

EU 2050 City Car Plan

"The European Union's transport commissioner announced what he described as 'very radical plans today to ban petrol and diesel cars in cities by 2050. Ideas put forward by Siim Kallas for reducing Europe's dependence on imported oil and slashing carbon emissions by 60% by 2050 attracted harsh criticism ... His vision included 'close to zero fatalities' on Europe's roads, 'zero' petrol or diesel cars in cities, and half of all intercity passenger and freight transport moving to rail or waterways. We are talking about the necessity of investment of €1.5 trillion (\$2.1 trillion)' to overhaul the private sector, Mr Kallas said. ... Meanwhile, environmental campaigners Transport & Environment attacked the lack of immediate changes. 'The only concrete action the commission proposes within its current mandate (2010-14) is to expand airport capacity, which will make the headline targets even harder to reach', said director Jos Dings. Other key targets are for 40% use of sustainable low carbon fuels in aviation and a cut in shipping emissions of at least 40% and a 50% shift away from conventionally-fuelled cars by 2030. 'We can break the transport system's dependence on oil without sacrificing its efficiency and compromising mobility. It can be win-win', Mr Kallas also said."

Ref: AFP, The Australian, 29/3/11

"The Transport 2050 roadmap sets different goals for different types of journey – within cities, between cities, and long distance:

- *For intercity travel: 50% of all medium-distance passenger and freight transport should shift off the roads and onto rail and waterborne transport. ...*
- *For long-distance travel and intercontinental freight, air travel and ships will continue to dominate. New engines, fuels and traffic management systems will increase efficiency and reduce emissions. ...*
- *For urban transport, a big shift to cleaner cars and cleaner fuels. 50% shift away from conventionally fuelled cars by 2030, phasing them out in cities by 2050. ... By 2050, move close to zero fatalities in road transport."*

Ref: European Commission Release, 28/3/11

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/372&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Australian Petroleum Sales

"Australian petroleum sales in 2009-10 were 36% petrol, 37% diesel and 13% jet fuel, while the remainder was for LPG, bitumen, lubricating oils and specialty products such as those used in chemical manufacture. Australian sales of petrol, diesel and jet fuel was about 44 billion litres in 2009-10 and about 30% of these petroleum products were imported. ... The Federal Government's Australian Energy Resource Assessment, published in March 2010, states that:

- *Crude oil production from known oil (Australian) fields will dramatically decline by 85% over the next 10 years; ...*
- *The prospect for new oil discoveries is not very good.*

"That will place Australia increasingly under the supply and pricing controls of oil-producing nations. [Caltex Australia CEO, Julian] Segal reports that Australia's useable oil reserves are largely off the coast of WA and are considered too far from an Australian refinery. A further problem is that Australian refineries are geared for light sweet crude, a variety that processes relatively easily into petrol, and that this was once in good supply in Australian waters, for instance in Bass Strait."

Ref: Neil Dowling, The Telegraph, 7/1/11



Back to the future

Spin on the Grand Prix

"The first grand prix of the year was scheduled for Bahrain ... Ron Walker, now tilting at an alarming angle, but still chairman of the Australian Grand Prix corporation, thinks the abandonment of Bahrain is a bonus for Melbourne, postulating that it might mean an international television audience of 400 million.... F1's own management put the cumulative worldwide audience for last year's 19 races at 527 million. That works out to less than 28 million per race. Allowing larger audiences for more popular races in friendlier time zones than Australia, it is probable that the global audience for Melbourne was around 20 million. Suddenly, says Mr [Walker], it will be 400 million, four times the authenticated audience for the Super Bowl, for instance, and about two-thirds of the likely total viewership of all grands prix this year. It doesn't leave many watchers for the other races. ... He maintains that the Australian audience for the Melbourne race is 4 million. OzTAM, the industry ratings standard, put the audience – including digital – for last year's race at less than 1.2 million. Allowing even for viewers outside capital cities, [he] exaggerates at least by a factor of three. ..."

"Elsewhere in the Formula 'Approximately' One paddock, world champion Sebastian Vettel and other drivers have sprung to the defence of the race that stops the universe. Vettel says Melbourne is 'one of the nicest cities we go to', adding: 'The fans are great'. [Fernando] Alonso says the Melbourne weekend is 'one of my favourites'. ... We know this because it says so in a release that arrived this week on an Australian Grand Prix letterhead. ... Last year he said of Silverstone: 'English fans are special. The fans are great, the circuit is great, the atmosphere is great'. And China: 'Macau is one of my favourite tracks'. Fernando Alonso said of Monaco: 'It's one of my favourite races of the year'. And Hungary: 'It's one of my favourite circuits'. Everywhere these guys go is their favourite place, everyone their 'bestest' friend. ... Courtesy of the GP [release], we learn that Massa likes Melbourne because it 'always produces plenty of incidents, and the safety car usually makes an appearance'. The communiqué added that what makes racing at Albert Park [Melbourne] special is it is 'often far from processional', and that there was 'no chance for the drivers to get bored here'. From this, we were able to deduce this about the state of grand prix racing around the world: that it is frequently in grinding single file, and that the new major attraction is the safety car."

Ref: Greg Baum, The Age, 26/2/11

"Australian Grand Prix Corporation's chief executive Andrew Westacott ... acknowledged the opposition in Melbourne to the race but challenged doubters to see it for themselves: 'I'd encourage anyone who hasn't experienced it to come along and they'll be a convert'. Declining attendances and corporate revenue in recent years – down from \$9.7 million in the race's first year in 1996 to \$6.2 million last year – have led many to question the event's worth to the state, including Melbourne lord mayor Robert Doyle, who in January said the race was on borrowed time."

Ref: Adam Carey, The Age, 22/3/11

"Melbourne's Grand Prix chief Ron Walker ... told The Age that New York had long coveted a grand prix and wanted to host one in the borough of Staten Island, where it would draw a large crowd. ... The Saturday Age revealed at the weekend that the race had run up \$253 million of accumulated losses since then premier Jeff Kennett poached it from Adelaide 15 years ago. Mr Walker agreed that it was too early to speculate on the Grand Prix's future but said he was confident that if it had state government support it would stay in Melbourne. ... Concerns about the race's economic viability have grown in recent years and the state government is believed to be split over retaining it. While the total fee paid to [Formula One supremo Bernie] Ecclestone's company is not disclosed, it was estimated to be \$8 million when the Melbourne race launched in 1996 and is now believed to be triple that. This coincides with declining revenue and crowd figures, down from a four-day high of 401,000 in 1996 to a low of 287,000 two years ago."

Ref: Reid Sexton, The Age, 23/3/11

Would you care if the Formula One grand prix went to New York?

Yes: 33%

No: 67%

Votes: 2205

Ref: Age Poll, 23/3/11

And Also ...

"Fox Sports ran a story about Jason Bright using a Prescription Windscreen in his race car so he didn't have to wear glasses while driving."

Ref: Reader's Comment, WA Today, 1/4/11

Perth Foreshore Eco-City?

"Around the world, governments are facilitating the construction of green towns and eco-cities, and the push is strongest in Asia and the Middle East, where unparalleled urban expansion is being done with the 21st century in mind. Projects to build cities around the world are outbidding each other on 'green', not least Masdar City in Abu Dhabi and Tianjin Eco-City in China. The Masdar City construction cost is estimated to be about \$22 billion. New technologies will help in heat dissipation, shade, breezes and clean air. The city will use 100% renewable energy, have vastly reduced energy and water consumption, and integrate advanced technologies such as personal rapid transit. Tianjin Eco-City, a joint Sino-Singaporean project 150km east of Beijing, is under way, and, when it is completed in 2020, 350,000 residents will live with green transport and architecture, energy from solar and wind power, rainwater recycling, as well as wastewater treatment & desalination of sea water. But existing cities that have at different times laid claim to the title of world's greenest city are not waiting to be overtaken."

"One of the most lauded green cities is Portland, Oregon – the first US city to enact a plan to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. Portland has aggressively pushed green building initiatives, a comprehensive system of light rail, buses and cycle lanes to help keep cars off the roads. It boasts 24,000ha of green space, compared with 60ha in Kings Park, and more than 100km of hiking, running, and cycling trails. Malmo in Sweden is also frontrunner. Known for its extensive parks and green space, Sweden's third biggest city is a model of sustainable urban development. With the goal of making Malmo an 'ekostaden' (eco-city), it is centrally heated (yes, the whole city) with heating from a local waste-to-energy plant. The city plans to be climate-neutral by 2020. Copenhagen in Denmark – the scene of the climate change talks in 2009 – is a green dream. Copenhagen has a big offshore wind farm just beyond its coastline and the city installed a new metro rail system 10 years ago to make public transit more efficient. Motorists are also respectful and courteous to the 30% who use bikes. Other cities are looking to change, and quickly – Seoul, the capital of South Korea, is undertaking projects with the aim of being the world's greenest city. The mayor of Seoul, Oh Se Hoon, has led efforts over the past three years to turn Seoul (population about 10 million), which has many environmental problems, into an eco-friendly city. ..."

"The Alkimos Eglinton area, 2600ha 40km north of Perth's CBD, is to be a 'master-planned coastal community of global significance' that is moving the population of up to 50,000 people towards carbon-neutral living. The city of Alkimos will include an integrated public transport system, schools, leisure and community facilities and opportunities for business. Alkimos aims to use only a green energy supply combined with a reduction in energy use across infrastructure delivery, land and built-form development and commercial and domestic uses, including energy-efficient building design. ..."

"So when it was excitedly announced there would be a redevelopment at the heart of Perth – the Perth foreshore – one might have expected something aspirationally sustainable, too. One would have expected a redevelopment that would have presented Perth as a world leader in the field. One that mentioned mass transit and renewable energy and reduced impact on the planet as a part of the goal of building a new, green, people-focused precinct that might ultimately help Perth itself to grow to be an eco-city."

Ref: Ray Wills, The West Australian, 14/3/11

Sustainable Canberra?

"Could Canberra, with its sprawling growth, dependence on cars and frustrating public transport network, really become Australia's greenest city? The answer is simple: yes. ... Canberra is about the same physical size as Greater London, yet the population it serves is only 360,000 compared to London's 7.2 million. Certainly, Canberra's low density, dispersed pattern of land development presents many sustainability challenges, as it encourages inefficient use of urban infrastructure, drives up greenhouse gas emissions and puts pressure on housing affordability. It also makes the city car-dependent [and] the hidden cost of car-dependency is Canberrans' health. In 2009, nearly 65% of men and half of women in the ACT were considered overweight or obese. ... Creating Australia's first sustainable city is possible, because Canberra is large enough to be taken seriously, but small enough to make it happen [but] bold and visionary leadership is required."

Ref: Romilly Madew, ABC, 31/3/11

www.abc.net.au/environment/articles/2011/03/31/3178495.htm

Brisbane to get a little Seoul

"Brisbane City Council has looked to Seoul for inspiration in its bid to make Norman Creek more resistant to the threat of flooding, while also providing attractive open space. Planners in the Korean capital spent two years transforming an ugly freeway into a natural creek system. Seoul's \$281 million Cheonggyecheon Restoration Project, completed in 2005, transformed a 5.6 kilometre highway into a 5.8 kilometre riverside park. As a result, thousands of people were attracted to the park, which reduced the temperature in the area by an average 3.6 degrees.

"Lord Mayor Campbell Newman said a similar project along Norman Creek's concrete drains could be just as successful. ... 'Practical examples are the best way to think of it. Imagine coming back here in 10 to 15 years time and instead of this ugly concrete drain, and ... this unusable piece of land, imagine ... that this whole area has been excavated down a level two or three metres', he said. 'Instead, we are now standing on a grassy sports field or something and the creek that is before us actually now is one side and it has a natural path, it has vegetation and there is vegetation along it. And there is a new bike path that is running along it'."



Ref: Tony Moore, SMH, 17/3/11

And Also ...

"The latest Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development comparison of the environmental behaviour of households in 10 member nations puts Australia at or near the bottom on most questions asked. ... And Australians adore our cars, with 2.6 per family, beaten only by Italy, which has 2.7. Some 85% of Australians use cars to get to shops, more than anyone else."

Ref: Peter Martin, SMH, 10/3/11

New Zealand Commuter Survey

"IBM undertook a commuter pain survey in October 2010, which interviewed over 900 commuters in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. It found that widening existing roads and building new ones would not fix our transport woes, and that commuting costs and stress could be significantly reduced by investing in better public transport. 'The findings of this survey are consistent with other research from New Zealand and overseas that shows the future trend in transportation will be increasing levels of walking, cycling, trains and buses', said Green Party Transport spokesperson Gareth Hughes. 'It shows once again that this Government is completely out of step with the transport needs of the country'.

"Mr Hughes said the survey found over half of Auckland commuters (51%) thought improving public transport would reduce their commute stress. The reason we are so dependent on cars as a nation is not because New Zealanders don't want to walk, cycle or take good quality public transport, it is because successive governments have reduced transport options through poor policy. 'And this Government is the worst. They have cut funding in every transport area except new state highways. How can we offer people better options in the future by spending all our money on new motorways? That has never worked to decrease congestion in the past, and it won't in the future'.

"Mr Hughes said that wide support for the CBD Rail Loop in Auckland following the release of the business case several weeks ago meant the Government should make it a priority. Transport Minister Steven Joyce is blindly determined to do things as we always have, wasting billions building new, expensive and unnecessary motorways like the Puhoi to Wellsford Holiday Highway and the Waikato Expressway', said Mr Hughes. 'For the price of one four lane motorway, we could have the CBD rail loop, which will reduce congestion by moving more people into and through the city at peak hour, and will attract business and residents to the heart of the city'."

Ref: NZ Greens Media Release, 13/12/10

Electric Cars for Wellington

"Wellington's first charging post for electric cars is offering a glimmer of hope for motorists tired of rocketing petrol prices. The 15-amp socket was installed earlier this week at Shell Harbour City, on the corner of Customhouse Quay and Whitmore St, and will be free to the public. Queues are unlikely to be a problem – there are only a handful of electric cars in Wellington. 'We are giving a lot of thought to how we're going to contribute to a sustainable future for New Zealand. We saw the installation of this charging post as an opportunity to demonstrate a new technology that we are likely ... to see more of in the future', Greenstone chief executive Mike Bennetts said. ... Five battery-powered Mitsubishi i-MiEV hatchbacks were brought to Wellington in a joint venture by Wellington City Council, Mitsubishi Motors, Meridian Energy, New Zealand Post and The Wellington Company. The low-noise green machines have a maximum speed of 130kmh and a range of up to 155km. One is being trialled as an inner-city courier vehicle, and another as a council pool car."

Ref: Paul Easton, Dominion Post, 19/3/11

Vancouver – Leading Canadian City

"Vancouver tops the chart of Canadian cities leading the fight against climate change, says the World Wildlife Fund. The city ranks the highest on the organization's list ... based on indicators such as cutting greenhouse gas emissions, using renewable energy, and encouraging green building and transportation. ... Josh Laughren, the group's director of climate and energy, said Monday that Vancouver planners have made an effort to integrate climate change and sustainability across all functions of the city. ... 'If you take a look at the things Vancouver has done, if you take a look at the things that other cities have done, then it provides us with an agenda for how cities can contribute to the solution of climate change', Laughren said. ... Vancouver ranks high because city politicians and planners have set goals that provide a good quality of life for those who live there and make the West Coast city attractive for people to visit, Laughren said. The city has launched a program called Imagine 2020, which aims to make Vancouver the greenest city in the world in just nine years. The program goals include green buildings and transportation, growing local food, and becoming a 'mecca' of green enterprise. On Monday, Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson announced a pilot project that deconstructs rather than demolishes neighbourhood homes, keeping over 90% of a home out of the landfill. Vancouver city councillor Andrea Reimer ... said Vancouver's advantage started decades ago when residents rejected a freeway through the city, forcing more transit and creating compact communities. 'It's a much more liveable city', Reimer said. 'That's a quality of life you don't get in many cities in North America'. Laughren said environmental savings mean costs savings, as well, and Reimer agreed it is actually cheaper."

Ref: CBC, Canadian Press, 21/3/11

Problems with Corn-Based Ethanol

"Spectators at February's Daytona 500 in Florida were handed green flags to wave in celebration of the news that the race's stock cars now use gasoline with 15% corn-based ethanol. It was the start of a season-long television marketing campaign to sell the merits of biofuel to Americans. On the surface, the 'greening of NASCAR' is merely a transparent (and, one suspects, ill-fated) exercise in 'green washing' for the sport. But the partnership between a beloved American pastime and the biofuel lobby is also the latest attempt to sway public opinion in favour of a truly irresponsible policy."

"The US spends about \$6 billion a year on federal support for ethanol production through tax credits, tariffs, and other programs. Thanks to this financial assistance, one-sixth of the world's corn supply is burned in American cars; enough corn to feed 350 million people for an entire year. Government support of rapid growth in biofuel production has contributed to disarray in food production. Indeed, as a result of policy in the US and Europe, including aggressive production targets, biofuel used more than 6.5% of global grain output and 8% of the world's vegetable oil last year, up from 2% of grain supplies and virtually no vegetable oil in 2004."

"This year, after a particularly bad growing season, we see the results. Global food prices are the highest they have been since the UN started tracking them in 1990, pushed up largely by increases in the cost of corn. Millions more people will be undernourished than would have been the case in the absence of official support for biofuels. We have been here before. In 2007 and 2008, the swift increase

in biofuel production caused a food crisis that incited political instability and fuelled malnutrition. Developed countries did not learn. Since 2008, ethanol production has increased by 33%.

"Biofuels were initially championed by environmental campaigners as a silver bullet against global warming. They started to change their minds as research showed that biofuels from most food crops did not significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions – and in many cases, caused forests to be destroyed to grow more food, creating more net carbon-dioxide emissions than fossil fuels. Some green activists supported mandates for biofuel, hoping they would pave the way for next-generation ethanol using non-food plants. That hasn't happened. Today, it is difficult to find a single environmentalist who still backs the policy. Even Al Gore – who once boasted of casting the deciding vote for ethanol support - calls the policy 'a mistake'. He now admits that he supported it because he 'had a certain fondness for the [corn] farmers in the state of Iowa' – who were crucial to his 2000 presidential bid. It is refreshing that Gore has changed his view in line with the evidence. But there is a wider lesson. A chorus of voices from the Left and Right argue against continued government support for biofuel. The problem, as Gore has put it, is that 'it's hard once such a program is put in place to deal with the lobbies that keep it going'. ... 'The NASCAR deal will push American ethanol into the stratosphere', declared Tom Buis, chief executive of the ethanol trade association Growth Energy."

Ref: Bjorn Lomborg, The Australian, 21/3/11

"Millions starve so that gluttonous westerners can drive cars around in a circle really fast."

Ref: Ian S, The Australian, 21/3/11

Train Travel is the New Black

"Train travel is the new black. On some European routes, such as Paris to Brussels, flights have been phased out altogether and it's not hard to see why. Europe's trains are, on the whole, clean, comfortable and punctual. For journeys of less than four hours, high-speed trains such as the TGV (which travels at up to 320km/h) can be faster than planes, particularly when you include the time spent getting to the airport, checking in, passing through security and waiting at the departure gate. Trains usually arrive in the city centre instead of the outskirts, where airports often are, saving taxi and shuttle fares to a final destination. You don't have to remove liquids from your hand luggage when you travel by train, luggage doesn't have to be weighed and train passes offer the freedom of flexible travel dates and discounts on accommodation and attractions. Staying on the ground has the advantages of scenery and the use of electronic devices as soon as you've boarded. And you'll also be travelling 'green'. Rail Europe says high-speed trains generate 96% less carbon dioxide than other modes of travel. Some trains, such as the Eurostar, which links Britain with France and Belgium, are carbon neutral due to offsetting (at no extra cost to the traveller)."

Ref: Louise Sunderden, The Age, 26/3/11

And Also ...

"Jetstar website users were last night greeted with the option of flying from Sydney to... Sydney. ... The cost of the flight was supposedly \$179. Although listed on its sale page, users could not purchase the Sydney to Sydney flight."

Ref: Ben Grubb, The Age, 23/3/11

Travelling 'The Long Haul'

"As someone who travels each summer to Melbourne from the UK (we are called 'Ping Pong Poms'), my carbon footprint is bigger than most people's. I therefore do everything I can to reduce every other aspect of it, but no amount of personal offsetting will make much difference. So this year I decided to fly as far as Perth and then take the train to Melbourne."

"With a shorter flight time, I didn't experience any jet lag. I enjoyed a week in Perth and then left on the Indian Pacific across the Nullarbor Plain. Extremely comfortable, with masses of leg room, huge windows, wide aisles and good showers, the train had everything you needed. There were even stops along the way – at 11.30pm at Kalgoorlie for a couple of hours, giving us time to get off and walk into town and get some snacks. It is even possible to do a tour of the mine if the train arrives on time (which admittedly ours didn't). Then the next morning, we stopped at the 'ghost town' of Cook, once a busy little settlement with a school, but now with a population of just 4 residents. A photographer's delight,

passengers can wander off and look at the abandoned buildings, from a safe distance. Also there is plenty of opportunity for pictures by the train itself and those long, straight tracks heading off into the distance. Catering wasn't perfect, as bizarrely not everything was on display and some items had run out by the second day, but prices were very reasonable. The dining car proved the perfect location for striking up conversations with strangers, children made new friends and played board games and cards and others gazed out at the vast, passing landscape.

"Arriving into Adelaide the next morning, passengers have the option of continuing on to Sydney, changing trains and going on to Melbourne on the Overland, or staying in Adelaide for a few days before carrying on, which is what I chose to do. The Overland train had far superior catering and the customer service was excellent, with informative commentaries (sometimes these couldn't be heard properly on the Indian Pacific). Both trains are extremely good value for money when booked online at \$199 and \$54 respectively.

"The same can't be said of the Countrylink service from Melbourne to Sydney: more expensive, unpleasant staff (especially in the buffet) and stops to pick up passengers through the night meant it was hard to sleep.. The train kept on jolting and even arrived nearly an hour late into Sydney. Hard to believe this is the rail link between the country's 2 major cities. The Greyhound bus trip back was much better – very restful and good value.

"My flight back to the UK from Melbourne takes me as far as Brussels, where after a good night's sleep, I will take the Eurostar train to London (for the first time) and then a Megatrain for £1 for the hour and a half trip to my home in Southampton. From now on, I will try and increase the amount of overland (or even sea) travel part of my long haul trip each year. I have just heard from Beyond Zero Emissions that the Chinese have a plan to build a fast rail link from China to London, meaning the journey would take a couple of days at least, but imagine the increased comfort compared with being stuck on a plane! Maybe we all need to take things slower and enjoy the journey."

Ref: Cara Sandys, 16/3/11

On Melbourne's Transport



- Good to see an almost full #57 tram at Errol St, North Melbourne, at 8pm on a Thursday evening heading into the city.
- Good to see full trams at Fed Sq stop at 10pm on a Friday night. More trams needed – every 10 minutes.

- Good to see Melbourne's Lord Mayor riding the trams as part of his daily commute.
- Good to see an almost full Smart Bus in the early evening on a Saturday in the middle outer eastern suburbs.



- Pathetic to see overcrowded trams crawling down Swanston St at 3pm on a Saturday afternoon.
- Pathetic that VicRoads can't prioritise Swanston trams crossing Victoria and Franklin Streets after years of promise!
- Pathetic that there is no bus service to the suburb of Wonga Park after 12 noon Saturday, or any at all on Sundays!
- Annoying that the new weekly fare is \$30.20; who wants to scratch around for 20c or end up with a pocket of change?

And Also ...

"For sale: one aircraft carrier, slightly used. Britain has put aircraft carrier Ark Royal, the former flagship of the Royal Navy, up for sale on a military auction website. ... The Ark Royal could be sold for scrap, but there has also been a proposal to park it on the Thames river as a heliport."

Ref: The Age, 30/3/11