

### More on Melbourne's Sprawl

*"The proposed low-density developments will lock Melbourne into further unsustainability, with the car the overwhelmingly dominant mode of transport. With global warming and peak oil, this is locking in serious problems for the future. While I hope the new railway projects Madden talks about eventuate, his Government has been in power 10 years without any substantial extension of the rail or tram network."*

*"With current rates of growth we will hit the 5 million population target within 10 years. Unless growth is substantially reduced — and that is not on the agenda — we will then see Melbourne at 6 million, 8 million, 10 million. The 10 people per hectare proposal for the new outer suburbs simply will not be able to cope and Melbourne will continue to devour prime farmland. There are few cities anywhere of the size of 5 to 10 million at the low densities being proposed for Melbourne."*

*"The Government has been reacting to change after it has occurred rather than having a clear vision it is able to implement, while the Opposition remains silent. We cannot simultaneously have high population growth, low taxes, low urban densities, high amenity and a sustainable city. Something has to give. The question is what? Let's have that debate."*

**Ref: Peter Hogg, The Age, 26/6/09**

*"Melbourne faces huge challenges: building a transport system for the post-carbon age, making urban growth sustainable, maintaining housing affordability, tackling pockets of social exclusion, keeping our envied record of multiculturalism, tackling water shortages and bushfire risks. But nurturing ideas is the greatest task of all because, ultimately, they are the catalyst of economic growth, as well as the spark of civilisation."*

**Ref: Julia Gillard, The Age, 12/7/09**

### New Federal Transport Regulations

*"The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) ... has endorsed:*

- *The establishment of a single national heavy vehicle regulator with responsibility for regulating all vehicles over 4.5 gross tonnes, including inspection standards, safe driving hours, mass limits and registration;*
- *The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) becoming the national regulator of all*

*commercial vessels operating in Australian waters. At the moment ASMA only regulates interstate operations; and*

- *The creation of a national rail safety regulatory system and the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) becoming the preferred investigator of rail accidents. Currently Australia has seven rail safety regulators, three rail safety investigators and different rules in every state. ...*

*It is proposed that all reforms will be fully implemented by 2013. Transitional arrangements will*

*come into effect in 2011 for heavy vehicles, maritime, and rail."*

**Ref Federal Ministerial Media Release, 2/7/09**

### Problems with Oil

*"Premier Anna Bligh and the Federal Transport Minister Anthony Albanese will demand the owners of the Moreton Bay oil spill ship Pacific Adventurer pay the full costs of the environmental disaster. ... 'This ship spilt 270 tonnes of heavy fuel oil onto the pristine beaches of Moreton Island, Bribie Island and the Sunshine Coast', she said. 'The State Government's clean up involved 2500 people and allowed beaches to reopen within just nine weeks of the disaster. But that clean up comes at a cost — currently estimated at \$34 million — and we have always said the polluter must pay. Taxpayers should not be left with the bill because this company is trying to avoid paying the full costs of the clean up. International maritime conventions refer to a cap on clean up payments of US\$17 million ...."*

**Ref: Joint Federal/State Ministerial Media Release, 5/7/09**



**The Future of Melbourne's Sprawl?**

## Making the Bay Connect (Part 4)

The 2008 Report<sup>1</sup> dwells extensively on the 'travel time' and concludes that: "Ferries are unlikely to provide an acceptable alternative to the journey time offered by rail or private vehicle, therefore if people are to choose to use ferries to commute from Geelong then this would be for some other reason."

The apparent assumptions here are that:

- The Geelong-Melbourne corridor is the only ferry route worth considering.
- The ferries will only service commuters.

Our response is that there are markets other than commuters, eg tourists, incidental travellers, people seeking alternatives to their present mode, people not concerned about the travel time, people wanting to go to places not otherwise serviced by public transport, people who can't or choose not to drive.

The 2008 Report states that "vessel speeds were tested that represent a viable spectrum of potential speeds across Port Phillip" and indicates the top level class of vessel in knots as: "40 (72 km/h) – represents a hovercraft or super fast planning monohull or catamaran". The flaw with this point is that modern hovercraft can travel at up to 65 knots (100 kph).

The 2008 Report goes onto state "The fastest travel time possible using the fastest ferry design between Geelong and Station Pier (with tram connection to CBD) is 83 minutes (1h 23min) ... 'Ferry to door' times – classified as time to enter the Melbourne CBD ... [from] Station Pier – walk to tram terminal and 109 tram to CBD – 29mins (comprised of 13 minutes journey time, potential 12 minutes waiting time between trams, 4 mins walking time to terminus)."

An integrated transit system *would* have special trams meeting and connecting with the ferries and perhaps running express into the city, so the likely land transit time would be more like 15 minutes and an express hovercraft service – Geelong to Port Melbourne – could do the trip in 45 minutes (or a total of one hour right to the CBD, equivalent to some of the V/Line services).

However it should be noted that to maximize financial viability the object is not to race against the V/line service to the same destination but rather provide a complementary service. As is indicated later in this (2009) report one of the key

<sup>1</sup> Review and Analysis of Proposed Commuter Ferry Services on Port Phillip, DoT, September 2008

destinations is actually Brighton Beach Station because of the connection to the rail network and therefore to the eastern and south-eastern suburbs. A trip (such as Geelong-Rippleside-Portarlington-Brighton Beach) would be timetabled at less than one hour. A modern Port Phillip Bay ferry service will not initially be successfully by trying to pick up large payloads from one point (Geelong) and taking them to another point (Port Melbourne) once a day but rather by efficiently moving smaller numbers of people right around the Bay with regular services and connecting them to the existing public and active modes of transit.

On vessel size, the 2008 Report concludes: "A craft size of around 200 to 300 passengers is considered a reasonable compromise between service frequency and operability factors." For the reasons stated above, it is unlikely (at least initially) that such a vessel would be viable, therefore the recommended size is a craft with a passenger capacity of around 175. A hovercraft of this size would have the added advantage of being able to ride over the types of wave conditions (up to 1.5 metres) presented by Port Phillip Bay.

{to be continued in #115}

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



Sketch: Jenny Donovan, David Lock Associates

## Ferries on Port Phillip

Here are some responses to feedback on ferries:

In the report that I am preparing I am very much advocating using the ferries (hovercraft) to link up to the existing and proposed public transport modes. The alternative is to keep building more freeways but that just encourages more (usually one person) cars. The latest is a \$770 million freeway bypass around Frankston. This is seven times the cost of establishing twelve hovercraft on the bay. It would be interesting to find out how much fuel is used in building such a bypass. I suspect that it would keep hovercraft running a fair while.

There is little commuter demand (which is to be expected as people are presently not choosing to live on one side of the bay and work on the other) although on some trips - based on the travel to work data - there could be more travellers than capacity. However, the geographical layout of tourist facilities around the bay means that we can utilise the return trips for tourists. Being able to have a return trip payload is a big plus. We also think that there is a significant demand for intermittent travel (people attending meetings, etc) and for light freight.

Mono or twin-hull are a problem on Port Phillip given the large size of the bay, the very shallow depth, the need for landside infrastructure (wharfs, etc) and related coastal morphology problems. Also the bay can get quite choppy, making travel uncomfortable for such vessels. The large bay means that we need a fast vessel but the demographics indicate that for most landing places there will only be a small number of passengers at any one time. Thus we have the need to travel quickly between a large number, perhaps 28, landing spots that in some cases may only be 5-10 minutes apart. It is my understanding that such operation is not compatible with JetCat type vessels. Other trip runs will be longer - over an hour - and if a JetCat is used we then have the problem of people being strapped into seats for long periods of time.

I'm keen to see that all of the fleet vessels are identical and yet can perform a variety of tasks hence the leading towards hovercraft. On the figures that I have seen, modern hovercraft are faster than twin-hull, and don't have problems with wake, shallow water or the need for massive landside infrastructure. There is of course a trade off between speed and fuel consumption / emissions but on the other hand we can use the speed of the hovercraft to avoid localised weather conditions on the bay and importantly still maintain a timetabled service.

We don't think noise will be a problem as the hovercraft will have to comply with EPA requirements. Modern hovercraft can use a number of new construction techniques to reduce noise. They can also power-down as they approach and leave the landing places. Quite often the existing buildings around the bay are separated from the water by busy roads - up to six lanes - which I think is more of a noise problem. Note also the comment on the Firth of Forth trial in Newsletter #110: "... noise levels [were] much lower than I thought they would be." (Rick 21/7/07)

### Feedback on Newcastle {see #110}

*"The situation in Newcastle, NSW, in which the big business people are proposing that the main railway into the centre of Newcastle be abandoned so that they can resume the land for their business purposes, is an utter disgrace. Sadly, they are not looking beyond their noses. In the near and more distant future they will be coming to depend more and more on the longer distance rail transport to bring people to do business with them. If this situation is really serious, one obvious solution is for the railway to be lowered, and the air rights above it sold to these very business interests.*

*"This situation is one which we in the Melbourne Region also must face up to now, both in locations where rail-road level crossings must (for reasons of both line and road occupancy, and safety) be grade-separated, and where new lines must be built. In the past, Melbourne's authorities have tended to be slow in this matter, although between 1909 and 1927 (as part of the rail electrification) at least the Burnley-East Camberwell & South Yarra-Caulfield lines were reworked to eliminate numerous earlier rail-road level crossings. Melbourne still has many level crossings requiring grade separation. The four 'tramway Squares', at Riversdale, Kooyong, Gardiner and Glenhuntly, are amongst those needing immediate attention.*

*"Mornington is a case we rarely consider. Yet, to restore the line to Mornington Centre will require lowering the line at several level crossings and taking the line via an underground section into Mornington Centre. Provision would also need to be made for an extension right to the Mornington Pier in the event of a bay ferry service to this town, the main centre of the Mornington Peninsula Shire."* **Ref: Louis Fouvry, Public Transport Engineer, 29/6/09**

**Comment:** Newcastle be warned! Mornington had a branch line running through the town centre. Unfortunately even the rail reserve in the township was removed on advice from transport planners and now looks like this:



## Problems with Swedish Taxis (Part 1)

*"In October of this year, Göran Orbe, a police officer in the economic crime division, was at Stockholmsmässan, the city's international fair facility, when a taxi arrived carrying an American dentist attending a convention. 'The dentist complained he had been ripped off', says Orbe. 'He had unknowingly taken a private taxi, which looked identical to the 'regular' taxis he had taken before, and the driver was demanding he pay 400 kronor for a ride that normally cost him 200 kronor. I could sympathize with him, but the private taxi had the law on his side'.*

*"Officer Orbe has heard many such taxi complaints over the years, mostly from Swedish and international tourists visiting Stockholm. 'The classic is cruise ship passengers who arrive at Värtahamnen and pay 1,700 kronor for a taxi ride to Gamla Stan – normally a 120 – 150kr ride. Then there are many tourists who are told the meter is showing the price in euros or dollars, and they pay it. The highest example I know of personally was a Japanese tourists who paid 450 euros (4,600kr) for a ride from Stockholm centre to Arlanda airport'.*

*"What's the limit on what these private taxis can charge? There was a case in 1996 for excessive charging, and the County Administrative Board won the case because the taxi was hiding the cost from the customer. But this was before the 1998 requirement to have prices displayed on the taxi windows. 'Now there is no limit', says Kari Björkqvist, a lawyer who oversees the regulation of the meters. 'As long as the amount listed on their window matches what they have on the meter, they can make the price whatever they like'. 'It's mostly a big city problem', says Rolf Arbin, Stockholm County Administrative Board's director of commercial traffic. 'It's happening in Stockholm, Gothenburg, Malmö and doesn't affect the smaller towns. But the number of these taxi scams in cities is increasing'.*

*"How did this happen? The taxi industry was deregulated in 1990 due to frustration. 'The government controlled the number of taxis allowed and there was a shortage. People couldn't find a taxi in the rain or during public holidays', explains Rolf Karlsson of Taxi Kurir, Sweden's largest taxi company. 'Now there are 50 percent more taxis'. Yes, after deregulating the industry, the number of taxis went up. But a few strange results have emerged as well. For starters, competition from small taxi companies hasn't driven the price down, as most anticipated.*

*"Instead, the big taxi companies (Taxi Stockholm and Taxi Kurir, which also now owns Taxi 020) have similar, almost non-competing rates, and many of the small taxi companies made their prices ridiculously high to prey on uninformed passengers - typically unsuspecting tourists who come from cities like New York or London, where taxi fares are regulated and there's no reason to be picky about the type of taxi to take. To further confuse the tourists (and drunk Swedes emerging from bars) many of these private taxis use names and logos similar to the big three companies.*

*"According to Kicki Erkers, press spokeswoman for Taxi Stockholm, they're trying to steal the confidence people have in the major companies. 'We have many legal trials underway at various stages - more than 10 per year -- with small taxi companies that try to make their taxis look too similar to ours ...'.*

*"The deceit of these fribilar/fritaxis (private taxis) couldn't be more obvious. 'They make their money by hiding their excessively high prices from the customer', says Mattias Grundström of the Swedish Consumer Agency (Konsumentverket), who agrees that tourists, the most likely to get ripped off, aren't going to spend time on their holiday to report an overpayment and wouldn't know who to call even if they wanted to. Another trick, according to Rolf Arbin, is to reorder their rate cards and meters so that the basic cheap rate 'Taxa 1' is the most expensive rate and Taxa 5 (normally reserved for late at night and on holidays) is the cheapest, so passengers think they're getting the cheap Taxa 1 rate all the time.*

*"It all seems rather un-Swedish. What happened to the country world renowned for its socially responsible regulations? And how have other far less regulated cities and countries managed to impose set maximum taxi fares that protect the consumer from such rip-offs? There are a few reasons why Sweden hasn't done much about it. For starters, most Swedes have figured out the rip-off long ago, avoid it by simply taking their favourite taxi company, and are now blind to the issue. (And the tourists don't complain enough to constitute a voice for change.) The more interesting reason is that, in a bizarre twist, the deregulation has created an oligopoly."*

**Ref: Doug Lansky, The Local (Swedish News in English), 12/1/09** {To be continued in #115}

## And Also ... (Aussies in Sweden)

*"You know that you have been in Sweden too long when: You get extremely annoyed when the bus is two minutes late."*

**Ref:** <http://www.coolabah.com/sweden/youknow.html>