

## Federal Funding of PT

*"Public transport advocates across Australia have united to call on the Federal Government to fund state-based transport projects. Today, the coalition will release a report, 'Moving Australians Sustainably', highlighting the health, economic and environmental benefits of increased public transport use. Public Transport Users Association president Daniel Bowen said the Federal Government had provided billions of dollars of funding for road projects and almost nothing for public transport initiatives, leading to cities "that are dirtier, more congested, less healthy, less sustainable and more vulnerable to rising oil prices". The report says public transport makes a significant contribution to minimising congestion costs for business and reduces Australia's high level of car dependence. It also says that national governments around the developed world have made significant investments in public transport. The Australian Government sees this as the sole responsibility of state governments. The Victorian Council of Social Service has backed the call. "We have too many cities and towns where an under-investment in public transport has forced people to depend on cars, trapping Victorians into a cycle of spending on escalating petrol costs," said VCOSS chief Cath Smith."*

**Ref: Steve Moynihan The Age 16/8/07**

## Carbon Credits and Public Transport

Phil Saunders, Department of Transport, Energy & Infrastructure in South Australia has raised the following question: "Has anyone started the discussion about carbon credits that are generated out of public transport uptake and trading them in the future? My thought - we put a good service into an area - reduce car trips by XX tonnes of carbon per annum - we (public transport) then trade them on the exchange when it gets operational and use it as a revenue source for further public transport investment."

## Melbourne's Skybus

I'm consistently impressed with the bus service from Southern Cross Station to Tullamarine airport and I note that they are now claiming a first for public transport: offsetting their annual greenhouse gas emissions by planting 5,488 trees per year through Greenfleet. The Skybus tree planting is part of the Murray Darling Rescue Project, co-ordinated by Scouts Australia and Greenfleet. Further, their vehicles which are easy to access even when burdened with luggage are apparently also operating with low-emission engines. It's good to see a transport company taking these initiatives.

## Sustainable Cities Authority

Here are extracts from a letter from the Federal Environment Minister, Malcolm Turnbull in response to the proposal to establish a Sustainable Cities Authority or Commission. We are grateful to the Member for Flinders, Greg Hunt, for facilitating the approach to the Minister.

*"Mr Ingrouille's proposal recognises the complex issues of urban sustainability that the Australian Government, in collaboration with all jurisdictions, is strongly committed to addressing .... Recommendation 3 of the [House of Representatives] Inquiry Report referred specifically to the establishment of a Sustainability Commission. That recommendation, together with a recommendation to establish an Australian Sustainability Charter is currently being considered .... I understand that the Committee aims to table the Inquiry Report in the Spring 2007 Sitings of Parliament .... The Government is close to finalising its response to the Inquiry Report. The response will identify work the Government is undertaking or planning in relation to the Inquiry's recommendations and will take into account the increasing and relevant national program of work on urban sustainability agreed to by the Council of Australian Governments. I am pleased to say that the response shows considerable progress in key areas such as water, climate change, energy and transport, which I note mirror the key points detailed in Mr Ingrouille's proposal."*

## And Also...

While waiting for my tram at Melbourne University at 10.30pm on Saturday 11/8/07 I tried the usually reliable trip finder (three times). My Destination was Albert Park just to the south of Melbourne:

1. "Catch Tram 67 at 6.31pm to Swanston Street and Latrobe Street arriving at 6.38pm.
2. Catch Glen Waverly Train at 6.45pm to Heyington Station, arriving at 5.57pm, walk 362 metres to your destination."

With these directions I would have ended up in the eastern suburbs 'In another place, in another time' to quote Van Morrison.



**Dunno. I was heading for Glen Waverly too.**

## Innovative Solutions for Hobart

*"A Hobart alderman says a light rail system from Hobart to Brighton could reduce traffic congestion on the Brooker Highway. Alderman Jeff Briscoe will introduce a motion to lobby the Federal Government to fund the system at tonight's council meeting. Alderman Briscoe says increasing traffic between central Hobart and the northern suburbs are placing stress on commuters and causing accidents. 'I think it's so important that we start looking at innovative solutions to Hobart's traffic problems because we know the Brooker Highway is chock-a-block full evenings and mornings, and I think this is one way that we can get shoppers, commuters and students off our roads:'"*

**Ref: ABC News 27/8/07**

*"Dennison MHR Lisa Singh yesterday backed a Hobart City Council move to investigate restoring light rail between Brighton and Hobart.... Options [include] the duel-mode railcar used in Japan [and] the Parry People Mover, used in Britain's West Midlands.... She said a light rail link would deliver a safe and reliable alternative to road travel, alleviating road congestion. 'With the existing rail line running to the preferred site for the new Royal Hobart Hospital, now is the right time to give this project serious consideration:'"*

**Ref: Phillip Duncan, Mercury 29/8/07**

*"Ten years ago, the plan to start a light rail service in Hobart's northern suburbs would have been dismissed as a train-spotter's fantasy. Now it is looking more likely and logical. Nothing could challenge the ease and flexibility of travelling by car until recently....Every year the delays and difficulties are getting worse and some serious transport challenges are looming....The speed and ease of travel on light rail is enticing. A seven-minute trip from New Town, 15 minutes from Glenorchy or little more than half an hour from Bridgewater would be a dream run for passengers used to being stuck on a bus in peak hour....The northern suburbs remain one of the most heavily populated and congested areas and a fast rail service is likely to get a lot of use. It should become part of an integrated plan for the city, with Metro shuttle bus services fanning out from each station....In a world concerned about gridlock and pollution, rail services are being expanded everywhere."*

**Ref: Editorial, Mercury 29/8/07**

**Online:** [www.goingsolar.com.au/transport](http://www.goingsolar.com.au/transport)

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## Melbourne Transport Forums

Two forums in Melbourne recently demonstrated remarkable consensus thinking in the need to fast-track sustainable transport. The first forum, *Public Transport Growth in Melbourne*, was a debate resulting mostly in agreement, while the second forum, the *Roads for Public Transport Summit*, demonstrated that there has been a paradigm shift in the thinking of both VicRoads and the RACV. This is remarkably good news. Many issues were raised including:

- Congestion caused where parked cars force motor vehicles onto tram tracks.
- Assumed 'ownership' of the parking spaces outside premises, and how in Japan such 'ownership' would be unthinkable.
- How little financial value on-street parking actually provides for adjoining premises.
- Why local authorities show remarkable reluctance to tackle shop owners on this issue.
- The measures that can be taken to calm traffic (thus decreasing noise and danger) while at the same time keeping through traffic moving (thus reducing pollution) where parked cars are removed from the on-street equation.
- The reluctance of the police to enforce fairways and transit lanes.
- The reason that it takes so long to adjust traffic lights to improve the flow of buses and trams.

A common theme was the need for an independent authority to resolve these types of issues, with resolutions being achieved through consultation and consensus. Once agreed though, the process must be adhered to by all levels of government and agencies. It was recognised that there are winners and losers in this process and perhaps some sort of compensation can be provided (eg a 6 monthly PT travel pass for adjoining premises where on-street parking is permanently removed). However it was also noted that many people are being disadvantaged at the moment by parked cars and by the same rationale, they should be compensated. If the police won't enforce fairways and transit lanes perhaps that responsibility should be transferred to another authority – with a corresponding transfer in budget. Apparently a shortage of technicians is the reason that traffic light priority can not be implemented as fast as would be desirable.

## Who's Who on the Train

*"Train operator Connex has revealed the results of a survey that found the typical peak commuter is a full-time white-collar worker with a household income of more than \$50,000 aged in their 30s or early 40s....in a two or more car household."*

**Ref: Rebecca Beisler, MX News 28/8/07**