

## Yarra River Water Taxi Proposal

"Melbourne should develop a water taxi industry to cater for the city's rapidly expanding waterside development, according to lord mayor Robert Doyle. With new businesses opening up at South Wharf, on the north bank of the Yarra River at the World Trade Centre and at Docklands, calls for a fully fledged water taxi service are growing. 'I would love the idea of water taxis, I know that we do have a fleet of boats that Parks Victoria own and I would love to see them active', Cr Doyle said. The lord mayor and Planning Minister Matthew Guy said a water taxi service for the city should be on the transport agenda. Launching the start of work on a new promenade that will extend pedestrian and cycling access on the north bank of the Yarra River from Spencer Street to the Charles Grimes Bridge, the lord mayor said he would 'love to see the day when we used our water to move people ... it would be a great thing to do'. Mr Guy agreed and said water taxis ... would be 'a new way of transporting people around Melbourne and we should certainly put it on the agenda'. Private operator Melbourne Water Taxis already offers a charter water taxi service. The company's Marie Pain said introducing a full-time water taxi service in Melbourne was a fantastic idea. 'You have just got to have a look at the development going on around the city, there is an absolute need for it', she said. She said they already operated a small shuttle service from the World Trade Centre to the ANZ building in Docklands twice a week. 'We really believe there is genuinely a need for something like this in Melbourne, with everything that is happening in Melbourne, all the inner-city living, the apartments', she said."

**Ref: Jason Dowling, The Age, 9/9/11**

"Talk about floating a great idea. Slow is good. We're not all in a hurry, all of the time. River taxis will suit many locals and delight tourists."

"Water taxis are the small picture. Looking at the big picture, we need a fast catamaran service on the bay. If we had terminals from Frankston to Geelong with regular stops, and we would ease congestion on the roads and the trains. These would need to be backed up with parking stations so that people could commute to the terminals and enjoy a fast boat ride of the bay. Of course, we would need a few stops in the CBD/Docklands area back up with a tram/train service to take workers throughout the city area. I think a ride on the bay before work would be far more enjoyable than being crammed in a car or a train!"

**Ref: Readers' Comments, The Age, 9/9/11**



**"Another balls-up in the Planning Department?"**

## No More RoNS (pronounced Morons!)

"If any one single reason can be said to explain New Zealand's relatively poor economic performance it would have to be the poor quality of public investment. All too often scarce capital has been squandered on prestige projects that serve some special interest or ideological itch rather than the collective good. There can be no clearer example of this wasteful approach to public investments than the Government's so called Roads of National Significance (RoNS) project.

"Despite the grandiose name this project is actually all about building more motorways. Inherent in the \$12 billion plus RoNS project is a philosophy, posture and preference that is past-based. The RoNS project could have been conceived any time over the past 40 years. Now, in the environment New Zealand faces in 2011 and beyond, it is just obsolete and irrelevant. Despite the massive cost, there is no clear statement from the Government of what problem the RoNS project is expected to solve. There is no justification for the timing of the project, or an explanation of why anyone would want to invest in transport infrastructure that increases, rather than decreases, NZ's dependency on oil.

"The RoNS project blithely ignores the fact that oil is at or near record prices and is not expected to fall given the fundamentals of global supply-demand balance. The sheer unaffordability of the project is breathtaking. At a time of severe financial stress with NZ Government spending in deep deficit, only the

most cost-effective infrastructure projects should get the green light. Yet there is no proven cost-benefit basis for RoNS. The project ignores the opportunity cost. What transport infrastructure could NZ build that would deliver real benefit for \$12 billion? Generals used to be castigated for preparing to fight the previous war, but in comparison with those addicted to building motorways in 2011 they now seem positively rational!"

Ref: Brian Jameson, Well-Track #4, Aug 2011

[www.trans-action.org.nz](http://www.trans-action.org.nz)

## Melbourne Strategy Submission (Pt 5)

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

"Potential taxi solutions include:

- Adopt a purpose-built taxi design perhaps similar to the one designed for New York City.
- Make sure all such taxis:
  - Are wheelchair compatible;
  - Have sufficient luggage capacity;
  - Have attachments for carrying at least two bikes;
  - Preferably run from biodiesel or renewably generated electricity.

"Manage taxis so that they are available where and when they are needed:

- with priority for disabled passengers;
- with effort to make them a better extension of (rather than replacement for) the public and active transport system).

"Introduce a second level of taxi service:

- with small electrically powered (from renewable sources of energy) vehicles, effectively an electric tuk-tuk;
- that would have smaller luggage capacity and would not be wheel chair compatible but perhaps could carry a bike or two;
- That would be used in a finite area (ie the Melbourne municipality) for a fixed fee (eg \$5) regardless of the journey length or number of passengers.
- That also would be discouraged from cruising but like 'first level taxis' would wait at distributed ranks including those on private land as outlined in #216. {Continued in #218}

Stephen Ingrouille. 30/6/11



**New York Taxi UniCab**

Photos: The Age 2/6/10

## Living Streets

"Living Streets is pleased to present its new report, 'Making the Case for Investment in the Walking Environment'. Researched by a multi-disciplinary team of experts from the University of the West of England and Cavill Associates, the report brings together and evaluates the multiple health, economic, social and environmental benefits of investment in walking friendly public spaces. It draws on inspiring case studies of schemes which have resulted in safer and more attractive public places in neighbourhoods and city centres in the UK and elsewhere. Key findings include:

- Investing in walking environments can support local economies by increasing footfall, improving accessibility and attracting new business and events;
- Investment in the walking environment is likely to be of equal or better value for money than other transport projects;
- Retailers and residents express a willingness to pay for improvements to the walking environment, while good quality public realm increases the value of both residential and commercial property
- Residents of walking friendly neighbourhoods are less likely to be depressed or to have poor mental or physical health;

- *People walk more when they feel their neighbourhood is safe, well maintained and lively, while increased walking in a neighbourhood is associated with better perceptions of safety and greater social interaction."*

**Ref: Living Streets, June 2011.**

See the report at: <http://www.livingstreets.org.uk/index.php?cID=651>

## Buses and Carbon Tax

*"Australian Bus Industry Confederation executive director Michael Apps said the carbon tax, if implemented, would force coach services to pay more to put their buses on the road in 2014. ... The Government will seek to establish an effective carbon price for heavy on-road liquid fuel use from July 1 2014. Mr Apps said the proposed carbon tax didn't address the main problem of reducing greenhouse emissions because light commercial vehicles and households would not face a carbon price on the fuel they used for transport. 'It compensates car users', he said. 'It doesn't incentivise the use of other passenger transport services such as coaches'. ... He said there needed to be a focus on encouraging people to leave their cars at home. 'Since cars are the biggest emitters of greenhouse emissions – you would think the carbon arrangements should have focused on how you reduce overall emissions from the transport sector', he said. 'The best way to do that is provide them with other incentives to use other forms of more sustainable transport'."*

**Ref: Jacqueline Williams, Canberra Times, 14/9/11**

## Making Fuel from Thin Air (Part 4)

### Building a Hydrocarbon

*"In the New Mexican desert, a six-metre wide dish of mirrors concentrates the sun's rays on a half-metre-long cylindrical machine shaped like a beer keg. The mirrors focus sunlight through a window in the machine's side, bathing a dozen, concentric rings in the sun's heat. Temperatures quickly reach 1,500 degrees Celsius, which drives oxygen out of teeth made of iron oxide (rust) before the teeth rotate back into the dark side of the reactor. There the teeth suck oxygen back out of introduced steam or CO<sub>2</sub>, leaving behind hydrogen or carbon monoxide. When enough H<sub>2</sub> and CO are produced, the mixture forms a very basic fuel known as synthesis gas, which is the building block used by the chemical industry to make hydrocarbons, chemicals, and even plastics.*

*"Think of this keg-like machine as high-temperature, high-speed reverse rusting – and the expensive parts are not the inputs of CO<sub>2</sub> or water, but rather the expense of the mirrors to harness the sun's heat. 'The real feed-stocks are not CO<sub>2</sub> and water, it's sunlight', says chemist James E. Miller of Sandia National Laboratory, co-inventor of the device. 'Even though sunlight is free, what costs you most is collecting it and converting it into a useable form'. Other groups are working on different designs or different materials, but the Sandia team in New Mexico estimates that it could make diesel or jet fuel for roughly \$2.50 per litre. There is another problem, however, one common to all such efforts to reverse combustion: To replace the more than 20 million barrels of oil consumed each day in the US would require 62.4 trillion moles of pure CO<sub>2</sub> per year. 'If we go to a scale that is meaningful, where does the carbon come from?' Toone asks. 'Learning how to recycle carbon is going to be important'.*

*"Coal plants offer one source, producing roughly 230 kilograms of CO<sub>2</sub> per second when burning enough coal to generate one gigawatt of electricity, but that still isn't enough to make a dent in transportation fuel use. Sucking CO<sub>2</sub> out of the air remains prohibitively expensive, according to a recent report from the American Physical Society. But pulling CO<sub>2</sub> out of seawater, where it is more highly concentrated, might offer one solution, as well as helping remedy the other peril from rising greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere: ocean acidification. Regardless, the first stirrings of a shift away from fossil fuels have started to show. The Princeton lab that gave birth to Liquid Light is now making butanol, the smallest molecule considered a hydrocarbon fuel, via the same process the lab used to make methanol. 'We are making that unambiguously', Bocarsly says. But 'we're in the early stages of understanding this'."*

**Ref: David Biello, ABC Environment, 6/6/11**

[www.abc.net.au/environment/articles/2011/06/06/3232934.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/environment/articles/2011/06/06/3232934.htm)



## Cars of the Future – Tiny and Clean

*“Futuristic city runabouts threaten to steal the limelight from show-pony performance cars when the Frankfurt motor show opens this evening with radical visions for urban transport. The unusual designs, which feature electric drivelines and room for only one or two people, show how carmakers are wrestling with the problems of traffic emissions and congestion. German companies are among the most energetic, with Volkswagen, Audi, BMW and Opel testing their ideas. The tiny Volkswagen Nils has a single seat accessed by dramatic wing doors, with the outboard wheels driven by an electric motor at the back. It has a range of 65km and batteries that recharge in two hours. Volkswagen’s researchers say the Nils would be ideal for commuters, with studies showing 90% travel solo. Audi’s Urban Concept is a two-seater on similar lines, with power from a pair of electric motors and a carbon-fibre cockpit. Unlike the tiny bubble cars of the 1950s, future runabouts will be packed with clever communication systems and made from expensive materials such as carbon fibre. BMW will be first with a mainstream car built from the material when its i3 enters production in two years. The i3 is not much longer than a Mini, but has room for four and an electric motor at the rear. One of the strangest designs comes from Opel, which will show a tandem two-seater that weighs one-third of a normal small car and uses one-tenth the energy. The German brand, which will begin shipping cars to Australia next year, says it will cost just E1 (\$1.32) per 100km to run. The green and frugal theme will permeate the show, and even sports cars are in on the act. Jaguar’s C-X16 has a hybrid booster system for push-to-pass acceleration and supercar vital statistics combined with miserly fuel use of less than seven litres per 100km.”*

**Ref: Phillip King, The Australian, 13/9/11**



**The Electric-Powered Volkswagen Nils**

Photo: The Australian, 13/9/

## Smart Transit by Choice

*“Increasing density is a key strategy for achieving carbon neutrality. However, it requires a significant level of effort and planning to ensure that dense neighbourhoods include good schools, parks, public safety, and many other factors that make communities work. Dense communities reduce climate impacts through energy efficiency and conservation. They also can reduce transportation emissions and automobile use by bringing jobs, housing, recreation, and shopping in closer proximity and offering the opportunity to connect urban villages and centres via efficient transit and ped/bike systems. But, while it is important to develop the transportation infrastructure and choices that help reduce automobile use and emissions, changing people’s travel patterns and behaviour requires a deeper understanding of how those choices are made as well as the social and cultural context for those decisions. Then the conditions that support change can be developed.*

*“So, why do we travel? Our home-to-work commutes mimic many traditional cultural patterns, from the pattern of daily travel in settled villages surrounded by agricultural lands to seasonal migrations from lower to higher elevations or dry to wet areas (‘transhumance’) that are characteristic of many cultures built around livestock. And even the poorest contemporary societies are linked by large numbers of overcrowded buses carrying people to and from market centres and on family visits. People like to travel, and mobility is a basic human drive. If we are going to positively affect people’s travel choices to emphasize low-carbon options, we have to work with people’s desires, not against them. Approaches are sometimes developed with the intent to restructure how people travel or to criticize or penalize people for choices without creating the positive conditions that can develop new behaviour. The intent should not be to stop people from travelling, but to create opportunities to minimize resource use and maximize energy efficiency. For example, strategies that reduce the amount of travel by making it easy to walk from home to work are great and will reap results – but we should understand that the benefits of these short trips and saved money may be invested in long-distance vacations.*

*“A strategy that relies solely on penalizing mobility risks failure as people find a way to get around whatever restrictions are placed on them. Increasing the cost for parking in downtown Seattle can help*

*to encourage people to choose different modes of travel. But it must be matched with convenient transportation alternatives and compelling reasons to go downtown. Only by making both alternative modes and the destination compelling can we count on people not choosing to drive to a shopping mall or workplace with free parking instead. An effective strategy for reducing carbon emissions from must draw people to efficient modes by designing and funding systems that reflect people's needs and provide enticing options for change. Make transit and bike/ped routes safe, convenient, reliable and desirable – fashionable would be optimum. We can't assume that people will stay put – and the complexities of two-job couples and multiple-destination families ensure that not many people will be able to avoid using automobiles entirely. Don't try to make people feel guilty about driving; rely on urban design to reduce trips as much as possible, and then on economic incentives and system design to draw them into the best choices for the trips they do take. And acknowledge that the private vehicle is going to be part of the equation, and that there will be a lot more people in our metropolitan area, so that even as we reduce per capita trips we will reduce total trips by a much smaller percentage. That means designing systems that will make automobile travel easy using efficient electric cars, but that will have significant disincentives to using cars when there are other possible alternatives available – and making sure that there are lures to get people to use those alternatives.*

*"Reshaping transportation choices is a long-range goal, and we cannot expect change to happen immediately. We need to assertively plan for the transition to a future that is not dependent on fossil fuels while acknowledging current patterns of behaviour and providing for current economic and social needs. This will require some experimentation to find the best ways to move people efficiently as well as thoughtful planning to identify interim actions. Effective strategies must be built around community engagement. They will only be embraced if they embody a shared understanding of the challenges and an appreciation of our common needs. The approach must emphasize hope, convenience, and community, not fear and penalty. Riding the bus must not only be good for the planet, easy, and good for the pocketbook – it should also be a fun way to travel as you join the bus rider community. For a climate strategy that works we must accept our desire to be mobile, acknowledge the limitations of our natural environment, and take creative steps that help people choose change because they want to."*

**Ref: Richard Conlin, Yes Magazine, 5/8/11**

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/blogs/richard-conlin/smart-transit-by-choice>

## Asia's Hyper-Motorization (Part 1)

*"Asia's love of vehicles is chokingly and noisily apparent. The number on the roads seems to rise inexorably, so fast in many places that it far outstrips the ability of governments to plan roads and infrastructure for them. But Asian nations desperate to find ways to cope with the clogged roads and foul air in their cities should not despair, says transport scientist Lee Schipper. Asian car ownership overall is tiny compared with the US and Europe. With the right planning and bold vision, it is possible to reclaim the streets and find more sustainable and more efficient transport systems. Asia is crazy about its wheels. China's Geely Automobile is set to buy Volvo as auto sales in China boom. In India, Tata Motor has rolled out the Nano, a mini-car for the middle class, while Japan's Honda sells top-of-the-line two-wheelers in Vietnam. Even rural Laos and Cambodia are abuzz with motorcycles. The world's most populous region is taking to the road, and many are overjoyed. Motorcycle or motorcar, personal vehicles are a pillar of development and for many a way to escape poverty. But are rapid increases in vehicle ownership a solution to poverty, or are they leading Asia, particularly its cities, to even greater problems? Will Asia's wheels grind to a halt? The answer is that for many Asian cities, wheels already have ground to a halt.*

*"The rapid increases in Asian motorization are no surprise to those of us who study transport. The World Business Council for Sustainable Development's 'Sustainable Mobility' project, backed by a host of major auto and oil companies, foresaw this boom. Concerned about the impact on both carbon dioxide emissions and the oil market, the group's 2003 report, 'Mobility 2030: Meeting the Challenges to Sustainability', recommended that the developing world adopt strategies already in use in the West, such as road pricing, vehicle emissions controls, better highways and car pooling as a way to cope with an inevitable rise in vehicle numbers. More recent work by the International Energy Agency (IEA) projects more rapid growth in vehicle ownership in Asia, but it has sounded alarms. Will Asians be better off with far more cars than today?*

*"The problem is not individual transportation itself – i.e. vehicle ownership. Rather, it is what I call hyper-motorization, which occurs when individual vehicle ownership rises so fast that authorities cannot cope with the associated problems – traffic fatalities, air pollution, congestion and noise – or more subtle yet difficult issues such as when whole sections of cities are cut off from pedestrian and cycle traffic by the kind of congested highway networks familiar to anyone who has tried to take a stroll through downtown Jakarta, Metro Manila or other mega cities.*

*"Why is Asia Different? On the surface, Asia should have a sustainable transport system. Urban transport across the region is mostly by bus, foot, bicycle or two-wheeler. But when all of this motion is focused in cities, the challenge of sustainable transport becomes particularly acute. First, there are about 200 cities in Asia with populations over a million and thousands with populations over 100,000. In short, Asia is crowded. But the wealth of Asia's economies is also concentrated in its cities, and with that comes the ability to own individual vehicles. Finally, the infrastructure required to support present and future generations of vehicles is also concentrated in urban areas. But in Asia's big cities, the amount of road space per person, per car or per square metre is often only a quarter to a half of what it is in the US or Europe. That means Asian cities often face massive traffic congestion even though fewer than 20% of all trips in cities are taken in cars, and car ownership levels are well below 100 cars per 1,000 people. In comparison, more than half of all trips in European cities are made in cars, and car ownership levels are around 300-500 cars per 1,000 people. In the US, 80% of city trips are made in automobiles, and car ownership is over 600 per 1,000 people.*

*"But it took the US and Europe several decades to reach this level, while in Asia it is happening much faster, in part because per capita incomes and urban populations are growing so much more rapidly than was the case in the US or Europe. Indeed, in much of Asia today, middle class urbanites have gone from walking to cycling to riding buses to running their own car or motorcycle within a generation. Few cities have been able to create either the policies or the physical infrastructure to provide fast, efficient, clean public transportation for the majority of people without letting the rise in private vehicles intrude – this is true even in such cities as Hong Kong and Seoul, where the mass transit systems are excellent but traffic congestion remains a problem."* {Continued in #218}

**Ref: Lee Schipper, World Streets, 3/8/11**

<http://worldstreets.wordpress.com/2011/08/03/car-crazy-lee-schipper-on-the-perils-of-asia%E2%80%99s-hyper-motorization/>

## And Also ....

*"Train announcement: 'So ladies and gentlemen, the commute home will be quite slow because, ah, the train in front is, well, just in front, and it doesn't seem to have much enthusiasm'."*

**Ref: mX, 31/8/11**

## Back Page Sport Report

*"The transport debacle on the opening night of the Rugby World Cup was caused by systematic bias against trains and buses in Government transport planning .... said [NZ] Green Party transport spokesperson Gareth Hughes. 'We hear again and again from the Minister of Transport that Aucklanders don't want to take buses and trains. The officials at the Ministry of Transport have taken this view in their pessimistic review of the CBD rail link business case. But it isn't true, as was obvious Friday night. The Government needs to take responsibility – Aucklanders want to take public transport, but they can't rely on it because the service isn't good enough, and this is due to decades of underinvestment. New Zealanders want and need smart green transport investment.*

*"Aucklanders want a vibrant city they can get around, without having to fill it with cars. This is why the CBD rail link should be fast tracked – Aucklanders need a fast and reliable way to get into their city every day, not another motorway to get them out'. Mr Hughes said that the poor service that occurred on the night was unacceptable, and that blaming passengers and the operator wasn't good enough. ... 'We need to learn from this - it's no surprise that public transport fell over, since it's never been properly funded. The Government is continuing the mistakes of the past, spending seven times more on motorways and roads than on public transport over the next ten years. We have the opportunity to make smarter transport investments that are fiscally responsible and will create more vibrant communities'."*

**Ref: Gareth Hughes, Media Release 12/9/11**



*"Fergus Gammie, pictured, who signed on as deputy director general of Transport for NSW last month, asked to delay his start date so he could oversee transport for the Rugby World Cup. He is chief operating officer of Auckland Transport. Unfortunately for him, his swansong has turned into an unmitigated nightmare that has raised eyebrows in government and transport circles on this side of the Tasman. Auckland Transport has been under fire from everyone from New Zealand Prime Minister, John Key, to the average Kiwi rugby fan, after a disaster start to the tournament. An estimated 2000 people missed the opening ceremony at Eden Park because of a meltdown on the city's rail system, while thousands of others were caught by knock-on delays."*

**Ref: Heath Aston, SMH, 18/9/11**



Photo: Tamara Dean

## And Also ...

*"Re-imagining the Rugby World Cup Opening. Somewhere in an alternate universe...."*

*"Fans who have been arriving from all over the world were delighted to be whisked into town on an excellent airbus service (double the normal frequency and half the price). The Council was able to offer this special service due to the Government's support. Since cutting the motorway budget so that only projects with a strong business case (BCRs greater than 3) can be funded through the national transport fund, the Government has saved billions. While the airport rail link is still in the first stages of planning, many international tourists were pleased to see signs indicating the route is currently being developed."*

*"Tourists were also stunned by the amazing redesign of Queen Street – now pedestrianized from Aotea Square to Quay Street. 'I think the row of native trees down the middle of the strip is so unique and special', said Jane, from England. Tourists have also enjoyed going from Takapuna to Saint Heliers along the new walk/cycle way across the bridge and down Tamaki Drive."*

*"Levi Browne, Chairman of the new, beefed up, Auckland Regional Council said, 'I think the redesign of Queen Street is really a tribute to the Government's strong commitment to liveable cities, and the appointment of a Green Minister of Urban Design in early 2009. It's amazing what local councils can achieve with a supportive Government behind them'. 'The new electric trains performed magnificently, carrying around 40,000 fans to the game', said Mark Leigh, chairman of the Auckland Regional Transport Committee. 'The regional fuel tax the Council levied in early 2009 has certainly paid off and the Auckland Transport Agency has worked miracles to get these trains on the line in time. Full credit to them! When we have completed the CBD rail link [ready to start construction in 2012] the rail system should be able to carry twice as many people'."*

*"Authorities also estimate a record number of Aucklanders cycled or walked around the city last night. Over 20,000 people on foot and bike are thought to have availed themselves of the new wider footpaths, off road cycle and walk ways, and thousands of cycle racks that have been recently installed. 'Auckland has followed the paths of New York, Melbourne and other world class cities – installing over 300 kms of cycleways and paths in the last 2 years', said Mr Leigh. In other news, air quality has improved remarkably in Auckland, serious road deaths and injuries are down, and despite record petrol prices this year, the regional service economy is booming."*

**Ref: Frogblog, 13/9/11**