

## Tax Incentives in the ACT

"Environmentally friendly cars in the ACT will receive stamp duty discounts under proposed new laws tabled in the Legislative Assembly. The proposed legislation aims to encourage more Canberra motorists to buy low-emitting cars. Chief Minister Jon Stanhope says cars that score the highest environmental rating will be exempt from stamp duty altogether, saving motorists more than \$1,000. 'The greener the car the less stamp duty. The less green the car, the high emitters, the four-wheel drives, the great big V8s will be penalised and stamp duty will increase for those heavy emitting vehicles', he said. 'This is directly a response to our climate change strategy, to issues in relation to climate change; it's another thing the Government can do to encourage behavioural change'."

Ref: ABC News, 8/8/08

## Addicted to Oil in the US

"Two years ago, President Bush declared that America was 'addicted to oil', and, by gosh, he was going to do something about it. Well, now he has. Now we have the new Bush energy plan: 'Get more addicted to oil'. Actually, it's more sophisticated than that: Get Saudi Arabia, our chief oil pusher, to up our dosage for a little while and bring down the oil price just enough so the renewable energy alternatives can't totally take off. Then try to strong-arm Congress into lifting the ban on drilling offshore and in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. It's as if our addict-in-chief is saying to us: 'C'mon, guys, you know you want a little more of the good stuff. One more hit, baby. Just one more toke on the ole oil pipe. I promise, next year, we'll all go straight. I'll even put a wind turbine on my presidential library. But for now, give me one more pop from that drill, please, baby. Just one more transfusion of that sweet offshore crude'."

"Oil is poisoning our climate and our geopolitics, and here is how we're going to break our addiction: We're going to set a floor price [for oil which] is going to trigger massive investments in renewable energy — particularly wind, solar panels and solar thermal. And we're also going to go on a crash program to dramatically increase energy efficiency, to drive conservation to a whole new level .... That's what a real president would do. He'd give us a big strategic plan to end our addiction to oil and build a bipartisan coalition to deliver it."

Ref: Thomas Freidman (columnist with the New York Times), The Age, 23/6/08

## Flying Green I {continued next issue}

"In the past year, driven as never before by oil prices, the entire aviation industry - airlines and plane and engine makers - has ratcheted up the search for new fuels to fever pitch. In February, Boeing for the first time flew an experimental light plane powered only by hydrogen fuel cells, which are emission-free, producing only heat and water as byproducts. Fuel cells aren't yet seen as the solutions for big aircraft but, in the past year, airlines and manufacturers have also tested in-flight various biofuels and low-emission liquefied gas. Qantas' chief risk officer, Rob Kella, told the Garnaut Review: 'Over the past 40 years, noise has been cut by 75 per cent, CO2 intensity has improved by 70 per cent and hydrocarbon and soot emissions have been almost eliminated'. But that's pedestrian compared with what the airlines want new technology to deliver in the next decade. Purely out of economic necessity - to wean themselves off the oil curse that has sent dozens of carriers to the wall in the past six months - the airlines want green flying as badly as their customers." Ref: Clive Dorman, SMH, 8/8/08

"Avoiding global warming requires sustained cuts in carbon emissions. And cutting flying is part of the solution. Yet aviation has been growing faster than any other source of greenhouse gases. ... George Monbiot, the author of Heat, says that unless something is done to stop the global growth, flying 'will soon overwhelm all the cuts we manage to make elsewhere'."

Ref: Adele Horin, SMH, 9/8/08

## And Also ...

"Aircraft flying in geese-like formation, refuelling at service stations in the sky and making extra stops over long distances have been suggested as radical ways for airlines to save fuel. Nick Lieven, dean of engineering at Bristol University, told the Asia Pacific Aviation Conference in Sydney that such 'wacky' measures could be considered if the oil price kept rising. Professor Lieven said studies had found that 'flocking'

could provide a fuel saving of about 20%. 'Birds are very clever and if you think of the way they fly, the lead bird creates a vortex which then makes it easier for the other birds to fly as well, and they rotate around every so often', he said. Professor Lieven said aircraft could also refuel in mid-air, a practice used by military aircraft. 'The difficulty is not the in-flight refuelling technology but what happens if you miss the refuelling stop', he said."

Ref: Mathew Murphy, The Age 31/7/08



'Can't get to London. This week every flocking flight is going to Tokyo.'

## Love in a Car Climate

*"There seems to be an idea rattling around, driven by concerns about global warming, that we need to stop building roads and using cars, and take to public transport to save the planet. Governments are expected to underwrite this change by creating a public transport system that would obviate car use. Essentially, the formulation is: public transport good, automobiles evil. We don't need that sort of mania. There's no doubt that public transport has to keep improving and becoming more attractive, not just for environmental reasons, but for our economy to function more effectively. And socially, public transport has positive effects. Anything that can bring people together in a shared purpose is good, and that's really what happens on a bus or a train or a tram. ... But there's no turning back: we're a car-based society. The choice was made a long time ago.*

*"After the Second World War, we established a car industry and started developing new suburbs, first at the end of our radial rail lines and, more recently, far beyond the reach of the rail and bus systems. This has happened not just in the capital cities but in the large regional centres too. ... However, our car addiction is not just the result of past planning decisions: it's an expression of our national culture, a personal sign of individual freedom. The motor vehicle has been one of the great liberating forces in modern history. For many, many Australians, obtaining a driver's licence and getting access to a car are the defining moments of adulthood, where for the first time in their lives they can go wherever they want. So let's drop the utopian notions of an Australia where everyone can have a train station or a light rail nearby and the services are frequent and trouble-free. If it ever happened, and maybe it did 50 years ago, it cannot happen now. ... We love our cars and we want to keep them."*

**Ref: Shaun Carney, The Age, 6/8/08**

*"Well, thank you Shaun Carney, that's sorted that out! All red-blooded Australians love their cars and should be able to drive them as and when they like. Shaun's premise leads to sprawling suburbs with no public transport, jobs a long drive away and hulking stand-alone shopping centres with an identical mix of shops. After we create this paradise, we find the congestion is appalling, and then start to knock down some of the less car-based inner suburbs to impose monolithic urban motorways so everyone can drive from one suburb to another a little faster."*

**Ref: John McPherson, The Age, 7/8/08**

*" 'I could go where I wanted', [said Martin Chiriano of Werribee]. "It was not just transport, it was fun. Now I calculate it costs me \$6 for a round trip to Werribee Plaza." If fuel is the lifeblood of Melbourne's sprawling outer suburban dream, the dream is looking decidedly anaemic as low-income earners battle prices that in recent weeks have hit \$1.70 a litre. ... Despite his 1996 four-litre Falcon's guzzling, Mr Chiriano has been able to rein in some costs, moving back to his family home in Werribee and shifting his university course to the nearby campus of Victoria University instead of distant Footscray. Many low-income earners in the outer suburbs are finding themselves trapped. "I never go to the city now," he said. His friend Julie Barrios, of Taylor's Lakes, does not even have this choice. She calculates she spends half her earnings as a freelance personal carer on the petrol for her 1998 Commodore. 'I am losing half my wage', she said. 'It is costing me \$180 a week for fuel. I can't sell the car for much, and if I buy a new one I'll be losing money on the repayments. I'm stuck in a trap'."*

**Ref: Geoff Strong, The Age, 2/8/08**

## Industry Confused

*"The Damgar Group is taking a punt on an untapped suburban office market, announcing plans for Creswick Malvern, a \$24 million office building in Melbourne's south-east. ... 'People I speak to say even driving to Hawthorn or Camberwell (from the south-east) is a headache with traffic the way it is' [said managing director Damian Fraser] adding that the push by tenants to be in environmentally sustainable buildings has also given Damgar the confidence to develop. The A-grade, 4.5-star Australian Building Greenhouse Rating building will measure about 4700 sq m, and be one of the biggest in the area. It will include 129 basement car parks and full showering and bathroom facilities. The development will also include a 'green wall', a type of vertical garden in the foyer that rejuvenates the atmosphere. The site is ... near the Gardiner train station." **Ref: Marc Pallisco, Business Day, The Age, 6/8/08***

**Comment:** Full marks to the Damgar Group for improving sustainability in their proposed building and locating it near a railway station, but if driving is a headache, why the 129 basement car parks? At around \$50,000 a car space that's almost \$6.5 million for car parking! Transport needs to be part of the ESD (Environmentally Sustainable Design) solution. How about subsidised Metcards for all of the people working in the building and a couple of Carshare vehicles for those tricky journeys? Congestion – it's enough to drive you up the (green) wall.

### Sicilian Solution

*"Since 1996, Castelbuono [in Sicily] has banned diesel-spewing trucks in favour of daily donkey trash pickup. Not only has the transition improved the air quality, noise, and traffic of the town, but residents also separate their garbage for recycling more frequently. 'We are saving money', Mario Cicero, the mayor, proudly told ABC News. 'The service is just as efficient, and the children love them!' The idea of using the donkeys came to Cicero, 45, late last year. 'Yes, the idea was mine. It's patented!' he laughed. Always seeking new ways to be more ecological and beautify his town, Castelbuono's environmentally conscious mayor has been at work for 10 years to make this town of 10,000 residents a model of environmental respect. The town is listed among the top 11 in Italy for environmental quality by the Lega Ambiente, or Environmental League. Each day is a different pickup in terms of waste — so compost might be on Tuesdays, while plastic bottles or paper products might be Wednesday. While this might be a bit cumbersome for those of us used to only thinking about putting out the trash once a week, residents in Castelbuono don't seem to mind. Plus the costs are right — \$1,600 for a donkey vs \$40,000 for a garbage truck."*

**Ref:** <http://www.groovygreen.com/groove/?p=2776>

*"Recycling the garbage began in Castelbuono in 1996 and is so successful that the town now separates 42 percent of its waste. 'We are one of the most virtuous towns in the country', Cicero exclaimed, with his Sicilian inflection. It was after he became mayor in 2002 that Cicero decided to remove all the ugly, malodorous garbage containers in the historic part of Castelbuono and replace them with door-to-door daily collection of differentiated waste. The citizens of Castelbuono responded and started separating their garbage, putting it on their doorsteps every morning. But that was not enough. 'I thought about what went on in the historic centre of town', recalled the mayor, 'where the tourists come across these trucks spewing diesel fumes and stinking of garbage. They block the traffic, too. So I thought, why can't we use something traditional, like our donkeys?' So now in the small streets of the old town the rhythmic sound of donkey hooves has replaced the rumble and smell of the trucks."*

**Ref:** <http://siciliamo.blogspot.com/2008/03/four-legged-garbage-collectors-hit.html>



### China Crisis II

*"China is the world's second biggest market for passenger cars, with some analysts forecasting that sales could reach ten million this year. The country's big cities have imposed auto emissions standards that exceed those in the US and are at least equal to European levels. Shanghai has banned*

*heavily polluting small motor scooters and limits access to its downtown areas by vehicles failing to meet clean air standards. At the same time, authorities are seeking ways to reduce fuel consumption amid major shortages, especially of diesel. But overall, China appears to have made little headway in its struggle to reduce auto emissions, seen most prominently in the effort to keep smoggy Beijing's skies clear during the Olympic Games. Vehicle exhaust accounts for about 80 per cent of urban air pollution. Many cities are frequently cloaked in a toxic grey haze that has grown worse as the numbers of vehicles on the roads has risen precipitously in recent years. Pollution by large commercial vehicles and many buses appears to go unchecked. Auto purchases are less affected by high global oil prices in China than in the West because government controls keep retail petrol and diesel prices at levels that are among the world's lowest."*

**Ref:** The Age, 14/8/08

*Cost of Petrol in China, July 2008: \$0.75 a litre. Number of Cars in China: in 1990: 1 million; in 2007: 11.5 million; by 2020: 140 million. Motor Vehicle Accidents Deaths (2007): 89,445. Percentage of urban dwellers who breathe air considered safe by the European Union: 1%. Number of people of people (in China) who die each year from air pollution: 300,000*

**Ref:** Good Weekend, The Age, 12/7/08

### Pacific Power

*"Power suppliers in the Pacific region have been challenged to make 25-percent of their output from renewable energy by the year 2020. Tom Roper from the Climate Institute ... says with the high cost of fuel, it is time to examine wind, solar and waves as alternatives. Cook Islands prime minister, Jim Marurai, said despite renewed efforts the Pacific still has problems with geographic isolation and costly transportation."*

**Ref:** ABC Radio Australia, 15/8/08

## The Story of Highways (Pt 4)

**“Peter Norton:** *It's not being built nearly as much, yes, they're still being built, now they're normally much more expensive to build, much more controversial to build, there's more opposition to them when the projects start, and it's just a much more complicated matter to build additional roads. And this is making some areas of the country, suburban Washington, D.C. is notorious for really extreme congestion. And as long as we see the alternative to that as building more highways, or the solution to that as building more highways, this problem is just going to spread, it spreads geographically because these urban highways can't support a very dense transportation network, so they have to spread out, and this sprawl is just amazing to watch. But I do think you're seeing more and more interest in alternatives, you're seeing more light rail systems, more commuter rail systems, and also you're starting to see alternatives to commuting at all. People are moving back into the centres of cities, and there are some movements going on right now in the States, in Australia and in Europe, to make living in the city more attractive, in part by going back to what the street is really for, because you're seeing people who are proposing that at least some streets in cities ought to be people-friendly. There's a man named David Engwirth in Brisbane who has a movement there going called Street Reclaiming where especially residential streets are sometimes just taken over by people in lawn chairs and they help to make residential living in the denser part of the city more attractive, because now you're not confined to narrow sidewalks. In Europe you're seeing a trend called Shared Space, where people and cars share space, and what they're finding is that instead of having a lot of cars hitting people, that in fact the motorists are taking a lot more responsibility for driving safely in those areas.*

**“Annabelle Quince:** *When you look forward, and it's not something I know historians do with great ease, but in I suppose the supremacy of cars and highways, has it reached its peak, or is there still somewhere else for it to go? Because it seems to me as though the 20th century was kind of very much a kind of a battle between cars and highways and other forms of transport, and I'm just wondering, how is that being played out now, the first part of the 21st century?*

**“Thomas Zeller:** *I think the answer would be to quote the famous automotive historian Mark Twain, 'Reports of the death of the car have*

*been greatly exaggerated', and that's a pattern we've been seeing for the last 3-1/2 decades, if not more. The massive critiques of the automobile, of the interstate highway system in the United States and all over the world since the 1960s and the '70s, and there were many people in the '70s, especially after the oil crisis in 1973, who told us that cars would be gone in five and ten years, and yet we still have cars; and we have more cars. And of course the big story right now is China and India where car companies see the biggest potential for growth, and see the biggest markets for the future, where in fact millions of cars will probably be produced over the long run. But the big question globally speaking, is how can we create an environmentally sustainable society by still investing so much in individual public transportation rather than public transportation. So the huge question of course is an environmental one, is one about solving the problems of global warming, and by investing more in cars and roads it becomes much more difficult to solve these problems of global warming. So I think the environmental aspect right now has really become the over-riding factor.”*

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**Ref: ABC Radio National program Rear Vision: 'The Story of Highways' produced and presented by Annabelle Quince, 20/7/08 See: <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/rearvision/stories/2008/2281165.htm>**



**'Junction of Fail'**

Picture Ref: [www.shipmentoffail.com/](http://www.shipmentoffail.com/)