

Ferry Feedback

The ferry to Portarlington - or any ferry on the Bay for that matter - requires a volume of regular commuter traffic with the potential top up of tourism traffic especially on weekends and public holidays. Estimate the commuter numbers to / from Portarlington - Melbourne and commuting surrounds within 15-20 minutes (car / bus, walk, bike) and you might find that the real passenger base is less than commercially required as not everyone of these commuters wants to get off at Station Pier, Port Melbourne (15 minute transfer to the City plus a 5-15 minute walk and wait for light rail at Sandridge) – commuting time adds up along with the cost of a weekly ticket....the cruel economics of time and dollars cuts in.....Also a full life cycle assessment of the alternative travel systems may indicate that hybrid shared cars provide the least total environmental impact and offer the maximum flexibility for door-to-door service in the least time for the lowest cost per head. Better still; don't commute for work unless there is no feasible alternative!

Peter Young, Primaform, 7/2/08

Comment:

I'm advocating that ferries should be investigated and such an investigation might find that ferries are not viable. I'm also advocating that travellers should have a choice of modes so that if there is an issue with a service – eg the rail to / from Geelong – then an alternative is available. Rising fuel costs will eventually bite and this will be a significant issue for the day-tripper tourist market and the many businesses located around the Bay. Car pooling is a good idea, as is working from home and these are part of the range of solutions for reducing traffic and congestion. It is interesting to note that other cities around the world are successfully running ferry services.

San Francisco with a similar size (but

obviously different shape) bay in terms of trip length is actively expanding its ferry services. Incidentally San Francisco is almost the same latitude north as Melbourne is south.

Portarlington to Port Melbourne is the logical first step though it will be essential to improve the land link to the city perhaps with additional trams that wait for the ferries and run direct to Flinders Street Railway Station via a tram link behind the casino. Cross-bay services, such as the Geelong-Portarlington-Frankston route, should also be investigated.

[Picture: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hovercraft>]



Tram Improvements in Melbourne

"Public Transport Minister Lynne Kosky yesterday announced the creation of a third line in St Kilda Road, in front of the Arts Centre and National Gallery of Victoria, to reduce delays. New platform tram stops will be built, at first outside the Arts Centre and eventually along the length of St Kilda Road. Car parking will be lost in front of the Arts Centre to make way for the new lines and stops. 'This is about making sure trams have priority,' Ms Kosky said. One lane for cars will also be lost closer to Flinders Street railway station after the new tram stops and lines are installed."

Ref: Clay Lucas. The Age, 19/2/08

The first stage of the project will include the construction of a 69-metre section of third track outside the Arts Centre, which will allow 'through' trams to run efficiently even in the event of a breakdown. Ms Kosky said that once this section was complete, turning tracks will be constructed at Southbank Boulevard and the Domain Interchange stop to allow turning trams to do so without delaying trams behind them. A major tram stop upgrade along the length of St Kilda Road will follow. "Stage one of the project is expected to cost \$8.2 million. Work will begin by mid-2008, with the major components of the strategy due for completion by late 2009.

Ref: Ministerial Media Release, 18/2/08

Ms Kosky said five new high-capacity, low-floor trams would be put on Route 96 (East Brunswick-St Kilda Beach) as part of the Government's plan to meet unprecedented patronage growth ahead of a long-term tram procurement program. The trams are equivalent in size to the longest trams currently operating in Melbourne and can carry about 240 passengers at a time. ... 'During peak hour these five new trams will be able to carry up to 1200 people which is equivalent to taking more than 1000 cars off Melbourne's roads,' she said. 'It also means that Route 96, which already has a high proportion of platform stops, will now be serviced entirely by low-floor trams, significantly improving accessibility for passengers.'

Ref: Ministerial Media Release, 7/2/08

Community Railway Stations

"A clean and attractive station is less likely to invite litter or vandalism, making the station not only more attractive but safer. A safer and beautified station will attract more users, leading to a reduction in car use and therefore, cleaner air. When people take trains, they walk more and interact with each other, increasing physical and mental health and community spirit. Stations that are taken care of also boost the sense of pride local residents have for their community assets."

Ref: On Track! Jan/Feb Edition 2008

Transport Connections (1)

An exciting 3 year project has commenced in the Shire of Yarra Ranges, aimed at assisting communities to find practical solutions to their local transport needs. The project is managed by a consortium of community organisations as well as the Shire of Yarra Ranges itself. It forms part of a network of projects across the state, funded and supported by the Department of Planning & Community Development and the Department of Infrastructure. Glenda George and Kaz Mackay are keen to meet with any individual, group, agency or company which has a vested interest in improving public and community transport. They can be contacted on 0432 603 442 or at yr.transportconnect@yahoo.com.au

Transport Connections (2)

"A project to help develop an effective, efficient and sustainable transport service system in North East Victoria has been funded through the Victorian Government's Transport Connections program. It is a cross-government initiative to help communities work together to improve local transport." ... "This program of the Victorian Government has obviously a lot to commend it. Translating the collective results into any real form of redress to the underlying problems may, however, be another thing."

Ref: Dave Moyle, On Track! Jan/Feb 2008

Cycling in London

"London is likely to become one of the more cycle-friendly cities, with a series of two-wheeler superhighways cutting through traffic and congestion. Plans for the super-cycleways will be unveiled next week as part of an initiative to stimulate a 400% increase in the number of people pedalling round the capital by 2025. At a cost of £400 million (\$A870 million), the 12 routes are intended to be the motorways of cycling and are likely to be emulated by other British cities. Londoners without bikes will be able to use the city's free bicycles. 'We want nothing short of a cycling transformation in London,' said Mayor Ken Livingstone. 'We are announcing the biggest investment in cycling in London's history, which will mean that thousands more Londoners can cycle in confidence'."

Ref: The Sunday Age, 10/2/08

And Also ...

"Contractors in Hampshire, UK, have been ordered to replace wonky road markings they painted at night. 'Presumably they were doing it then to prevent traffic disruption but perhaps it was counter-productive,' a council spokesman said." **Ref: Royal Auto Dec 07/Jan 08**

Regional Rail in Victoria

"Without substantial investment in rail transport, the Victorian community can expect more trucks on the road, more road fatalities and more farming families unable to cope with the pressures of additional costs', [said the Victorian Farmers Federation grains group president, Geoff Nalder]. The VFF expects about 1.5 million tonnes of wheat to be harvested this season, down from the annual average of 4 million tonnes. ... 'Premier John Brumby and [Public Transport] Minister Kosky must guarantee that Victoria's grain and other freight rail lines will be properly maintained so that when good grain seasons return, export grain trains to Melbourne, Geelong and Portland can recommence', Opposition public transport spokesman Terry Mulder said. 'Country ratepayers and councils face large hikes in road maintenance costs if grain, containers, logs and other freight is transported more by road instead of by grain trains', he said. One grain train carrying a load of 2000 tonnes is the equivalent to 500 truck movements. ... 'The Victorian Government is committed to a sustainable freight network ... and are investing significantly in upgrades with work on the \$73 million upgrade of the Mildura line starting last week', Ms Kosky said."

Ref: Stephen Moynihan, Mathew Murphy and Royce Miller, The Age, 12/12/07

Westgate Bridge Congestion

"Another bridge or a tunnel beneath the Yarra River would be the best way to solve the West Gate Bridge traffic crisis, the Opposition says."

Ref: John Ferguson and Geraldine Mitchell, Herald Sun, 18/2/08

"More than a million Australian children are now overweight or obese, and experts predict an explosion in childhood type 2 diabetes over the next few decades." **Ref: Kamahl Cogdon and Rachel Hewitt, Herald Sun, 18/2/08**

The above quotes are from the same Herald Sun front page (yet they don't make the link between obesity and the type of planning that leads to traffic congestion). Below is a sample of the (more sensible) 'Reader's Comments':

"Here is a novel idea that governments of a long time ago understood well - invest continually in new public transport infrastructure. What's the point of growth corridors, and new suburbs when the infrastructure to support the population does not exist?" **Ref: Elliot, Herald Sun, 18/2/08**

"Stop building roads. Expand the rail network, and put on more trains. Problem solved."

Ref: Daryl Johnson, Herald Sun, 18/2/08