

Victoria's Bike Strategy Audited

"A plan to make cycling a major form of transport in Victoria has failed, the auditor-general says. The aim of the 2009 Victorian cycling strategy, introduced by the then-Labor government, was to grow bike riding into a leading form of transport. Auditor-General Des Pearson said the strategy was hastily developed without a proper understanding of current cycling trends or what was required to make it mainstream. 'Serious limitations in (the strategy's) ... development and implementation compromised its potential to achieve its goal', he said in a report tabled to state parliament today. Dr Pearson said there was too much emphasis on physical infrastructure and more time should have been spent reducing incentives to drive and promoting cycling. Despite recent growth, bicycles are used for just 1.6%, or 184,000, of the 11.6 million trips made on a typical weekday in Victoria, according to 2007-08 figures. Cycling accounts for between 10% and 27% of all trips in Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands.

"Dr Pearson said cycling had grown in those countries due to extensive infrastructure and promotion and measures to make driving more expensive and less convenient. He noted cycling trips in inner Melbourne and the central business district have grown by about 50% during the past four years. Dr Pearson said higher petrol prices and overcrowding on public transport had contributed to cycling levels. Bicycle Victoria spokesman Garry Brennan said the report showed the government needed to do more to encourage cycling. 'While we have made haphazard progress so far, if cycling is to become truly mainstream then much more concentrated effort has to be made by the government', he said."

Ref: AAP, The Age, 17/8/11

"Using 2007-08 figures is useless – any cyclist in Melbourne can tell you that cycling numbers have grown massively since then. But cycling will not be mainstream until our 'leaders' lead the way. Mr Baillieu [Victorian Premier] went to Cadel's [2011 Tour de France Melbourne victory] parade in a car ... how disappointing."

"Sadly, this city was designed to be convenient only for cars, and it will take much political courage to retro-fit it for bicycles. Currently it's just too dangerous to cycle on many roads at peak times. If it were made safe, many more people would commute on their bikes."

Ref: Readers' Comments, The Age, 17/8/11



**"What do you mean finished?
It is finished!"**

Tar Sands Pipeline Protest

"Dozens of people were arrested at the White House on Saturday as protesters began a two-week sit-in expected to draw over 2000 opponents of a proposed pipeline from Canada to the US Gulf Coast. 'President (Barack) Obama can stop this climate-killing disaster with the stroke of a pen', said Bill McKibben, spokesman for Tar Sands Action, the environmental group that organised the protest. Tar Sands said on its website that more than 70 people were arrested Saturday. 'This is the most important environmental test that President Obama has faced. He has to decide whether or not to grant permission for this giant pipeline', said McKibben. A total of 2,200 people from all 50 states are expected to take part in the event, which is designed to pressure Obama to deny a permit for the \$13 billion Keystone XL pipeline project due to stretch across 2,700 kilometres. Many of Saturday's protesters wore pro-Obama buttons, but Professor Bob Wilson from New York State said he was 'upset' with the president. 'I'm upset with the Obama administration and the federal government's inability to do anything in dealing with climate change', he said. 'Enormous carbon has been locked up in these tar sands and to release it into the atmosphere will make climate change worse'. James Speth of Vermont Law School said Obama 'could have an electrifying effect across the world' by saying 'no' to the pipeline. ... The US government plans to decide by year's end whether to issue a permit for the proposed pipeline stretching from Canada to Texas. The Keystone XL pipeline proposed by TransCanada would begin in Alberta in western Canada and pass through the US states of Montana, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas and Oklahoma before ending up in Texas at the Gulf of Mexico. A number of environmental and citizen groups have launched a fight against the pipeline because exploiting the unconventional oil sands of Alberta requires energy that produces a large volume of greenhouse gasses." **Ref: Sky News, 21/8/11**

On the Qantas Hop

"The Australian Government believes in an Australian-based and majority Australian-owned Qantas. It is regrettable Qantas has announced that around 1,000 jobs are being cut, most through voluntary redundancies. Qantas employs more than 35,000 people with 90% of those jobs based in Australia. Job losses are always regrettable but the Government acknowledges that this is a commercial decision taken by Qantas. The Qantas Sale Act requires that:

- *Qantas's main operational base and headquarters must remain in Australia;*
- *Total foreign ownership not exceed 49%;*
- *The name of Qantas must be preserved for the company's scheduled international passenger services;*
- *The company must be incorporated in Australia;*
- *At least two-thirds of the board of Qantas must be Australian citizens; and*
- *The chairman of the Board must be an Australian citizen.*

The Government strongly supports these provisions being maintained to ensure that Qantas remains an iconic Australian brand."

Federal Government Media Release, 16/8/11

Australian Fast Train Debate (Part 4)

"Australia is too big not to invest in a high-speed rail network as part of the infrastructure development needed to accommodate our projected population growth and our future transport infrastructure needs. Our population is expected to grow from 22 million to 35 million by mid-century. Most of that growth will be on the eastern seaboard, yet Australia's three largest cities and its capital – Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Canberra – are connected by what can only be described as an antiquated passenger and freight rail system. Our transport infrastructure is under strain and while the air transport options between these cities are world class, they need the support of high-speed rail to ensure the long-term provision of high-quality transport links. Consider this: The Sydney-to-Melbourne route is the fourth-busiest air corridor in the world – if there was ever a corridor that could support a high-speed rail network it is this one. We are lagging other developed nations in the construction and utilisation of high-speed rail – China and the US are investing billions in the development of such rail networks. Both countries are geographically larger than Australia and yet believe that such high-speed rail networks are viable – why do we think such a network won't work here?"

"Even if a site is selected for a second Sydney Airport, it will be remote from Sydney and a high-speed rail network will be needed to connect that airport to the CBD. Why spend billions of dollars on a new airport, and then spend billions of dollars on a rail network connecting the airport to Sydney, when for less cost (financially and politically) you could link Newcastle-Sydney-Canberra with high-speed rail, facilitate the increased role of Canberra and Newcastle airports in providing airport capacity for Sydney, and create an economic corridor down the east of NSW? This would also ease the use of roads and create a transport and economic corridor for eastern NSW: an area of industry, population growth, commercial development, innovation and further infrastructure investment. And it would be a corridor in which Sydney, Wollongong and the southern highlands could grow and which has none of the natural geographic and access problems that arise to the north of Sydney."

Ref: Stephen Byron, 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

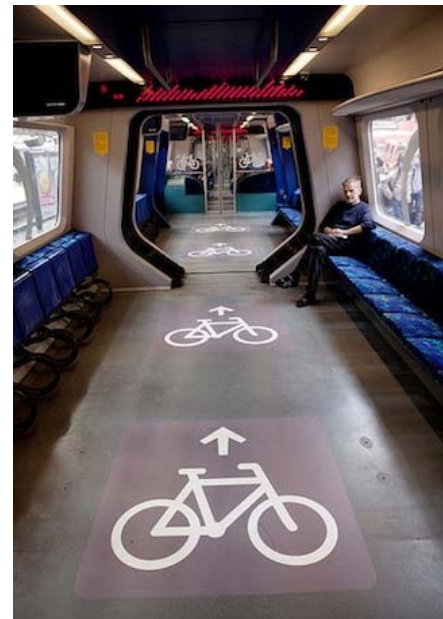
"There is a lot of research on very fast trains at present and I am curious: at what point does the environmental cost of fast trains exceed that of aeroplanes? The faster the train, the more embodied energy is required in making its tracks, the straighter and more environmentally intrusive the route and the more energy is required. Energy costs per kilometre rise geometrically with increases in travel speeds. In the US some research is being done on slightly slower, high-efficiency airliners. How would these compare with the fastest of the trains being researched at present? Given that freight is the cash cow of railways, at least in Australia, it may be counter-productive to run passenger trains too fast because of the need to allocate travel space to freight and passengers. Relatively little freight needs to go super fast and the energy costs of running freight as fast as passenger trains may be ridiculous. With the latest Australian proposal aiming at a relatively moderate 250 km/h, it would seem this point has been borne in mind. However not many community advocates of high-speed rail seem to appreciate it."

John Harland, 19/8/11

Bikes on Trains in Denmark

"Copenhagen is doubling the space for bikes on a number of its suburban trains to meet growth stimulated by the switch to free bike travel. The photo at right is sure to strike pangs of envy in Melbourne commuters who have to shoe-horn bikes into tiny spaces. The Copenhagen S-train has also introduced one-way traffic in the new bike compartments to make it easier and faster to get on and off. Ten S-Trains are being remodelled with the new compartments, which are in the middle of the train so that there is more space for bikes on the platform. The train system in the Danish capital is being gradually improved for travellers with bikes as increasing numbers of passengers are combining bike and train for their commute. The railway is installing bicycle pumps at a number of stations, making bicycle ramps, more and building more bicycle parking. The remodelled trains have pronounced coloured stripes on the sides of the train indicating the bike compartments. Bikes must be stored only in the bike area, while prams can be taken in the passageways. Research indicates that a third of all passengers have taken advantage of taking their bike on the S-train for free, and 91% are very positive about the idea, whether or not they take their bike on the S-train. Some 27% of the riders said they would not have taken the S-train if they had to pay extra for the bike."

Ref: Bicycle Victoria 13/7/11



The 'Missing' Cyclists (Part 2)

"There are many policies aimed at improving the ways cyclists and drivers interact. Intersection treatments can provide safe flow for both bicycles and cars. Extensive traffic-calmed urban areas with speed limits of 30 km/h or less make cycling more appealing. Road safety measures consistently make the safety of cyclists more important than keeping motor vehicles moving. For example, car drivers have the legal responsibility to avoid collisions with cyclists and pedestrians. The principle is that the responsibility for injury prevention lies with the operator of the vehicle that can cause most harm."

"Because of these measures, cycling environments are both safe and pleasant. Cyclists rarely experience the hazardous and unpleasant interactions with motorists that characterise cycling in countries such as Australia and the USA. It is important to recognise that these high-cycling countries are not 'anti-car'; rather, they provide a more level playing field for a wider range of ways of travelling. As in Australia, motorways and arterial roads provide for high-speed, high-volume motorised travel between major population centres. But transport and urban planning measures make cycling faster and more convenient than car travel within cities, towns and suburbs. It's not just regulation that makes cycling more appealing for women, children and older adults. In high-cycling countries, people are more likely to use bicycles appropriate for everyday travel – more upright bikes, in other words. Their bikes have a bigger carrying capacity (so you can take your children and do your shopping), and it's normal to ride in everyday clothing rather than sports gear (including to work). Because of these measures, cycling is seen as a convenient form of everyday travel for everyone, rather than a vigorous form of sport and exercise that is more appealing to young to middle-aged men."

"In countries like Australia, where few women cycle for transport, many of the factors described above are either lacking or only partly addressed. More people, and more women, would cycle if we prioritised bicycle travel over car travel for many of the daily trips that are part of urban life. Think of the short trips you make everyday that could be on a bike if cycling was easier: taking the kids to school, picking up some things at the shop, going to work or to the gym. Urban environments designed for safe, enjoyable bicycle travel are quite unlike those where cycling is simply tacked on to the "real transport business" of moving cars as quickly as possible at all times in all locations. The evidence shows that as bicycle travel becomes a convenient, safe and enjoyable everyday transport option, increasing numbers of girls, adolescents and adult women will almost certainly go along for the ride."

Ref: Jan Garrard, The Conversation, 11/8/11

<http://theconversation.edu.au/bikes-as-transport-getting-australian-women-along-for-the-ride-2157>

"Melbourne traffic at least, and Australian traffic in general, is very aggressive. This is not only an issue for cyclists, and not only for women cyclists. To look in terms only of bicycle facilities, as many do, would be to evade the real problem. It should not take daring or fierce determination to cross a road when a driver wants to turn across your path. It should also not require explaining to the driver that they are legally obliged to give way to you in such circumstances. Too many drivers believe the road space to be purely for motor vehicles and have very little knowledge of the rights of other road users. Part of the reason for this, however, is that cyclists and pedestrians are not confident of their rights so they just acquiesce to the bullying. Both of these behaviours are in profound contrast to the interactions of cyclists and drivers in The Netherlands. Drivers do not get away with bullying and it is striking that it is virtually all cyclists and all pedestrians that stand up to any bullying, not only large or aggressive men. Knowledge makes you stronger. Driver training in Australia remains pitiful. So does education of cyclists. Ratios of women to men cyclists will remain poor until a lot is done to improve on this."

John Harland, 19/8/11

Bogota's Bountiful Bikeways

"Since 1998, Bogotá, Colombia has built more than 300 kilometres of protected bikeways. Streetfilms recently had the chance to explore the city's bike network with the man responsible for building it, former mayor Enrique Peñalosa. 'When we build very high quality bicycle infrastructure, besides protecting cyclists, it shows that a citizen on a \$30 bicycle is equally as important to one in a \$30,000 car', said Peñalosa. And as mayor, he walked the walk, extending the network of protected bikeways to every community. He spent all of the money that he had developing public space for pedestrians and bicycles', said Carlos Felipe Pardo from SlowResearch.org. 'If you go to other places, you have people in the mud walking but the cars on a perfect road and here it is the opposite'. Now the investment in cycling infrastructure is paying off. After starting off with hardly any bike commuters, Bogota is pushing a five percent bike commute mode-share."

Ref: Street Films, 8/8/11

http://vimeo.com/moogaloop.swf?clip_id=27307346

And Also ...

"Talking with a friend recently – he suggested the best thing that could happen to transport planning in Victoria is for asbestos to be found at the VicRoads head office, and for all staff to be relocated to the City – in two separated offices either end of the CBD. Result: Eventual realisation that public transport, walking and cycling need to be improved. Has Kew been tested for asbestos recently??"

John Grant, 9/8/11

Melbourne Strategy Submission (Part 1)

Here are some excerpts from my comments on the 2011 Melbourne Transport Strategy:

"Firstly let me applaud the City of Melbourne on their commitment to improving transport in Melbourne as reflected in the excellent work that has been incorporated into this strategy. I broadly agree with the initiatives within the document but would like to make a few observations and suggestions – with the intention of pushing the boundaries of thinking with regards to sustainable modes of transport. I have focussed on only selected issues within the draft strategy and am happy to discuss any of these points (and the source documents).

River Ferries

"The surprising omission from the draft strategy is any detail on the utilisation of waterborne transport. Europe and the United States are rediscovering their waterways for both passengers and freight. Other countries make valuable use of their waterways for tourists and commuters. In Bangkok for example, in those areas away from the elevated railways and metro, the best way by far to negotiate around the city is by the river commuter ferries. Even a casual glance at the City of Melbourne municipality indicates that it is neatly dissected on the east-west axis by the Yarra River. This is even more pronounced since Fishermans Bend was included with the municipal boundaries. A closer investigation of that river axis reveals substantial trip generators for both tourists and commuters including:

Yarra River Northern Bank

- Olympic Park

- Melbourne Park (and National Tennis Centre) and by connection, the MCG
- Birrarung Marr and Artplay
- Federation Square
- Swanston Street Trams
- Flinders Street Railway Station
- Banana Valley Vaults
- Enterprise Park
- Melbourne Aquarium
- Batman Park
- Crown Plaza Hotel
- World Trade Centre
- Docklands Park
- North Wharf
- Docklands and Etihad Station

Yarra River Southern Bank

- Royal Botanical Gardens
- Kings Domain (and Myer Music Bowl)
- Alexandra Gardens
- St Kilda Road Trams (and Tourist Bus)
- Arts Centre
- South Gate and Southbank
- 55 Tram and various buses
- Freshwater Place
- Crown Complex
- 96, 109, and 112 Trams
- Polly Woodside
- Melbourne Exhibition Centre
- Melbourne Convention Centre
- South Wharf
- Yarra Edge
- Fishermans Bend and Westgate Park

"The problem is not a shortage of destinations, but a question of how to service so many efficiently. Parks Victoria ran an occasional, low profile, tourist ferry service (only over summer months). The object however would be to run a regular timetabled service (rather than compete with the existing commercial Yarra River cruise services) that complements and integrates with existing and proposed active and public transport systems. It would be a mistake to assume that river ferries could not be a viable component because they are slower than other modes. Not every trip is – or should be – only about speed – convenience, cost, frequency, comfort and appeal also contribute to people's transport choices." {Continued in #214}

Stephen Ingrouille, 30/6/11

The Value of Railway Suburbs

"With the cost of fuel continuing to escalate and the rising costs of long-term parking and traffic congestion, it's hardly surprising that property buyers are increasingly targeting areas within close proximity of public transport links. In fact, Grow Consulting Group director Ayda Shabanzadeh says that proximity to transport nodes is now one of the most desired features when it comes to buying property. 'Where once homeowners and investors valued waterfront views above all else, they're now putting a great deal more emphasis on whether their home's location allows easy access to their place of employment and other amenities'.

"While a new transport link can do wonders for an area's property prices, investors shouldn't get too speculative and jump in too early, says John Lindeman. 'You've really got to wait until the project's completed before you get any real results', he says. 'People don't move in until new railway lines or stations are built. It's then that you see a real change in property values and demand for properties in those areas'. He points to the Regional Rail Express upgrade that was proposed for outlying cities in the Melbourne vicinity in 2006. The big idea was to improve the service from Melbourne to the three

regional hubs of Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong, but the scale of the project has since been cut back. 'That's affected demand in most of those areas, apart from Werribee and Geelong where the line's still proceeding', says Lindeman.

"The airport link in Sydney saw Mascot prices jump by 60% within two years of the line opening, says Lindeman, while Green Square also saw huge growth. 'The airport link was built purely to get people from the airport to the city to get to the Olympic Games in 2000', says Lindeman. 'But it enabled a whole redevelopment and refurbishment of what was previously an area of warehouses, old factories and distribution centres. So, even though the intention wasn't to have those areas developed, that's nevertheless what occurred'.

"A similar story can be told in Perth when the new Mandurah rail line opened its doors to the public in 2008. The Perth market at the time was in the midst of a price decline, but those areas serviced by the new railway line managed to show healthy capital growth. 'People flocked to those areas and there were price increases in Mandurah. So investors who bought just before the line was finished did very well', explains Lindeman. He notes that capital growth in these areas didn't spike during construction, as owner-occupiers don't purchase in droves until the station is actually up and running. The key therefore is to get in early once the project is certain to go ahead and snap up a property before the new line opens and the increased owner-occupier demand starts to drive up prices.

"New stations don't crop up all that often, but it is possible to spot suburbs on existing transport networks that are set to see an increase in owner-occupier demand. In Sydney for example, Lindeman suggests looking at areas where the local government is encouraging high density development. He suggests areas like Chatswood and Artarmon to the north, Hurstville and Rockdale to the south and Bondi Junction to the east. 'That's pretty much where all the high density is concentrated', says Lindeman. 'And that will continue because Sydney's roads can't cope with any more traffic, so people are now living in units in areas where there's good access to public transport – and in particular, trains'.

"In Melbourne's growth corridors, on the other hand, the emphasis is still on houses rather than units. Lindeman highlights areas such as Cranbourne and Pakenham to the south-east, Melton to the west and Werribee to the south-west. Savvy investors have quickly caught on to such trends and have started to strategically purchase properties that incorporate efficient transport infrastructure within a short walk, as well as lifestyle amenities, to best maximise rental rates. 'It is well promoted that investing in real estate in close proximity to strong transport nodes (particularly train lines) attains the best long-term returns for property investors', says Dan O'Halloran, residential research analyst. But how do these suburbs really stack up against the transport 'black holes' or areas without train stations? The team analysed the performance of houses in railway suburbs within a 15km radius of the CBD in Sydney and Melbourne, Brisbane and compared these with transport 'black holes'. The results may surprise you."

Ref: Perry Finance Newsletter, 2/8/11

www.bmsonline.com.au/perry-finance/newsletter/377/116779/

Considering Equity in Transport (Part 8)

"Assessments Equality Impact Assessments would explicitly consider Equality as described in the Transport Integration Act:

- equity in respect of physical ability, ethnicity, culture, gender and financial situation;
- location; and
- Intergenerational equity.

"Depending on the level of the decision, appropriate evidence may have been generated in the Social and Economic Impact Assessment, in any Transport and Strategic Land Use Assessments, in a planning application or in the background material for an application. Other relevant evidence for considering equity would include:

- census data by CD cell by gender, by age, by ethnicity and culture, and by ability;
- assessment on transport choices by ability assessment on transport choices by gender;
- assessment on transport choices by ethnicity;
- transport use appropriate to location and choice;
- mobility;
- Differences between populations and transport choices;

- Differences between populations and transport choices seen to be appropriate; and
- Differences between populations and transport choices seen to be accessible.

"It is unlikely that Equity would have been considered explicitly in any other Impact Assessments gathered in any process. An Equality Impact Assessment could be accompanied by a Design and Access Statement.

"Design and Access Statements are an complementary tool that might assist in the consideration of access and equity in transport decision-making processes. CABE, UK, give guidance on Design and Access Statements, describing them as tools that assess an application against the design objectives and illustrate how a design meets those objectives. Again these make explicit how the design meets the Equity amongst other objectives. For instance, in the case of older residents, a Design and Access Statement would illustrate whether a particular road design works in the way intended, and takes into account the needs of this population.

"Are Equity Impact Assessments and Design Access Statements relevant in Victoria? The Transport Integration Act requires explicit consideration of Equity objectives in decision making. A response similar to Equity Impact Assessments and Design Impact Assessments it appears are required for all transport decisions under the Act.

"Who undertakes Equity Impact or Design and Access Statements? There is no current Google record of any Equity Impact Assessments being undertaken in Australia. An appropriately skilled organisation to undertake Equity Impact Assessments might include an organisation with Diversity and Access as core business, with a well developed understanding of Equality principles, and standing at Panel. There is no Google record of any Design and Access Statements being undertaken in Australia."

Ref: Carmel Boyce, 19/4/11

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

Rural Intersection ALERT Signs

"To improve safety at rural, two-way-stop intersections, researchers from the University of Minnesota Duluth, working with traffic engineers from St Louis County, Minnesota, have developed the ALERT System (Advanced LED Warning Signs for Rural IntersecTions Powered by Renewable Energy). Sponsored by the Minnesota Local Road Research Board, the low-cost, dynamic warning system provides traffic information to drivers approaching the intersection. Vehicle detectors placed at each approach send messages to LED blinker signs. The system is wireless and powered by solar panels, which eliminates problems associated with buried wires, as well as the need to connect to a local power grid. The ALERT system has been installed at an intersection in Duluth, which has a severe vertical curve on the east approach of the major road that significantly reduces sightlines for drivers stopped on the north and south approaches of the minor road. In addition, westbound drivers on the major road cannot see cross-traffic until they are nearly in the intersection. Westbound drivers see the message: 'Cross traffic when flashing'. North and southbound drivers on the minor road see the message: 'Vehicle approaching when flashing'. According to St Louis County traffic engineer Victor Lund, ALERT was 'tremendously successful' at changing driver behaviour. When the alert signs were flashing, westbound traffic on the major road slowed by 6.4km/h (4mph), drivers on the minor road waited longer before crossing, and roll-throughs were eliminated."



Ref: Traffic Technology Today, 3/8/11