

## Popular Public Transport

*"Patronage on Melbourne's metropolitan rail network is up more than six per cent, new figures show. The data released by the State Government today reveals an overall increase of 6.3 per cent in train trips made in the 2008-09 year to a total of 213.9 million journeys. Growth on the Sydenham line rose a whopping 59 per cent in the last four years. ... Overall, public transport was a popular choice for travel in Melbourne, increasing nine per cent, with tram travel recording a 12.5 per cent increase."*

**Ref: AAP, The Age, 19/8/09**

## A City Too Far

*"They only wanted to go as far as Gosford, on the NSW Central Coast, but when seven passengers travelling from Sydney on a CityRail bus saw the outskirts of Newcastle they realised something was wrong. The full extent of their predicament was revealed moments later when the driver told them they were on their way to Brisbane. And regulations prevented him from diverting from his route, he said. ... The ordeal began on Sunday evening when the CityRail service to Newcastle, via the Central Coast, was held up at Hornsby station after an accident. After a two-hour delay, the passengers were herded off the train and on to coaches hired by RailCorp. Mr Conway, a postgraduate student from California who is studying at Sydney Uni, said there were no signs or announcements to indicate the destination of the buses. 'There was just a security guard waving us toward the buses saying they would take us where we needed to go', he said. With six other passengers, also bound for the Central Coast, he boarded a Pegasus coach. Unfortunately, it was a vehicle hired to transport passengers from an interstate CountryLink train, which had also been delayed at Hornsby. ... Mr Conway said the driver had told him that Pegasus's contract with RailCorp did not permit it to pick up or set down passengers between stops. While the bus would make two stops along the way, they were in small towns, and the passengers were better off enduring the 10-hour bus ride to Brisbane. Mr Conway arrived in Brisbane on Monday morning and was told he would need to pay his own way back to Sydney on that afternoon's train." [RailCorp later offered to reimburse the passengers].*

**Ref: Andrew West, SMH, 12/8/09**



**'The driver says he hopes we've got lots of sandwiches!'**

## Electric Cars in South Australia

*"The push to build an electric vehicle at Holden's Elizabeth plant is, at last, a move which is aligned with what consumers actually want. Australian car makers have had to adjust their focus from building large, powerful cars. Car buyers, both here and overseas, have been buying smaller, more fuel-efficient vehicles, motivated both by cost and concerns for the environment. The late arrival of some car makers to fill this market has been to their detriment. In the U.S. it threatened to wipe out the entire industry."*

**Ref: Adelaide Advertiser, 21/8/09**

## Exemptions for Electric Cars in NZ

*"The New Zealand government has passed legislation that will exempt electric cars from road user charges for four years, a change that is intended to encourage people to use them. The exemption applies to light electric vehicles – those weighing up to 3.5 tonnes – which are currently classed as diesels for the purpose of road user charges. ... The exemption will be effective from October 1 this year and continue until 2013 when the Government will reassess it."*

**Ref: Traffic Technology Today, 7/8/09**

## Exemptions for Vehicles in the UK

*"The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, has agreed to review the exemption rules for alternative fuel vehicles to the London Congestion Charge, following a challenge by Volvo Car UK. Volvo believes that the charging system unfairly biases hybrid cars over other low-emitting vehicles. ... The Mayor confirmed that the exemption to the Congestion Charge was introduced to incentivize the take-up of more environmentally-friendly vehicles, but that he recognized that vehicle technology has developed considerably since the rules were drawn up."*

**Ref: Traffic Technology Today, 4/8/09**

## The Alberta Clipper from Canada

*"The Obama administration faces a test of its environmental credentials in deciding whether to approve a pipeline carrying greenhouse gas-intensive oil sands fuel from Canada into the US. ... The Alberta Clipper [is] a 1,000-mile pipeline designed to carry up to 800,000 barrels a day of fuel from Canada's vast oil sands. ... It is hard for the US to resist the 175bn barrels of oil sand reserves, given rising concerns over energy security. But the extraction of a barrel of crude from oil sands is estimated to generate as much as five times more greenhouse gas emissions as from a barrel of conventional crude."*

**Ref: Sheila McNulty, Financial Times, NineMSN, 10/8/09**

## Digital Rail

*“Australia's rail industry chief has blasted the sector itself - not government inaction - for rail's failure to play a bigger role in the national economy. Don Telford, chairman of the Australasian Railway Association and chief executive of Pacific National, said rail had failed to compete effectively with road, and its relative performance had declined. With urban road congestion set to cost the Australian economy \$30 billion by 2015, rail was the solution, Mr Telford argued. ‘Rail is safer and greener than most transport modes, yet the average age of the industry's locomotive fleet is over 20 years old’, he told the AusRAIL 2008 conference in Melbourne. He said the Federal Government had a role to play to help the industry. ‘We are not seeking cash - if they are offering, I will, of course, accept - but other measures such as accelerated depreciation, tax credits or incentives through the climate change agenda’.*

*“Rail in the US, Canada and Europe received similar benefits and was far better off financially than operators in Australia. However, Mr Telford said the local industry needed to introduce more modern technology: ‘Progressing towards a digital train control system is a must. Currently, Australia has 22 radio networks that are controlled through different mediums’. On average, an Australian freight train could be equipped with eight radio systems and a train driver had to interpret various signalling systems to travel between states. ‘Sometimes, even multiple radio systems are required within a single state. This situation, besides being absurd, clearly impacts negatively on the capacity and productivity of all rail operations’. A proper digital train control system would ensure each train driver had only one digital screen and one radio microphone.*

*“Mr Telford said the rail manufacturing sector also needed to join the revolution. ‘We do not need different crash worthiness standards or endless component specifications for each state. It is sheer lunacy that the same basic rail car in Western Australia and Queensland has 650 different components’. This meant every operator had a large inventory of spares, pushing up the cost of rolling stock.”*

**Ref: Philip Hopkins, The Age, 3/12/08**

*“Ken Davidson, a consultant, said that even with Australia's existing rail network, rail used only about 30% of the energy used by an articulated truck. ‘A good rail route would use only 15% what an efficient truck would need’.”*

**Ref: Philip Hopkins, The Age, 3/12/08**

## Super-Capacitors on Trams

*“Paris transport operator RATP and Alstom are to launch a one-year trial of a super-capacitor on-board energy storage system. ... Developed under the STEEM (Maximised Energy Efficiency Tramway System) research and development project, the super-capacitor technology has been fitted to one of 21 Citadis 402 low-floor cars. ....*

*“A bank of 48 super-capacitor modules installed on the roof of the tram will store energy regenerated during braking, and can also be topped up from the overhead wire in 20 second during station dwell times. This allows the vehicle to run between stops without using the catenary. During the test runs, conducted under commercial operating conditions, the vehicle will operate with its pantograph lowered on two sections of the T3 [line]. A ‘rapid-charging station’ has also been installed at the Lucotte depot.*



Picture: Railway Gazette International

*“According to Alstom, the super-capacitor technology will ‘support operations in partially-autonomous mode’, avoiding the need to install catenaries at complex*

*junctions, on bridges or in front of public buildings. It will also allow wire-free operation in depot areas. Operation in ‘fully-autonomous mode’ would be possible with the use of ‘boost chargers’ at the stops. The STEEM partners believe that building new lines without catenary could reduce investment costs, as well as ‘optimising integration into the urban landscape’.”*

**Ref: Railway Gazette International, 15/7/09**

[http://www.railwaygazette.com/news\\_view/article/2009/07/9756/supercapacitors\\_to\\_be\\_tested\\_on\\_paris\\_tram.html](http://www.railwaygazette.com/news_view/article/2009/07/9756/supercapacitors_to_be_tested_on_paris_tram.html)

## And Also ...

*“Scientists have found that traffic noise is drowning out the mating call of some frogs. It's believed to be partly to blame for the species being radically reduced in some urban areas. The research was presented at an international conference of ecologists in Brisbane ... In areas with lots of traffic, frogs that could once be heard by females 800 metres away, can now only be heard within 14 metres and it's been causing havoc for their social life.”*

**Ref: PM, ABC Radio, 20/8/09**

[www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2008/s2662250.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2008/s2662250.htm)

**Urban Planning & Active Lifestyles**

*“Many of the urban policy agendas for our cities and towns focus on improving infrastructure, adapting to climate change, ensuring housing affordability and creating jobs. Just as important (and often overlooked) is the influence that the design of our cities and towns has on the health of its residents, especially in addressing the range of diseases exacerbated by physical inactivity. ... One of Australia’s biggest health challenges - like many other western countries - is trying to get its citizens out of cars, off the couch and engaging in more physical activity. We are now so conditioned to using our cars for trips outside our homes that around 10 per cent of our car trips could be substituted for a ten minute walk.*

*“The prevalence of overweight and obesity in Australia has been steadily increasing over the past 30 years and if the current trend continues unabated over the next 20 years, it is estimated that nearly three-quarters of the Australian population will be overweight or obese by 2025. Even though the recommended guidelines suggest 30 minutes of physical activity is required every day, around 9 million Australians do not do enough physical activity on a daily basis. This level of inactivity doubles the risk of cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes and obesity, and increases the risk of breast and bowel cancer, depression and anxiety.*

*“There is a high price for Australians to pay for this inactive lifestyle. Physical inactivity costs the healthcare system around \$1.5 billion a year. Addressing obesity and health issues resulting from physical inactivity is a complex issue and*

*requires multiple responses including from the food industry, medical profession, marketing and education campaign. However, research now shows that this problem can also be tackled by improving the way that cities and towns are designed.”*

**Ref: Urbecon Vol 2, 2009, SGS Economics and Planning** <http://www.sgsep.com.au/publications>

*“In research published in yesterday’s Medical Journal of Australia, West Australian researchers including Australian of the Year Fiona Stanley found nearly a third of the children in the study were unhealthy due to their weight, diet and lack of exercise. They found 29 per cent of 14-year-olds and 25 per cent of eight-year-olds were in a ‘high-risk cluster’ for future health problems such as heart disease, diabetes or stroke. Lead author Dr Rae-Chi Huang, from the University of Western Australia’s school of medicine, said the study proved there was no room for complacency on child health.”*

**Ref: Nick Miller, The Age, 6/7/09**

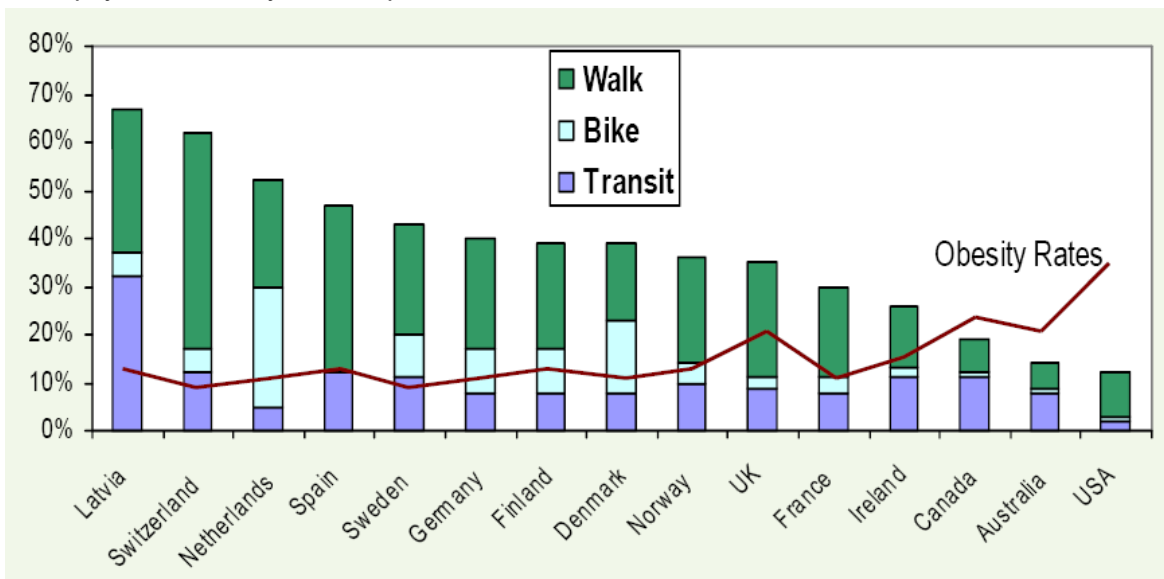
*“Wheelchair ramps were once the bane of architects and town planners. When they were first forced to include them in building projects these ramps were ‘too expensive’ or ‘an eyesore’. Now ramps are incorporated seamlessly into a building’s design, and more importantly, they are used by everybody.”*

**Ref: Supertext News #67, 2003**

**And Also ...**

*“A man was knifed in the buttocks following a fight over a car park space in Sydney’s west last night.”*

**Ref: Georgina Robinson, SMH, 14/8/09**



**Ref: Todd Litman, Victoria (BC) Transport Policy Institute, 25/3/09** [www.vtpi.org](http://www.vtpi.org)

## Car Dependency (Part 1)

*“The birth of the oil age in turn gave rise to the automobile, most notably, the car. From its origins as a luxury reserved only for those wealthy enough to afford the new technology, the car has quickly become the dominant form of motorised transport and a perceived necessity for most modern people.*

*“Our eagerness to construct cities around the car and the spaces it required to move and park, is now starting to show worrying signs of error and misguided judgement. The fact seemed to slip everyone’s mind, that this entire system and its associated urban form was based on a finite fuel source. Or perhaps more accurately, everyone was having such a good time and making so much money during the heyday of inexpensive oil, no one cared to think about future ramifications and where this was all heading.*

*“The emergence of the car in America as a hallmark of personal freedom and liberty has spread across many parts of the globe. We have in turn designed our lives around the convenience a car can offer and become dependent upon the car for many facets of our lives, including work, socialising, recreation, holiday travel and everyday transit. This dependence is having obvious negative impacts on our health, the environment and economy, as well as the strength of our communities. How did we find ourselves in this predicament and what solutions are available?*

*“While it is difficult to place a subjective label on the price of a natural commodity outside the context of the market, it must be recognised that ‘cheap oil’ has allowed an explosion of the suburbs and firmly ingrained car dependency to support this urban form. When putting modern transit in the context of the pre-petroleum human experience, the ability to move two tonnes of metal (a car) ten kilometres may have taken a few people a day to achieve. It is now done countless times everyday around the world in a few minutes, for the cost of less than one litre of petrol. Such massive amounts of energy for such a low price, in the context of the energy equation physically taking place, is really quite staggering. It was ‘cheap oil’ that encouraged car dependency and the problems that came with it and it seems that only the end of ‘cheap oil’ will cause its downfall.” {To be continued in #120}*

**Ref: Myles Graham, 9/7/09**

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## And Also ... (Aviation 101)

*‘Takeoff’s are optional. Landings are mandatory.’*

## Public Transport Costs

*“Few people today understand the matter of public transport capital and operating costs (or transport costs in general, for that matter). No true view of these costs is valid unless they include the total costs to the community, not merely costs to an operator, government, or private individuals, etc.*

*“This is because many of these costs are quite widely distributed, especially the costs for remedying all the damage done by road traffic crashes. For trains, trams and buses, the ratio of apparent capital to operating costs decreases in the order shown. This is why, for some people, buses (because of their apparently low capital cost, at least to the operator) are to be favoured over trains and trams. However, if the capital costs are converted to annual depreciation costs, and combined with the operating costs, the situation changes considerably. In fact, the combined operating costs for trains, trams and buses over any route depend greatly on the numbers of passengers per hour to be carried. Thus, buses are most economical on lightly loaded routes.*

*“Trams are most economical on routes with medium loading levels, while trains are most economical on heavily loaded routes. The crossover points, though a somewhat grey area depending on particular individual circumstances, are such that somewhere between 500 and 1000 passengers/hour is the changeover from buses to trams, and 3000 to 3500 passengers/hour as the changeover from trams to trains. (The term ‘tram’ is best retained here, rather than ‘light rail’).*

*“When annual depreciation costs are reckoned, private cars are usually depreciated over a period such as 10 years, buses over 20 years, and trains and trams over 30 to 40 years. In addition, other factors such as the average duration per day over which these vehicles are used must be taken into account. Private cars, on average, are used for one hour per day. By contrast, public transport vehicles (including taxis) are used, on average, for at least around eight hours per day. This means that public transport vehicles are used much more efficiently, and so significantly fewer are required to serve the millions of person-kilometres which we cover on an average weekday.*

*“Other factors must also be taken into account, such as environmental sustainability and pollution costs, etc. Thus, these days, electric vehicles powered by electricity generated from photovoltaic, tidal and wind energy sources are to be favoured.”*

**Ref: Louis Fouvy, 29/6/09**