

Car Free Day

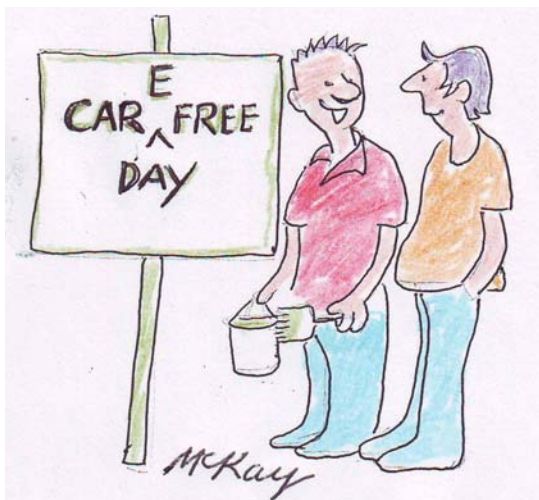
I had been thinking recently what a good idea it would be to create 'pedestrian heavens' – as the Japanese call them – for an hour or so in the weekday evenings around City Loop stations. Effectively this would be a car curfew around pedestrian peak-hours. You could still drive in the city for 22½ of the 24 hours but not when your noise, pollution and congestion adversely affected the maximum number of people. So it was refreshing to read of a proposal for at least a one-day car ban:

"[A] proposal, from the Future Stainable Leader's Group, involved putting roadblocks around City Loop Stations, but the [City of Melbourne] Council suggested ... [instead] a ban [that] would bar cars from Elizabeth, Collins, Swanston and Bourke Streets. Cr David Wilson said ... 'Having a car-free da) shows what can be done as far as sustainability is concerned'." **MX News 5/9/07**

Now the Council's revised suggestion is not actually that exciting as two streets are already blocked by the Bourke St Mall and Swanston Walk. That didn't seem to stop what appears to be a knee-jerk reaction: *"Plans for a car-free day in Melbourne will be canned if Premier John Brumby has his way ... saying it would cause chaos on the roads."* **MX News 5/9/07** Premier's advisors please note: there already is chaos on the roads and the car is the key culprit!

Royce Miller, **The Age 6/9/07** reports: *"Car-free days had been a success in many overseas cities, including Vancouver, which had run one annually since 2003. 'If they've done it, why can't Melbourne?"*

And why for that matter, do our governments keep sending mixed messages on sustainability?



There. That's better!

Megan Holbeck, **The Age 6/9/07** writes: *"Imagine just for one day, the city of Melbourne being turned over to the people, rather than machines. The streets free of traffic, not breathing in fumes, not dodging the cars, dodging the orange lights. Bliss.... Surely a day exploring the alternatives to our usual carbon-belching, time-wasting, dangerous and efficient traffic-as-usual scenario isn't too much to ask?"*

And from Charlie Davie, **The Age 8/9/07**: *"Reducing car use is an essential part of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and maintaining the liveability of our city, so it is great to see a group of innovative young people present a vision for a car free day in the Melbourne CBD. They are showing exactly the sort of leadership and initiative we need to bring to our city's environmental challenges. It is very disappooint to hear the Premier pour scorn on their idea.... City streets without cars would attract thousands of Melbournians to experience their beautiful city without the bumper-to-bumper traffic for just one day of the year. Retail businesses are likely to find that there are economic benefits to attracting foot and cycle traffic to the area. Creating a vision is a powerful first step to achieving positive change, and our leaders should step forward and engage the innovative ideas of this new generation of Melbournians."*

190 more comments can be found at:

http://blogs.theage.com.au/yoursay/archives/2007/09/carfree_day.html#comments

A New Melbourne Train Timetable

A new Melbourne metropolitan train timetable will deliver more than 200 new services across the network each week, providing relief for many passengers feeling the squeeze due to unprecedented patronage growth. The six new morning peak services alone can carry up to 6,000 people, more than the carrying capacity of two new freeway lanes. Copies of the new timetable are available at www.metlinkmelbourne.com.au and from railway stations. **Ref: Premier's Media Release**

A Ferry Idea

On how to creatively shape the future of Melbourne: *"My suggestion is that Melbourne leverage its waterways to develop Sydney-style ferries as an alternative to public transport. The ferries should cover both sides of the Bay (based on Melbourne city being in the middle). This will help reduce the number of cars on the road and also improve the environment."*

Ref: Antony Babu The Sunday Age 9/9/07

Now there's an idea!

More on Hobart Transit Solutions

"Mayors of Glenorchy and Brighton have been urged to support a light rail system.... 'It appears that an integrated transport system of buses, trains and ferry services should be under one co-ordinating authority such as the Metro,' Ald Briscoe said. 'Brisbane City has a totally integrated system with the same ticket. Cyclists have told me they would use it [the light rail], provided they could take their cycles on the train as in Melbourne.' Tram and light rail enthusiast Jeremy Kays said a rail service had broad appeal. 'I believe a rail service would attract significant patronage in Hobart, particularly if park-and-ride facilities were available at key stations,' Mr Kays said. 'Light rail performs a substantially different role and portrays a different image to traditional bus services. With low-floor access and wider aisles for people with wheelchairs, prams and bikes and the elderly, they can be easily boarded and are seen as more attractive for people commuting between suburbs'. Mr Kays said restored heritage trams would provide a valuable tourist asset."

Ref: Michelle Paine, Mercury 31/8/07

More on Computer Journey Planners

Our item on a wayward computer journey planner (#28) caused a small flurry of activity. Apparently there is no connection between the Metlink Journey Planner, which you can access with your PC, and the interactive systems at the tram stops. On the whole we think that both systems, which record many hits per day, are excellent, in spite of the occasional glitches.

More on Car Pooling

In *Transport Newsletter* edition #25 Darren McClelland noted that it is critical that car-poolers in a particular locality use a common on-line database as their one-stop shop for finding prospective people to share a lift with them. There are two reasons:

- ◆ to optimise the likelihood of an effective match by forming a critical mass of car-poolers who live and work near each other.
- ◆ to make effective use of finite resources to promote carpooling.

Darren gave examples of existing databases set up by entrepreneurs and concerned citizens, and explained that while these databases are commendable, they fragment the potential for carpooling. Those using different carpooling databases for example can't identify each other.

The Victorian Government's *TravelSmart* program, while a good start, also fails to optimise the possibility of car-poolers matching up.

TravelSmart facilitates carpooling at the workplace. An obvious solution is for local councils to promote a database, hosted on their websites, as the carpooling database of choice for its residents. However, local government are resistant to this concept for a range of reasons including liability, privacy and security.

In a future edition of the *Transport Newsletter* we will explore some of these perceived obstacles and how the issues might be resolved. In the meantime, consider writing to your local mayor or Victorian Government MP and ask why more is not done to facilitate carpooling.

Thanks to Darren McClelland for this item.

Melbourne and Public Transport

"Melbourne's suburbs and its periphery continue to be dormitories connected by car to large shopping malls—this is not a city in any urban sense. Walking in much of the outer suburbs is hindered by the excessive traffic and unappealing car oriented roads....The claim - often used by our politicians and bureaucrats - that Melbourne's population is too small for a 'high response' public transport is not correct. Neither is the view that we cannot afford the costs of major transport infrastructure - Australia, with an annual budget surplus can certainly afford this. In a recent article, Royce Miller discusses the possibility of 'people-friendly transport tunnels' for Melbourne. These tunnels aim to solve congestion, and opens up more holistic considerations regarding the upgrading of the rail system, connectivity, and the notion of a pedestrian friendly city.

Efficient public transport needs investment. It does not rely on 'coercing' or 'educating' people into using it - people opt for public transport when it is a real option. Underground tunnels, assuming these included good public transport service, could assist cities in becoming pedestrian friendly, as the traffic above is reduced. Public transport, in my view, should be deemed as a right, an integral part of what Lefebvre defined as 'the right to the city'. Our governments, State and Federal, have not yet understood the importance of public transport in relation to environmental issues, health and the liveability of our city. Public transport should act as a network of interconnections to link the Melbourne CBD and the majority of Melbournians who live in suburbs and the periphery."

Ref: Beatriz C. Maturana 15/7/07

For full article: www.architectsforpeace.org

Online: www.goingsolar.com.au/transport

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