

## Calcutta Taxis

"More than 60,000 ageing vehicles, from auto-rickshaws to taxis, were ordered off the streets of eastern India's largest city over the weekend in an attempt to ease the city's chronic air pollution. The Calcutta High Court had given owners of commercial vehicles older than 15 years a one-year deadline that ended on Saturday, but several transport groups have appealed the decision to India's Supreme Court, which is likely to hear the matter on Tuesday. ...

"The government is also encouraging new auto-rickshaws and taxis to use compressed natural gas as fuel. All the phased-out vehicles used petrol or diesel.

The air quality in Calcutta already had improved significantly on Saturday, according to a survey conducted by Saviour and Friend of Environment, a private environmental group, and commissioned by The Times of India newspaper. Readings in several busy areas of the city showed hydrocarbon levels had dropped by more than 50 per cent while the oxygen content had gone up by more than 15 per cent, according to SAFE. While several residents welcomed the change, others worried about the lack of transport once the work week resumed on Monday."

Ref: NineMSN, 3/8/09



## Tramwave

"A new ground-level power supply system that feeds electrical current to tramlines safely and efficiently without using catenaries or batteries and without creating traffic barriers has been launched by Ansaldo STS. The new 'Tramwave' system completely eliminates the need for traditional overhead lines because power is provided through a contact line that activates a small section of the line only as the tram passes over it. Significantly, 'Tramwave' is extremely flexible and can be integrated into virtually any kind of tram, regardless of the supplier. This means that it can be smoothly and seamlessly introduced into existing fleets, facilitating the replacement of catenaries in historical locations. Additionally 'Tramwave' can be used without any modification for multi-modal use, such as allowing the power line to be shared with rubber tyred electric vehicles." Ref: Ansaldo-STs media release, 9/6/09

## Feedback on Walking in Canberra

"Sounds too much like Los Angeles. I tried to walk from Santa Barbara beach to Hollywood / UECLA. It wasn't far but I found I was the only one walking on the grass verge between the road and the walled-in residences. The cars seem to slow and say: 'that man is walking!' Then again here in Healesville [Victoria] when I walk the 4km 30-40min to town I get comments like: 'you walk all that way!' I must admit it is difficult on the non-existent footpaths. Why do we follow the American way? I used to walk to the shops with my mum from the age of four! Also home for lunch (a couple of km, so ~8km a day) ... From the train I see new carparks appearing every where ... progress???"

Ref: Paul Judd, 4/8/09

"Don't know whether you know that Walter Burley Griffin's original plan [for Canberra] had a public transport spine - it was in the brief. It was one of the first things thrown out by the then government. On the attached plan you can see the railway that was planned."

[http://www.kheper.net/ecognosis/images/Griffins\\_plan\\_f or\\_Canberra.gif](http://www.kheper.net/ecognosis/images/Griffins_plan_f or_Canberra.gif) Ref: Trevor Budge, 4/8/09

## Race to Federation Square (Part A)

Recently there was a transit race from the not-so-well-served-by-PT north-eastern suburb of Manningham to the Melbourne CBD.

Mode	Details (Departure at 08:00)
Car 1	Single occupancy 4cl (via Freeway)
Car 2	Duel occupancy 6cl (via Transit Lane)
Bike 1	Shortest direct route via roadway
Bike 2	Scenic route (Yarra River bike path)
PT 1	Bus via Freeway, tram to Fed Square
PT 2	Bus to Box Hill, train to City

Mode	After 15 mins	After 30 mins
Car 1	2km from Hoddle	200m from Hoddle St
Car 2	1km from Hoddle	Hoddle St/Victoria St
Bike 1	Harp Road	Church St/Bridge Rd
Bike 2	Bourke Road	Fairfield Boathouse
PT 1	6km from Hoddle	Vic Pde/Brunswick St
PT 2	Station St, Box Hill	East Camberwell Stn

Finish details at right ►►►

Ref: Bill Pemberton, 22/7/09

## Race to Federation Square (Part B)

Mode	Time	Cost	CO <sup>2</sup>	CO <sup>2</sup> /km
Bike 1	08:40	\$0.00	0	0
PT 1	08:48	\$10.60	0.132kg	0.003kg
PT 2	09:00	\$10.60	0.150kg	0.003kg
Bike 2	09:02	\$0.00	0	0
Car 2	09:05	\$79.60*	6.8kg pp	308g 6cl
Car 1	09:14	\$82.10#	8.0kg pp	182g 4cl

\* Cost: \$42.60 running costs for 6cl + parking \$37  
# Cost: \$35.10 running costs for 4cl + parking \$47

## Transport Funding Smoke & Mirrors

*“The extraordinary costs nominated by the [Vic] Government for the most modest public transport improvements are more than a matter for amusement: they are the visible signs of a malign culture in the Department of Transport — a culture that believes public transport is best provided by buses running on freeways. This leads the department to go to extreme lengths to make its proposals look financially respectable and to denigrate fixed-rail proposals. One strip of land a little more than three metres wide can carry one freeway lane or one track for a light or heavy rail service. Building one lane of a freeway will cost about \$6.5 million a kilometre; building a kilometre of light or heavy rail track will cost slightly less. Both costs can be affected by terrain: tunnels and bridges are expensive. If the strip of land is used for private cars it can carry about 2000 people an hour; if it is used by buses, this goes up to about 2500 people an hour; a light rail service can carry 7500 people an hour and a heavy rail service 20,000 or more.*

*“The Monash Freeway serves a busy and growing area to Melbourne’s south-east, and was running out of capacity. It did have a median reservation east of Warrigal Road wide enough for a twin track heavy or light rail service, originally designated as the route for a train service to the Waverley Park stadium. The bureaucrats in the Department of Transport persuaded the Government to let them build two extra road lanes on the reservation, guaranteeing further congestion almost as soon as the work is complete.*

*“If an engineer got anywhere near the ear of the minister or the Premier, the decision to tarmac the rail reservation on the Monash would have raised serious questions: why spend \$60 million to add two traffic lanes and increase capacity by 33 per cent when spending a little more money on a fixed-rail service (including the cost of making a connection with the rest of the system) would have increased capacity by between 120 and 300 per cent? When The Age’s Mary-Anne Toy found a Department of Transport spokesman prepared to explain the \$562.3 million price tag on the Epping to South Morang extension (June 13), she was treated to something that would have made a great script for Yes, Prime Minister. Toy pointed out that a highly respected engineering consulting firm had costed the extension at \$44.5 million: the department’s spokesman explained that since patronage on the metropolitan train system had grown 21 per cent in the past couple of years, the department had decided to take a ‘holistic*

*approach’. This turns out to mean that, starting from the \$44.5 million that the tracks and new station would cost, the department tipped in \$180 million for road works to avoid creating new level crossings. This money does nothing for the train service. The Government has decided to buy some trains: this means new stabling is needed; but building this is a general expense and has almost nothing to do with the South Morang extension. There are excellent reasons for replacing the 19th-century safe working system between Greensborough and Hurstbridge with modern automatic signalling; but this too has nothing whatever to do with the tracks between South Morang and Epping.*

*“Challenged to explain why the work was going to take three years when elsewhere in Australia railways are built at up to a kilometre a day, the spokesman veered into fantasy. Work would have to be done at night for safety reasons, he assured Toy. But daytime work alongside operating tracks is routine in Australia, including on the Melbourne system. Thirty years ago the track between Macleod and Greensborough was duplicated in under a year, replacing two level crossings with overpasses, building two footbridges and rebuilding two stations, a job comparable in complexity with the South Morang extension. Train services continued normally throughout.*

*“Returning to the use or misuse of the Monash Freeway central reservation. Using it for heavy rail would have cost under \$6000 a person an hour of added capacity. Using it for extra road traffic lanes cost more than \$30,000 a person an hour of capacity. To make the road traffic lanes look economically superior, the cost of the rail alternative had to be inflated by a factor of at least five. The South Morang extension shows how this is done. A \$44.5 million project has been presented to the Government and people of Victoria as costing \$562.3 million, a multiple of 12.6. Yes, Premier: rail costs so much that it is uncompetitive with new freeways. Popycock!”*  
**Ref: John Legge, The Age, 26/6/09**

*“The [WA] Barnett Government has let two controversial reassessments of the feasibility of the on-again-off-again Ellenbrook railway proposal in secret, without going to tender. The first \$38,529 project has been awarded to Syme Marmion, a consulting company formerly co-owned by Premier Barnett’s Parliamentary Secretary for Transport, Bill Marmion. ... The second pre-feasibility study for the northeast corridor to be let without tender has been awarded to Parsons Brinkerhoff at a cost of \$97,350.”*  
**Ref: Chris Tomson, WA Today, 25/6/09**

## More on Peak Oil

*“Australia's abundant endowment of natural resources has provided a cushion against the need for energy security policies. No longer. Declining domestic oil production, refinery disruptions, extended supply lines, geopolitical turmoil and the carbon constrained future are all sending warning signals: Australia's easy energy ride is over, and moves to encourage renewable transport energy sources are long overdue. It is a message the Howard government ignored. Rudd so far has shown little interest.*

*“Given Australia's increasing reliance on oil imports, and our relative isolation, such political apathy is a mystery. Some attribute it to government concern to appease the oil majors to keep them in the local refining business. Refinery numbers have been cut to seven, all owned by the oil majors. More refinery consolidation is widely expected, further inhibiting competition. Others believe there is a widespread view in the bureaucracy that Australia has a window of about 20 to 30 years before peak oil has an impact on global markets. Why worry about renewables while there is a flourishing global trade in cheaper oil?*

*“Rudd's reluctance to embrace renewable fuel is all the more puzzling given that it runs counter to other Labor initiatives. Rudd is prepared to mandate 20 per cent renewables for electricity generation, but not in transport fuel. The Rudd Government is also pouring \$1.3 billion into a green car fund as part of its \$6.2 billion package to support the car industry. How do you run green cars? Not on standard petrol. Maybe hybrid electricity, hydrogen or high-percentage ethanol, such as E85, requiring specially adjusted engines.*

*“Rudd's renewable transport fuel vacuum is also at odds with the global mood. The International Energy Agency argues that between the demands of energy security and climate change challenges, nothing short of an ‘energy revolution’ is required. Global demand for energy, it says, will rise by 45 per cent by 2030, with oil and coal remaining the major fuel sources despite increases in nuclear and renewable energy. The agency says that while peak oil may not happen until about 2030, shortages could start to show up from about 2015, posing a real risk for Australia's energy security.*

*“In the United States, several states, led by California, are imposing low-carbon fuel standards (LCFS), setting limits on the*

*greenhouse gas emissions allowed from both the production and consumption of transport fuel. Inevitably this means greater renewable - likely ethanol - use. LCFS could become US policy as President Barack Obama, when a senator, sponsored a move to get the Senate to approve it and signalled his support in the election campaign. But LCFS will cost. Every carbon reduction idea, be it cap-and-trade schemes, carbon sequestration or renewable electricity generation, carries costs. Transport will be no exception.*

*“There are signs Australia's lethargy on transport renewables is about to end. Resources and Energy Minister Martin Ferguson has released three reports in the build-up to a new energy white paper later this year. These reports set a different tone than the complacent 2004 energy security report, which gave scant regard to renewables.*

*“Indeed, the National Energy Security Assessment now rates Australia's projected liquid fuel security as overall only moderate in 15 years' time, down from the high prevailing now and extending through to 2018. There could be another downward notch to come. The report says that both adequacy and price actually could be low by 2023, which translates as queues and big price rises for motorists. Despite abundant coal, gas and uranium stocks, Australia remains vulnerable on oil. We now rely on imported oil for two-thirds of our refinery output.*

*“Stocks are thin, accounting for just five to 15 days of refinery consumption. ‘With increasing dependence on imported crude oil and the ongoing prospect of unplanned interruptions in domestic refineries, it is possible that these levels of cover may not be sufficient to ensure adequate supply in domestic markets in the event of a major supply disruption’, ACIL Tasman says in a brief on Australia's liquid fuel vulnerability, also released by Ferguson. This year will be a time of reckoning for Australia's energy security.” Ref: Allan Fels and Fred Benchley, The Age, 18/4/09*

## Friends of Tram 96

*“Melbourne loves its trams, but a new lobby group set up to campaign for just one lone tram line takes the obsession to a new extreme. The Friends of Tram 96 held their first meeting yesterday to discuss strategies to pressure the State Government to further improve what is already one of Melbourne's premier routes. The tram line runs between St Kilda Beach and East Brunswick, via one of the city's key boulevards, Bourke Street.” Ref: Clay Lucus, The Age, 22/7/09* Tram 96 Facebook Group:

[www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=111314698538](http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=111314698538)

## Social Justice & Urban Design (Part 2)

*"It is important to note that everyone sees their surroundings differently - what is welcoming to someone may be threatening to someone else. Age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status and personal experience all influence a person's interpretation of their surroundings and the opportunities it offers. However, experience suggests that some aspects of our surroundings are typically interpreted the same way by many people, and it is within our power to design places that can provide people with the opportunities to do what they need to do to support their well being, develop their skills, forge social bonds and live lives congruent to their principles. Failure to provide these opportunities, either deliberately or accidentally, risks fundamentally compromising the quality of people's lives. Such environments offer people few and/or poor opportunities to meet their needs and so are hostile to them thriving and reaching their potential. In these cases people get by despite and not because of their surroundings.*

*"Some key components of a more equitable public realm are:*

- *They make the uptake of sustainable living more attractive, something to be embraced because of the opportunities it offers.*
- *They promote active transport, the public realm makes walking and cycling, the most accessible forms of transport, preferable, not just possible as a means to get to all the places a person has to go.*
- *They are food secure, when everyone has access to opportunities to access fresh, tasty and healthy food. They offer transport equity, when a lack of a car is no barrier to getting to where you want to go*
- *They offer quality open spaces, when parks, squares and other open spaces are nearby and offer a wide range of qualities and experiences, to play sport, to enjoy nature, relax and gather.*
- *They embody the values and highest principles of the people who share them, providing people with a chance to participate in their design, implementation and management. The people who live there can be proud of their community, investing emotional capital in their surroundings.*
- *They are designed not just to minimize the potential for appropriation by one group but to ensure as many people as possible, with diverse needs and priorities can share the same spaces. Land uses and densities respond to the scarcity of land and conflicts are mitigated.*

*"The characteristics of interventions that can achieve a supportive environment are well known to designers and academics. Mandating these characteristics will not be without its challenges but, if we can, it is possible to ensure interventions in our built environment incrementally move to create 'human habitat' - mitigating unfairness rather than compounding it."* **Ref: Jenny Donovan, Australian Fabian News, 2009**

## New Old London Bridge

*"The idea of building a new bridge across the Thames lined with shops and houses, just like Old London Bridge, the one 'falling down, falling down' in nursery rhyme lore, is a well worn one. This is one of those hardy perennials in the world of eye-popping design projects, one that refuses to go the way Old London Bridge did soon after its successor opened in 1831. It has now been revived by the London mayor, Boris Johnson.*

*"Inhabited bridges are alluring structures, yet they haven proven to be tricky, tacky and downright annoying things that serve primarily to slow down traffic over them. It could take an hour to cross Old London Bridge, threading your way under gateways crowned with traitors' heads and past rickety shops that had been built, thanks to King John, too pay the cost of the bridge."* **Ref: Jonathan Glancey, Guardian Weekly, 15/5/09**



**Old London Bridge**

Photograph: Stapleton Collection/Corbis

## And Also ...

*"Sydney's passionate car culture has pushed its livability ranking well below Melbourne in this year's race of the world's top 25 cities - although the Victorian capital has been warned it must do 'more about its urban sprawl'. But according to the chic global design and lifestyle magazine, Monocle, if Melbourne manages to improve its 'buckling' transport system, the Victorian capital will soon 'be pushing its way to the top of our list'."* **Ref: Paola Totaro, SMH, 18/6/09**