anthony Howarth announced today that the start of the record breaking voyage of The Solar Circumnavigator, The Global GreenCat, will be in May 2011. The ... circumnavigation will be on the most direct route using the two canals. From the ... mouth of the English Channel to Panama and on to Darwin, or (direct to Singapore), then the Suez Canal and back, through the Mediterranean, to the English Channel. ... The Global GreenCat (green catamaran) will be built from plywood, the most environmental friendly product for a boat of this size and displacement. ... The finished GreenCat will have 120 m² of solar panels installed which, as they self-orientate toward the sun and in combination with lightweight batteries and electric motors, will give it an average speed better than 8 knots and an maximum speed of 15 knots. Displacement (weight) of the boat equipped for the voyage is expected to be about 8000 kg. ... This is not an existing boat or ferry boat design with some solar panels mounted on or above the deck. It is a pure solar boat pointing like a dart to the future of clean energy and transport."

Ref: Media Release, People's Project Foundation, 6/12/10
www.thesolarcircumnavigator.com

Bike Assembly Station at Airport

"Cyclists travelling to and from Portland International Airport have a new tool for at least one leg of their journey. A new bike assembly station on the lower terminal roadway will enable people travelling with bicycles to more easily assemble and disassemble their bikes before and after flights. With many travellers visiting Oregon and southwest Washington to take advantage of bike tourism and to participate in the region's many bicycle events, the new station will help cyclists more quickly prepare their bikes for travel, whether it's away from the airport on the PDX bike path or for a return flight home. The station is also available to airport employees who bike to work. As an extra resource, Travel Oregon and the Port of Portland have basic bike tools available for check-out by cyclists assembling or disassembling their bikes. Cyclists can stop by State Welcome Centre, located near bag claim carousels five and six, to borrow a pedal wrench, air pump, or just to peruse literature about bicycling resources in the region."



Ref: Port of Portland, Oregon, 2010

www.portofportland.com/Notices/PDX_Bike_Assmby_01_BLT.htm

Problems on the French Metro

"In the '80s in France ... we have a metro line which is really in trouble because it's always saturated; we have a lot of problems. The story of violation is always the same: you see management telling the workers that they should make some effort to doing better with the situation. And this management proposes some solutions to bypass a little bit the system. The management itself for example will say 'well we have a speed control but if you use the train like that you can a little bit influence the speed control', or 'you can also save time here and here. And we have a formal rule for stopping at a red light but we also have a formal rule that accepts to cross the red light in special conditions. Use this special condition for all normal operations' and what you see is that people are accepting that and progressively return to something that is not really what was expected, they cut the corners. But they cut the corners for themselves also and you go for a trip on a train where Mr X is supposed to be the driver and when you arrive it's Mr Y who is driving' ..."

Ref: Rene Amalberti, The Health Report, ABC Radio National, 30/8/10

www.abc.net.au/rn/healthreport/stories/2010/2995556.htm#transcript

More on Transport in France

"The first horse-drawn omnibus made its clip-clopping appearance on the clogged streets of Paris [C1838]. ... The railway network increased from virtually nothing in 1840 to 11,000 miles by 1870. Telegraph lines radiated out all over the country and ship building expanded as never before. ... [C1890] there were horseless carriages and in 1894 the first automobile race took place from Paris to Rouen, 77 miles. ... Rail networks proliferated and became faster. ... By 1907 there were 4000 teufs-teufs [onomatopoeia, imitating the sound of an engine explosion] clogging up the centre of Paris, and despoiling the tranquillity of centuries. ... Conditioning all the city planning, as well as being its worst enemy, was the automobile. For years the city was heaved up as vast parks, sometimes seven storeys deep, were burrowed under the Place de la Concorde, the Place Vendôme and almost everywhere else."

Ref: Alistair Horne, Friend or Foe, 2004

And Also ...

"The road leads into Aix at the end of the most handsome main street in France. The Cours Mirabeau is most beautiful at any time of the year, but it is best between spring and autumn when the plane trees form a pale green tunnel five hundred yards long. The diffused sunlight, the four fountains along the centre of the Cours' length, the perfect proportions which follow da Vinci's rule 'let the street be as wide as the height of the houses' – the arrangement of spaces and trees and architecture is so pleasing that you hardly notice the cars."

Ref: Peter Mayle, A Year in Provence, 1989

Cost of Parking

"Colliers International has conducted research to show just how expensive car parking is across the world. It's probably a competition you don't want to win, but Sydney came in 5th being only marginally cheaper than the most expensive cities in the world. Brisbane, Melbourne and Perth were the other three Australian cities to make the top 50."

Comparison of Daily Parking Rates (in \$US)		
1	Abu Dhabi	\$55
2	Oslo	\$55
3	Tokyo	\$55
4	London	\$52
5	Sydney	\$51
12	New York	\$40
24	Brisbane	\$30
25	Melbourne	\$30
40	Perth	\$25
50	Singapore	\$22

Ref: Zest Market Commentary, 30/7/10

US Rail Policy Hearings (Part 1)

“Today’s hearing is about progress. It’s about what’s required to modernize our transportation system so our businesses and our workers can stay competitive in the 21st century. It’s about levelling the playing field. And it’s about how when we do that, America is stronger in the global marketplace and that means jobs and economic security. One of the keys to this progress is our national rail system. We all understand that our highways and skies are continuing to get more crowded. That means rail is going to have to become a higher priority. I am pleased that the Obama Administration is hard at work on this important issue, and I appreciate the Administration’s efforts to aggressively implement the important infrastructure programs created by Congress. I’m looking forward to hearing today from Deputy Secretary Porcari about the status of the development of the Department of Transportation’s new ‘National Rail Plan’. A comprehensive, long-term plan for our rail system is long overdue. I commend the Department and the Federal Railroad Administration for its good work on this issue. ...

“While today’s hearing is about progress, it’s also about the lack of progress we have seen over the last few decades. It’s about the natural tendency of big corporations to fight to maintain a status quo that works well for them, but that will not get us where we need to go for the future. Of course I’m talking about the freight rail industry. Thirty years ago, the freight railroads were really struggling. Congress responded by amending the law to give the railroads an opportunity to do business differently. I’m not sure I agree with how the law was written back in 1980, but I think it’s pretty clear that the reforms worked from the railroads’ point of view. Today, I am releasing a staff report that documents just how well the big Class I freight railroads are doing these days. What this important report tells us is that the railroads are earning 12 and 13% profit margins, which puts them at the top of the Fortune 500. And they’re just getting more profitable because they’re raising their shipping prices by an average of 5% a year.

“But the railroads say different things depending on their audience. When they’re talking to the Surface Transportation Board, Mr. Elliott’s agency, they act like it’s still 1980. They say they’re barely making enough money to keep the lights on. But when they’re on their quarterly calls with Wall Street investors, it’s a very different story. These companies tout their high profit margins and their power to dictate prices to their customers. And at the same time they’re

telling Congress that they don’t have enough money to invest in needed capital projects, they’re using billions of dollars of their profits to reward their shareholders with dividends and stock buybacks. This is all happening at a time when shippers all over our country are paying more than their fair share to transport their goods to their customers – paying more because they have no other alternative.

“As I have said many times before, we need a rail system that works not just for the freight railroads, but for all – shippers, passengers, and consumers. Unfortunately, it has felt at times like the railroads – some much more than others – have attempted to delay this process, hoping that these reforms will die if they can only stretch the process out through the elections. I am proud that for the first time in 30 years, this Committee reported out a bill – in a bipartisan way – that would update our rail regulations to reflect the economic realities of 2010. This legislation may not be on the cover of all the newspapers in the country each and every day but its benefits for communities small and large throughout America cannot – and should not – be underestimated.” Ref: Chairman Jay Rockefeller, US Senate Hearings, 15/9/09

“This Committee has been extremely active in addressing rail policy issues, most recently securing enactment of legislation to reauthorize Amtrak; laying the groundwork for the development of high-speed rail service; and addressing rail safety. ... Today’s hearing will be a good opportunity to take stock of what has been achieved and what still needs to be accomplished, particularly in light of the Department of Transportation’s progress report on the National Rail Plan.

“As you know, Mr. Chairman, I am a strong supporter of a national network for intercity passenger rail service, and believe high-speed rail service can be competitive with highway and air travel along densely populated corridors. I also support a healthy freight rail industry. Nearly 40% of all freight, as measured in ton-miles, now moves by rail. Rail transportation reduces the number of trucks on our highways, lowering highway maintenance costs; uses less fuel; and emits fewer greenhouse gases. However, I am also a strong supporter of a better balance at the Surface Transportation Board between the needs of the freight railroads and their customers. For the past 30 years, the railroads have enjoyed virtually unlimited ratemaking freedom, and captive shippers have literally paid the price.”

Ref: Senator Kay Hutchison, US Senate Hearings, 15/9/09

Vehicle Consideration by Fuel Type

“Consideration for diesel vehicles has grown consistently for the last two years, from 37% in the quarter to July 2008, to 46% for the quarter to August 2010. Across the alternative fuel category, consideration remains strongest for hybrid vehicles, with 49% of Australian drivers saying they would seriously consider a hybrid vehicle for the quarter to August 2010. However, consideration for hybrids has declined consistently since the peak in petrol prices in late 2008, even as diesel has continued to rise. Like hybrids, other alternative fuels, including LPG and fully electric cars, have shown similar declines. {See graph below}

“Norman Morris, Industry Communications Director, Roy Morgan Research, says: ‘Further analysis of the data reveals that those Australian drivers 18+ who would consider a hybrid or electric vehicle are more worried about fuel efficiency and tend to see themselves as environmentalists. In comparison, people who would seriously consider a diesel vehicle consider themselves to be car enthusiasts and require a car that can ‘pull a load.’ With the decrease in consideration for Hybrids, Electric and LPG, Diesel consideration is set to overtake in the coming months’.”

Ref: Roy Morgan Press Release, 6/12/10
www.roymorgan.com/news/press-releases/2010/1231/

“I would seriously consider buying a ...

High Speed Rail in China

“China’s railways ministry said [on] Friday that one of its passenger trains had broken a world speed record, travelling at 486.1 kilometres per hour in a test run, state media reported. The feat – a record for unmodified conventional commercial trains, according to the ministry – was achieved on a stretch of track between the capital Beijing and Shanghai, the Xinhua news agency said. State television showed footage of the white train cruising through the countryside. ‘It not only marks a milestone in the construction of the Beijing-Shanghai high-speed railway, but also is a major achievement of China’s technological innovation’, ministry spokesman Wang Yongping was quoted as saying. China is rapidly expanding and upgrading its railway network amid increased pressures on its transportation system, with plans to have 120,000 kilometres of track by 2020. The railway authority said in July that China would spend about \$US120 billion to nearly double the country’s high-speed rail network by 2012. Earlier this year, the ministry announced that the high-speed line linking Beijing and Shanghai would open in 2011, a year ahead of schedule, cutting travel time between the two cities from 10 hours to four, state press said.”

Ref: AFP, The Age, 6/12/10

Source: Roy Morgan Single Source (Australia) August 2005 —August 2010. **Base:** Drivers 18+ n=213,675 (average sample per data point n=3,622 *Respondents are able to choose multiple responses.

