

## Future Melbourne

*"Even our politicians seem to be focusing on the need for 'environmental sustainability'. Unfortunately there is little real understanding, particularly in the political sector, of the scale of problems at hand and the urgency with which we must now deal with them. Any vision for a future sustainable Melbourne will require a fundamental reassessment of some basic issues .... Melbourne, already one of the biggest urban metropolitan zones by area in the world, has an opportunity to develop a forward view, not based on the consumer consumptive economics of previous decades and facilitated by the introduction of another million people inside the Urban Growth Boundary, but by understanding sustainable economics, natural limits, developing new policies and new investment patterns which put environmental externalities on the balance sheet.*

*Future Melbourne has set out a range of options for business, cultural and knowledge development, transport and other services, spatial design and our environment. These options are no longer for our consideration they are mandatory. In particular, in the short term, a fundamental rethink of our transport system will require billions of dollars of investment in public transport infrastructure together with strategic redesign of core components of the road transport system while moving away from that mode as our principal focus."* **Ref: Rob Gell, 'Big ideas need a higher, longer-term view', 19/1/08** <http://evillagemelbourne.com.au>

*"...use of Melbourne's public transport system is now growing faster than in any other capital city. What has been missing is the necessary investment in infrastructure. Expenditure on rolling stock and improved signalling is not as attractive to governments as some of the alternatives. Why spend money on suburban rail lines when there's a Grand Prix to support? The supposed 'economic benefit' of the Grand Prix is used by the State Government as a justification for financing the \$35 million the race lost last year. It appears no one has asked what would be the benefit of people getting to work quicker and home to their families sooner if the public transport system were improved. It is State Government policy that by 2020, 20% of all transport trips in Melbourne will be taken by public transport. Currently, public transport trips comprise about 10% of all trips."*

**Ref: John Roskam, Executive Director of the Institute of Public Affairs, The Age, 13/2/08**

## Present Melbourne

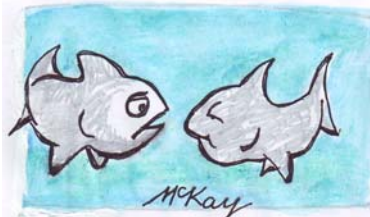
*"I find Melbourne's transport system effective, and I rely on it for up to three hours' commuting every working day. However, I do live in the inner parts of the city and realise that infrastructure is desperately needed to service the ballooning suburbs further out. Since I left my home town of Sydney four years ago, I have parted ways with my car. Sydney's public transport is a disgrace. At least we have not had our transport minister urging commuters to buy a car if they're fed up with a crippled rail system, as then transport minister Michael Costa did in 2004. In comparison, Melbourne is a public transport user's haven. There is undoubtedly desperate need for improvement, but I figure someone has to stick up for aspects of this essential service."*

**Ref: Jay Tilley, The Age, 6/2/08**

*"...after carefully planning my connecting trains using the Connex journey planner, I arrived at Victoria Park station well ahead of time. My train did come, and it went straight past. When I rang the customer feedback line, the response was 'driver error' — the driver was told to run express (driver error?). I asked if I could get a refund: no, Connex does not issue refunds. But I didn't catch the train: you bought a ticket with the intention to travel, was the Connex line. Yes, but the service was not provided to me."*

**Ref: Melissa Clark, The Age, 6/2/08**

*"As I was disgorged at Flagstaff, after the usual experience of cancelled trains, sardined passengers and pointless stops to try to shoehorn in even more people, I angrily muttered those words muttered by thousands every day: "Never again." Ref: John Henry, The Age, 6/2/08*



**'Am I the only sardine who has nightmares about being on a Melbourne train?'**

*"Premier John Brumby should realise that he is risking votes by letting this public transport*

*mess continue without apparent action. ... I'm turning into an angry swinging voter with an urge to voice my discontent, and judging by the commuters simmering around me, I'm not alone."*

**Ref: 25/2/08 Graham 'Sardines that John rejects', MXNews**

## And Also ...

*"One wag said, after hearing Brumby boasting about how Melbourne is now gaining about 1200 extra people every week: 'I think they all caught my train this morning'."*

**Ref: Paul Austin, The Age, 6/3/08**

**Oil ► Ethanol ► Electricity**

*"The world's biggest car maker, General Motors, believes global oil supply has peaked and a switch to electric cars is inevitable. In a stunning announcement at the opening of the Detroit motor show, Rick Wagoner, GM's chairman and chief executive, also said ethanol was an 'important interim solution' to the world's demand for oil, until battery technology improved to give electric cars the same driving range as petrol-powered cars. GM is working on an electric car, called the Volt, which is due in showrooms in 2010, but delays in suitable battery technology have slowed the project.*

*Mr Wagoner cited US Department of Energy figures which show the world is consuming roughly 1000 barrels of oil every second of the day, and yet demand for oil is likely to increase by 70 per cent over the next 20 years. Some experts believe the supply of oil peaked in 2006. The remaining oil reserves are deeper below the Earth's surface and therefore more costly to mine and refine. 'There is no doubt demand for oil is outpacing supply at a rapid pace, and has been for some time now,' Mr Wagoner said. ... 'So, are electrically driven vehicles the answer for the mid- and long-term? Yes, for sure. But ... we need something else to significantly reduce our reliance on petroleum in the interim.' GM is so convinced about ethanol it has signed an agreement with a supplier that claims to have come up with a way of producing ethanol that is cheaper and more efficient than refining oil. The supplier claims it can produce ethanol from 'almost any material' such as farm waste, municipal waste, discarded plastics - even old tyres."*

**Ref: Joshua Dowling, SMH, 15/1/08**

**And Also ...**

*"Before last year's election, Labor promised to contribute \$4.7 billion to help build a national broadband network accessible to 98% of homes... This could include a broadcast-quality video telephone call, while someone else watches high definition internet television, and another person plays online gaming."* **Ref: Jason Koutsoukis, The Sunday Age, 2/3/08**

**Comment:** While it is acknowledged that broadband can help reduce the demand for travel, \$4.7 billion to be able to simultaneously make telephone calls, watch TV and gamble! Yet after 100 days of Federal Labor in office we still have nothing concrete for sustainable transport.

**Memo to Advisors:** Note the flood of comment calling for Transit Orientated Development.

**Encouraging Cars**

*"The tax concession for the private use of company cars involves billions of taxpayers' dollars every year and the rate of the concession actually increases the more kilometres drivers clock up. The concessions contribute to increased greenhouse gas pollution and urban traffic congestion. ... Treasury now estimates that, by 2009-10, we will be spending over \$2 billion per year subsidising the use of company cars - nearly twice as much as was previously predicted. Other tax estimates have also increased. For the 2008-09 year, the estimated value of tax incentives for use of aviation fuel has gone up from \$830 million to \$900 million and for the same year the value of tax incentives for the production of condensate by petroleum and gas companies has gone from \$250 million to \$320 million. ACF's strategies director Charles Berger said: 'These tax breaks are economically senseless, reward environmentally destructive behaviour and increase taxes that the rest of us have to pay. There are much better uses for \$2 billion than to hand it out to affluent corporate executives as an incentive to buy cars and drive them as much as possible to get the maximum tax benefit'."* **Ref:**

**Australian Conservation Foundation 30/1/08**  
[http://www.acfonline.org.au/articles/news.asp?news\\_id=1614&eid=4221](http://www.acfonline.org.au/articles/news.asp?news_id=1614&eid=4221)

*"Victorian MPs, senior public servants and police will be driving Australian-made gas guzzlers until at least 2012, under an \$800 million extension to the State Government's car fleet contract... the tender arrangement had been extended because no other manufacturers could meet government requirements for local vehicles.... State Greens MP Greg Barber said Australian governments had made a huge error by backing larger cars and ignoring changing tastes for smaller cars, triggered by rising fuel prices and concern about the environment."*

**Ref: Josh Gordon, The Age, 15/2/08**

*"We, the grateful taxpayers, provide 108 gas-guzzlers for our MPs. How many other cars do we provide for the public service? Why do we provide any cars at all? If the Government is serious about traffic congestion and greenhouse gases, surely no cars should be provided at public expense. MPs and public servants could be given a voucher for public transport, and if they wished to travel by car, they could do so at their own expense, like the rest of us."* **Ref: Peter Valder, The Age, 18/2/08**

*"There needs to be a serious plan for providing sustainable transport to cut greenhouse gas emissions, and this means providing convenient, less polluting options to private car use."*

**Ref: Genevieve O'Connell, The Age, 16/2/08**