

## More on Queensland Rail

*“Acting Premier and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning Paul Lucas ... said a new morning peak-hour service on the busy Ipswich line would be introduced from tomorrow to help ease passenger demand ahead of further service enhancements early this year. ... ‘This new six-carriage service will provide an extra 450 seats and further room for 300 standing passengers during the height of peak hour’, Mr Lucas said. ‘This new “sweeper” service will depart Darra station six minutes before a busy service leaves the same station at 6.41am – the new service is designed to pick up passengers beforehand to help ease demand’.*

*“Mr Lucas said the TransLink Transit Authority and QR were undertaking a huge amount of work to improve access to public transport by upgrading infrastructure and bolstering services. ‘Public transport patronage across the TransLink network had soared almost 40 per cent in the past four years and we are committed to boosting public transport amid this unprecedented growth’ ... Mr Lucas said clearly people were voting with their feet when it came to public transport, with more than more than 220,000 go cards now in circulation. ‘People are telling us what they think of this convenient and flexible system the only way that counts – by using it’, Mr Lucas said. ‘More than 15 million journeys have been taken on the go card and over \$41 million has been loaded on to the cards. TransLink’s go card makes using public transport quicker and easier as passengers no longer need to carry change or waste time queuing for tickets. South East Queensland is just the second Australian public transport system to successfully roll out smart card technology and it is the largest network in the world’.” Ref: Qld Govt Media Release, 11/1/09*

## More on Bike Loans

The Wimmera Primary Care Partnership (in Western Victoria) has an Active Transport initiative within its Health Promotion Network ... very similar to the Errand Bikes as reported in Newsletters #95 & #96.

**Thanks to Taryn Marks for this item.**

## Ferry Family Funday Sunday

*“The NSW Government introduced a heavily discounted ‘Family Funday Sunday’ public transport ticket to encourage use. The ticket has been blamed for a 15% increase in demand for ferries on Sunday - the peak day for ferry use - which has seen passengers left stranded unable to board full vessels.” Ref: Bryony Cooper, The Flyer, January 2009 [www.scapestrategy.com.au](http://www.scapestrategy.com.au)*

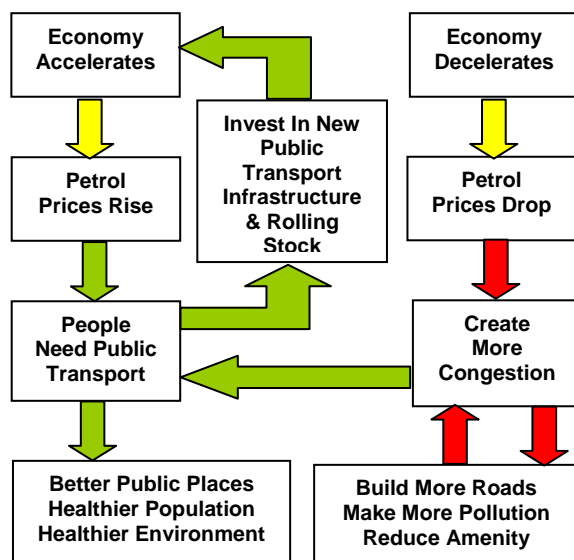
## Victoria’s Transport

*“Imagine being a public transport user in this great state of ours. No train but a nice cold icy pole to ease the pain of walking home or arriving at sunset. And to think our trains are running late, or not appearing at all at a time when global warming is on everyone’s lips and we need more people dispensing with cars. Instead of investing in rolling stock and making a serious commitment to producing at least some of our trains in Australia we hear one excuse after another.”*

**Ref: Electrical Trades Union Newsletter, 5/2/09**

*“While he refused to apologise, Mr Brumby promised to ‘do better’ on public transport, saying ‘what occurred last week wasn’t acceptable to me, wasn’t acceptable to the Minister for Public Transport (Lynne Kosky), wasn’t acceptable to the Government’.” Ref: David Rood, The Age, 4/2/09*

## Try This Quick Quiz:



*“Trouble on Melbourne’s public transport system is costing the Brumby Government votes, with many Victorians rating Spring Street’s delivery of basic services as poor or appalling, according to a Sunday Age readers’ poll. The poll of more than 1000 readers, taken last week after a record heatwave sent the city’s train system into meltdown, found that 57 per cent would vote against the Brumby Government because of the recent problems with the public transport system. Asked about the delivery of basic services – such as public transport, health, power and water – only 10 per cent of readers rated the Government’s performance as good, while 55 per cent said it was either poor or appalling. One in three readers rated the service delivery as average.”*

**Ref: Mylissa Fyfe, The Age, 8/2/09**

## Electric Cars in Denmark

*“California-based Better Place and Denmark utility operator DONG Energy said Tuesday they will build a charging network so the nation's motorists can switch to electric cars. Dong and the Palo Alto-based startup said they have signed a deal aimed at cutting the amount of Earth-warming carbon gas emissions by giving Danes access to environmentally-friendly electric vehicles ‘at attractive prices’. Better Place is to make available battery-powered electric vehicles offering ‘at least the same road-holding qualities as fuel-based cars’ by the year 2011. Better Place has procured 135 million US dollars in private funding for the Denmark project.”*

**Ref: SMH (AFP), 28/1/08**

## Transport Emissions in the US

*“While transportation enhances the quality of our lives, it also generates environmental impacts that can lead to human health problems and ecological damage. Overall, most transportation air emissions in the United States, such as particulates, have declined since 1980 despite significant increases in U.S. population, Gross Domestic Product, and vehicle-miles travelled. However, carbon dioxide emissions from transportation fuel use have risen.”*

**Ref: Pocket Guide to Transport 2009**

[www.bts.gov/publications/pocket\\_guide\\_to\\_transportation/2009/pdf/entire.pdf](http://www.bts.gov/publications/pocket_guide_to_transportation/2009/pdf/entire.pdf)

## Four-Wheel-Drives Down Hill

*“January figures show sales of 4WDs (or off-roaders) were down by almost 25 per cent on the same month last year, with large and luxury models bearing the brunt of the downturn in consumer confidence. The drop compares with an overall decline of 18.5 per cent in the new-car market for the month. .... But 4WD sales have been going downhill faster than passenger cars since August, potentially signalling an end to the love affair with off-roaders.”*

**Ref: Richard Blackburn, The Age, 7/2/09**

## And Also ...

*“A German motorist missed a bend in the road, broke through a barrier and hurtled up a bank, crash-landing on a church roof in eastern Germany, police said yesterday. The bank acted like a springboard, propelling the black Skoda about 35m forward and straight into the church's roof frame, where it remained wedged 7m off the ground, police said. ‘We've never ever had a case of a car landing in a church before’, said Frank Fischer, a spokesman for Chemnitz police in the state of Saxony.”*

**Ref: Herald Sun, 27/1/08**

## Transportation Stimulation

*“Transportation investments can have large long-term economic, social and environmental impacts. Expanding urban highways tends to stimulate motor vehicle travel and sprawl, exacerbating future transport problems and threatening future economic productivity. Improving alternative modes (walking and cycling conditions, and public transit service quality) tends to reduce total motor vehicle traffic and associated costs, providing additional long-term economic savings and benefits. Increasing transport system efficiency tends to create far more jobs than those created directly by infrastructure investments. Domestic automobile industry subsidies are ineffective at stimulating employment or economic development. Public policies intended to support domestic automobile sales could be economically harmful in the long-term.”*

**Ref: Todd Litman, Victoria [BC] Transport Policy Institute, 3/2/09** See full report at:

[http://www.vtppi.org/econ\\_stim.pdf](http://www.vtppi.org/econ_stim.pdf)

## Connex Contracts

*“The Age reported today that Connex was recently dealt a blow in its fight to keep the contract to run Melbourne's troubled rail system after one of its bid partners, Thiess, pulled out. The French-owned Connex is bidding against two companies for the multibillion-dollar contract to run*

*Melbourne's trains -*

*Hong Kong's MTR and France's Keolis. Now it has emerged that,*

*overseas, Connex's parent company Veolia has launched legal*

*action against the*

*Stockholm County*

*Council for selecting*

*Hong Kong's MTR*

*instead of Veolia. It is*

*suing the Swedish*

*capital's council because its bid was cheaper than*

*MTR's. The council argues it chose MTR because*

*it had offered a higher-quality service, rather than*

*just the cheapest price. Here in Melbourne,*

*Veolia's Connex is desperate to retain the right to*

*run Melbourne's train system, which in 2007 - the*

*last year for which records are available - earned*

*the company revenue of \$589 million. That year,*

*Connex sent home \$11 million in profits to its*

*French parent company. Connex has had a*

*disastrous fortnight in Melbourne. In last week's*

*heatwave it cancelled hundreds of services. On*

*Friday alone it cancelled 740 services - a third of*

*the day's scheduled trains.”*

**Ref: Clay Lucas, The Age, 3/2/09**



### Prepare for Takeoff (without the pilot)

"When passengers on Aeroflot Flight 315 heard the pilot make his preflight announcement, they knew something was amiss. The pilot's voice was garbled, barely intelligible — and that was in his native Russian. When he switched to English, it was impossible to understand him at all. 'The first thought that occurred to me was, 'This guy is drunk', said Khatuna Kobiashvili, a passenger on the Moscow-New York flight. 'His speech was so slurred it was hard to tell what language he was speaking'.

"As passengers, including a Moscow Times reporter, related their concerns to the flight crew, they were told to 'stop making trouble' or get off the Boeing 767 jet. A passenger who called Aeroflot's head office received a similar rebuff. 'They told me that it was impossible for a pilot to be drunk and hung up the phone', said the passenger, Tatyana Vorontsova. After a chaotic hour during which passengers pleaded with flight attendants, crew and several Aeroflot representatives who boarded the plane, unexpected help came from socialite and TV host Ksenia Sobchak, who was also on the plane, and all four pilots were replaced.

"The December 28 incident is a black mark against an airline that has worked hard to distance itself from its Soviet past and assuage passenger fears after a jet operated by Aeroflot-Nord crashed last September, killing all 88 people on board. Pilot error has been blamed for the crash, and a report said Monday that tests had found alcohol in the pilot's blood. Aeroflot spokeswoman Irina Dannenberg refused to comment for this article, telling a reporter to 'read about it on the Internet'. Immediately after the incident, Dannenberg told Komsomolskaya Pravda that the pilots were removed from the plane because of 'mass psychosis' among the passengers. In the same interview, Dannenberg said Aeroflot would sue Sobchak if the costs of delaying the flight were 'very large'.

"Nearly three weeks later, Aeroflot issued a statement saying the pilot, Alexander Cheplevsky, might have suffered a stroke immediately before the flight. Tests administered after the incident found no signs of intoxication, it said. Oleg Smirnov, a decorated test pilot and head of the Partner for Civil Aviation, said he

doubted that the pilot had been drunk because 'only a madman' would decide to pilot a trans-Atlantic flight while intoxicated. He added, however, that while pilots are forced to undergo a battery of medical tests before each flight, a test determining blood alcohol level is not among them. 'There is just too much trust in the professionalism of the pilots to think they would do that kind of thing', he said.

"Passengers said Cheplevsky, when he finally emerged from the cockpit after refusing to do so for half an hour, was red-faced with bloodshot eyes and unsteady on his feet. 'I don't think there's anyone in Russia who doesn't know what a drunk person looks like', said Katya Kushner, who, along with her husband, was one of the first to react when the pilot made his announcement. 'At first, he was looking at us like we were crazy. Then, when we wouldn't back down, he said, 'I'll sit here quietly in a corner. We have three more pilots. I won't even touch the controls, I promise'."

"As passengers waited three hours for a new crew to board the plane, more than 100 of them signed a statement saying they believed that Cheplevsky was intoxicated. At the same time, an Aeroflot

representative sought to assure them that 'it's not such a big deal if the pilot is drunk. Really, all he has to do is press a button and the plane flies itself', the representative said. 'The worst that could happen is he'll trip over something in the cockpit'. Komsomolskaya Pravda reported that Cheplevsky had celebrated his birthday the day before the flight.

"Nicknamed 'Aeroflop' in Soviet times for its dour flight attendants and bad food, Aeroflot has invested tens of millions of dollars in

reinventing itself ... Aeroflot's safety record is comparable to other major carriers, but the airline is still viewed by many passengers as being subpar in safety and service, said Yelena Sakhnova, an airline analyst at VTB."

Ref: The Moscow Times, 3/2/09

### → And Also ... (Aviation 101)

"If you push the stick forward, the houses get bigger, if you pull the stick back they get smaller. (Unless you keep pulling the stick back --- then they get bigger again)."

Ref: [www.jokefile.co.uk/numerical\\_order/1087.html](http://www.jokefile.co.uk/numerical_order/1087.html)



'You just imagined it. Right?'

## Drive Slowly and Prosper (Part 2)

**“John Whitelegg:** .... 80 per cent of the motorists say, when they look at the evidence, that they are very happy to go with lower speed limits when they see the impact that the higher speed limits have on child fatality, child serious injury. Motorists are not evil monsters. In the main, they're very reasonable people and they're very happy to drive at a lower speed when they are presented with the information of the severely damaging consequences of higher speed. And by the way, there's detailed research on the loss of time when you're making a journey to lower speed. If you're doing a journey by car of, say, six, seven, eight kilometres and you're driving at, say, 40 kilometres an hour rather than 50 kilometres an hour, you lose two minutes. You know, the time impact - put it that way - is trivial. And people can try it for themselves. Traffic moves more smoothly at lower speeds; traffic makes better use of the highway capacity. People don't drive in a way where they accelerate aggressively and decelerate rapidly. You know, there are many advantages. I actually trust drivers to look at the evidence and arrive at a view. And the problem we've got is that politicians behave like a rabbit caught in the headlights of a passing car. They really don't know what to do and they're frightened of upsetting the electorate.... All it is saying is 'Look, do we want a society where we're likely to squash children over the roadside because they have the temerity to try and cross the road between parked cars and are hit by a car going at 55 kilometres per hour? Do we want the kind of society that creates children-unfriendly cities and elderly unfriendly cities (and we're running into so called demographic time bombs with more of us, including me, going to be over the age of 55, than ever before)? Do we want a friendly city for those kind of people or not? And really, really, what are the consequences of lower speed limits - and they are trivially insignificant, apart from reducing the number of dead children? And what's wrong with that?

**“Peter Mares:** I don't think anyone would argue with reducing the number of dead children and I guess people would say 'No, it doesn't necessarily have to be anti-motorist'. But it is anti-car. I mean, it is saying the car having everyone getting about in their own individual car, that's not going to make for an ideal city.

**“John Whitelegg:** It's not anti-car at all. The car is a wonderful thing for many kinds of journeys, many kinds of situations; it should be used responsibly and intelligently. But Australian cities, for example, very often have (what's the percentage?) around 30 per cent, 35 per cent of

all the car trips are less than two kilometres - two kilometres in length. That's generally recognised around the world as not an intelligent use of cars. You know, we have to go for smart use, intelligent use of vehicles, appropriate use of vehicles and, again, I find in my work, whether it's in Germany or Denmark or Sweden or the UK, or wherever, the people say, 'Yes, yes, we agree'. And then we have to look for ways of implementing the changes in things like road design, speed limits, enforcement of speed limits and other things that reward the responsible user of the vehicle and punish the irresponsible user of the vehicle.

**“Peter Mares:** Let's now turn to perhaps the other benefit that there is to be had from this, and that's the broader environmental benefit, particularly as we try to deal with climate change.

**“John Whitelegg:** The climate change connections with a discussion of speed and health and child-friendly cities are very strong, limiting speed of vehicles in cities. What it actually does is create a very attractive environment where people are more likely to reduce the use of the car from their own choice, from their own thinking. They work through it themselves and they switch to walking and cycling and public transport - they change their behaviour. If they do change their behaviour that way, there's an immediate, very significant reduction in greenhouse gases in carbon dioxide. So, we actually have one of those classic win-win situations: we create healthy cities, safe cities more walking or cycling, more child-friendly cities, carbon-reduced cities, we deliver carbon dioxide reduction targets to sort out climate change.”

**Ref: The National Interest, ABC Radio National, 12/12/08** See the full transcript at:

[www.abc.net.au/rn/nationalinterest/stories/2008/2445020.htm#transcript](http://www.abc.net.au/rn/nationalinterest/stories/2008/2445020.htm#transcript)

**“Neighbourhoods that have people walking and biking on the streets are safer. These active people become the eyes that look out for crime, keep watch on children out playing, and notice anything unusual going on. Contrary to what you may think, as walking in a community increases, the chance of a walker being struck by a driver actually decreases. It's the 'safety in numbers' phenomenon. As drivers become more accustomed to seeing people on foot on the street, they become more attentive and cautious overall. The more people who are out, the slower the cars move. Commuting by foot through a neighbourhood allows neighbours to get to know one another. Neighbours watch out for each other and are the first to notice when something 'is not right'.”** **Ref: Pedestrian & Pedaling Network**

**(PedNet) Columbia, Missouri**

[www.pednet.org/benefits/safe-neighborhoods.asp](http://www.pednet.org/benefits/safe-neighborhoods.asp)