

Canberra Wins (and Loses)

"Canberra's position as the nation's car capital reigns supreme, with a federal report showing the territory continues to have the nation's highest use of cars per capita. The federal Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics data also shows Canberra's public transport system was relatively unpopular, recording with Adelaide the lowest per capita use of public transport. Worse, Canberra and Adelaide were the only cities that did not record a shift from car use to public transport use. Canberra has recorded the highest per capita use of cars for decades."

Ref: Bianca Hall, Canberra Times, 24/6/11

"I will continue to use my car until decent public transport is introduced to Canberra ... I am sure this is the same mentality of a lot of other(s)."

"When I first came to Canberra to live how astonished I was to discover that a 'planned city' had such a lack of tangible public transport infrastructure. Clearly the plan never envisioned any need for it and all subsequent Governments have shied away from developing any."

"It was always intended that Canberra would have trams/light rail and suburban heavy rail. It's on Griffin's 1911 plan. ACT is king of the road ironically because King O'Malley blocked the plans for trams and had the railway into Civic dismantled in 1922. Population is not an argument against light rail. There are 30+ cities in Europe smaller than Canberra with light rail. Density is not an argument either. Perth has a similar density to Canberra and has 150km of heavy rail."

Ref: Readers' Comments, Canberra Times, 24/6/11



REMEMBER WHEN?

*"Peter Harvey...
CARnbra."*

Airline News

"Passengers flying into Sydney were forced to circle in the air for the equivalent of 290 days over the past year as congestion at Australia's main airport hit a new high. ... The Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics estimated the cost of the jet fuel expended while holding was nearly \$19.6 million, compared with just over \$16.5 million the previous year. The 62.6 million kg of carbon emissions released over the year from planes being in a holding pattern were estimated to be the equivalent of that released from 19,575 cars. The data will be used by the federal government as it prepares for a showdown with Sydney Airport Corporation, which is concerned over the loss of its monopoly. Canberra has already been put on notice by the NSW government that it will oppose a second airport within the Sydney basin. ... NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell said his government would not support a second airport in Sydney or on the Central Coast. He would prefer the federal government invested in a fast rail link. 'Find me an area that is not going to end up causing enormous grief to people who currently live around it', Mr O'Farrell said."

Ref: Linda Silmalis, Sunday Telegraph, 12/6/11

Cycle Path to Melbourne Airport

"When will we see 'a signposted Airport Cycleway, the only obvious route is the Freeway?' {#202} Local community groups are developing a proposal to undertake longer term planning for further developing the existing shared path network in the Moonee Ponds Creek corridor. Goals including extending to the Airport via a recently acquired, strategically placed land parcel; providing paths on both sides of the Creek from Westmeadows to Footscray Road; and separating commuter cycle traffic from recreational cycle/walking/fitness trails. The Moonee Ponds Creek trail already connects to the Western Ring Road trail and forms part of the Federation trail."

Tony Smith, 30/5/11

And Also ...

"Once a year the NSW transport authority RailCorp auctions off the thousands of items left behind by commuters. ... The strangest thing being auctioned [is] a small fibre glass boat."

Ref: Ben Grubb, The Age, 9/9/10

Sydney Harbour Bridge

"[The] Sydney Harbour Bridge carries an incredible volume of traffic every day. In June 1976, the one billionth car crossed the bridge. It took 33 years for the first half a billion and only 11 years for the next half a billion. ... Today the Bridge carries an estimated 165,000 cars per day."

Ref: Laurence Pollwade, 15/6/11

"It now carries eight traffic lanes and two rail lines, one in each direction. But at the time of construction the two eastern lanes were tram tracks. They were converted to road traffic when Sydney closed down its tram system in the 1950s."

Ref: 7 Bridges Walk

"According to the [NSW] Department of Transport, the number of bus commuters who cross the bridge southbound between 7am and 9am has grown 15% in just three years - from 20,000 in 2007 to 23,000 last year. In contrast, an average 22,600 rail passengers cross the bridge in the morning peak along with 15,400 cars. At Wynyard station, there are still remnants of tunnels that once catered to trams rolling off the bridge. The tunnels themselves, built between 1927 and 1932, are testimony to Sydney's propensity to compromise on transport projects. Under a plan by J.J.C. Bradfield, the engineer behind the Harbour Bridge and Sydney's underground rail network, the tunnels were to be used for a rail connection that linked Wynyard to Mosman and the northern beaches via the bridge. But that idea was shelved. Instead, in a more modest scheme, from 1932 trams ran down the tunnels from the north shore to Wynyard. By 1958, however, the tracks were closed and by 1962, the tunnels at Wynyard had been converted into a car park under the Menzies Hotel that remains in use today."

Ref: Jacob Saulwick, SMH, 2/7/11

"This article is about a proposal to 'reduce congestion' by moving buses coming off the harbour bridge into disused tram tunnels, but the numbers in the article make it clear they are blind to the real source of the congestion. Between 7:00 and 9:00 am the bridge carries southbound:

- 22,600 people on one rail line.
- 23,000 people on buses almost always confined to a single lane shared with taxis and hire cars.
- 15,400 cars in total which have up to five more lanes to themselves.

"Even Wikipedia makes it clear: 'A 24-hour Bus Lane (buses, taxi cabs and hire cars) was added after the Sydney Harbour Tunnel opened in 1992. It runs southbound on the outer carriageway and across the Harbour Bridge. This has proven to be a major success, carrying more persons in the morning rush hour than all other southbound lanes combined'. But the obvious conclusions are not allowed to trouble the public consciousness."

Ref: Tony Smith, 4/7/11



The tramway that once crossed the Sydney Harbour Bridge

Photo: SMH, 4/7/11



Buses enter the city from the Harbour Bridge (1/7/11)

Photo: James Brickwood, SMH

"Annual average daily traffic [both directions]:

1932	10,900 vehicles/day
1950	32,000 vehicles/day
1960	76,000 vehicles/day
1970	129,000 vehicles/day
1980	159,000 vehicles/day
1991	181,878 vehicles/day
1992	138,400 vehicles/day *
2000	161,734 vehicles/day **
2001	159,597 vehicles/day"

(Sydney Harbour Tunnel opened 31/8/92 and carries an extra 75,000 vehicles per day)
(** figure high due to equipment problems)*

Ref: www.sydneyharbourbridge.info/

More on the 2030 Vic Rail Map

"Good to see train lines in areas that currently don't have them. But it's really confusing. How will the lines operated? To build most of them would require a lot of property acquisition (Unless they were built fully or partially underground, which would be the preferred option of most owners).

"Rowville line could go much further to Endeavour Hills, which is a fair distance from a railway line. It could then tunnel under Fountain Gate Shopping Centre, and rejoin the Pakenham Line at Narre Warren.

"I like the Donvale Line, but it could go much further. From there it could travel south-east to serve Eastland Shopping Centre, then south to Knox interchanging with Belgrave/Lilydale and Rowville Lines, then south to Dandenong, interchanging with Cranbourne/Pakenham Lines, then south-west to Frankston, terminating near Bayside Shopping Centre.

"Another extension proposal: the Aurora estate railway line is missing. It's meant to branch off at Lalor Station, with stations at Epping Plaza, Epping North and Aurora.

"I think Lilydale to Healesville would be better served by V-line shuttle, similar to the Frankston to Stony Point service.

"The only way I can see the Sorrento line being built, is along the Mornington Peninsula Freeway median.

"I like the idea of the Geelong line being incorporated into Metropolitan Zone 2. Reconnecting Queenscliff-Geelong railway line has merit. Another Station beyond Werribee (Westleigh) to serve the residential areas.

"The Airport railway line should travel via the Albion-Jacana railway line and branching off at the Tullamarine Freeway near Airport West. This line, which is underutilised, should be electrified. Stations should be Sunshine North, Keilor East, Airport West, Gowanbrae and Bel-Air (Bel-Air Avenue, Glenroy)

"Sunbury Line: Stations needed at Calder Park and Jacksons Hill."

William McGroarty, 8/6/11

The assumption is that new lines would be grade separated, which – where corridors have not been reserved – would mean underground lines. It was interesting to see the following article on reduced costs for underground rail.

Stephen Ingrouille, 9/6/11

"I have just signed up for the transport newsletter. It was interesting to read about transport options in the western suburbs in the latest newsletter {#203}. What a debacle and there is no progressive thinking apparent from anyone with authority on this issue.

"The residents of Seaholme and Altona are protesting ... against cuts and major changes to the Altona loop service. (We now have trains every 22 minutes in peak hour and a shuttle to Newport operates off peak). I cannot believe that we are only around 13 km out of central Melbourne and have to change trains twice in the off peak to get to a city loop station. It now takes up to 50 minutes (previously 30) for a trip to Parliament [Railway Station]. The new Metro timetable has forced commuters to find other ways to get to where they are going and many have given up on the trains. I have got back into my car after years of using the train due to the appalling service and treatment by both government and private train operators. For someone who was absolutely committed to public transport, this is tragic."

Jennifer Williams, 14/6/11

And Also ...

"A former mobile speed camera operator who lost his job for speeding [including travelling at 102 kilometres per hour in a 50 kph zone] has lost his appeal for unfair dismissal, with a Fair Work Australia commissioner satisfied the speeding represented 'serious misconduct'."

Ref: VECCI Blog, 7/6/11

Metro, Anyone? (Part 1)

"As Australian cities become denser and our urban transport systems reach capacity, metro rail systems offer an efficient transport solution that promotes good urbanism. What is a metro? It's a high capacity and high frequency passenger railway service, serving an urban area, powered by electricity and using grade-separated tracks. Each metro line uses exclusive tracks and platforms. Tracks are typically underground, but may be elevated or on the surface. With no level crossings and no other rail traffic, a reliable schedule is easier to achieve. By running at frequencies of less than ten minutes, passengers don't need to bother with timetables."

"No Australian city has a metro, although many Australians will be familiar with them from travel on the New York Subway, the London Underground or the Paris Metro. Instead, Australian cities have trams, buses, cars and 'normal' surface trains to move people around. In Melbourne and Sydney the main roads and the rail networks are at capacity or soon will be. Public transport use has increased 60% in the last decade in Melbourne. Governments in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane are spending billions of dollars in new transport infrastructure, especially motorways. Could that money be better spent building metros, and as a by-product creating more walkable urban areas around the stations?"

"Australian cities already have extensive public transport networks, and the Victorian Government has plans to make Melbourne's passenger train network more metro-like. It is considering providing exclusive tracks for each line, reducing the number of level crossings and increasing service frequency. Why introduce a metro system? Firstly, different transport modes excel at different trip types. Trams are excellent for short trips and can move up to 15,000 people per hour in one direction on one line. Trains are excellent at long trips, up to 200 km, moving up to 50,000 per hour. Metros fit in the middle, doing well at moving up to 40,000 people per hour on mid-range trips. Secondly, as demand increases, each city has to increase the capacity of its transport system. A metro line might well be the best value solution. Thirdly, by taking people out of trams, cars, buses and 'normal' trains, a metro will reduce the demand on those systems and decongest them. New technology allows the creation of a low-cost 'light metro' network to serve the middle and inner suburbs." {Continued in #207}

Ref: Nathan Alexander, 9/6/11 This is slightly extended version of an article originally published in Urban Design Framework, Issue 94, June 2011

More on the 'Outer Circle' Line

"The Outer Circle Railway has one of the most interesting histories of all the railway lines in Victoria. The line was originally conceived as a means of connecting the Gippsland Railway to the main government railway terminal at Spencer Street without requiring travel along the privately owned railway from Flinders Street. ... The former rail corridor is almost entirely intact and includes sections in steep cuttings and embankments and several large bridges. The former bridge across the Yarra River at Fairfield is now used by traffic on the Chandler Highway. While any proposal to reopen this line today would likely be met by stiff opposition from abutting land owners, there have been many calls for an orbital rail corridor to provide a cross-country rail route avoiding travel in and out of the city to reach other suburban destinations. Such a route would not only serve passengers but could also be used by freight from Gippsland and Hastings allowing the double stacking of containers and avoiding travel beneath Federation Square to reach the Port of Melbourne and Dynon rail terminals. One proposal that is mentioned from time to time is an extension of the Alamein Railway Line to provide a connection to Chadstone Shopping Centre, possibly using part of the former right of way."

Ref: Ross Thomson, Victorian Railway Stations, 2006 www.vicrailstations.com

And Also ...

"The Easter weekend got off to a bad start ... when an embarrassed Virgin Blue captain was forced to call for two volunteers to leave the plane after extra fuel was needed to fly through bad weather to Bali. When nobody volunteered, airline staff attempted to jettison the last two passengers to board in a bid to compensate for the extra weight. The angry holidaymakers refused to leave before federal police marched them from the plane. A witness said the whole plane sympathised with the ejected men. 'They had taken care to book their flights, they were ready to go to Bali and then they were told they couldn't', the passenger said. Virgin Blue ... said the incident was 'totally regrettable', but bad weather meant the amount of spare fuel needed to be doubled."

Ref: Hamish Heard and Mitchell Toy, Herald Sun, 24/4/11 {See also Airline News in #202}

Considering Equity in Transport (Pt 3)

"Micro-scale equity impacts are relevant as the Act identifies decision making from the perspective of the user, as well as classes that might impact differentially, inhibiting personal mobility including such examples as:

- *being able to walk the distance to the local shop as others do, or catch the local bus because there is no low floor bus, or no accessible stop, and so having to catch a cab to the shop instead, or*
- *being able to cross the road as kerb ramps provided are not to standard and don't facilitate wheelchairs, prams or people with mobility impairments*
- *being able to cross the road as it doesn't feel safe as you are too old to walk fast enough to make the crossing without a break, or the road is too wide to make the crossing safely without a break, or too young for your short legs to get you across the road in time, or*
- *catching the bus at night as the stops are not safe for young women, or*
- *being available from job opportunities as there is no proximate or appropriate public transport opportunities to the job, or no linking taxis from the train to the place of employment, or bike parking at the station, or you are too young to drive or too poor to afford the cab fare, or no affordable housing located close by, or*
- *catching the train at night because as a hijab wearing young woman you feel unsafe and being excluded from educational opportunities as a result; or*
- *travelling to the city any more and being isolated and excluded as a result as you not longer drive, catching regional rail requires you to use the toilet from time to time and you are aware of violence against older women on Southern Cross Station, and unseemly youthful behaviour on the train*
- *having sufficient wealth to live in the transport rich inner suburbs and having to live in a transport poor outer suburb, thus causing an increasingly significant impost on a family budget in petrol, a barrier to access to services, adverse impacts on health, stress, and educational attainment levels for your children*
- *a model of transport planning that comparatively benefits those of higher economic status, and*
- *a model of transport provisions that runs more frequent services to people of higher educational and wealth status than others."* {Continued in #207}

Ref: Carmel Boyce, 19/4/11

For the full article and the notes contact: Carmel@equityjusticeaccess.com

Housing Obesity

"I gave up counting downlights when I reached 55 – and that was just upstairs. I was touring the Monarch, Metricon's 'five-star' display home, and I felt almost queenly as I surveyed five bedrooms, each with en suite. The Monarch looms over a suburban block like a tall, dark sentinel. It's a long, brown, two-storey house that feels like a Balinese holiday resort inside. ... Now we're getting bigger – and so are our houses. In Victoria, new house sizes grew by 16.3% over the decade to 2009, compared with an Australian average increase of 9%. The average Victorian new house is now 252 square metres. With a floor area of 456 square metres, the Monarch is all about rewarding yourself with excess. When I first read of it, I glibly assumed it was in a newly built fringe suburb, where the lack of public transport and amenities might give you a reason to stay indoors and bathroom hop. But it's in Balwyn, in Melbourne's wealthy inner-east. Lots of upmarket McMansions are being built in old established suburbs, too. ... Bigger houses generally have a bigger carbon footprint and cost more to run. I spotted eight solar panels on the Monarch's roof – but how much power would its galaxy of downlights churn through? How much water would be wasted in those bathrooms? And when a house devours its backyard, the environment suffers.

"Vegetation around homes absorbs rainwater, helps cool the building and contributes to local biodiversity, says Professor Tony Hall, author of The Life and Death of the Australian Backyard. But people no longer see gardens as important. 'What's important is the size of the house', he told me. It's not that block sizes are getting smaller, he points out. 'It's the houses getting bigger'. Planning laws have enabled this shift, but lifestyles are changing, too. People are working longer hours to service big debts, and children have little time for free play. Houses are seen as 'an investment', Hall says, and people are being told that they need a home theatre or a certain number of bathrooms to protect that investment. Australians now have the biggest houses in the world. ... In the Netherlands, the average new house size is 115 square metres. In Britain, it's just 76."

Ref: Suzy Freeman-Greene, The Age, 23/4/11

And Also ...

"A Northwest Airlines flight carrying 144 passengers from San Diego to Minneapolis lost contact with air controllers for more than an hour and overflowed its destination by 240 kilometres ... after ... they had become distracted during a 'heated discussion about airline policy' ... Flight 188 was 240 kilometres off course by the time the crew re-established communications and requested permission to turn around, officials said.."

Ref: The Age 23/10/09

Electric Vehicles in Australia

"A spokeswoman for Senator Kim Carr, the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, acknowledged the incentives by other countries but questioned the true environmental value of electric cars. 'Electric vehicles are often referred to as a "zero emissions technology", the uptake of which would reduce carbon emissions', the spokeswoman says. 'However, potential emissions reductions in Australia need to be viewed with caution because the carbon emissions intensity of Australia's electricity production is significantly higher than the world average. Thus a subsidy for electric vehicles in Australia may have limited benefits in terms of reducing emissions'.

"The Greens' deputy leader, Senator Christine Milne, wants to see the government do more to get electric cars onto roads before we fall behind the rest of the world. 'Government also has a major role to play in driving renewable energy to support the best possible electric cars and facilitate their roll-out to the broadest possible market as fast as possible', Milne says. 'China has set an aggressive goal for expanding its electric car market and Australia is once again at risk of falling way behind'. Milne also criticised the government's on-going support of the local manufacturing industry at the expense of electric vehicles. The limited amount of financial support the government has offered has been targeted at local manufacturing jobs. It has invested less than \$10 million on electric vehicle projects while handing over hundreds of millions to Holden, Ford and Toyota under the Green Car Innovation Fund for petrol-powered cars. 'Investment in truly innovative car manufacturing in Australia would also see a shift towards electric cars, instead of paying companies to make slightly less inefficient six-cylinder petrol cars', she says.

"One car company executive revealed that during a meeting with the government it indicated it was only interested in supporting an electric car if it was made locally. Such a scenario seems some way off, even though Holden admits its new production line in South Australia has been 'future-proofed' to build electric cars. Before it becomes viable for a manufacturer to build an electric vehicle locally there needs to be more consumer demand, and that may not come for at least another decade. That's when today's tech-savvy youth of Generations Y and Z become major players in the new car market."

Ref: Stephen Ottley, The Age, 23/4/11

<http://theage.drive.com.au/motor-news/electric-dreams-the-charge-ahead-20110422-1dreb.html>

Electric-Less Vehicles in Melbourne

"Two new suburban railway stations being built in Melbourne's south-east, planned since 2006, will sit dormant for six months after they are completed later this year. The Department of Transport says there is not enough electricity to stop and start trains travelling through the stations. Construction of Cardinia Road station on the Pakenham line and Lynbrook station on the Cranbourne line began last year, and building works will be completed by the end of 2011. However, residents who live nearby will wait until mid-2012 to use either station. The transport department found last September there was not enough electricity available in the existing overhead wires to power trains leaving the stations at an acceptable speed. As a result, new electricity sub-stations will have to be built, a department spokeswoman said. ... Daniel Bowen, president of the Public Transport Users Association, said the planning behind the new stations – announced by then transport minister Peter Batchelor five years ago – had not been well managed. 'This is a Yes Minister scenario: people are crying out for rail stations in these fast-growing suburbs so to have them lying dormant for months is just awful', he said. 'This underscores why public transport management needs a shake-up. We can only hope that the government's planned Public Transport Development Authority will do a better job at ensuring growing suburbs get much-needed transport facilities in an efficient, timely manner'."

Ref: Clay Lucas, The Age, 23/4/11

Yes Minister

Jim: 'I've been looking at the railway map, Humphrey.'

Humphrey: 'Have you Minister – Are you planning a trip?'

Jim: 'I'm looking to see if we can find a way to fix up that confounded bottleneck at [The] Junction. People are complaining about the hold-ups.'

Humphrey: 'People always complain Minister.'

Jim: (Frowning) 'They've every right to in this case – and I found a way to solve the problem. Look at this, there's a disused railway – there, see. It can be opened up and all that slow traffic can go that way and leave the other line for fast traffic.'

Bernard: 'That would be 'Fastaffic!' (Jim and Humphrey stare at Bernard).

Jim: 'I can't see why somebody's not thought of it!'

Humphrey: 'Well they might have Minister – if was that black line with all those little cross bits.'

Humphrey: 'It says "Disused" Minister.'

Jim: 'I can see that – We'll make it "Re-used" - "Recycled, Re-opened".'

Bernard: 'What Sir Humphrey is saying, Minister, is that it's more a case of "Disappeared" than "Disused".'

Jim: 'Gone! Where's it gone?'

Humphrey: 'It was disposed of Minister – In a process of realization of redundant assets – A redistribution through re-prioritisation in the satisfaction of pressing needs in other domains.'

Jim: 'What pressing needs?'

Humphrey: 'The sleepers went to firewood for pensioners. The rails got sold off for fence posts in the parks projects, and the ballast went to a jogging track.'

Jim: 'I'm astounded!'

Humphrey: 'Why thank you Minister. It was nothing – All in a day's work!'

Jim: 'Your work Humphrey?'

Humphrey: 'I must confess, that indeed, I was able to put the Department's seal upon the recommendation to the Secretary.'

Jim: 'Did you now? I was just about to ask what fool gave away my railway!'

Bernard: 'Sir Humphrey did- er- didn't er –something – Gosh! – Is that the time?'

Jim: 'Humphrey!'

Humphrey: 'Minister?'

Jim: 'I'm speechless!'

Humphrey: 'Yes Minister!'

Ref: An adaptation from TV's Yes Minister! Reprinted from *On Track*, August 2008



Photo: BBC