

## Ferry Trial in Hobart

It's always a pleasure to visit Tasmania and any excuse for a stopover in Hobart is welcome. Situated on the waterway, Hobart is a most picturesque city and ferries are an obvious mode of transport. Alas like Melbourne's Bay, there are at present no regular commuter-only ferries. The reasons though are not necessarily similar.

Hobart is a much smaller city and is yet to suffer the levels of congestion of, for example Sydney or Melbourne. It is however a matter of degree and to a Hobartian even a short peak-hour is considered unacceptable. A common comment was that you could walk faster than the cars. The problem of increasing congestion is that amenity for pedestrians and cyclists is reduced which usually means a trend to more cars, exacerbating the situation. During my short stay in Hobart, cyclists were not evident in the way that they are in cities in New Zealand of similar size and topography.



**Sullivan's Cove at Hobart. The commuter ferries could dock on the city edge.**



**Existing popular tourist ferries.**

A commuter ferry trial was conducted recently between Hobart and Opossum Bay, a small settlement on a peninsular to the south of Hobart. It was the Opossum Bay residents that wanted the ferry service and who established a landing jetty. There are some good lessons to be learnt from this exercise including the need for: connecting land services (to the next township); extra ferry stops; and while the vessel in many ways was excellent, the seating type and layout could be improved.

## Road Carnage in Victoria

*"Fifteen (people over Easter) were involved in car accidents and eight in motorbike crashes. Seventeen of those injured were driving, five were passengers and one was a pedestrian. They suffered head and internal injuries, fractures to the pelvis, lower leg and thorax, and injuries to the knees, ankle and feet.*

*Transport Accident Commission figures reveal that more than 16,000 people — or 46 a day — are injured in car accidents in Victoria every year, in addition to the daily average of one fatality. It has been estimated that every four days someone is severely brain injured and every eight days someone is turned into a quadriplegic. The cost to the community is enormous. In 2005-06, the TAC paid out \$675 million in benefits and compensation. TAC spokesman Alexander Twomey said the average cost of a claim for a fatality was \$115,000, but the cost of every serious injury (defined as involving a stay in hospital for more than a day) was \$200,000, and each minor injury \$8000. Over a lifetime, a severe acquired brain injury costs an average \$2.9 million, while quadriplegia costs an average \$5.3 million.*

*Acting Inspector Jeff Smith of the major collision investigation unit said the impact of serious car accidents on families was horrific."*

**Ref: Mark Russell, The Age 15/4/07**

## Congratulations

Congratulations to Department of Infrastructure (DOI), Yarra Trams and others for the many excellent improvements to Melbourne's transit system including:

- o Smart Buses
- o Tram Super Stops
- o TramTracker

Whilst the positioning of some of the Tram Super Stops is a bit odd, particularly in the CBD, where connectivity with other services is more difficult (eg between the 112 and Southern Cross Station) the Super Stops themselves are excellent. It is good to see a Super Stop outside the Alfred Hospital.

TramTracker in my experience also works well. I heard of something similar when I was in North America, so it was pleasing to see that Yarra Trams were already on the case when I returned.

Smart Buses are probably the most reasonable solution for the outer suburbs designed around the motor car. Keep rolling out the system but make sure that the Smart Buses terminate near the proposed ferry terminals!

## Parking

How parking relates to sustainability is an interesting subject. Off-street parking can have some benefits but on the other hand there are issues related to land utilisation, traffic generation and infrastructure cost. Multi-level parking has additional problems of significant embodied energy (in the structures) & the need for 24 hour lighting on each floor regardless of the number of vehicles (eg on a Sunday night).

Just as the air-conditioning industry has had to come to terms with sustainable design so too will the parking industry, for example by using new technologies to provide natural lighting to minimise artificial lighting. I'm particularly keen on giving priority parking spaces to (in this order) (a) disabled drivers, (b) electric vehicles, (c) bicycles/tricycles (d) flex-cars (e) hybrid-vehicles, etc.



**'Electric Cars Only'. A free recharge bay provided by Woolworths at Dural in NSW. Photo courtesy of Blade Electric Vehicles [www.bev.com.au](http://www.bev.com.au)**

When I was in Hobart recently I was told that the city has a series of (free) car parks dotted around the edges of the city. This at least encourages people to walk for part of the journey which has obvious health and social benefits. The talk of new car parking stations in the city centre therefore rings a few alarm bells, not just because of the ongoing maintenance costs but also because of addition pressure on congestion.

The motor car had the potential to be a wonderfully liberating machine but where it is caught in congestion, or reduces the amenity of others, we need to start asking questions. My own view is that by providing quality public transport (and here I don't include most bus 'milk runs') we free up the existing road infrastructure for those that want to (or need to) use their cars. This is a win-win situation.



**An existing multi-level car parking station in Hobart. An effort has been made with the architecture but is it compatible with nearby historic buildings? Note all the artificial lighting switched on in the middle of the day and all the concrete. What will we do with these spaces when Peak Oil really hits?**

*"Car parks are often poorly designed and located, and create unpleasant and potentially unsafe environments, and pedestrian barriers between different developments and the surrounding neighbourhood. Car parks must be available for an activity centre to remain viable, though the efficacy of their use, and their location and design can be improved to ensure pedestrian and cycling environments are not degraded."*

**Ref: DSE 2005: Activity Centre Design Guidelines, Element 8: Car Parking**

### What Would Jesus Drive?

"A group of American Christians take a stand for the environment. *'What Would Jesus Drive?'* is their campaign against the USA's obsession with gas-guzzling cars. This is a critical look at the biggest love affair in the world. America's love affair with cars makes it the biggest consumer of fossil fuels in the world; the biggest contributor to global warming. And cars are now dividing America. From the SUV Owners of California, who plan illegal rallies against the state government's proposals to cut greenhouse emissions, to the *'What Would Jesus Drive'* campaigners. From the Environmental Liberation Front, who have had their SUVs slashed and burned, to the Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Detroit, a group of nuns who have adopted 'eco-justice' ...".

**Compass ABC 2 Sunday April 29 at 22:15 Ref: [www.abc.net.au/compass/intervs/schedule.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/compass/intervs/schedule.htm)**

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