

### Open Letter to the Treasurer

*"The forthcoming Federal Budget gives the Government a great opportunity to build our nation's prosperity and set us up to be the world's leading 'green' economy. We believe the first step should be to remove tax breaks for salary-packaged cars and invest this money (\$1.2 billion in 2006-07) in public transport infrastructure. The current Fringe Benefits Tax arrangements are not exactly 'climate friendly'. They provide a financial incentive for employees to drive to work, rather than catch public transport, ride or car pool. It is estimated 50 per cent of Sydney's peak hour traffic is FBT subsidised. The Australian Council of Social Services, the Institute of Chartered Accountants, Insurance Australia Group and the bi-partisan House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment & Heritage have all advocated the repeal of this absurd tax bias towards private vehicles. ...*

*"Furthermore, we encourage the Government to set up a specific fund for sustainable transport infrastructure. This would supplement state government and private sector investment and create a substantial pool of capital for public transport projects ... Investing in public transport infrastructure will build the productive capacity of our cities and buttress the economy against the growing costs of urban congestion and increasingly scarce oil. It will also help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve the liveability of cities. Failing to invest, however, will expose Australia to unnecessary economic and environmental risks." Ref: Don Henry (ACF) and Chris Brown (TTF) 28/4/08*

### Federal Funding for PT?

*"...federal Transport Minister Anthony Albanese said the Federal Government would consider funding public transport in Australia's big cities... Mr Albanese said the Government could be prepared to help fund urban development. 'You can't have a strategy for moving freight, without a strategy for moving people'."*

**Ref: Clay Lucas, The Age 3/5/08**

### French Transport

*"French President Nicolas Sarkozy in October pledged that France would stop building motorways and airports to tackle pollution from transport. Instead, Mr Sarkozy said, there would be more investment in the French rail network, to shift freight traffic away from the roads. More than 25% of French carbon dioxide gas emissions are from transport. Ref: Clay Lucas and Linton Besser. The Age 28/4/08*

### Sustainable Transport in Queensland

*"Maroochy council is set to adopt an ambitious new transport strategy today which it hopes will form the basis for sustainable planning throughout the Sunshine Coast region. ... The strategy deals with public transport options including buses, heavy and light rail, land use, parking, improvements to walkways and bikeways, roads, travel demand management and transit oriented development. It also recognises the importance of working closely with other levels of government to deliver much-needed infrastructure and services as quickly and efficiently as possible... 'It is about linking transport with our activities, planning for more employment, recreational and sporting facilities and commercial and residential development and ensuring public transport plays an integral part' [said SunROC transport committee chair Zrinka Johnston]. 'It's about connecting our centres, putting lines on maps and connecting the dots which are our main activity centres, and it will provide the basis for the Sunshine Coast's sustainable growth strategy for the future'." Ref: Carolyn Tucker, Sunshine Coast Daily 17/12/07*

*"Sunshine Coast public transport users will be among the first to try Translink's long-awaited smart card ticketing system next month. Three years in the making, the 'go' card will be available to Coast commuters from January, allowing them to finally try the swipe machines which have sat neglected on buses, trains and ferries and at stations and terminals. Brisbane will get the card in February with the Gold Coast to follow. Card users will be able to register up to \$200 credit over the phone, online, at selected agents or using machines at bus, train and ferry stations. They will be required to touch the card on one of the machines before starting their journey and then touch it again when they disembark to ensure the correct fare is registered. The existing paper system will continue to be available.*

*[Qld] Transport minister John Mickel implored new users to report their experiences with the ticketing system back to the government. 'If there are any glitches in it we want to hear because I don't want to roll this out until I know it's not going to cause people any inconvenience,' he said. Aware of the criticism his own government has faced for the lengthy delays in rolling out the technology, Mr Mickel could not resist a dig at his NSW counterparts who continued to face problems with the development of their own version. {See #45} 'It's not about a State of Origin between us and New South Wales but I tell you if it was mate we'd be right out in front,' he said." Ref: Toby Walker, Sunshine Coast Daily 17/12/07*

## Urban Design & Transport

Transport is not a traffic issue, it is an urban issue. A collective transport solution is an integral part of a city, its social, urban and environmental fabric. The quality of the city (the entire city) cannot be separated from the quality of its transport. Good quality urban spaces are not isolated events. They work in connection with its surrounding neighbourhoods and municipalities—together they form the city.

Transport must connect an entire city, be time efficient and affordable. It must run frequently and be available anytime, any day. In a city like Melbourne, transport should not determine the way in which people live, but rather offer people real choices. The public deserves a good collective transport system and the environment cannot afford any less.

We need to find an inclusive a holistic and a collaborative way to address the quality of our cities and with this its transport. Quality depends on approaches that are encompassing of human and non-human beings, buildings, roads, traffic, vegetations, commerce (of all scales), and services. We hope that government (at all levels) begin to trust the professions and the community, not as recipients of set agendas, but as partners. This requires openness to criticism, openness to question the premises. It requires trust in collaborative processes. **Beatriz C. Maturana, Architects for Peace 19/2/08**  
<http://www.architectsforpeace.org/>

## Electric Vehicles in Israel

“Currently, it takes some form of oil to run the almost 700 million vehicles on this great earth of ours.... Israel is hoping to make their country the first country to have an electric car with the infrastructure built for electric cars. ... Carlos Ghosn, President and CEO of both Renault and Nissan, explained ... ‘Renault will provide the vehicles. Nissan, with a joint venture with NEC has created a battery pack that meets the requirements of electric vehicles. Project Better Place (PBP) will construct and operate and electric grid recharge across the country. The Israeli government will give tax incentives for zero-emission cars.’ ... The Israeli government is embracing a new technology; a paradigm of thinking that could transform the country and add 50,000 people to the workforce. Israel only has about two million cars on the road. Electricity is less volatile than the price of gasoline, and if supplied by solar panels ... could become cheaper as the initial investment is amortized.” **Ref: Lou Ann Hammond, 27/1/08**  
[www.carlist.com/blog/?p=885](http://www.carlist.com/blog/?p=885)

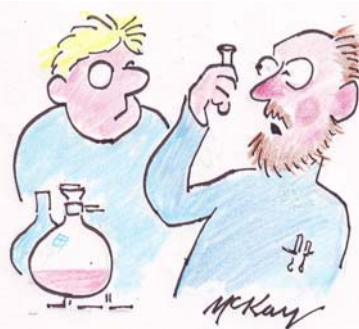
## Sending the Wrong Signals

“Hypocrites is an apt description of federal politicians and their taste for gas-guzzling cars. ... more than 213 of them drive cars that are streets away from being the environmentally friendly vehicles they advocate for ordinary Australians. There are only 10 hybrid cars in this privileged fleet. Remarkably, despite having rushed to sign the Kyoto Protocol, the Rudd Government imposes no environmental restrictions or guidelines on cars for MPs. Climate Change Minister Penny Wong says the Government is committed to leading by example in reducing emissions. The gas guzzlers would be a good place to start.” **Ref: Herald Sun 1/4/08**

## Hydrogen Vehicles in Japan

“Japanese companies have been working to create a viable car running on fuel cells, which would produce electricity through a chemical reaction between hydrogen and oxygen, leaving water as the only by-product. ‘When we first started the research and development of fuel-cell cars, some people predicted that they may be commercialised by around 2010. But that’s difficult,’ Toyota Motor Corp. president Katsuaki Watanabe said. ‘The technological advances are significant. The only problem is the cost,’ he told reporters. Toyota last year reported success in a test of a fuel-cell car. The FCHV vehicle was driven about 560 kilometres on a single filling and finished with 30 percent of the hydrogen still in the tank. But besides the hefty price of the FCHV, Watanabe noted that motorists would need an infrastructure of hydrogen filling stations if they are to take fuel-cell cars on the road. ‘It will probably

be a long way ahead until we can start mass production, considering problems linked to difficulties in how to stock hydrogen and where to draw hydrogen from,’ he said.” **Ref:**



**‘Hydrogen? Seems like a lot of hot air’**

**SMH, 14/3/08**

## And also ...

“The Queen in Lewis Carroll’s ‘Through the Looking Glass’ says that she could believe ‘six impossible things before breakfast.’ Such an attitude is necessary to discuss the hydrogen economy, since no part of it is possible.”

**Ref: Robert Zubrin, The Hydrogen Hoax - see:**  
<http://www.thenewatlantis.com/archive/15/zubrin.htm>

## Sustainable Cities

*"Frustration over the continuing sprawl of Melbourne's suburbs and lack of progress in providing public transport have led to mounting pressure for a new authority to guide the city's future. Two separate government inquiries are about to call for a new metropolitan planning body, which would involve both the State Government and local councils ceding some planning control. The findings are a response to a widening view in property, planning and architectural circles that both the Government and councils struggle to take a metropolitan-wide view of planning when under pressure from either big developers or powerful resident interests. ... Such a body would probably be made up of local council representatives given the job of overseeing a metropolitan plan such as 2030. Some supporters believe it should also take charge of Melbourne's transport system."*  
**Ref: Royce Miller & Jason Dowling, The Age 5/5/08**

**Comment:** For sustainable cities (including regional cities) there are four key - and interlinking - factors:

- Sustainable urban design
- Sustainable buildings
- Sustainable transport (including freight)
- Sustainable tourism

To achieve these we need:

- A broad vision – which is distilled into:
- A sustainable cities blueprint – which is implemented by:
- A Sustainable Cities Authority – through a process of developing:
- Transition Communities

The Sustainable Cities Authority needs to work across the existing government departments, not duplicating their work, but rather implementing the blueprint by co-operation and consensus – however in the end, the Authority will need to have considerable power. There would also need to be considerable community input.

## Money Flows for Freeway

*"The cost of upgrading Melbourne's M1 freeway system has blown out by more than \$400 million, the State Government has revealed. The projected cost of the Monash-CityLink-West Gate Freeway upgrade has risen to \$1.39 billion, Roads and Ports Minister Tim Pallas said today. ... The Public Transport Users Association president Daniel Bowen said the extra cost was galling, when the Government was refusing to build new outer suburban rail extensions. "Four hundred million dollars is an incredible amount of money - you could build a new railway line for that much," he said. Ref: The Age 28/4/08*

## Roads vs Public Transport

*"The money spent on new roads in Melbourne by state and federal governments since 1999 has been five times that spent on new public transport connections. Since Labor was elected in Victoria in 1999, \$1.7 billion has been spent on new road projects, including \$770 million on the Ring Road, \$306 million on the Craigieburn bypass and \$242 million on the Pakenham bypass, according a spending analysis conducted by the Public Transport Users Association. By comparison, there has been just \$322 million spent on new public transport connections, the analysis found, including \$115 million for the Craigieburn electrification and \$43 million for the Vermont South tram connection. (Last week the State Government announced the cost of widening the Monash and West Gate freeways had blown out by \$363 million, to a total cost of \$1.4 billion.)"*  
**Ref: Jason Dowling, The Age 5/5/08**

*"It is safe to forecast that as the new interchanges relieve congestion and the traffic speeds up as a result, new traffic will be attracted to the roads and the city will face the same or worse congestion as it does now. What a mess. CityLink cost about \$2 billion to build. Now we have to spend \$1.4 billion patching it up. The patch-up will relieve the pressure for a couple of years at most. Spaghetti junctions will be the memorial to this folly. ... At what point is this cycle of stupidity to stop? ... Are motorists so myopic that they can't see that their problem is more than just getting the car in front of them to speed up or get out of the way?"*  
**Ref: Kenneth Davidson, The Age 5/5/08**

*"The existence of congestion indicates high latent demand, so an increase in road capacity quickly induces additional traffic,' [a PTUA] report says. 'The need to shift a large proportion of motor vehicle journeys to walking, cycling and public transport, as well as the counter-productive effects of road capacity expansion, both demonstrate the need for a moratorium on new roads'."*  
**Ref: Clay Lucas and Linton Besser. The Age 28/4/08**

## Rowville Light Rail Link

*"Professor [Graeme] Davison said an immediate priority should be the construction of a rail line linking Huntingdale Station to the growth area of Rowville, including Monash University's Clayton campus, which is used by more than 30,000 people every day. Given current congestion problems on the rail network, a stand-alone light-rail system should be built that would ferry people from the outer east to the Caulfield line along Wellington Road, he said."*

**Ref: Reid Sexton. The Sunday Age 4/5/08**

## Rail & Ferries in New Zealand

"Freight transport firm Toll Holdings sold its New Zealand rail and ferry operations to the country's government for \$555.35 million to focus on its goods forwarding business. 'The disposal of the rail and ferry operations to the New Zealand government will give rail in New Zealand the opportunity to move forward in an environment with greater clarity and ability to better plan its development', Toll managing director Paul Little said in a statement today. 'We support the government's objective of boosting capital spending on rail'." **Ref: AAP, The Age 5/5/08**



New Plymouth, New Zealand (2005)

"[NZ] Prime Minister Helen Clark today said the deal would pave the way for the modernisation of the rail network, which formed a key part of the Gov't's sustainability agenda. Modernising our transport sector is central to transforming our economy and making it truly sustainable', the PM said. 'With rising fuel prices and growing awareness about the challenge of global climate change, many nations are looking to rail as a central part of 21st century economic infrastructure'. She said a modern rail system could reduce the emissions of the overall transport network, take pressure off our roads and allow trucking and shipping to operate more efficiently. The Government will pay a purchase price of NZ\$665 million for the rail and ferry business with settlement on June 30 [2008]."

**Ref: New Zealand Herald, 5/5/08**

"NZRL was sold for \$400 million to a consortium of Wisconsin Central Railway (40%), Berkshire Partners (20%) and Fay, Richwhite & Company (40%) in 1993. The company was renamed Tranz Rail in 1995, with urban passenger services rebranded Tranz Metro, long-distance passenger Tranz Scenic, and freight Tranz Link. Tranz Rail was purchased by Toll Holdings in 2004 and renamed Toll NZ."

**Ref: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ONTRACK>**

## Congestion Levies

"Road experts are calling for charges at congestion hot spots — effectively charging drivers for the cost of congestion on the economy and environment. Last week, the [Victorian] State Government announced a range of measures — including longer clearway times and quicker responses to broken-down vehicles — but has repeatedly distanced itself from the idea of a congestion levy. Professor Graham Currie, from Monash University's Institute of Transport Studies, said the budget should be used to combat the hidden cost of motor transport by introducing tolling on all Melbourne's freeways.

'Anywhere we have congestion we should be having these sorts of things', he said. 'What this does is it tends to reduce the demand for that road thus alleviating the congestion ... (and) it results in a pot of money. This is a way of taxing the problem to fund the solution'."

**Ref: Reid Sexton. The Sunday Age 4/5/08**

## Car Efficiency

"Cars are no more fuel efficient than in the 1960s, a prominent transport expert has found. ... 'The improvements in emissions you hear cited are from the promotional material released by car companies, which put the best possible spin on things,' Dr [Paul] Mees said. 'But the Australian Bureau of Statistics doesn't put the spin on it: the current rate of progress in making cars more fuel efficient is no progress at all'. While engine efficiency has increased since 1963, car size and extra features — air-conditioning, power steering and windows, safety and entertainment systems — mean petrol consumption per 100 kilometres has not budged. Freeways had also reduced fuel efficiency, Dr Mees said. 'If you drive at 110 km/h, you use more fuel than if you drive at 70 km/h'. Dr Patrick Moriarty, of Monash University's department of mechanical engineering, agreed that little gain had been made in reducing car fuel use per 100 kilometres. Fuel use in transport accounted for 14% of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions in 2005. By 2020 it is projected to increase on 1990 levels by 67%."

**Ref: Clay Lucas. The Age 28/4/08**

## More on Orbital Rail for Melbourne

I have been trying to get DOI to look at extending the Mt Waverley line to Belgrave line for years. They said they were looking into a tunnel to avoid major roads but were not considering using the freeway easement. This was mid 90's, still no progress. Why does one have to go into the city and back out to go to almost local stations? Why two hours from Lilydale to Frankston rather than a one hour more direct route? **Paul Judd, 1/5/08**