

Addiction to Oil

"The industrialised world's addiction to oil is not just environmentally destructive and geopolitically suicidal, but also economically irrational. By relying on fossil fuels, the West is not only risking catastrophic climate change and subsidising some of the world's nastiest political regimes to the tune of \$US1 trillion annually, it is also forgoing the opportunity to develop new energy technologies in which knowledge-based societies, [eg] Europe and the US, would enjoy a clear competitive advantage. Continuing to feed the world's oil addiction rather than developing alternative energy sources is the real crime committed by BP and accomplices in Big Oil."

Ref: Anatole Kaletsky, The Australian, 17/6/10

"The days of discovering 'easy oil' and giant oil fields that produce more than 1 million barrels per day are long gone. Australia, like the rest of the world, is facing the harsh reality of depleting oil stocks (Peak Oil) and we are being forced to source oil from larger numbers of small oil fields, rather than smaller numbers of large fields. Our petroleum deficit is negatively impacting our annual balance of payments to the tune of \$10 billion. This number will be far worse once oil prices return to their pre-GFC levels and India and China accelerate their respective quests for modernisation. In 2005 Robert Hirsch was commissioned to do a report on alternative liquid fuels by the US government - the most worrying finding was that the USA had just 15 years to develop technology-intensive alternatives to fossil fuels to effect a seamless transition and not cause massive societal dislocations."

Ref: 'Neville', Comments, Australian, 17/6/10



"Saudi Arabia has blocked a call by vulnerable island states, supported by Australia, for a study into the impact of 1.5 degrees Celsius of global warming, delegates say. ... The goal is receding as emissions of greenhouse gases rise and political problems for tackling climate change multiply. ... But it was thwarted by Saudi Arabia, with support from Kuwait and Qatar, under the UN's consensus rule, the sources said. Saudi Arabia and other major oil producers argue that ratcheting up action on carbon emissions will hurt their revenues as fossil-fuel consumers switch to cleaner energy."

Ref: AAP, SBS World News, 11/6/10

"The US search for a viable alternative energy source is nothing new: 'We are at a turning point in our history ... This intolerable dependence on foreign oil threatens our economic independence and the very security of our nation. The energy crisis is real. It is worldwide. It is a clear and present danger to our nation. These are facts and we simply must face them'. Barack Obama, June 15, 2010? No, these were the words of Jimmy Carter, spoken almost 31 years ago in an evening broadcast to the nation that became known as the 'malaise' speech, a dour appraisal of the 1970s oil shocks and recession."

"Carter's address was a clarion call for America to stand on its own feet and to avoid the prospect of again being held hostage to Middle Eastern and other oil producers. His solution was a range of measures to stem oil imports, to find more oil at home and to move the economy towards a renewable energy future. By 2000, he pledged, a fifth of US energy needs would be met by solar sources. 'From now on, every new addition to our demand for energy will be met from our own production and our own conservation', Carter insisted. And why not? Americans had put a man on the moon, after all, and in the American century, ingenuity and innovation were talismans that defined a nation. ..."

"Needless to say, Carter failed, although he did create a Department of Energy, pushed research into alternative energy sources and even fixed solar panels to the roof of the White House. But fast forward to 2010 and the US is as reliant on foreign oil as it ever was. Accounting for just 2% of known global reserves, America chews up 20% of global oil production. Oil remains the bedrock of US economic growth, providing 40% of America's \$US500 billion annual energy needs; renewable sources, including solar, about 7%. ..."

"While Obama has imposed a six-month moratorium on new deep-sea exploration in the gulf as a result of the Deepwater Horizon disaster, no one doubts that America's overwhelming thirst for oil will continue"

to drive the hunt offshore. ... The notion of peak oil and the increasing cost of retrieving oil from deeper and less accessible pockets within the earth's crust will be the prime drivers of the market, along with demand rising in tandem with the gathering economic recovery."

Ref: Simon Mann, SMH, 19/6/10

World Road Crash Statistics

"The Global Status Report released by WHO [World Health Organisation] this year, confirms that road traffic injuries are still a big global health and development program. Every year:

- 1.2 million people die in road crashes;
- 50 million more are injured;
- 21.5 deaths/100K in low income countries;
- 19.5 deaths/100K in middle income countries
- 10.3 deaths/100K in high income countries;
- 50% of those who die in traffic accidents are cyclists, pedestrians or motorcyclists."

Ref: World Health Organisation

www.infrastructurist.com/2010/03/11/how-cars-are-killing-us-around-the-world/

"Given the available statistics, I'm guessing that the average person reading this article has close to a 1 in 4000 chance of dying this year in a car crash, and a 1 in 50 chance of dying in a car crash over the course of their lifetime."

Ref: 'Design New Haven', Comments*, 11/3/10

"1 in 50 chance of dying in a car crash over the course of their lifetime. As a cyclist who doesn't drive, I have the same chance of being killed by 'a motorist' as he does of being killed by 'one of his own kind'. That is a risk that I am not willing to take. If motorists are killing one another, that's one thing. But for non-motorists to be killed by these car-people is not fair. True freedom/ equality/democracy means that you don't have to live in fear of being killed by other people's toys."

Ref: 'Qatzelok', Comments*, 11/3/10

"[Around] 37K deaths [in the US] in 2008 (excludes pedestrians) ... this is around twice the number of deaths from murders. Gun control activists should take transit to their next rally!"

Ref: 'Paanta', Comments*, 11/3/10

"Over the years, people in general and Americans in particular have decided to live with the risks of driving in order to enjoy the speed and convenience it affords. One of the reasons why most folks are a lot more afraid of air travel is that when a passenger plane crashes, it takes out people in 'case lots' and makes big headlines. Motor vehicle fatalities are rarely more than four or five per incident, and often just the driver 'buys the farm'. Furthermore, auto casualties tend to be younger and poorer, while airplane failures take out the more affluent and sometimes the more newsworthy."

Ref: Dob Davis, Comments*, 12/3/10

***Comments from The Infrastructurist, www.infrastructurist.com/2010/03/11/how-cars-are-killing-us-around-the-world/**

Better Car Design Could Save Lives

"Researchers have found more than two thirds of cars on the Australian market fail to meet international standards on pedestrian safety.

The Centre for Automotive Safety Research at Adelaide University tested 33 models and found just six met the standard. Daniel Searson from the Centre says there is no motivation for car makers to change the designs. He says making improvements would help save lives. 'Twenty-eight fatalities per year would be saved by the introduction of the standard, about 1,000 serious injuries about 1,000 minor injuries and about \$380 million in crash costs'."

Ref: ABC News, 29/3/10

And Also ...

"Large limousine-style cars and powerful sports sedans are being recommended to young drivers on a list of vehicles the [Victoria] state government says are the safest and cheapest they can buy."

Ref: Steve Colquhoun, The Age, 23/6/10

More on the Grand Prix

"We ran a poll asking if constituents supported the Australian Grand Prix in Albert Park. Of the 500 respondents, about 90% were against the Grand Prix and roughly 10% in favour. ... It is time that the Grand Prix found a new home, and that home is Avalon. Several weeks ago Linfox proposed construction of a purpose-built race track at Avalon Airport."

Ref: Michael Danby, MP (Federal Labor), Melbourne Ports News, Winter 2010

More on the Railway Station Awards

"The last NSW station to win the Sulman Prize was Martin Place in 1979/80 - this resulted in a demonstration by people in wheelchairs at the award ceremony pointing out that there are no lifts there! This eventually led to the current long drawn out Easy Access program."

Ref: Tony Bailey, Transit Australia, 22/6/10

And Also ...

"Blonde: Why are the power lines so low in the city?"

Friend: They're tram lines, silly!"

Ref: MX. 22/6/10

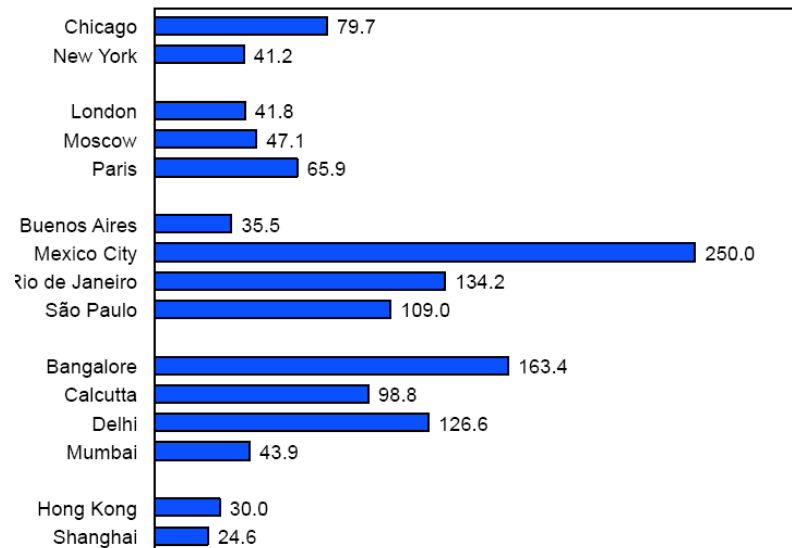
The Future of Megacities (Part 3)

"Traffic safety is an important factor in assessing the sustainability of a transportation system. Consequently, the number of road fatalities per million inhabitants by metropolitan area was examined. The highest fatality rate is in Mexico City, followed by several Indian and South American metropolitan areas. However, the rates vary substantially within the regions."

Ref: University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute, February 2010

See:

<http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/2027.42/65001/1/102514.pdf>



Number of road fatalities per million inhabitants (mostly for 2001)

The Curse of Cars (Part 2)

"It is no surprise that after more than 50 years of car-centric urban development in Sydney, it is hard to imagine living without a car. Every detail of our lives has been optimised for car use."

We keep expanding our city with low-density urban sprawl that is difficult to serve with bikes or trains. Shopping malls have huge car parks but hardly any way to enter by foot. Every street is used for car traffic or parking, with no space for bikes or buses to avoid the gridlock. Every office building has hundreds of car spaces and still there are hundreds more parking stations and on-street parking. The city is so choked by cars that the real users of the city (pedestrians) are squeezed onto tiny pavements and asked to wait 5 minutes at every intersection to cross the road. The Cityrail network has had less than 20km added to it since 1950! The bike network is incomplete and indirect. Wake up and smell the exhaust fumes people! There is nothing special about Europe. We keep telling ourselves that their cities are the right size, or the right density, or they are flatter or the weather is different or some other lame excuse. The only thing standing in our way is the car-centric system we have built. So let's start building the right system. We need great public transport (particularly heavy rail), urban consolidation and better facilities for bikes. To reflect the huge cost of providing roads and (usually free) parking for cars we need appropriately heavy charges (fuel tax, tolls, parking costs & congestion charges)."

Ref: 'TonyA', Comments, SMH, 19/2/10

"Whilst it's fair enough to focus on economics when arguing the merits of public transport and less car dependency, I'd love to see some more discussion on the delights of car-free urban environments. Some have commented on the bum deal that pedestrians have in this city. It's really unpleasant to walk in the city centre where it is totally choked up by vehicular traffic; waiting time at traffic lights is interminable; the footpaths are too narrow and too crowded; it's impossible to hold a conversation because of the noise; and the air stinks. We could at least get the ball rolling by banning cars in the centre of Sydney. The city should be for people – not cars."

Ref: 'Thomas', Comments, SMH, 19/2/10

"That is what Sydney really should aim for - George St needs to become a massive walkway from Central to Circular Quay. The city should be for the pedestrians not the cars not buses. ... Jan Gehl's idea has worked in many other cities and should be used to reclaim Sydney for the pedestrians not the cars."

Ref: 'Llewster', Comments, SMH, 19/2/10

"There are a number of reasons why we are in this mess and these need to be addressed to get us out of it. Motor vehicles are used in Sydney to establish a pecking order. Pedestrians are at the bottom and Hummers are the top. If you ride a bike you will soon work that the road rules only give you right of way over a 4WD if you get to the road space first. If the 4WD gets there first, it's his and you need to avoid him or suffer the consequences. Those who are top of the flock of road users aren't likely want to pay to lose their position. For them the fuel usage figures posted on new cars are useless and should be replaced by an official pecking order number on Sydney streets. Motor vehicles are also used to establish status in Sydney. A new BMW would be at the top and an old Hyundai at the bottom. If you want both status and pecking order you buy a large luxury 4WD. Another issue is anxiety amongst owners of high status vehicles otherwise know as BMW Separation Disorder. Folk need to be with their cars all the time and don't like leaving them too far away. Hence a BMW owner who parks in a disabled spot at a sports field is not necessarily lazy, he is just trying to keep his car near, preferably in sight of whatever he then does."

Ref: 'StuckinTraffic', Comments, SMH, 19/2/10

"Frequent and reliable public transport with competitive times will attract passengers out of cars. Initially, this will be mostly during peak hours. If you maintain frequent services after the peak hours, people will see that they can use public transport at other times."

Ref: 'EJ', Comments, SMH, 19/2/10

"The car has been both good and bad for society. So has heroin. But they are only good for us when used correctly and not abused."

Ref: John Holstein, Comments, SMH, 19/2/10

"The transport sector is one of the largest generators of greenhouse gas emissions in Australia, contributing 13.2% of net emissions in 2007 - an increase of 27% on the 1990 level. Road transport was the main source of transport emissions in 2007, contributing 87% of the total, of which passenger vehicles made up nearly two thirds. In March 2009, 92% of Australian households kept at least one registered motor vehicle, while the need for a double garage has also been on the rise. The proportion of households with two or more registered motor vehicles increased from 51% in 2006 to 56% in 2009. The Yearbook also shows that eight in ten people over the age of 18 used a private motor vehicle to get to and from work or study last year."

Ref: AAP, Herald Sun, 4/6/10

Tearing Down Motorways (Part 3)

"Arguably the US city where freeway removal has most improved urban life is San Francisco. The Embarcadero Freeway once stood elevated on the city's waterfront. Two levels of concrete divided downtown from the bay. Though there had been a public push to demolish it since it was constructed, only after it was damaged in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake did the efforts crystallize, and it was never rebuilt. In its place today: a waterfront boulevard with bike trails, parks, and public exhibitions."

{Continued in #162}

Ref: Yonah Freemark and Jebediah Reed, The Infrastructurist, 6/7/09

www.infrastructurist.com/2009/07/06/huh-4-cases-of-how-tearing-down-a-highway-can-relieve-traffic-jams-and-help-save-a-city/

"Recently, the Embarcadero in San Francisco was the site for Sunday Streets, the city's experiment in Ciclovía. Nobody misses the Embarcadero Freeway. The greatest enhancement in San Francisco in the past 20 years has been the recovery of the waterfront, from AT&T Park, to the Ferry Terminal, to Fisherman's Wharf, to Crissy Field. Tear down the freeways, create a more appealing city, and people will get there."

Ref: Paul Dorn, Comments, The Infrastructurist, 7/7/09

"I also live in San Francisco, and agree the destruction of the freeways was one of the best things to happen to the city in a long time. I have also seen lane reductions on busy corridors (Valencia, Alemany) and partial closures (17th at Market, Waller Street at Kezar). Congestion is no worse than before, and the pedestrian landscape is improved."

Ref: 'CB2', Comments, The Infrastructurist, 7/7/09



**Before and After Case 3:
San Francisco
Embarcadero Freeway**

"In addition to the West Side Highway, New York also experienced no increase in congestion when Fifth Avenue was closed through Washington Square Park (over the objections of Robert Moses, who wanted to widen the streets around the park to compensate)."

Ref: Alon Levy, Comments, The Infrastructurist, 6/7/09

Removing the Robert Moses Parkway

"In the year 2000, the Niagara Heritage Partnership called on the state to remove the 6.5-mile section of the Robert Moses Parkway between Niagara Falls, New York and Lewiston, New York, and to restore that portion of the Niagara Gorge's shore with native vegetation. They said that parts of one lane of the parkway, furthest from the river, could be left as a bicycle path and hiking path, to allow people to enjoy the restored land. ..."

"Beginning in September, 2001, the state implemented a pilot project that closed the two lanes of the parkway nearest to the gorge to traffic, so it can be used by bicyclists and hikers. The remaining two lane portion of the parkway was made two-way, and its speed limit was lowered from 55 to 45 miles per hour. In December, 2003, the state issued a report saying the pilot project was a success and should be made permanent. According to the report, accidents on this route had been reduced by 50% and emissions had been reduced by 16%."

{Continued in #162}

Ref: Preservation Institute, 2007 www.preservenet.com/freeways/FreewaysMoses.html



Heart and Soul of the City (Part 3)

"The demolition of a vast motorway through the centre of South Korea's capital and the restoration of a river and park in its place proves that mega-cities can be changed for the better."

"Critics say that it has been gentrification on a massive scale, that it has forced thousands of people away from the area and threatens the livelihoods and homes of people nearby. Others say the city is really only masking its problems. The water for the river is now pumped from deep below the city and collected from the nearby Han River. There have been accusations of profiteering, and the rich moving in to appropriate the views and the better quality environment. For Simon Evans, head of Creative Clusters, the Sheffield-based group that works for the regeneration of cities, it is a triumph. 'Mayor Lee and his team took a crumbling, filthy motorway, turned it back into a river, and reclaimed the area for pedestrians. New contemporary bridges and walkways were built, and the banks of the newly-revealed stream was animated with public artworks. There are now marsh-plants and ducks, running tracks, clean waterfalls where children can play, and a park replaces the old Clover-leaf Road intersection. There is a new museum, and an events programme that attracted upwards of 10 million visitors within three months of the project's completion. The Cheonggyecheon restoration is a perfect example of

joined-up regeneration and environmental progress. It asserts that intimacy and creativity is still possible in the mega-city'.

"Evans is strongly backed by most locals. 'Our life has been changed', says Inchon Yu, an actor and cultural adviser to the former mayor of Seoul, Lee Myung Bak. 'People feel the water and the wind. Life becomes slower. Many people are changed. Economic life has changed, too. The price of land nearby has risen. But it reminds people of their own hearts. It gives a new heart to the city - 30,000 people use it every weekend'. Last week, the verdict of ordinary Seoulians, asked at random what they thought of the development, was overwhelmingly positive. 'The city centre is so much cleaner', said Rhoda Chung, a young pharmaceutical worker. 'The shopkeepers were arguing against the restoration but now that they can see the difference they all like it'. Soo Chul Kwak, a retired driver, said: 'Before, you only heard the traffic, but now you can hear the water.' ...

"Braess's paradox, named after mathematician Dietrich Braess, gives the lie to governments and local authorities that argue that building more roads reduces congestion. According to Wikipedia, the online encyclopaedia, it works like this: 'For each point of a road network, let there be given the number of cars starting from it, and the destination of the cars. Under these conditions, one wishes to estimate the distribution of traffic flow. Whether one street is preferable to another depends not only on the quality of the road but also on the density of the flow. If every driver takes the path that looks most favourable to him, the resultant running times need not be minimal. Furthermore, it is indicated by an example that an extension of the road network may cause a redistribution of the traffic that results in longer individual running times'."

Ref: John Vidal, The Guardian, 1/11/06

"Through more than six centuries of settlement, the stream went from being a revered feature of the landscape to an open sewer to a buried, forgotten storm drain and now to a three-mile corridor of burbling waters, milling carp, strolling picnickers and relative quiet in one of the powerhouse metropolises of Asia. The Seoul stream project was integrated with a parallel effort to take away highways and improve public transportation."

Ref: Comments, The Infrastructurist, 7/7/09

Transforming Portland, Oregon (Part 2)

"In 1968, the [US] State Highway Dept proposed widening Harbour Drive, and the city of Portland acquired the Journal Building to provide more land for the right of way. By this time, many people in Portland had other ideas about how cities should be designed. They were ready to revive the ideas that were first introduced in a 1903 study by Frederick Law Olmsted that called for parks within the city and greenways along the riverbanks. In 1968, the city's Downtown Waterfront Plan recommended eliminating Harbour Drive and developing the land as a park to beautify the downtown riverfront. In July, 1969, Allison and Robert Belcher and James Howell formed the group Riverfront for People, to fight against the expected widening of Harbour Drive. In addition to campaigning through the press and petition drives, the group held picnics on the site, next to the Journal Building, to attract public attention to the issue. In August, 1969, the Portland City Club issued the report 'Journal Building Site Use and Riverfront Development', which recommended that the riverfront should be developed to provide 'varied public use of land; aesthetically pleasing environment; and easy and attractive pedestrian access'."

{Continued in #162}

Ref: Preservation Institute, 2007

www.preservenet.com/freeways/FreewaysHarbor.html

Sydney Hovercraft Proposal

"If Ian Brookfield has his way, we'll all be travelling on hovercraft from Manly to the city within six months. ... His initial fleet would include four hovercraft doing the cross-harbour run – and another two operating on the Parramatta River – and would swell to 'over 50' by the end of next year. ... 'There will be a hovercraft arriving and departing from Manly every five minutes, 21- hours-a-day, 365-days-a-year. That equates to 336-trips-a-day from Manly to Circular Quay and return', he wrote. 'The estimated time for the run will be nine to 10 minutes'. Under his grand plan, the vessels would carry 24 passengers, have state-of-the-art navigation systems and be able to handle swells of up to 1.8m as they crossed the heads. He also said the vessels would be as quiet 'as an air conditioner. No one will hear them. They

are a maximum of 72 decibels', Mr Brookfield said. A spokesman for NSW Transport & Infrastructure said Mr Brookfield had approached the government with his proposal, but it had not yet been approved."

Ref: Jesse Phillips, Manly Daily, 3/5/10

"As one would appreciate, the infrastructure to operate these vessels is quite expensive, landing platforms and dedicated gangways at each location are one such example. For the curious, these hovercraft cost \$1.6 million each and operate on as little as 30 litres per hour of diesel. Six hovercraft operating over 500 trips/day x 24 passenger equates to a very profitable business. Break even point: seven passenger per trip average. For those commuting daily, the offering of transport every five minutes has to be attractive. ... Fare prices [for Manly and Parramatta] are: Single adult \$9.50 ..."

Ref: Ian Brookfield, Manly Daily, 19/6/10

"Over in Europe they use much bigger hovercraft without any problems. Also they don't disturb sea life and don't make waves. Once that is going you might want to consider one going from let's say Careel Bay to the City - the big ones are ocean going. Thousands of people on the Peninsula are sick of being stuck around the Spit Bridge and just waiting for something like that. We need people with a vision."

Ref: 'Gunter', Comments, Manly Daily, 4/5/10

"Great idea! Technological developments for this type of craft have gone a long way. I sincerely hope that that Ian has plenty of shoe leather for the run-around to the myriad of buck-passing government departments that never make decisions ... Good luck."

Ref: 'John', Comments, Manly Daily, 4/5/10

"Actually, hovercraft are being used commercially to this day quite successfully all over the world.

The only downfall may be the price of tickets to make up for the expenses already incurred, but these will eventually even out over time. Why make a stab at what is a great idea and sorely needed for our already large population, which is only going to continue growing? I would much rather travel by hovercraft any day, and so would lots of commuters. It's about time someone put their hand up with a solution of any size, because the government sure as hell wasn't going to bother."

Ref: 'Banny', Comments, Manly Daily, 4/5/10

"Manly to Darling Harbour or Pyrmont would be appreciate and used by many. These areas have many more people working in them than five years ago and the public transport hasn't kept up."

Ref: 'Niki', Comments, Manly Daily, 4/5/10

"AirLift Hovercraft build and export world class commercial hovercrafts. The only other company building successful hovercrafts in our size range is based in the UK so we are very proud to be supplying an Australian designed and built product to an Australian visionary such as Ian Brookfield. Broome Hovercraft is a very successful tour operator who has been operating our designs since 1987. During the last 3 years we have been working with Broome Hovercraft on the Pioneer Mk3 design, which supersedes our earlier models. Broome Hovercraft has confirmed orders for three units and options on several further units. An additional unit is also near completion for the South Korea Coast Guard. This design is based upon a long line of earlier successful models and is the same design that Ian Brookfield has ordered. With the last 3 years spent in product development we are now moving into production phase and expect to deliver 5-6 of these before the end of the year."

Ref: Ross McLeod, Manly Daily, 5/5/10



AirLift Hovercraft