

Innovative Idea for Melbourne

An 'Early Bird Metcard' will be tested on the Sydenham and Frankston lines from October 2007, enabling passengers on those lines to travel for free on a train scheduled to arrive at its destination by 7am. The Early Bird Metcard means a zone 1 and 2 trip scheduled to arrive at its destination by 7am will be free, saving commuters up to \$52 a fortnight on the normal cost of a 10x2 hourly ticket. Customers can then purchase a 10x2 hour Metcard to travel home in the evenings. A regular traveller using this system could save up to \$1100 each year. By encouraging passengers to take earlier trains it is hoped that the load will be spread across more services and ease congestion on the network. It should also attract more people out of their cars

Public Transport Minister Lynne Kosky said: 'More services are part of the solution, but we also need innovative ideas to encourage commuters to use all parts of the network'.

Ref: Premier's Media Release 18/9/07

"Environment Victoria said the Early Bird Metcard was a good short-term fix but warned the government needed to do more to avoid a future public transport crisis."

Ref: Dan Harrison The Age 18/9/07

Your Leaders on Public Transport

Senator ALLISON (Victoria—Leader of the Australian Democrats) (3.52 pm)—moved:

That the Senate:

(a) notes that the Metropolitan Transport Forum, comprising of 19 Melbourne Municipal Councils and 17 associated organisations and members, at a forum at the Melbourne Town Hall on 30 August 2007, has called on the Government to contribute to funding public transport services throughout Australia to meet the needs of public transport users for the following reasons:

- (i) public transport contributes to the economic performance and liveability of cities and reduces car dependence and the costs of road congestion, estimated to be \$10 billion nationally in 2005 and \$20 billion by 2020,
- (ii) one suburban train can remove 5 kilometres of cars from congested roads,
- (iii) public transport enables Australia to respond to rising fuel prices and environmental sustainability,
- (iv) petrol will continue to increase beyond \$US70 per barrel with increasing world demand for oil, and only one barrel of oil being discovered for nine barrels being produced,

- (v) public transport assists in access to jobs, education and services for people who cannot afford a car or who are unable to drive, including students, the poor, people with disabilities and the elderly, and helps to reduce socio-economic problems, social isolation and inequity,
 - (vi) public transport helps reduce health costs by reducing the effect of accidents and pollution on the national health bill and hospitals,
 - (vii) in-built walking to and from transport nodes contributes to regular physical activity, essential in reducing risks of cardio-vascular disease, hypertension, obesity, diabetes, depression, bowel and other cancers,
 - (viii) by increasing demand – Melbourne's public transport use increased by 20 per cent in the past 2 years, and
 - (ix) in an independent Melbourne survey, more than 4 out of 5 respondents (83 per cent) said that the issue of public transport infrastructure would be of importance when deciding who they would vote for in the next federal election; and
- (b) urges the Government to reverse its policy of denying public transport any funding in its transport budget determinations.

Question put. The Senate divided. [3.53 pm]

Ayes..... 9 Noes..... 53

The nine in favour were: Allison, L.F; Bartlett, A.J.J; Brown, B.J; Fielding, S; Milne, C; Murray, A.J.M; Nettle, K; Siewert, R; & Stott Despoja, N.

Ref: Senate Hansard 18/9/07

www.aph.gov.au/hansard/senate/dailys/ds180907.pdf

What do you think when the minor parties vote in favour of such a motion and the two major parties join forces to oppose it? Keep in mind that the Federal Government pours billions into roads funding and propping up the car industry. Australia is the only OECD country in the world that does not fund public transport at the Federal level so the idea that this is a State issue does not hold anything, let alone water! Remember that you use public transport and you vote.

Skewed Bike Path Questions

On 18/9/07 VicRoads conducted a survey on how Copenhagen-style bike lanes affected pedestrians. It will be interesting to see the compiled results given that that the questions appeared a bit skewed. I wonder if VicRoads has published a similar survey on how motor vehicle lanes affect pedestrians.

And Also ...

You know there is a problem when you type: 'Copenhagen-style bile lanes'.

The Cost of Car Parking

"Ministerial staff and bureaucrats are enjoying hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxpayer-funded parking The exclusive city car-parking spots cost \$4884 each a year. ... The Public Transport Users Association said it was hypocritical of the Government to be spending thousands of dollars on private car-parking spaces for its staff while advocating other workers use public transport. 'The Government should be setting an example and having their workers come to the city by public transport,' spokesman Tim Petersen said. Use of the private car park showed the Government 'has no confidence in the public transport system to carry senior people to work in reasonable comfort ... It's hardly a surprise to the rest of us'. Mr Petersen said the CBD was one of the areas most accessible by public transport ... 'The Government should be minimising the number of people who drive in and out of the city, if they are serious about helping the environment.' ... The Opposition's scrutiny of government spokesman, David Davis, said ... 'What sort of signal does this send when our public transport system is in crisis, when passengers are packed in like sardines?'"

Ref: The Sunday Age 16/9/07

Bus Reforms

"Victorian bus companies could be fined for failing to meet performance standards under new laws to go before State Parliament this week. Public Transport Minister Lynne Kosky said the laws would shape new bus contracts due to be negotiated this year and take effect next year. "These laws are the first step towards financial incentives for bus operators that improve their services, and will also make them more accountable to the public, including possible financial penalties," Ms Kosky said.... Under the new laws, bus contracts could contain financial incentives for growth in patronage, improvements in punctuality and more accurate timetables. Contractors would also be required to meet certain performance indicators based on measures such as cancellation rates, on-time running and timing points along routes, she said.

Ref: The Age 18/9/07

More on Car Free Days

Online Poll: 'What do you think about a car free day in the CBD? Of 234 votes:

- 'Good idea for a trial' - 74%
- 'Depends on which roads' - 18%

Ref: www.yarratrams.com.au/desktopdefault.aspx

Sustainable Cities

"...when it comes to encouraging transit, mode choice -- ie., train vs. bus vs. streetcar -- isn't the most important factor in determining how many people use a transit system... Far more important is the layout of communities served by transit. In particular, compact neighbourhoods can concentrate people and jobs near major transit routes, which helps make transit more convenient and cost-effective.... What I am saying is that neither buses nor trains will get as many riders as we might hope -- unless we get our neighbourhoods right first."

Ref: Clark Williams-Derry 15/5/07

www.sightline.org/daily_score/archive/2007/05/15/is-the-skytrain-the-limit

"Big names [in the USA] within the urban planning and transportation technology sectors met this week to begin a conversation about how they could create more sustainable cities and vehicles. The Meeting of the Minds Conference brought together public officials, scientists, academics, auto manufacturers and non-profits to discuss fuels of the future, improving transit systems, breakthroughs in urban design, climate change and cutting edge vehicle technology."

Ref: Tilde Herrera Green Buzz 14/9/07

www.greenbiz.com/news/news_third.cfm?NewsID=35902

"The Age has recently reported the extra costs incurred by those in the outer suburbs reliant on cars. It is a significant socio-economic but also environmentally unsustainable blight on our lifestyle.... I am one of those outer-suburban, car-dependent, disadvantaged people. I am frustrated that there is no viable, sustainable alternative to the car to allow me to maintain employment and mobility. I am fortunate that I have to travel only 17 minutes to work by car. To take the currently available public transport would take 1½ hours. The Government's continued focus on road infrastructure only encourages more traffic. Public transport is barely considered, and yet it is more cost-effective. Much of its infrastructure is there already. Improved, publicly owned transport is part of the solution: it decreases carbon emissions as people will use their cars less; decreases the cost of living as people spend less on cars and petrol; and lessens the disparity between city and outer-suburban dwellers. Something needs to be done now."

David Cox, Mornington The Age 6/6/07

Online: www.goingsolar.com.au/transport

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