

More on the Melbourne Grand Prix

"The Auditor-General's peer reviewed cost benefit analysis found the Grand Prix in Albert Park does not deliver a net economic benefit. In denial, Mr Baillieu said the event delivers value to Victoria and Australia. The Baillieu (and Brumby) defence of the multi-million dollar operating losses on the grand prix is to claim the event delivers intangible benefits such as the 'branding' of Melbourne.

"The branding has a value, according to Formula Money, a \$500 report for businesses that reveals the advertising value of Formula One, race by race. Their report on this year's Australian Grand Prix shows the advertising value of 'Melbourne' is only \$250,000. That is all taxpayers get for the hundreds of millions of dollars that have been sunk into the event. In fact, Formula Money shows 'Melbourne' was one of the least noticed brands in the world television coverage of the event, coming in at 29th – a very poor return. This supports the Auditor-General's research that found no evidence the event brings in extra tourists to Melbourne and begs the question: has the government been hiding this information from Victorians?"

"This last myth in the web of spin and deceit justifying the taxpayer funding of a temporary car race in a public park has been destroyed by Formula Money. Other claims that have been found to be false: The often repeated claim of a global viewing audience of 500 million for our grand prix is totally false. Formula One's own figures quoted by The Economist indicate it is no more than 16 million. Despite this evidence, some media outlets have been quoting the total figure for all grands prix in the world as the viewing audience for Melbourne's Grand Prix!"

"Also, with only 24,739 grandstand seats, and limited capacity in the outfield, why would any media outlet make such unbelievable statements such as 'Crowds of up to 119,000 on race day made it the biggest single event in Australia?' Save Albert Park president, Peter Goad says, 'With current grandstand and general viewing capacity, the venue cannot accommodate more than 70,000 spectators, so why did the Herald Sun make this ridiculous claim? The Grand Prix Corporation's own annual accounts show a 41% drop in ticket sales over the last five years. These facts are readily available but they are never included in the government's media releases. Journalists have to look them up.'"

Ref: Peter Logan, Save Albert Park, Media Release, 22/7/11



**'Some car race – someplace.
Local hero seems to be some guy called
Albert Park.'**

More on Carmageddon

"Los Angeles – perhaps America's most famously car-choked city – briefly became a modern transportation morality play. The city closed ten miles of the 405, a heavily congested freeway that typically handles 500,000 vehicles each day, so it could demolish an overpass bridge. Traffic was predicted to be spectacular. City officials ... issued dire warnings of a coming 'Carmageddon' – ... people expected L.A. to unravel without the freeway. In response, JetBlue offered a special deal: \$4 flights from Burbank to Long Beach. At under 40 miles, it was the shortest flight route the airline had ever offered. ...

"Flying? Across L.A.? A group of cyclists decided to call attention to more sensible transit possibilities by issuing a modern-day John Henry challenge: on their bikes, they would beat the plane to the other side of the city. And they did. The cyclists, part of a group called Wolfpack Hustle, made the ride in an hour and thirty-five minutes. Another member of the group drove to the airport, arrived the requisite hour early, waited in the security line, boarded the plane, landed, and took a cab (which apparently got lost) to the finish line – arriving more than an hour after the cyclists, and after a challenger who made the trip by public transit and walking, and another who rollerbladed it. ... Of course, the flight was a publicity

stunt, not a serious suggestion about city-scale alternatives to car supremacy. The sheer ridiculousness of using an airplane to solve a problem caused by too many cars is pretty obvious, especially during this summer that has so dramatized the dangers of a warming climate. ... But the flights did symbolize the conventional wisdom that Los Angeles just can't function without its current car-centric transportation infrastructure."

Ref: Brook Jarvis, Yes!, 28/7/11

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/blogs/brooke-jarvis/the-cyclists-who-beat-an-airplane-a-tale-of-carmageddon>

Planes Running on Biofuel

"On July 1 the US standards body ASTM International gave approval for carriers to fly passenger planes using kerosene mixed with biofuel made from organic waste and non-edible plants. The approval allows a blend of as much as 50% biofuel, which can include feed stocks such as jatropha, woodchips, waste vegetable oil and algae. SkyNRG has since provided fuel to Air France-KLM, Europe's largest airline, Finnair, and Thomson Airways. ... At present jet fuel from renewable sources costs about three times as much as traditional kerosene-based fuel. SkyNRG aims to lower these costs for airlines by buying and producing the fuel in bulk and sharing the cost-burden across airlines, airports, government and corporate customers. ... Pressure is building on the aviation industry, which accounts for 2% of global carbon-dioxide output, to cut pollution. In 2012 carriers with European routes will have to participate in the European Union's cap-and-trade system for CO2 and buy extra permits if they exceed limits."

Ref: Lousie Dowing, SMH, 22/7/11

"Qantas chief Alan Joyce said the flag carrier was investing in biofuel research as part of its push to meet an industry target of a 1.5% cut in carbon emissions by 2020. The airline is working with US renewable energy companies Solazyme to develop a business case for the use of algal-derived sustainable fuel. It is also working with another US group, Solena, which deals with waste-based fuel. Qantas has a fuel bill of almost \$4 billion a year."

Ref: Neil Wilson, Herald-Sun, 22/7/11

Buses Running on Empty

"More than a quarter of Brisbane's buses are running empty, a review of the public transport network's sustainability has revealed. The Securing 2026 review by management consultancy AT Kearney on behalf of Brisbane City Council shows 28% of bus services are 'dead running', where passengers are unable to board. The majority of dead running services are under-stood to be express or BUZ services returning empty to stations at the beginning of a route or to depots. The proportion of dead running services in Brisbane is significantly more than that in Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth, where between 12% and 22% of buses run empty. In comparison, under 20% of Sydney buses are dead running on a weekdays during school terms. Commuter lobby group Rail Back on Track spokesman Robert Dow said the council and state government could save between \$15 and \$17 million if dead running was reduced to 20%. ... Lord Mayor Graham Quirk said the council was building new bus depots at Sherwood and Eagle Farm to reduce the need for buses to make long journeys with no passengers."

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Ref: Marissa Calligeros, Brisbane Times, 8/6/11

"I've often thought 'Sorry Not in Service' was the most common destination on Brisbane buses."

"I watched two 66s in a row roll up to Mater Hill the other day, headed towards the city – that's the second stop on the route. Why are two buses with the same number starting their route at the same time? Neither had more than 2 or 3 people on them."

"One of the major problems with the large amount of dead running in Brisbane is the obsession that TransLink has with running buses all the way into the CBD. The almost complete refusal to feed rail (within the Brisbane City Council boundaries at least) contributes to this."



Photo: Tony Moore, Brisbane Times

"Buses run 'dead' or as it should be correctly referred to as 'blank' because drivers have come to the end of the maximum amount of time they are allowed to drive. According to the law, a driver must not drive a heavy vehicle more than five hours without a break. This is part of fatigue management and is intended to maintain safe driving practice."

Ref: Reader's Comments, Brisbane Times, 8/6/11

Feedback on Rail Planning

"From my eight years of working in rail (passenger, freight, consulting, and in the UK), with a background in private heavy industry prior to that, one constant theme is that with rail and public transport there is a lack of understanding of the market that is able to be served – most people in rail have a 'can't do' attitude, rather than a 'can do'. Some examples include rail personnel who have been prouder of closing and removing infrastructure than trying to develop; over-regulation of rail compared to other transport mechanisms; and the consistent delay to the development of rail/PT projects compared to road-based. However, one example of attempting to understand these markets is the proposed tram route for the Gold Coast – at least they are being designed to carry surfboards!"

Alex Pout 25/7/11

Comparing Cities (Part 2)

"Around Löwenplatz, one of Zurich's busiest squares, cars are now banned on many blocks. Where permitted, their speed is limited to a snail's pace so that crosswalks and crossing signs can be removed entirely, giving people on foot the right to cross anywhere they like at any time. As he stood watching a few cars inch through a mass of bicycles and pedestrians, the city's chief traffic planner, Andy Fellmann, smiled. 'Driving is a stop-and-go experience', he said. 'That's what we like! Our goal is to reconquer public space for pedestrians, not to make it easy for drivers'.

"While some American cities – notably San Francisco, which has 'pedestrianised' parts of Market Street – have made similar efforts, they are still the exception in the United States, where it has been difficult to get people to imagine a life where cars are not entrenched, Dr Lee Schipper said. Europe's cities generally have stronger incentives to act. Built for the most part before the advent of cars, their narrow roads are poor at handling heavy traffic. Public transportation is generally better in Europe than in the United States, and petrol often costs over \$8 a gallon, contributing to driving costs that are two to three times greater per mile than in the United States, Dr. Schipper said. What is more, European Union countries probably cannot meet a commitment under the Kyoto Protocol to reduce their carbon dioxide emissions unless they curb driving. The US never ratified that pact.

"Globally, emissions from transportation continue a relentless rise, with half of them coming from personal cars. Yet an important impulse behind Europe's traffic reforms will be familiar to mayors in Los Angeles and Vienna alike: to make cities more inviting, with cleaner air and less traffic. Michael Kodransky, global research manager at the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy in New York, which works with cities to reduce transport emissions, said that Europe was previously 'on the same trajectory as the United States, with more people wanting to own more cars'. But in the past decade, there had been 'a conscious shift in thinking, and firm policy', he said. And it is having an effect.

"After two decades of car ownership, Hans Von Matt, 52, who works in the insurance industry, sold his vehicle and now gets around Zurich by tram or bicycle, using a car-sharing service for trips out of the city. Carless households have increased from 40 to 45% in the last decade, and car owners use their vehicles less, city statistics show. 'There were big fights over whether to close this road or not – but now it is closed, and people got used to it', he said, alighting from his bicycle on Limmatquai, a riverside pedestrian zone lined with cafes that used to be two lanes of gridlock. Each major road closing has to be approved in a referendum. Today 91% of the delegates to the Swiss Parliament take the tram to work.

"Still, there is grumbling. 'There are all these zones where you can only drive 20 or 30 kilometres per hour which is rather stressful', Thomas Rickli, a consultant, said as he parked his Jaguar in a lot at the edge of town. 'It's useless'."

{Continued in #211}

Ref: Elisabeth Rosenthal, NY Times, 26/6/11

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/27/science/earth/27traffic.html?src=ISMR_AP_LO_MST_FB

Australian Fast Train Debate (Part 1)

"I love high-speed rail. My travels on Japan's Bullet Train and France's TGV were just wonderful. These rail systems service densely populated centres over relatively small distances. The Tokyo to Osaka line is profitable, the French routes not so. Where high-speed rail substitutes significantly for road and air travel and relieves congestion in other modes, it has a chance. Unfortunately, trains in Australia do not pay and may not relieve road and air travel congestion. Coal and iron ore transport pays. Suburban rail commuter traffic is highly subsidised but can be justified in total traffic management and equity terms. The Air Train that services Brisbane does not pay, although the one servicing Sydney is part of the suburban network and acceptable as part of that investment. The fast trains – for example, Canberra to Sydney and Brisbane to Bundaberg and beyond – do not pay. Only pensioners, who are not sensitive to time, use them.

"The economics of high-speed rail are determined by a simple formula: the number of people carried by distance travelled. Broadly, too few people and distances too long kill the economics. Australia's main centres of population are too far apart for high-speed rail. Moreover, the type of customer that high-speed rail needs to attract is time-sensitive. In order to take traffic off the road or out of the air, trains need to save on time. On the routes normally suggested in Australia this is highly unlikely. The evidence against high-speed rail is strong. High-speed rail is too risky in competing against air travel when airlines have scope to price out new entrants.

Is Australia too big for a high-speed rail network?

Yes: 14%
No: 86%
Votes: 6575
Ref: Age Poll 3/5/11

"Further, the environmental advantages of high-speed rail over new-generation planes are not clear, as air travel is reasonably fuel-efficient on the basis of passenger per kilometre. And, for the practically minded, while rail and plane both can be closed down by incidents at the terminal, the entire rail line can be stopped by blockages from mechanical breakdowns, accidents and hoaxes. Where a flight might be delayed or cancelled, passengers can take a later flight or use an alternative carrier. Australia has enough white elephants, such as the Darwin to Alice Springs rail. High-speed rail is another we should not feed." {See next issue for an alternative view}

Ref: Gary Johns, The Age, 30/4/11

www.theage.com.au/opinion/society-and-culture/the-question-is-australia-too-big-for-a-highspeed-rail-network-20110429-1e0ce.html#ixzz1LF0jPc3Y

US Fast Train Debate

"Barack Obama has made high-speed rail one of the projects of his presidency. On Monday the federal government doled out another \$2bn in funds. ... What was surprising however, was that Michigan's governor, Rick Snyder, and a Tea Party leader of impeccably conservative credentials, was awarded nearly \$200m. ... The decision makes Snyder an oddity. From New Jersey to Florida, his class of newly elected Republican governors have made a grand display of rejecting federal funds for upgrading America's rail system. Snyder has been as true to the Tea Party ideology as any of those rail refuseniks. ... But on the issue of trains, he seems to be travelling on the same track as Obama. The funds award on Monday are meant for a line between Chicago and Detroit that will allow passenger trains to travel at speeds of 79mph, and eventually more than 110mph. Not exactly high-speed rail by global standards, but faster than many American trains. The project is scheduled for completion in 2014. In a statement, Snyder said: 'Investment of this magnitude can spur economic development in our communities with rail stations, and provide access to a 21st century rail system that will help Michigan citizens compete in a global economy. Reliable, fast train service is attractive to businesses that want to locate or expand near it.'

"Now compare that with Wisconsin's Scott Walker, who ran for governor last year on a promise to send back \$810m in federal funds for high-speed rail. He said the money would be better spent on building roads or paying off the federal deficit. Or Ohio's governor, John Kasich, who sought to keep the \$400m his state was awarded – so long as he did not have to spend it on trains. The federal government eventually took the money back. New Jersey's governor, Chris Christie, meanwhile turned down \$3bn from the federal government to build a rail tunnel under the Hudson River to New York City. The rationale in all cases was government spending; high-speed rail projects are especially irksome to Republicans because they are funded out of the 2009 economic recovery plan which, in Tea Party Eyes anyway, is the ultimate symbol of government waste. Obama set aside \$8bn in federal funds for rail projects in the recovery plan. The funds turned down by Ohio and Wisconsin were eventually rolled into

a \$2.4bn package that was supposed to build a high-speed line between Tampa and Orlando – until Florida's newly elected governor cancelled the project. ... The federal government re-purposed those funds yet again, channelling most of them to improving rail service between Washington and New York.”
Ref: Suzanne Goldenberg, Guardian, 10/5/11

More on Trinidad and Tobago

“Interested to see the reference in #208 to roads in Trinidad and Tobago. Trolleybuses ran in Port of Spain until 1956. A photo in the January 1953 edition of National Geographic was captioned ‘Automobiles clog Frederick Street [Port of Spain]’, and showed trolleybus overhead wiring and abandoned tram tracks. Maybe traffic congestion is not so new?”

Tony Weston, 29/7/11

“Transportation in and out of Port of Spain is plagued by heavy traffic delays at morning and evening rush hour. ... To ease the current traffic woes that result in two to three hour commutes during rush hours, a number of projects are in various stages of implementation. The upgrading of the Churchill-Roosevelt highway to a grade separated expressway and the extension of water ferry services from Port of Spain to the major urban hubs along the west coast are particularly notable.”

Ref: Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Port_of_Spain



Intersection of Churchill Roosevelt Highway and Uriah Butler Highway 2009 Ref: Wikipedia

Peak Cars (Part 2)

“**Peter Newman:** And most of these cities are now saying we've got to do something different. So Shanghai in a ten-year period built the biggest metro in the world. They now have eight million passengers a day on a metro that covers 80% of the city. They knew they couldn't keep going with this car business that the American engineers had said they needed to do. So these dense cities of Asia that are clearly recognising the need to change. So 82 cities across China are building metros, 14 cities in India are building metros, major changes in direction for these cities.

“**Robyn Williams:** Your paper cites six main reasons that car ownership is going down. What are those?

“**Peter Newman:** Well, we talk about hitting the Marchetti wall, and in many ways that's the key to it. Marchetti was the first to define that every city has a one-hour travel time budget, and if you can't get to most destinations in one hour over an average for your travel time for the day, then you either move or you get very angry and the road rage settles into a political movement that defines elections, like has just happened in Sydney. And that has been the limit, because we built cities around the car, which could go quicker and be more flexible, and for a while there we were keeping well within the Marchetti travel time budget, but we have gone over now.

“And most cities have hit the wall on freeways. They don't work any more. They're absolutely jam-packed at peak time, so it really needs a different sort of economic approach. And the reality is, and I have been looking at this in quite a bit of detail through my Infrastructure Australia hat, it costs about \$50 million to build a lane of freeway today and pretty much the same to build a rail line, except the rail line will carry 8 to 20 times more people than that road will. So it doesn't take long to recognise that the cities are going to fill very quickly with cars, and the only way around it is to get public transport going. So at the same time as this peak car use is happen-ing, we are seeing dramatic increases in public transport. In Melbourne and Perth in the decade '99 to 2009, 70% increase. In Brisbane, 50%. Sydney had just a few percent because it didn't build anything new, every other city has been building it. And as soon as you build it, they come, because it's a better way to get around, it's quicker, and you are not stuck all day in the traffic.

“Robyn Williams: The figures for Adelaide are similarly not that great.

“Peter Newman: No, but they are building now, and they got off the mark a lot quicker than Sydney did. We gave them a lot of money to build up their rail system, extend their light rail and they are really coasting along. It is really sparking quite a change in that city, and you will see that dramatic change in the same way that Perth did. You build rail up, people will flock to it. Our Southern Railway is carrying the equivalent of eight lanes of traffic now after just a few years of operating.

“Robyn Williams: So you've got public transport, you've got the Marchetti line, the one-hour travel, and what about the way cities are kind of decentralising?

“Peter Newman: Yes, there is a cultural change going on. Young people in particular are wanting more urban and less suburban. So cities are coming back in. Densities are going up for the first time in hundreds of years. Dramatic change that the car and before that trains and trams did was to spread cities out and lower densities, it is now coming back in right across the world. So the cities have hit the wall on sprawl really. Younger people, baby boomers like myself, are not particularly wanting to have the bigger block and long commutes in a car that is hardly moving. The change to living in areas that are more urban where they can have greater opportunities, where they can meet friends more easily and do the things that cities have always been about, that is a universal phenomenon, it's called the 'Friends' phenomenon as compared to the 'Father Knows Best' phenomenon. And that change is documented and I think we are now seeing it reflected in the data.

“Robyn Williams: What about the final couple of reasons?

“Peter Newman: Well, the main one that I think is really feeding all of this is the change in fuel prices. But the oil price was going up but it hadn't gone up the dramatic way that 2008 showed with US\$140 a barrel, but that has really sealed it for many people. You just can't afford to live with a lot of driving because it's going to bankrupt you. It's pretty simple economics, and I think this is driving the change. So we've hit the wall on fuel.”

{Continued in #211}

Ref: ABC Radio National, Science Show, 5/5/11

www.abc.net.au/rn/scienceshow/stories/2011/3206293.htm

Marchetti's Constant

“Marchetti's Constant is a term for the average amount of time spent travelling each day, which is approximately one and a half hours. Developed by Venetian physicist Cesare Marchetti, it posits that although forms of urban planning and transport may change, and although some live in villages and others in cities, people gradually adjust their lives to their conditions (including location of their homes relative to their workplace) such that the average travel time stays approximately constant. Even since Neolithic times, people have kept the time at which they travel per day the same, even though the distance may increase. ...

“A related concept is that of Yakov Zahavi, who also noticed that people seem to have a constant 'travel time budget'. Zahavi's work is cited by David Metz in his book 'The Limits to Travel' ... Metz refers to the travel time budget as 'a stable daily amount of time that people make available for travel'. Metz cites data of average travel time in Britain drawn from the British National Travel Survey in support of Marchetti's and Zahavi's conclusions. This work casts doubt on the contention that investment in infrastructure saves travel time. Instead it appears from Metz's figures that people invest travel time saved in travelling a longer distance.”

Ref: Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marchetti%27s_Constant

“You can relate Marchetti's Constant to your life. The average travel time budget, around the world, in every city, is about one hour, per person, per day. If you take half an hour for the journey to work and home again then that's it. If you take less, you'll probably go walking with the dog or something but you'll take about an hour on average. This is found to apply everywhere. A recent study in Britain showed it had applied in English cities for the past 600 years. We need to have a restorative, reflective time. What it means is that the city is always one-hour wide. The walking cities of the past – historic, medieval cities – were five to eight kilometres wide. You could walk across them in an hour. Victorian cities, the industrial revolution cities, spread out because the pipes and the rails meant that we could now travel 20

to 30 kilometres. And the city remained one hour wide. But the new frontier entered essentially by US traffic engineers was to spread the city out further around highways. So the city spread out and in an hour you could go 50 kilometres. The Marchetti principle does mean that if you have a good public transport system there will be a market for dense, walkable development.

"Sydney's commitment to motorways in recent times has been very extensive. Ten billion dollars in a decade is a major determinant of the city's recent character. It has created a more car-dependent city. It is not possible to do other than that. You have had recent announcements about public transport spending, of about \$2 billion. Is it enough? What about new lines, especially light rail, what about local priority for biking or walking? And is there a vision to fit all this into? The one-hour-wide city, in Sydney, is reaching its limits. A city that has got 20 people a hectare and 40 kilometres an hour will become dysfunctional after about 2.5 million people.

"Market-based reurbanisation is flooding in now. There are 100 new rail developments opening in US cities. In Denver, a classic urban-sprawl, car-based city, the light rail is being extended in eight directions. Sydney is now turning in as its sprawl limits are reached. Public transport options, which are then favoured by that, are at capacity and too slow. The economics are very powerful. If you look at car use and city wealth, there is no correlation. European cities, which have less than half the car use, are the wealthiest. And even in the US there is very little correlation at all. Some cities put their wealth into public transport and use it – and it works.

"One key factor is the speed of the public transport system compared with other traffic. In US and Australian cities, cars travel much quicker than public transport. In Sydney its 39kmh for the traffic and 34kmh for public transport, which is a lot closer but it still favours the traffic. So, given the Marchetti constant and that we will minimise our travel time, people will tend to choose a car if that is the quickest option. Cities which are car dependent have seen 12 and 13% of their wealth going on transport. The cities which have good public transport systems have about 8% and wealthy Asian cities about 5%.

"The Australian Federal Government funds transport and housing ... and they put a lot of money into roads. In Western Australian we've gone from spending for every \$5 on roads \$1 on public transport to \$1 on roads for every \$5 on public transport. An enormous change and it happened because the public demanded it; 78% of people said there was a large or very large need for public transport, cycling and walking funding over car use; 87% said the Government should take it out of road funding. So the commitment has been made, the new rail system has been significantly adopted and the reason it is being used is because it is going faster than the traffic."

Ref: Peter Newman, SMH, 26/4/04

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**Considering Equity in Transport** which should have continued in #209 will now continue in #211.

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