

## Federal Budget

*"The large investment in public transport in the Federal Budget offers a practical way in which ordinary householders can contribute economically to the reduction in their emissions. People are eager to contribute to a global reduction, within their own limited financial capabilities, but are restricted to such things as recycling and electricity saving in the home. One of the biggest contributions people can make is to change the commuting habits of a lifetime and use low-emission transport, such as buses, trains and trams. Up to now the use of public transport has been difficult, especially in Adelaide where the infrastructure has been neglected for many years."*

**Ref: Editorial, The Advertiser, 13/5/09**

*"Beyond the regional rail express, there is little for transport in Victoria. ... The 40-plus kilometres of new track, from west Werribee via a new station at Tarneit to South Kensington and then in to new platforms at Southern Cross Station, will disentangle the regional and metropolitan lines. As a result, V/Line trains will no longer get stuck behind suburban services, and life will be better for residents of the expanding western suburbs as well as passengers on the Bendigo, Geelong and Ballarat lines."*

**Ref: Paul Austin, The Age, 14/5/09**

*"Metlink chief executive Bernie Carolan welcomed the Federal Government's support for Victorian public transport. 'After many years of contributing to road funding, it is good to see that the Federal Government has had the foresight to invest in Victoria's public transport network', he said."* **Ref: Jason Dowling and Geoff Strong, The Age, 14/5/09**

## Trams Popular

*"Surging tram patronage has forced the State Government to bring forward the purchase of dozens of new trams. Growth in tram use over the past 12 months was three times the rate recorded between 2001 and 2008. ... By July there are expected to have been 174 million passengers on Melbourne's trams for the previous 12 months - a 9.9 per cent jump in patronage growth."*

**Ref: Jason Dowling, The Age, 14/5/09**



## Street Parking & Traders (Part 1)

*"Proposals to install bike lanes on major streets are often met with opposition from merchants who fear that the reallocation of road space from on - street parking to on - street bike lanes would hurt business. .... To encourage more Canadians to use bicycles for utilitarian trips more often, it is essential that the implementation of bike lanes on major streets be accelerated. The Bloor - Danforth corridor is a particularly attractive option for a citywide east - west bike lane in Toronto because it is one of the only long, straight, relatively flat routes that connects the city from end to end; there are no streetcar tracks; and it has one of the highest incidences of bicycle collisions in the city."*

*"This report is about the development and testing of new analytic tools to determine the public acceptability and economic impact of reallocating road space. The study - conducted in July of 2008 - surveyed the opinions and preferences of 61 merchants and 538 patrons on Bloor Street and analysed parking usage data in the area."*

*"Among the study's findings:*

- *Only 10% of patrons drive to the Bloor Annex neighbourhood;*
- *Even during peak periods no more than about 80% of paid parking spaces are paid for;*
- *Patrons arriving by foot and bicycle visit the most often and spend the most money per month;*
- *There are more merchants who believe that a bike lane or widened sidewalk would increase business than merchants who think those changes would reduce business;*
- *Patrons would prefer a bike lane to widened sidewalks at a ratio of almost four to one; and*
- *The reduction in on - street parking supply from a bike lane or widened sidewalk could be accommodated in the area's off - street municipal parking lots."*

*"The spending habits of cyclists and pedestrians, their relatively high travel mode share, and the minimal impact on parking all demonstrate that merchants in this area are unlikely to be negatively affected by reallocating on - street parking space to a bike lane. On the contrary, this change will likely increase commercial activity."*

*"It is recommended that this type of study be replicated on other commercial streets where there is concern about reducing parking to accommodate wider sidewalks or bicycle lanes."*

**Ref: Fred Sztabinski, Bike Lanes, On-Street Parking and Business, Feb 2009** Full report: [www.cleanairpartnership.org/pdf/bike-lanes-parking.pdf](http://www.cleanairpartnership.org/pdf/bike-lanes-parking.pdf)

### Light Rail Proposal for Perth

*“Perth could have a light rail system servicing the city’s technological heart within two years if a plan being pushed by transport sustainability expert Peter Newman gets the nod. Professor Newman is working on a strategy with the Public Transport Authority on Perth’s transport options for the next 20 years. As part of that plan he is arguing for a new focus on high speed, efficient public transport options including light rail. ...*

*“Professor Newman, from Curtin University’s Sustainable Policy Institute, said the light rail plan would see modern-style trams running from Curtin University to the University of Western Australia, following a route that went via Victoria Park, the Causeway and city centre, in what he described as the city’s ‘knowledge arc’. The trip to the city from Curtin would take about 10 minutes. The light rail would be fast and carry up to 160 people each service. It could follow tracks that would be placed along existing roads and could be laid in sections at weekends. ... He said the available federal funds could be used to build a light rail system in Perth freeing up valuable land currently used for parking at Curtin and UWA and in the city centre. He said parking was a growing problem at the universities and the city centre and alternative transport options were needed. ‘Getting a light rail system up and running is a relatively simple and quick option’, Professor Newman said.” Ref: Jane Hammond, The West Australian, 23/3/09*

### Coastal Shipping in New Zealand

*“The [New Zealand] Government plans to cut almost all funding for coastal shipping from 2009, the Green Party has discovered. ‘Sea freight is a key part of our transport infrastructure’, said Green Maritime Transport spokesperson Sue Bradford today. ‘National plans to throw this all away by removing funding for rail and sea freight development’, Ms Bradford said in response to the Government’s revised Policy Statement (GPS) released this week. ‘A huge amount of work went in over the last few years in getting the Roadways to Waterways and Sea Change strategies under way. The gains are now all at risk’. The Sea Change strategy aimed to transform coastal shipping in New Zealand and double its share of the freight task to 30% by 2040, taking trucks off New Zealand’s roads and making the country’s freight infrastructure more sustainable. ‘... Sea freight has the potential to make a huge contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and our reliance on foreign oil’. Coastal shipping is the most energy efficient way to move freight around the country,*

*producing only 14 grams of CO2 per tonne-kilometre compared with road at 92–123 grams of CO2 per tonne-kilometre.” Ref: Sue Bradford, Media Release, Green Party of NZ, 25/3/09*

### Lethal Air

*“The World Health Organization estimates that about two million people die prematurely every year as a result of air pollution, while many more suffer from breathing ailments, heart disease, lung infections and even cancer. Fine particles or microscopic dust from coal or wood fires and unfiltered diesel engines are rated as one of the most lethal forms of air pollution caused by industry, transport, household heating, cooking and ageing coal or oil-fired power stations.” Ref: AFP, The Australian, 22/3/09*

*“Deaths from heat stress among the elderly are likely to double in Sydney by the middle of the century because of climate change, and the number of people hospitalised because of air pollution is likely to treble, scientists from the CSIRO and the Bureau of Meteorology are predicting. ... Dr Cope’s team looked at what would happen in 2060 in Sydney where climate change is likely to increase the number of days when the temperature will rise above 30 degrees. In western Sydney the very hot days are likely to increase from 40 days to 45 to 50, and closer to the city the hot days are likely to rise from about 24 days to 30 days. This would increase fire risk and air pollution, said Dr Cope. At higher temperatures the polluting compounds from sources such as motor vehicles or bushfires react and generate ozone. High smog levels can trigger problems such as asthma, bronchitis and emphysema. The study looked in detail at the health effects of increased air pollution. Photochemical smog, largely from vehicle emissions, leads to about 250 people a year presenting at hospitals. Dr Cope said this was likely to treble with climate change to about 750 people.” Ref: Marian Wilkinson, SMH, 25/3/09*

*“NSW will not meet some of its air pollution targets and western Sydney is often bathed in a photochemical smog because the state lacks public transport, draft cabinet documents show. Cleaner fuels had helped to improve air quality in the past decade, but the rising use of vehicles powered by fossil fuels remained the biggest source of air pollution, the leaked Action for Air 2009 report says. Sydney also exceeds national standards for ozone, a photochemical air pollutant that aggravates respiratory illnesses such as asthma, it says.” Ref: Ben Cubby & Linton Besser, Sydney Morning Herald (SMH), 25/3/09*

## US Transit & Ricky Deals (Part 1)

*"GWEN IFILL: "Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke today singled out insurance giant AIG as one of many companies that took big risks with devastating consequences. It turns out that public transportation agencies also made deals with companies like AIG, and those are now coming home to roost. ..."*

*"RICK KARR: Public transit systems across the country are facing a crisis: mounting budget deficits. More than 60 transit agencies have proposed fare hikes, service cuts, or both. And they've been begging lawmakers for more subsidies. But there's another looming fiscal crisis in public transit that could make things even worse: a series of complex financial deals that transit authorities nationwide made with banks in order to stretch their budgets. Now those deals could end up costing systems nationwide billions of dollars. Carol Kissal of Washington, D.C.'s, Metro says the deals could hit her agency hard."*

*"CAROL KISSAL, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority: I would have to pay \$330 million of liquidated damages, which would wipe out my capital budget. So this would mean, you know, no maintenance on track, delay, cuts in service. Repairs would go to the wayside."*

*"RICK KARR: The deals are known as sale-leaseback agreements, and they're really tax shelters. When a transit agency spends \$4 million to buy a new subway car, it can't do what a for-profit business would, which is, as the car ages, write wear-and-tear off its taxes, because it doesn't pay any taxes. But a bank can write off that wear-and-tear. So, according to Samuel Staley, who advocates market-based transit solutions at the Reason Foundation, the idea was for the transit agency to sell the car to the bank."*

*"SAMUEL STALEY, transit economist, Reason Foundation: I can depreciate the value, because these trains wear out. So if you can use that depreciation to reduce your tax liability, it actually can work out to be a pretty decent deal."*

*"RICK KARR: The bank got its tax break while the transit agency got a windfall of about \$250,000 from the sale that it could, for example, use to pay for maintenance. The agency would deposit the right of what it got from the sale into an interest-bearing account, then use that interest to lease the car back from the bank, a classic win-win, at least on paper. Sale-leaseback seemed like such good deals that dozens of agencies got involved: Washington,*

*New York City, New Jersey, St. Louis, Houston, Los Angeles and 25 others. They sold banks billions of dollars' worth of equipment and facilities in an effort to stretch tight transit budgets."*

*"CAROL KISSAL: Most of these transit entities have a very limited amount of capital investment to use for repairs for their buses, to buy rolling stock, rail cars, to make infrastructure improvements. And as a result, these were ways to actually capture some capital to make those investments."*

*"RICK KARR: Banks and transit agencies weren't the only parties to the sale-leaseback deals. They also involved insurance giants, including AIG."*

*"SAMUEL STALEY: The banks weren't going to enter into these lease agreements with the transit agencies unless they had some assurance that, if something would happen in the contract, that they would be covered financially. So the insurance agency - in this case, AIG - they said, OK, we're going to be there to get you back if for some reason a transit agency defaults."*

*"RICK KARR: The contract specified that all AIG had to do, basically, was remain solvent. It didn't. And that's when the trouble started for transit agencies like Washington, D.C.'s, Metro. The problem is that, when AIG went bust, its credit rating got downgraded. And that meant that Metro rail was technically in default on its sale-leaseback agreements. Under one of the contracts it had, that meant that Metrorail was liable for a penalty payment of \$43 million."*

*"CAROL KISSAL: When the entity was downgraded, actually, that's what triggered the technical default."*

*"RICK KARR: So it doesn't mean that Metro couldn't make the payments. It just means that you were in violation of the fine print of the contract?"*

*"CAROL KISSAL: That's exactly right. I mean, Metro has always made their payment obligations. The lease payments are made. There has never been a default on a payment."*

*{To be continued in #106}*

**Ref: NewsHour (with Jim Lehrer), SBS TV, 10/3/09** See the full transcript at:

[www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/business/ian-june09/blueprint\\_03-10.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/business/ian-june09/blueprint_03-10.html)

## And Also ...

*"In 2007 in the U.S. there were 599,766 highway bridges of which 72,520 were structurally deficient and a further 79,804 were functionally obsolete."*

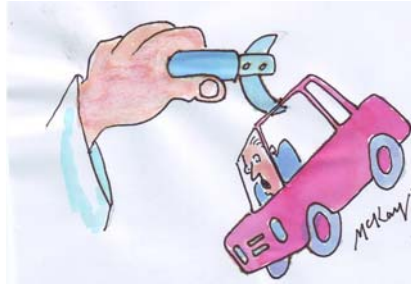
**Ref: Pocket Guide to Transport 2009**

[www.bts.gov/publications/pocket\\_guide\\_to\\_transportation/2009/pdf/entire.pdf](http://www.bts.gov/publications/pocket_guide_to_transportation/2009/pdf/entire.pdf)

## Drowning in Traffic

*"Melbourne - a world-class city with a rich cultural diversity, fantastic architecture and a dynamic mosaic of communities - is drowning in traffic because of its love affair with the car. It is a love affair fuelled by over-generous budgets and the space provided for roads and illustrates a nervousness Melbourne has about getting to grips with its public transport system and making sure it is as good as Vienna's [or] Frankfurt's ..."*

*"This combination of boldness in catering for cars and shyness with public transport, walking and cycling could propel Melbourne down the list of the world's most liveable cities and cancel out its multiple advantages. It will also add to the burdens of poor health, especially through low levels of physical activity, obesity and early onset diabetes. The time is right to make sure that Melbourne's budgets and policy priorities contain a clear map of how the city can celebrate the virtues of walking, cycling and public transport, reduce car trips and reward its residents with cleaner air, less noise, lower greenhouse gas emissions, fewer deaths and injuries and a calmer, more child-friendly and more economically successful city."*



**Removing motorists from cars - Strategy #08: Divine Intervention**

*"Getting people out of cars with their enthusiastic support is not difficult but it requires political boldness, a clear, health-related message and an unwavering commitment to quality public transport, walking and cycling. Reducing car dependency also has huge political and security implications. Given the importance of climate change and the upcoming battle for declining oil supplies, it would be a huge mistake to carry on with a car-based pattern of suburban expansion, road building and poor quality penetration of public transport to distant suburbs. Reducing oil dependency is the smart thing to do unless Australians want to compete with China for increasingly scarce supplies and be dependent on politically unstable regimes in the Middle East. We should all ask why Sweden has adopted a policy to be oil-free by 2020, and reflect on the logic. It is all about protecting Swedish citizens from future shocks related to climate change, peak oil and price hikes and creating a peaceful and secure society that is truly resilient. There are a few basic policies that Melbourne must implement. The city desperately needs the 1000 kilometres of high-quality cycle routes that the people of Vienna enjoy, and the*

*integrated public transport of almost every German and Dutch city. Every bus, tram and train has to play its part in creating thousands of reliable, secure and pleasant journeys with no barriers in moving from one to another. Integration is not just a trendy word used by transport planners; it is a completely new way of life and works very well in persuading people to use public transport instead of their car."*

*"Melbourne also needs a general system-wide 30km/h speed limit on every residential street (like Graz in Austria) because this sends a clear signal that walking and cycling is safe and attractive. Higher levels of walking and cycling are crucial for health and fitness and we ignore the legitimate fears of potential users at our peril. Every institution, business, council and state government department can help in this transformation to an accessible, high-quality lifestyle for Melbourne's residents. Every employer in Melbourne with more than 100 staff should be encouraged to take part in what is known as a 'workplace travel plan'. These plans are detailed interventions to give staff financial incentives and help to use the car less and to practise 'travel surfing' - for example, use a car two days a week, a bike once and work from home a day*

*if possible. ... Travel plans can reduce car trips by 15-20 per cent and make a huge difference to congestion, pollution and stress. The same can be done at schools. There should be a presumption that only in special circumstances should a child be driven to school. This will stop another 20 per cent of car trips on school days. Large trucks could stay out of city streets and shopping malls and unload their goods at an edge-of-city logistics centre for disbursement by environmentally friendly smaller vehicles. Cutting the number of car trips makes it possible for families to reduce the number of cars they own: each car given up saves up to \$10,000. Cities with fewer cars are cheaper to run and have more green space, trees and community life. An environment with less pollution and less noise feels good, makes people happier and reduces mental illness. Basle in Switzerland is one of the most successful cities in the world yet just 17 per cent of its trips every day are carried out by car. Melbourne hits 75 per cent. We need to move on from the love affair with the car and have a love affair with a healthy, thriving city where the car is only one choice of many. The age of the car as the default option is over."*

**Ref: John Whitelegg, The Age, 28/12/08**