

Community Consultation

Led by DOI, a number of Victorian councils and departments are working on a program to make railway stations 'more attractive, inviting, vibrant and safe community spaces'. Two suburban stations (Mooroolbark and Laverton) and one V/Line station (North Shore, near Geelong) were chosen for the pilot program. More than 90 people turned up for the Laverton session which shows the community interest in the local public transport infrastructure. Many good initiatives were raised but one caused a little concern - the 'need' for a multi-level car park. Most attending lived within walking or cycling distance so better public transport connections would be preferable to attracting more cars from other areas.

Sydney Metro Announced

Peak national transport group Tourism and Transport Forum (TTF) today endorsed the construction of Sydney's first metro line from Rouse Hill to the CBD, which will be operational by 2017. TTF Managing Director Christopher Brown said the \$12 billion 38-km underground metro project was the biggest single public transport investment NSW had ever seen. "Metro rail is quicker, more efficient and carries more people. This is a bold vision for Sydney's future. It is what Sydney needs." Mr Brown said a single-deck metro system can carry up to 60,000 people an hour – double what Sydney's existing rail network can accommodate. "The SydneyLink metro will provide a vital link between the CBD, the suburbs and business districts of the inner west and the fast-growing north-western suburbs. It will be a viable and essential alternative to travel by car – helping relieve the stifling congestion that costs Sydney \$11 million each day and takes a major social and environmental toll. The Government's strategy also allows for a metro line to the east of the CBD, which would link the city to the Moore Park precinct and beyond to Malabar. A third potential metro line to Parramatta is also being investigated. On its own, metro cannot provide all the answers – but together with existing rail and bus infrastructure, the potential expansion of light rail and the introduction of a much-needed integrated ticketing system, it has the potential to revitalise Sydney's public transport system." Mr Brown said increasing the capacity of Sydney's mass transit system was essential to both urban congestion and transport-related greenhouse gas emissions. "Moving more commuters out of their cars and on to public transport will reduce pollution and free-up road space for the movement of freight."

Ref TTF Media Release, 18/3/08

Reshaping Our Cities

"If the long term vision existed, we could rezone our ever-evolving cities and accrue some fantastic oil-saving benefits quickly. Let us look at the example of steering suburban home building in the right direction. Folke Günther — a Swedish author — writes that the natural attrition rate of old suburban homes is about 1.6% per year. (This is based on a 60 year home lifespan, so is a safe enough figure to work with. I don't see Australian suburban homes lasting longer than that, do you?) That is, 1.6% of Swedish homes are demolished and rebuilt each year. Demolition means the potential for change, because when a home has reached the end of its lifespan, it does not have to be replaced with a similar building and a similar function on the same old real estate space. That space can be rezoned and used for other purposes, but I'll describe the shape of this change below. Right now I am discussing the speed of the change that normal home demolition rates could allow. If we took charge of city change in the right direction, 1.6% per year means that we could reshape the city by 16% in a decade, or 32% in 20 years, or even 64% over 40 years. In other words, if we made the appropriate zoning law changes, we could reduce suburbia's need for oil transport by 64% in just 4 decades at the rate of change cities are already experiencing anyway! All it requires is the vision and political will to grab the reigns of this beast and steer it in the right direction." **Ref: 'Eclipse', ABC TV Difference of Opinion: Are We Running On Empty? 27/7/07**

<http://www.2b.abc.net.au/tmb/Client/Message.aspx?b=70&m=10561&ps=20&dm=1&pd=3>



'If I was a house I'd be condemned'

Based on 21 simulation models and a range of emissions scenarios, a study by the US DOT

(Department of Transportation) on the US Gulf Coast Region "found that potential changes in climate over the next 50 to 100 years could disrupt transportation services in the region. 27% of major roads, 9% of rail lines, and 72% of area ports are at or below 4 feet in elevation, and could be vulnerable to flooding due to future sea level rise and natural sinking of the area's land mass. The study is designed to help state and local officials as they develop their transportation plans and make investment decisions."

Ref: US DOT Media Release 12/3/08 More info: <http://www.climate-science.gov/Library/sap/sap4-7/final-report/>

The Cars That Ate Cities

"When you're in traffic these days, four-wheel drives are everywhere. Most of them are registered in the cities and rarely leave the bitumen. They can be deadly urban assault vehicles. Many of them guzzle fuel at a rate that makes the big Falcons and Commodores look like petrol misers. And the toxic emissions that many four-wheel drives spew from their exhaust pipes can rate up there with small trucks. Four-wheel drive sales have boomed over the past decade; they now make up about a quarter of all new passenger vehicles sales in this country. In contrast, regulation by the federal and state governments is going at a snail's pace. It's been a similar situation in the United States, where four-wheel drives now rule the roads. New Australian safety research you'll hear about on today's program adds to the concern. ...Actually here they're now officially called Sports Utility Vehicles, or SUVs, as they're called in America."

Ref: Stephen Skinner, Background Briefing, The Cars That Ate Cities, Radio National 15/6/03 Read the full transcript:
<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/talks/bbing/stories/s881845.htm>

A "survey of 2380 licensed drivers, conducted by Sweeney Research ... found that most drivers object to 4WDs on city roads. The vehicles are increasingly popular, with the Australian sport utility vehicle market growing by 16 per cent last year. Six in 10 Australians surveyed said the city was no place for 4WDs, while 66 per cent said they thought they were a danger to other road users. More than half of the drivers surveyed (56 per cent) said higher registration fees should be imposed on 4WDs and a third said they were socially unacceptable because of their carbon footprint." **Ref: AAP. Herald Sun, 6/3/08**

Problems with Freeways

"If we quote the western Ring Road, which, when it opened, for the first three months seemed to flow very well. I mean now, it's almost as clogged up as the South Eastern Freeway." **Ref: Gavin**

Murphy, Stateline Victoria, ABCTV 22/2/08
www.abc.net.au/stateline/vic/content/2006/s2170350.htm

"When the South Eastern Arterial was opened in the 80's, VicRoads predicted that it would take 15 years for traffic to reach congestion levels. In fact it took only three months, and the new road reached peak hour capacity in just six months."

Ref: Bronwen Machin & John Stone Connections, Frequency and Speed – managing our public transport so more people will use it. Environment Victoria, October 1995



London Bike Plan

"London will adopt a bicycle hire scheme similar to a popular initiative in Paris under a \$1 billion cycling investment package announced by the mayor on Monday. Under the plan, part of a series of environmental measures due in coming days, 6,000 bicycles will be available for hire from racks every 300 metres throughout the city centre. London, which accounts for seven percent of Britain's climate changing carbon emissions and is at the forefront of efforts by major cities around the world to combat global warming, plans to cut carbon emissions by 60 percent by 2025. The Paris bike scheme lets riders with an electronic card take a bike from one rack and return it at another rack anywhere in the city. It has proven popular, transforming traffic in the French capital since it came into operation last July."

Ref: Jeremy Lovell, Reuters, 11/2/08

London Congestion Charge Increase

"Driver's of fuel-guzzling cars will have to pay \$53 a day to enter central London, triple the present general congestion charge. But the most fuel-efficient vehicles will get a free ride."

Ref: MX 13/2/08

London Low Emission Zone

"[Trucks over twelve tonnes driving around London] will be fined up to £200 per day if they are found to be over EU pollution standards in an attempt to improve the city's poor air quality. ...Cameras around the zone will check their number plates against a database of vehicles registered as meeting the EU's 'Euro' limits on emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx) and particulate matter (PM) – two pollutants found in exhaust fumes that are blamed for serious health and environmental problems. ...The scheme will be

extended to cover buses and coaches in July and to large vans and minibuses in October 2010. Transport for London (TfL), which is implementing the £49 million project, says it will improve quality of life for Londoners and reduce the number of people suffering from asthma, cardiovascular disease and other health conditions, cutting healthcare bills by £250 million."

Ref: World Business Council for Sustainable Development 4/2/08 www.wbcsd.org

And Also ...

"North America may have the world's cheapest petrol but prices recently hit \$US1 a litre (A\$1.06 a litre) and General Motors believes the Holden ute may find appeal among pick-up drivers who want to down-size or use less fuel but still drive a V8."

Re: Jason Dowling, The Sunday Age, 16/3/08