

## Shall We Dense?

*"The number of houses on each hectare of Melbourne's newest suburbs must double if shops and services within walking distance are to be viable, according to new research. If housing density in growth areas does not increase, the city was 'building to fail', a leading planning academic has warned. Building guidelines call for 15 homes a hectare in Melbourne's growth areas, but research by urban designers SJB Urban shows it is not enough to make even a small local shopping centre or corner shop within walking distance viable. The report 'Shall we Dense?' calls for new suburbs to have an average of 25 to 30 dwellings a hectare by providing a better mix of housing, including townhouses and apartments. Report co-author and urban designer Simon McPherson said 15 houses a hectare would mean the loss of more than local shops. 'That lack of viability then extends to other types of centres and facilities', Mr McPherson said. 'It is not just retail, it is community facilities, it is public transport'.*

*"The researchers used published economic data to determine the number of people required to make services viable then calculated the number of houses for the necessary population. The report said 15 houses a hectare translated to about 510 dwellings within walking distance of shops and services or 'just over half of the required population to support the centre's viability and sustainability'. The research ... argues people need services close by to encourage walking and patronage. 'Beyond five to 10 minutes walk, the behavioural tendency is to opt for car use, and then to potentially bypass local centres to travel further to larger centres'.*

*"Planning Minister Matthew Guy rejected the call for much greater housing density in Melbourne's growth areas. The Victorian government does not accept the assumption put forward by SJB Urban that 26 houses per hectare is the minimum required to attract services. ... The government believes there is merit in developments with varying densities, and that services can be provided to these developments'. The associate professor of urban planning at RMIT University, Michael Buxton, said Melbourne was building to fail with its low housing density in growth areas. 'We are building suburbs in the fringe that can't support services ... It's world's-worst-standard subdivision, single-use suburbs at relatively low density without any hope of adequate services'. He said Melbourne probably needed to increase housing density between '2-3 times what we are doing in the outer fringe areas'."*

**Ref Jason Dowling, The Age, 29/4/11**



**The Airship Solution**

## Victoria's Transport Spending

*"Victoria's poor spending on public and active transport is notorious. In recent years public transport patronage has grown substantially but capacity has not kept pace. The state government spent less than any other state on transport – with just 0.11 per cent of GSP (Gross State Product) within the 'Other' category in the last ten years. There has not been any expansion of rail to the outer suburbs for decades. While some lines have been reopened, the state government has not put forward any new rail projects while committing more public money to new roads. The state government needs to help Victorians prepare as petrol is not going to get cheaper. A number of feasibility studies have been commissioned but real action is needed and new rail lines need to be built. ...*

*"Although the Federal Government has started to invest more in public transport, a great deal more needs to be done at every level of government to catch up on years of neglect. National public and active transport targets should aim to: double the number of trips made by public transport in all major cities in the next decade triple the number of cycling trips made within ten years quadruple the number of walking trips within a decade. Ongoing investment of this order will help Australia regain a world class public transport system. We can move from being a pollution dependent economy to a cleaner*

*economy. People can be happier and healthier. We can improve the resilience of our environment and our communities. We can do all these things by spending more on public and active transport while at the same time reducing our dependence on imported oil."*

**Ref: Australia's Public Transport – Investment for a Clean Transport Future, ACF, April, 2011**

See full report at: [www.acfonline.org.au/articles/news.asp?news\\_id=3372](http://www.acfonline.org.au/articles/news.asp?news_id=3372)

## More on the 2030 Rail Map

*"I love the 2030 train network map! [In #201]... It's a great vision. Fingers crossed we start heading in that direction soon."*

**Nicholas Aberle, 24/5/11**

*"A very interesting map and certainly agree that the proposed Transport Development Authority should be producing a long-term vision for the public transport network, including train, tram and bus, in a similar vein to the VicRoads planning. Interestingly, I note that the map does not include the regional rail link through Tarneit, given it has been confirmed that the project will go ahead it seems like a glaring omission on a proposed vision. Also, Lynbrook Station on the Cranbourne line hasn't been included, despite this project being completed shortly [but] interesting to note the stations that have connecting tram services. The proposed tram extension to Knox hasn't been included and Ringwood, despite its Central Activity District status, doesn't have a tram connection, despite the fact that any tram to Lilydale would pass through Ringwood via the Maroondah Highway. I like the concept of long-term maps that identify a vision; I think it also helps in positioning projects like rail extension to South Morang, Mernda and Cranbourne East as obvious and long overdue projects. Hope this provides some further discussion over the vision."*

**Alex Makin, 24/5/11**

Thanks for your comments. Good to get your input on oversights like Ringwood and Lynbrook. We would like hear of other connections that should be in Melbourne by 2030. The Lilydale tram connection is based on connecting Montrose to Lilydale via Swinburne TAFE & Uni (Lilydale campus) with a community (small, light weight) tram. Community trams could also be used on the old rail track from Lilydale to Mount Evelyn and eventually to Warburton. Such trams could also be used in many of our suburbs such as Moonee Valley or Broadmeadows.

We were mindful of keeping the rail map familiar, recognising that even the suggested extensions would take many years to build and be a substantial, albeit necessary, investment. Ideas have to start somewhere so let us hear your suggestions for tram, train or smart bus routes. How about commuter and freight train lines across the north of the city: Melbourne Airport (RS) – Coolaroo RS – Campbellfield – Wholesale Market/Northern Hospital – Epping RS – South Morang RS – Plenty – Eltham RS – Eltham South – Templestowe – Donvale (RS) – Ringwood RS?

The logical extension on Melbourne's east would be: Ringwood RS – Wantirna – Knox (RS) – Rowville (RS) – Dandenong Nth – Dandenong RS – Frankston RS – Hastings Deep Water Port. On Melbourne's west: Melbourne Airport (RS) – Caroline Springs Town Centre – Tarneit (RS) – Geelong RS. We now have an outer-most loop. Just as a fast ferry between Williamston and Sandringham (actually more likely Hampton) would complete the 'middle rail loop', a fast ferry between Geelong and Frankston would complete the 'outer rail loop'.

**Stephen Ingrouille, 24/5/11**

## More on Doncaster Bus Rapid Transit

*"The busway numbers in your newsletter don't add up, unless daily totals have been misstated as hourly ones. A 'bendy' bus can carry 80 seated passengers (not legal to have standing passengers on a bus at freeway speeds, although nobody seems to have told the Melbourne airport bus link that) and two minute intervals are close to the maximum, allowing for safe headway and boarding/disembarking times. That gives 2400 passengers per hour in each direction, on a road lane that could have carried 1800 cars and about 2200 people total. Most claims for bus transit go to 2,500 in each direction max; with light rail to 7,500 and heavy rail after that."*

*"The Doncaster 'bus rapid transit' service is proposed to use 50-seat buses and a four minute headway; if it was allowed exclusive use of the HOV lane it would actually reduce the capacity of the Eastern*

*Freeway. Light rail can carry 250 passengers per vehicle; heavy rail 1200 or more per train, and both can achieve two minute headways in the absence of path conflicts. A dedicated bus lane costs at least as much to build as a light rail track and the light rail track lasts three times as long between major repairs; light rail vehicles last three times longer than buses and give a much better ride.*

*"The alignment and gradient, and formation and land acquisition costs, are the same for a freeway lane as they are for a light rail track. Rails, sleepers and ballast cost about the same to acquire and lay as a heavy duty road surface; the overhead may be a trivial extra. Service life of a bus is around ten years; service life of a light rail vehicle is thirty years (Some Z1 trams are still in service in Melbourne: they were introduced circa 1980). The tram tracks in Whitehorse Road between Balwyn Road & Union Road were re-laid in the 1950s and are still in service: a blacktop road would revert to gravel in that time."*

**John M Legge, 23/5/11 & 26/5/11**

## More on Melbourne Airport Rail

*"A road-based airport transport link that only takes twice as long in the peaks? {#198 & #199} No mention of any solutions to traffic congestion, CO2 emissions, carcinogens in the air, road trauma, disability access or peak oil consequences, I notice. No possibility that tourist or business people might appreciate a rail service starting from the CBD, or that people starting from home might actually get to the Airport quicker by getting onto suburban trains? If it takes 10 years to build an Airport Rail Link, I'd say it's already too late – the first stage of a Sydney-Melbourne High Speed Rail system will see Airport usage plummeting. And while we're on the subject, when will we see a signposted Airport Cycleway, the only obvious route is the Freeway?"*

**Ref: Robin Spragg, 16/5/11**

## Meantime Road Planners Plan

*"To cope with more traffic, the Tullamarine Freeway would be widened from four to six lanes from the Western Ring Road to Melbourne Airport, under a plan VicRoads began work on last year. ... An average 36,700 vehicles use the freeway each day to get to the airport, with around 4 per cent of this trucks, one report written by VicRoads for Transport Minister Terry Mulder says. 'As the capacity of a two-lane freeway is approximately 40,000 vehicles per day, the Tullamarine Freeway is operating above capacity in both directions on Fridays and close to capacity on most week days', it says."*

**Ref Clay Lucas, The Age, 26/5/11**

*"When will they learn, extra lanes do not reduce congestion ... look at the Monash [Freeway]. ... Congestion will reduce when they provide efficient, clean, punctual & safe public transport."*

*"When will governments realise that by improving public transport to the point where people see it as a viable alternative to the car, they won't have to spend so much on roads?"*

*"We have enough problems with climate change due to belching gas guzzling cars and now its proposed to increase the volume of vehicles, most of which would have one sole occupant, travelling to Melbourne airport."*

*"Let's move 20,000 taxis off the freeway each day! Put in a rail line that will make a difference!"*

*"Let's hope this government gives PT the same amount of resources and money the previous [one] gave to road funding thus removing the necessity of the car. .... No extra lanes are needed, just a change in direction with a viable, efficient and safe alternative to the car."*

*"Perhaps we should take a leaf out of Kuala Lumpur's book: you check in with your airline at Sentral train station, your bags are transferred, you catch the high speed KILA Express, 160 kph, you are at the airport in under a half hour, all for A\$25.00. .... Everyone knows if you build another few lanes they are clogged in a few years anyway. How many lanes will we have when there are 60 million people in Australia? It's always an embarrassment that there is no train to the airport in Melbourne, unlike most other developed capital cities. Europeans are quite surprised. Don't forget to build more housing estates on our best farmland so we need even more freeways. That's a future-proof strategy."*

**Ref Readers' Comments, The Age, 26/5/11**



## Kuala Lumpur Sentral

*"Kuala Lumpur Sentral (KL Sentral) ... is a transit-oriented development that houses the main railway station of Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia. Opened on 16 April 2001, despite its name it is actually even less central than the old Kuala Lumpur Railway Station; a colonial-era landmark that now remains open for local commuter trains only. KL Sentral is the largest railway station in Southeast Asia."*

*"KL Sentral was designed as an intermodal transportation hub. Most of Kuala Lumpur's passenger rail lines serve KL Sentral, while many intercity trains serving Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore start there. ... Stesen Sentral (English: Central Station) ... is designated the transportation hub within its KL Sentral development project, although both the public and connected transit lines generally refer to the station itself as 'KL Sentral'. Stesen Sentral, designed to house six rail networks, was completed in December 2000. ... In 2008, Stesen Sentral registered over 100,000 passengers daily, which translates into 36.5 million people a year. ..."*



**A partial view of Kuala Lumpur Sentral at dusk**

Photo: Akira Mitsuda, Wikipedia

*"The Kuala Lumpur Monorail station is not directly connected to the Kuala Lumpur Sentral transport hub. Despite its proximity to the building, passengers must walk a 410-metre path around a construction site. ... There are plans to move the monorail station closer to the main station by integrating it into the main shopping centre. ... The [monorail] station uses the Spanish solution, having one rail line with a platform on each side, for passengers embarking and disembarking the train separately. ... KL Sentral has also been made a city bus hub."*

**Ref Wikipedia** [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuala\\_Lumpur\\_Sentral\\_railway\\_station](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuala_Lumpur_Sentral_railway_station)

## Car Addiction

*"They may cause traffic jams, pump out greenhouse gases and chew through your credit card but Australians simply can't do without their cars, a new survey shows. And an alarming number of us would rather undergo a tooth filling or wear the same clothes to work two days running than say bye to our favourite set of wheels. The survey of more than 5000 motorists by NRMA Insurance has revealed some interesting facts about Australian drivers and the unusual role cars can play in daily life. For many, the car has become a second home, doubling as a bed, bathroom and kitchen. Nearly one third of those surveyed said they used their vehicles as a dressing room, 15% put on make up, while around 50% of men take naps in their car seats. Around one in 10 people admitted to eating a chocolate sundae in their car while other foods, such as lasagne, cereal and soup also ranked highly. The top reason Australians hate being without their cars is getting caught in cold weather, being late for work or left stranded with shopping bags."*

**Ref: AAP, The Australian, 19/5/11**

### "Fast Facts"

- Over 50% of car trips in Australian cities are under 5km and 30% are less than 3 km.
- Transport is responsible for 34% of household greenhouse gas emissions
- 1.9 million Australian adults cycled in 2009 (11.1% of the population), a 32% increase since 2001 (ERASS 2009)
- Over 1.3million bikes were sold in Australia in 2010."

**Ref: Media Release, Cycling Promotion Fund, 18/5/11**

## Road Diets (Part 2)

**Dan Burdon (Walkable and Liveable Communities Institute):** *"The most common road diet is converting four lanes to two and then putting in the third lane for turning, and then with the extra space, adding in bike lanes."*

**Mike Sallaberry (Traffic Engineer, San Francisco MTA):** *"It's a way to reallocate space so that the street performs more efficiently and it also allows space to be allocated for bicycle and pedestrian measures. As a motorist you have fewer lane changes and you now have a dedicated ... turn pocket [in the centre of the road] and that improves safety for the motorists and for the pedestrians."*

**Charles Gandy (Mobility Co-ordinator, City of Long Beach, CA):** *"We've reallocated the space in the street to accommodate those that live here, that work here, that buy things here, verses privileging those that just drive through here fast."*

**Dan Burdon:** *"When you have a road diet typically you have one lane in each direction and now the prudent driver is setting the speed and not the imprudent drives so crashes come down. Another real benefit is that it makes it much faster to cross the street if you are a pedestrian as you end up with less distance to cross; it's quieter; and you end up with more people walking and bicycling; we typically see more people socialising; and generally we see the value of properties going up."*

**Mike Sallaberry:** *"Back in the 1990s Valencia Street [in San Francisco] was a four lane roadway .. so the bike lanes went in as a trial ... and a report was written after one year. We found that the number of cyclists increased by about 140% and we were finding that the merchants along the roadway were actually very open to the idea of keeping the road diet."*

**Dan Burdon:** *"After the road diets go in ... motorists are driving more prudently ... and the retail life improves so the businesses typically do better after a road diet. To a lot of people it's a surprise if you take half of something away – a number lanes – that you end up with more performance for a street. It simply gets right down to the crunch of the numbers."*

**Mike Sallaberry:** *"Road diet is one of the most cost-efficient ways to improve a roadway."*

**Dan Burdon:** *"One major reason for Road Diets is safety. ... When you have too many lanes you induce more speeding and more risky behaviour. ... So many of our streets – sometimes 40% of the streets – could operate better with fewer lanes."*

**Ref: Streetfilms, MBA Road Diet, 12/4/11**

[www.streetfilms.org/mba-road-diet/#more-49209](http://www.streetfilms.org/mba-road-diet/#more-49209)

## Brisbane's PT Patronage

*"Southeast Queensland bus patronage has surged by 65% over the past six years, more than triple the growth in rail usage. As the state government yesterday hailed the 10th anniversary of the first full busway opening in Brisbane, new figures showed how much the region had embraced that mode of travel. Bus patronage rose by 65% since 2003/04 to 71,659,535 trips last financial year as more busways and buses were rolled out, according to figures provided by TransLink. By contrast, the number of train trips rose by 20% over the same period to 57,620,000 last year. Public transport advocates said they were unsurprised to see commuters opt for the bus as significant investments had been made in that mode of travel, but authorities were now [beginning to focus more on rail](#). ... Transport Minister Annastacia Palaszczuk said the city's bus network had undergone a major transformation during the past 10 years, with three major busways completed and two more under construction. 'There are now 24 kilometres of busway, 19 busway stations, seven inter-changes, five park 'n' ride facilities and almost 600 CCTV cameras monitored 24 hours a day on the busway network'. ...*

**All things being equal, would you rather catch a bus or train to work?**

|          |     |
|----------|-----|
| Bus:     | 22% |
| Train:   | 67% |
| Neither: | 11% |
| Votes:   | 605 |

**Ref:**  
**Brisbane Times Poll, 4/5/11**

*"TransLink's latest quarterly report shows bus patronage in October, November and December was 2.1% higher than 12 months earlier, but rail recorded higher growth with a 6% usage jump.*

*Robert Dow, from commuter lobby group Rail Back on Track, said he was unsurprised to see the investment in bus services had sparked large patronage growth. ... 'However, the South East Busway is approaching capacity; that's the elephant in the room. ... What they've done [with the busways] to some extent is they've used buses in a train-like way, but there's a limit to what you can do with that. [Bus]*

capacity is starting to be a major problem'. Mr Dow said it was possible that some busways could be converted to light rail in the future. He added that there would be difficulties on the rail network over the coming decade as the delayed cross-river rail project was desperately needed to address capacity bottlenecks."

**Ref: Daniel Hurst, Brisbane Times, 4/5/11**

"I think it's about time that the government seriously considered converting the busways into light rail with buses feeding the stations."

"Full buses aren't starting to be a problem they are a problem."

"Put some of the same effort into the train service and watch the patronage of that improve, but while people have to stand shoulder to shoulder for up to an hour at a time of course the usage will not increase."

"I'm not embracing the bus, I just don't have an alternative. My buses are nearly always full, and take an hour to travel the distance a train can in 15 mins. If the BCC would spend the billions it used for Clem 7 and is planning to use for the Northern Link on a metro network, we'd have no congestion, a sustainable city, less pollution, more family time, and Brisbane would once again be a liveable city."

"Commuters are voting with their feet, but the vast bulk of government money is still being spent on new roads. Imagine what the \$1.8 billion cost of one road tunnel could have done for the bus system? It's a case of the public being ahead of the decision makers."

"Brisbane has more train stations within the Brisbane City Council area than the entire Toronto Transit Commission Subway, Canada (69 stations) serving a city three times the population of Brisbane. We have 85 train stations within the BCC area and 149 across SEQ! So why isn't it performing? The number of train stations outnumber busway stations within the Brisbane City Council area four train stations to one. But train patronage (170 000 trips per day) struggles to keep above that carried on the busway (150 000) There are huge levels of rail infrastructure within Brisbane that are not put to good use due to poor frequency, poor interchange facilities and bottlenecks on train lines that results in a train network that would fall over if you tried to run trains every 10 minutes in both directions at the same time. What a pity that places like Toronto runs trains every 5 minutes off peak, Vancouver every 8 minutes, Perth (yes, PERTH!) every 15 minutes off peak, and Frankston Line in Melbourne every 10 minutes all day, we are still stuck with horrible 30 minute train frequency and no decent bus connections! Our train system must be converted to run more like a metro, with frequency, reliability, predictability and capacity. If the South East Busway were operated only two buses per hour and buses were confined to go only up and down the busway with no services feeding into it, there would be uproar and patronage rock bottom. But this is exactly how South East Queensland's train system is being operated."

**Ref: Readers' Comments, Brisbane Times, 4/5/11**

## Rail Freight News

"Geoff Thomas has a big job. As general manager of logistics for Woolworths, he and his team need to make sure that the tub of yoghurt you collect from your local store is fresh, undamaged and makes it into your shopping trolley in the fastest time possible from cow to shelf. It is the complex art of logistics and it is something that occupies the minds of some very smart Australians. Central to every decision is whether to use road or rail. For a long time, there was no contest. Though rail was the mode of choice for some long distance runs between, say, Brisbane and Cairns, on the busy Melbourne / Sydney / Brisbane route rail was simply too slow, too unreliable. In fact in 2007, Woolworths stopped using rail on that route altogether. It was more reliable and quicker to send everything along our highways by truck.

"Four years later, our nation's largest super-market chain is considering changing its mind. According to Thomas, sometime later next year Woolworths is looking to switch to rail to carry the 2,000 tonnes of goods that are moved north each week from Melbourne to Brisbane and the smaller quantity that returns the other way. It is not a decision that Woolworths can take lightly. There is the cost of new rail containers, as well as new systems, new staff to manage those systems and the development of a relationship with the new rail carrier. And while cost is the main driver, Thomas says Woolworths recognises that rail transport is safer and has a lower carbon output than road so the switch offers the opportunity to shore up its credentials as a good corporate citizen.



*"That the nation's largest supermarket chain is considering such a monumental change is only possible because of Federal Government's Economic Stimulus Plan which we introduced just over two years ago to counter the effects of the world economic crisis that was devastating the economies of the advanced world. The plan fast-tracked 17 major rail projects ... and improved the safety at ... dangerous rail-crossings. We have invested more in rail over the past 12 months than our predecessors did in 12 years. Among these projects were much needed improvements to the Brisbane to Melbourne freight line. Extended crossing loops, new signalling systems and the removal of severe curves are part of a \$3.4 billion investment by the Gillard Labor Government in interstate rail. This is helping the Australian Rail Track Corporation upgrade the north-south line that will see 11 hours shaved off the trip, reducing the earlier travel time by one-third. "Making rail attractive to companies such as Woolworths makes great sense. One 1500 metre train can carry the load of 100 semi-trailer trucks. Woolworths alone has 160 B-double trucks on the Melbourne Brisbane route. Carrying those loads via rail leaves our roads safer and less congested for private motorists and reduces our global footprint."*

**Ref: Anthony Albanese, The Australian, 6/5/11**

## Airline News

*"US airline passengers can collect \$US1300 when they are forced to give up their seat on an overbooked flight, a 63% increase, under a federal rule made final yesterday. Additionally, foreign carriers must release passengers from their aircraft stuck at US airports within four hours or face fines as high as \$US27,500, and airlines must refund luggage fees if bags are lost, under the regulation issued by the US Transportation Department. 'Airline passengers have a right to be treated fairly', Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said in a statement. The rule affects foreign carriers including Qantas, British Airways and Air France-KLM and domestic airlines such as Delta Air Lines and United Continental. ...*

*"Passengers on a Cathay Pacific Airways flight were stuck on the tarmac at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport for almost 12 hours in December as they waited for a gate after a snowstorm. Such delays at Kennedy by international carriers were 'an important factor' in deciding to impose the rule, the Transportation Department said in the statement. Airlines often sell more seats than available on a flight, betting that some travellers won't show up. When a flight is oversold, carriers typically seek volunteers by offering incentives including vouchers before forcing fliers to give up their seats.*

*"The rate of involuntarily bumping was 1.09 per 10,000 passengers last year, down from 1.23 in the same period of 2009, according to Transportation Department statistics. Passengers can collect \$US1300, up from \$US800 currently, for being bumped from a domestic flight if they arrive at their destination more than two hours later than scheduled, according to the new rule. Consumers can collect at most \$US650, up from \$US400, if they get to their destination within two hours of the scheduled time, under the rule. ...*

*"LaHood's rule also would let passengers cancel reservations within 24 hours of booking a flight without penalty, prohibit price increases after tickets are purchased and require airlines to notify consumers of delays of more than 30 minutes."*

**Ref: Bloomberg, The Age, 21/4/11**