

Victorian Toorak Tractors

"Ministers, MPs and bureaucrats are thumbing their noses at the environment by driving gas guzzling cars. The Ford Territory - a six-cylinder 'Toorak tractor' - is the most popular car among MPs and Brumby Government executives. The wagon was the vehicle of choice of 37 MPs, including Premier John Brumby, Opposition leader Ted Baillieu and Deputy Premier Rob Hulls. It was also the favoured mode of transport for senior bureaucrats, with 170 in the Government's executive fleet. But green-powered Toyota Prius hybrids were far less popular."

Ref: Peter Rolfe, Herald-Sun, 21/6/09

F1 Trough

"Formula One Teams Association teams will sign up for the Melbourne 2010 race. The Brumby Government will use public funds to pay Ecclestone's \$40 million-\$50 million fee, and the race in Albert Park reserve will be run at a loss of \$55 million-\$60 million. Ecclestone and FOTA will continue to fall out over their share of the spoils, and Victoria will maintain its global position as a centre for financial, economic and ecological insanity."

Ref: Peter Goad, The Age, 23/6/09

Safer New Cars

"All new models of cars, passenger vans and off-road vehicles sold in Australia will soon be fitted with Electronic Stability Control (ESC), technology with the potential to reduce a motorist's chances of being involved in a fatal accident by 25%. I have now signed into law new regulations requiring this life saving technology to be fitted to all new models of passenger vehicles from November 2011 and all models from November 2013. ESC is a computer-based system that helps drivers maintain control of their vehicles, particularly in adverse conditions such as wet weather. It continuously monitors a vehicle's speed, steering wheel angle, direction of travel and cornering acceleration, automatically applying individual brakes if there is a risk of skidding or overturning." **Ref: Anthony Albanese, Federal Transport Minister, Media Release 23/6/09**

Feedback on New Laws for Cyclists

"Does this now give the right for pedestrians to walk in front on me without looking? I have complained to local Police sergeant re car owners getting out of the car without looking. His reply was, 'that's your problem being green'. It would be interesting who he'd fine first under new rules!" **Ref: Paul Judd, 30/6/09**

Tasmanian Vehicle Policy

"Treasurer Michael Aird has bluntly stated it is not the [Tasmanian] State Government's responsibility to save the Australian car industry. ... There have been calls for the Government's policy on greenhouse-friendly cars to be adjusted to ensure homemade cars such as Holdens and Fords don't miss out. Many of the Australian vehicles fall short of selection for the Tasmanian Government car fleet because they do not meet the strict 5.5-star rating set by the state last year. ... The challenge is now for the Australian manufacturers to reach that standard'."

Ref: Damien Brown, The Mercury, 16/4/09

NSW Ethanol Target

"Not one fuel company had met the NSW Government's mandatory target of 2 per cent of all petrol being ethanol-blended by the end of last year, new figures reveal. The news throws into doubt any hope of the Premier, Nathan Rees, reaching his target of 6 per cent of fuel being blended with ethanol by 2010. ... Yet the Government is not penalising or naming and shaming any of the companies"

Ref: Andrew Clennell, SMH, 23/3/09

Tequila Biofuel

"Agave tequilana, used to make the potent spirit, is one of the most water-efficient plants in the world and has the potential to create ethanol, Central Queensland University's Professor Nanjappa Ashwath said. [He] has agreed to help tequila researchers ... in their plan to establish field trials to assess the succulent plant's potential to serve as an alternative raw material for ethanol production units located around sugar mills. Farmers near Childers are growing the agave for the trials. ... Unlike other sources of ethanol, such as corn, agave would not deplete existing food production or push up world food prices."

Ref: AAP, SMH, 25/4/09

Bogus Fuel Saving Devices

"Bogus fuel-saving devices claiming to save motorists up to 20 per cent on petrol costs have been grounded by the State Government, following a six-month investigation. Four products claiming to contain fuel-saving additives or catalysts, and costing anywhere from \$89 to \$310 apiece, have been removed from the market. Magnoflow, Prozone, Mpg-Caps and the FuelMax/Super FuelMax have all been withdrawn after their manufacturers failed to provide the Office of Fair Trading with credible evidence to substantiate the products' claims or how the devices comply with the Australian Standard."

Ref: Kelly Burke, Canberra Times, 21/4/09

Walk Score

Walk Score in the US helps “you find a walkable place to live by calculating a Walk Score for any address.” ... “The cities at the top of the Walk Score rankings have density, mixed use, transit, short blocks—and almost everything else on our walkability checklist. Most importantly, these cities have lots of destinations near each address, which is the strongest indicator of whether people walk. The top three cities are: #1 San Francisco, #2 New York, #3 Boston.” At the bottom of the list are: #38 Charlotte; #39 Nashville & #40 Jacksonville where “It’s difficult to get by without a car (or even walk to a nearby restaurant) in these sprawling cities. More time in the car means more money at the pump, less exercise, and more pollution.”

Ref: **Walk Score** www.walkscore.com/rankings/

Walkable Neighbourhoods

“Compact, walkable communities - the opposite of poorly planned sprawl - are the solution to some of our biggest shared challenges, from childhood obesity to social isolation, from crash deaths to disappearing farmland, from the high price of gas to the architectural blight of strip development. They’re even one of our most powerful weapons against climate change - they conserve fossil fuels like nobody’s business. (It takes effort to burn gasoline when everything is so close to your front door.) But the main reason to love walkable neighborhoods is their human energy: they’re fun, lively, memorable... not boring. They’re the kinds of places where you might bump into a long-lost friend; stumble across creative inspiration, whether for a song or a new business; or meet the love of your life. (That’s why they’re becoming among the most sought-after addresses around.)”

Ref: **Alan Durning, Sightline Institute**

www.walkscore.com/rankings/walkable-neighborhood-benefits.shtml

Walking Initiative in Victoria

If you are interested in walking for transport and making neighbourhoods better for walking, the *Victoria Walks* website has an extensive array of resources and tools to assist people to work together to make their neighbourhoods better for walking (both socially and physically). Your neighbourhood is at your feet: step out and explore. Make your streets safe, attractive and fun. You never know who you might meet in walk-friendly streets!

See www.victoriawalks.org.au

See *Renew Magazine*, Issue 108, July 2009, for an article on high speed rail.

Metlink Melbourne Surveys

“Metlink undertakes and commissions surveys and analyses industry databases to develop insights into passenger attitudes and behaviours. ...

“The surveys confirmed that personal security is most important to passengers. Train and tram users value emergency alarm buttons, video monitoring and a reliable and frequent service. Bus users value up-to-date timetable information at stops and service reliability.

“The importance of adequate vehicle lighting and visible stops and stations was rated highly by all users. While train and tram users were most impressed with the availability of timetable information on the Metlink and Yarra Trams websites, bus users were impressed by the removal of litter from the buses and the driver’s helpful attitude. Train and bus users also considered stations and stops close to home to be one of the best aspects of the service. Tram passengers gave operating hours a high score for suiting their needs. Key reasons for dissatisfaction were consistent across modes and include crowding and punctuality. ...

“Key findings of the study include:

- Melbourne is experiencing the greatest shift of people to public transport than any other Australian city.
- In the past 12 months, 30 per cent of people in Melbourne have decreased their car use. Two out of three of these people moved to public transport and half of these people switched to train travel.
- Melburnians who reduced their car usage in favour of public transport felt positive about it and saw it as a permanent change.
- One-third agreed they could see themselves moving away from the car as their main mode of transport.
- Melburnians are nearly twice as likely to support investment in public transport infrastructure over roads.
- Over half of the people surveyed who live more than 11 kilometres from the city cite petrol costs as the main reason for decreasing their car use.
- People who live within 10km of the CBD were four times more likely to cite environmental issues as a reason for decreasing their car use.”

Ref: **Metlink Annual Review 2008, 06/09**

And Also ...

The tram driver clearly announced the tram stop: ‘Sak Hill Darit’. I thought I was on the wrong route until I realised that we had reached St Kilda Road.

> **Cartoonist Andrew McKay is presently unwell.**

Making the Bay Connect (Part 2)

Like the 2000 Report, the September 2008 Report has some serious flaws. Perhaps by direction – or otherwise – it focuses almost entirely on the Geelong to Melbourne route (with potential stops at Portarlington and Werribee South). Its key findings include:

“It is unlikely that a high speed commuter ferry service between Geelong and Melbourne is a viable alternative to land based transportation modes. There may well exist a niche market of people who have a preference for the use of this form of transport. However the provision of the service will not be comparable to the alternatives such as train and motor car for the general commuter market and will therefore struggle to win market share.

“It should be noted that the route Portarlington to Melbourne displays a potentially different outcome scenario to the route Geelong to Melbourne. The Portarlington to Melbourne (Station Pier) ferry trip will provide a significant travel time saving compared to the same trip via public transport or private vehicle. This is due to the fact that potential commuters from Portarlington have a significantly longer trip to Melbourne than a commuter from Geelong and therefore this route needs to be viewed differently from a market perspective.”

Review and Analysis of Proposed Commuter Ferry Services on Port Phillip Sept 2008

Whatever the intention of commissioning this report the result is clear:

“A spokesperson for Roads and Transport Minister Lynne Kosky said the ferry was ‘not a priority at this stage’. ... ‘A network of ferries in Port Phillip Bay is unlikely to be viable’, the spokesperson said.”

Jessica Benton, Geelong Independent 13/2/09

Note that the Minister’s spokesperson talks about a ‘network of ferries’ but interestingly the September report doesn’t investigate a ‘network’ but rather the one corridor: Geelong to Port Melbourne.

The questions relating to the (2008 Report) Executive Summary are:

- Why focus on this route which is already connected by a relatively good train service?
- Why focus only on journeys to work? What about:
 - Cross-bay travel and other destinations around the bay?

- Tourist and incidental travel?
- Connection to Avalon Airport?
- Movement of light freight?
- Greenhouse Gas implications?
- Peak Oil implications?

Under Technical Viability the report states: “a service is questionable due to - travel time significantly in excess of other competing modes of transport.”¹ However if you consider a journey from say Frankston to Geelong, Altona to Brighton, or Portarlington to Portsea then you could reach quite a different conclusion.

Also under Technical Viability the report states: “Reliability of the service cannot be guaranteed and that the service is significantly more susceptible to weather conditions than existing modes of transport.” Would it not be infinitely better to have a service running 360 days of the year than no service at all?

Under Commercial Viability the report points out that by their estimation a ferry service could not operate without subsidy. If this is a valid argument then we should close down many of our public service organisations.

Under Market Acceptance the report states that “a ferry service does not have the ability to match the service levels currently provided for commuters” however the popularity of ferry services around the world disproves this.

Under Service Effectiveness the report argues that a ferry service would do little to relieve congestion on for example, the Westgate Bridge. This is probably true but is more of an indictment of our planning policies than a reason for not establishing a ferry service. Incidentally the 300 cars that they claim could be removed per AM peak represents around one and a half kilometres of lane space and of course 3090 car parking spaces.

{to be continued in #113}

Extract from *Making the Bay Connect*, my yet-to-be released study on ferries for Port Phillip.



¹ Executive Summary, Review and Analysis of Proposed Commuter Ferry Services on Port Phillip, Sept 2008

Sir Robert Risson (Part 4)

"The continued operation of trams was called into question when plans were first drawn for the St Kilda Junction Project and associated road improvements. Initial plans included the retention of the East Brighton and Malvern Burke Rd trams in narrow Wellington Street. The M&MTB sought successfully for trams to utilise the centre median strip in the divided roadway. The new tramline opened in late 1968 and it proved to be more than a symbolic relocation. At last Melbourne had a glimpse of what was becoming commonplace in Europe. In 1969 the Metropolitan Transport Committee released the 1985 Transport Plan for Melbourne. The report recommended the continued operation of trams and that further studies be undertaken into proposed tram or bus extensions.

"Sir Robert received his knighthood in the Queen's Birthday honours of 1970 and retired as Chairman of the M&MTB on 30 June the same year. He then served with distinction as Executive Director of the Metropolitan Transportation Committee until 1978. By the early 1970s public attitudes towards urban passenger transport were gradually changing. The Hon Vernon Wilcox, State Minister for Transport from 1967 to 1973 was quoted in 1971 as expressing the view: 'I had my doubts about the future of trams a few years ago, but no longer. They are proving their worth in moving people in the mass...' Known as Bob Risson to his closest friends, Sir Robert gradually retired from public life. Sir Robert Risson, CB, CBE, DSO, OStJ, ED passed away on 19 July 1992, after an outstanding transport and military career. ...

"Speaking at a seminar in October 1974 to discuss the Implementation of Melbourne's Transportation Plan, Dr Derek Scrafton paid tribute to Sir Robert: 'I would like to take this opportunity to publicly express my admiration over the years for the professional strength of the Executive Director of the Metropolitan Transportation Committee, who stood by his faith in trams, along with a few others in a handful of cities in North America and mainland Europe when other cities in Australia followed the British example and got rid of trams as fast as possible. The world has now vindicated Sir Robert with talk of new interurban light rapid transit, supertrams or whatever you care to call them.'

"Although sections of the media portrayed Sir Robert as a 'tram man', he was nevertheless a



highly respected transport professional whose influence extended beyond tramways, especially in his role as Executive Director of the MTC.

"Whilst Melbourne continues to operate the largest tramway system in the English speaking world and globally numerous light rail schemes have come to fruition, the recent emergence of segregated busways and transitways as alternatives to light rail in urban areas has and will ensure that the modal debate is likely to continue.

"Regardless of individual opinion or preferred mode of transport Sir Robert's impact on all of us remains. The continued operation of Melbourne's trams has drawn widespread support from those committed to tramways and light rail. The continued operation of the network is sometimes questioned on economic grounds and challenged by those who support other forms of public transport.

"Trams are probably the 'most socially acceptable form of public transport' in Melbourne, although there has been an overemphasis in recent years on heritage aspects of the tramway system. ... The pollution issue and green image of trams is open to debate, especially using a brown coal fuel source and given technological improvements associated with modern buses (CNG, Ethanol).

The current tramway network [though] substantial is still a conventional or traditional tramway system. There is, I believe, considerable scope for upgrading the network (in management terms, what we might call to achieve its full potential).

"In summary, from an increasingly global viewpoint, there will be a growth in busways, transitways and other forms of transport alongside light rail. Sir Robert's legacy (to return to the title of today's lecture) is that we can still debate these issues in Melbourne. Sir Robert's considerable influence has led to the continued operation of a unique multi-modal public transport system in Melbourne, of which the trams, now seen by many as an icon (a far cry from their image throughout the 1950s and 1960s), are an integral part.

"The true transport professional will seek the optimal solution and select the appropriate mode (in the case of public transport) and design a balanced transport network, to meet the needs of public and private transport in line with community needs, whilst maintaining a satisfactory level of equity."

Ref: Graeme Turnbull, RMIT Sir Robert Risson Memorial Lecture 2001, 20/4/01

For the full article (including footnotes) see:
www.hawthorntramdepot.org.au/papers/risson.htm#note6