

### Call for End to Car Salary Loophole

*"The [Australian] Greens say the Federal Government should scrap tax concessions for people who receive a car through salary sacrificing. ... Greens Senator Christine Milne says there also needs to be major changes to Australia's transport use. 'We'd be looking at getting rid of the fringe benefits tax concession for motor vehicles and for a number of the fuel credit programs that are there at the moment', she said. 'And at the same time, be looking at salary packaging to include a benefit for public transport'."*

**Ref: ABC News, 12/10/09**

### Boost for Cycling in Tasmania

*"The [Australian Federal] Labor Government is investing more than \$2.2 million in six cycling infrastructure projects in Tasmania from [the] \$40 million National Bike Paths Projects fund. ... The Government's investment will deliver projects worth \$4.3 million, with the remainder of the funding provided by local councils. These infrastructure projects will support 74 jobs and traineeships across Tasmania, delivering an economic boost in local communities. ... This is exactly what our Economic Stimulus Plan is about – supporting practical infrastructure projects that make a difference over the longer term in local communities. The projects, located in Hobart, Launceston, Burnie, St Helens, Prospect Vale, Strahan and Tullah, will encourage healthier lifestyles amongst residents and create more sustainable communities. By building better cycling infrastructure, we are also helping take cars off Tasmanian roads and reducing carbon emissions over the longer term. The Rudd Government is delivering funding for cycling infrastructure around the country, providing Australians with a greener, healthier way of getting to and from school and work, as well as recreational facilities."*

**Ref: Federal Govt Media Release, 14/10/09**

### From Ford Plant to Renewables Park

*"A Ford car plant which was recently shut down as part of cost savings by the car maker is being converted into a facility for renewable energy companies. The facility in Wixom, Michigan, which at the height of production had about 5,000 workers, closed in 2007 with the loss of 1,000 jobs. The site will now be converted into a business park for a series of renewable energy companies, which the backers claim could generate about 4,000 jobs."* **Ref: Andrew Donoghue, BusinessGreen, 11/9/09**

### Big Oil in the US

*"Hundreds of people packed a downtown theatre in Houston this week for a lunchtime rally that was as much a celebration of oil's traditional role in the Texas way of life as it was a political protest against Washington's energy policies. 'Something we hold dear is in danger, and that's our future', said Bill Bailey, a rodeo announcer and local celebrity who was master of ceremonies at Tuesday's hour-long rally. The event was organised by a group called Energy Citizens, which is backed by the American Petroleum Institute, the oil industry's main trade group. Many of the people attending the demonstration were employees of oil companies who work in Houston and were bussed in from their workplaces. ... 'It's just a sense of outrage and disappointment with*

*the bill passed by the House', said James Hackett, chief executive of Anadarko Petroleum, who attended the rally. He defended the use of buses financed by oil companies and Energy Citizens to carry employees to the rally. 'If we all drove in cars, it wouldn't look good', he said.*



**Wedding photo**

*"The House bill seeks to reduce greenhouse gases in the United States by 83 percent by 2050 through a mechanism known as cap and trade, which would create carbon permits that could be bought and sold. ... The power sector, which accounts for about a third of the nation's emissions, got 35.5 percent of the free allowances. Petroleum refiners, meanwhile, got 2.25 percent of these allowances, although the transportation sector accounts for about 40 percent of emissions. That means oil companies would have to buy many of their permits on the open market, and they contend that they would have to raise gasoline prices to do so.*

*"An article on Wednesday about the oil industry's backing of protests against climate change legislation misstated the number of fake letters sent to members of Congress by a pro-coal industry group, the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity. A Congressional inquiry has determined that 13 letters — not 58 — sent by a public relations company, Bonner & Associates, on behalf of the coalition were forgeries. Forty-five other letters sent by the company remain under investigation."* **Ref: Clifford Krauss and Jad Mouawad, New York Times, 18/8/09**

## Biofuels in Australia

*“Australian motorists are rapidly changing their petrol-buying habits with a growing number of them turning to ethanol-blended petrol, a new report released today reveals. Australia’s emerging biofuel sector is currently contributing a record 290 million litres per annum to the country’s national transport fuel supply, the report states. This is about 80% of the way towards meeting the 350 million litres target by 2010, set by the previous Federal government.*

*“It is expected that the industry will exceed that target by the end of 2009 as new ethanol production comes on stream. This is one of the key findings in the annual report on Australia’s biofuel industry released today by leading industry consultants, APAC Biofuel Consultants. ‘Ethanol remains the larger (ahead of biodiesel) biofuel contributor as demand for ethanol-blended petrol (petrol containing 10% ethanol or E10) continues to grow rapidly’, APAC Biofuel Consultants Joint Chief Executive Officer, Mr Mike Cochran, said today. ‘The rapid increase in E10 sales over the past 12 months shows that more and more Australian motorists are turning to ethanol-blended petrol to run their vehicles – and that figure is increasing by the day’, he said. ‘The growing popularity of ethanol blended petrol is due to the fact that it is generally cheaper than unleaded petrol, has a higher octane level, and is a cleaner fuel. The number of retail outlets selling ethanol blend fuel has increased by 25% over the past twelve months, increasing its accessibility for motorists. Although the majority of outlets are in New South Wales and Queensland, there has been a rapid increase in Victoria over the past 12 months, and we can see that spreading to other states as demand increases’.*

*“Sales of ethanol-blended fuels in NSW have been assisted by the introduction of a 2% ethanol mandate from October 2007. This will increase to 4% from January 2010, and 6% from January 2011. ‘Currently Australian domestic production from NSW and Queensland can meet the increasing demand for ethanol but we estimate production will be close to capacity at around 300 million litres per year by the end of 2009’, Mr Cochran said. Australian biodiesel production has increased marginally and is currently around 80 million litres per annum. Biodiesel is blended in quantities varying from 2% (called B2) to 20% (B20) with diesel fuel. Future sales of biodiesel blends should increase as the NSW Government’s 2% biodiesel mandate takes effect from January 2010.*

*“The report also reviews the latest developments in the worldwide effort to produce biofuels from algae. Global interest in algae research and development is at an all time high with major world oil companies investing hundreds of millions of dollars. ‘Australia has natural and intellectual competitive advantages, and can become an international leader in algae research and development for biofuels’, Mr Cochran said. ‘Algae has significant potential advantages over existing biofuel crops. It is a high yielding crop, an absorber of carbon dioxide, is low cost, and does not compete with other plants as a source of food’. Australia, with its warm sunny climate and access to carbon dioxide and nutrients, has many natural competitive advantages for producing algae.”*

**Ref: Eco Voice Online #67, October 09**

<http://www.ecovoice.com.au/enews/enews-67/eco-news-14.php>

## Call for Light Rail in New Zealand

*“New Zealand has a serious public transport infrastructure backlog that is now beginning to be addressed in Auckland and Wellington. Infrastructure choices about technologies and systems are critical because they shape the future of our economy and society. A National Infrastructure Plan must make reference to the role of light rail (the modern tram) as this technology is being adapted by hundreds of cities internationally. A credible National Infrastructure Plan must acknowledge the potential of light rail as a genuine option for inner city corridors which have the travel intensity to support this transport mode. Light Rail is a practical, affordable and high quality type of public transport that makes eminent sense where travel density justifies this technology.*



**New Zealand**

*Wellington, in particular, is well suited to the use of light rail in the tram-train configuration. With tram-trains the suburban rail network can be extended directly through the CBD, eliminating many of the interchange problems associated with the current rail and bus services.”* **Ref: Brian Jameson, Submission to the National Infrastructure Plan, Trans-Action (Transport Choice for Wellington), 30/9/09**

**Trans-Action** (Transport choice for Wellington) is an email-based, group of 150 dedicated to researching and advocating sustainable transport. We promote the adoption of electric public transport, rail transport, transport energy efficiency, more liveable cities, smart growth and the containment of urban sprawl. For more information contact [brent.efford@techmedia.co.nz](mailto:brent.efford@techmedia.co.nz)

## The Public Transport Revival

*“Public transport is making a comeback: on drawing boards, in the Senate committee hearings that just toured the country, and in our neighbourhoods. Planners are revisiting the idea of urban village archipelagos, networks of medium and high density human-scale settlements linked with safe, fast, frequent public transport. With light rail proposals advancing in Canberra, the Gold Coast, Sydney and Perth, and the proposition of Commonwealth Government public transport funding for the first time in a decade, we may be on the edge of an urban tipping point.*

*“Planning world-class public transport for our communities can catalyse a whole series of changes that are not immediately obvious. Public transport works best in high population centres when a critical mass of people are an easy walk or cycle from transfer stations. Artful densification reduces the urban footprint and can be a major driver for local economies. Embedding a high proportion of affordable housing in these centres, rather than condemning low-income families to the urban fringe, guarantees access to employment and creates the opportunity for vibrant social diversity.*

*“Halt the sprawl once and for all and we'll be able to protect and restore the ragged biodiversity and watersheds surrounding our cities. The reckless paving over of essential peri-urban agricultural land can also come to an end as we recall farmers and market gardeners to their central place in community life. Electrifying public transport by installing light rail along strategic corridors will lighten our vulnerability to rising oil prices and help prevent the horror of future oil wars. Demoting private cars from their pre-eminent position in the planning hierarchy will improve public health and reduce obesity, because every public transport trip starts with a walk or a cycle.*

*“All of these ideas are taking shape in real-world neighbourhoods around Australia, but the dominant governance mindset is still the provision of more roads to reduce the congestion spawned by the last round of road-building. The resistance from vested interests and path-dependent bureaucratic structures will be fierce and frustrating, but that doesn't make them right: the catastrophe taking shape everywhere between the Arctic circle and the Murray-Darling Basin is entirely non-negotiable. When climate change or vicious price shocks at the foothills of peak oil take unleaded through \$5 a litre, it will*

*be too late. But with persistence and goodwill it is possible to see our way through to the resilient city: the design and re-working of ecologically sane, human-centred communities that will be genuinely at home in the twenty-first century.”*

**Senator Scott Ludlam, public transport spokesperson, Australian Greens, 7/10/09**

## Making Transport Attractive (Part 3)

*“A growing number of citizens - not only mobile older people - are more sensitive to comfort and ease of use rather than to time gains. Metropolitan underground railways are fast but rarely achieve optimal ease of use. As an example, a return trip on the Paris Metro with one change each way requires the same total effort as climbing the stairs of an eight-storey building. Escalators have been installed in a number of stations but they are still not widespread. Buses are usually slow because of traffic congestion. These are powerful reasons why surface light rail could capture a large market.*

*“Interest in the example of Manchester in the UK goes beyond the new Metrolink system. Very soon after deregulation when on-street competition was introduced, the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPTE) and Public Transport Authority (PTA) took measures to integrate transport supply by offering the Travelcard unlimited-use pass accepted by all operators (rail and bus) in the Manchester area. The uniqueness of Travelcard is in how passenger revenues are allocated to different operators. A continuous sample survey covering all the operators is performed by an independent team according to a stochastic model accepted by all parties and the revenues are shared according to actual daily use (demand) rather than by seat kilometers (supply). Although the cost of the permanent survey sample is relatively high (about 2% of income), it has been a remarkable success in terms of user attractiveness and marketing. It has allowed identification of passenger profiles by asking three simple questions: point of entry, point of exit and passenger fare category (child, adult, concession). The results allow neutral assessment of the daily evolution of patronage level to the benefit of each operator. In addition, they allow independent assessment of the number of subsidized concession riders. Integration of Metrolink with its own tariff structure has proved compatible with Travelcard. The market niche specifically generated by Metrolink was a direct result of its commuter rail-urban rail interoperability concept.” {Continued in #128}*

**Ref: Pierre Laconte, Light Rail: Making Urban Transport More Attractive, Japan Railway & Transport Review 38, March 2004**

## Parry People Mover in the UK

*"My Lords, will the Minister join me in congratulating Parry People Movers on introducing rapid lightweight trains between Stourbridge and Stourbridge Junction which successfully carry lots of people, and much better than the railway to which he has just referred [the Wellington-Stafford line in the 1960s]? Will he look particularly at the list of potential lines which that company has put forward for using this railcar, particularly as regards enthusiast and freight railways?"*  
Lord Bradshaw, Liberal Democrat

*"My Lords, I am very happy to do so. The application of new ways of running railway services much more economically than has been*



*the case in the past is something to which we should pay a good deal of attention."*

Lord Adonis, Secretary of State for Transport  
**Ref: House of Lords Debate on Rail, 20/7/09**

*"Making one journey in each direction every ten minutes, the railcar easily met its operational specification and gave Stourbridge Town its best ever train service - made possible by the sprightly performance and short turnaround times achievable with this type of rolling stock."*

**Ref: Parry News #54, 30/6/09**

[www.parrypeoplemovers.com/products.htm](http://www.parrypeoplemovers.com/products.htm)

*"... This innovative, environmentally-friendly, futuristic mode of public transport [Class 139 railcars] will not only run at more frequent intervals than its diesel predecessor, it will allow far easier flat-level entry for wheelchair access and parents with baby buggies and be far kinder to the environment. The people behind the development of the Parry People Mover, and now the operational staff who are going to run it, should be justifiably proud of their achievement to bring this innovative operation to Stourbridge. As a local resident I am certainly proud to use it. Why not extend it down the High Street to make our town something special? ... Public transport is really moving forward in our area."*

**Ref: Phil Tonks, Stourbridge News, 18/6/09**

## And Also ... (Strange Laws)

*"In New York, it is against the law for a blind person to drive an automobile."*

**Ref:** <http://www.strangefacts.com/laws.html>

## Human Sacrifice on the Roads

*"Modern automobile-dependent societies operate with the knowledge that a certain number of people each year will be brutally injured or killed in crashes on the road. According to the United States Department of Transportation, 42,642 people died in motor-vehicle crashes in 2006. Of these, 5,740 were non-motorists---pedestrians, bicyclists, and others. These numbers have been relatively consistent over the last decade, dropping only somewhat compared to the total number of miles travelled.*

*"This cost is considerable. One in 90 Americans will die in a motor vehicle crash. There is no greater killer of people in their 30's. In terms of years of potential life lost, only cancer and heart disease take a higher toll than traffic. Yet for most Americans, driving is a daily habit. Despite its dangers, people drive because other options are either not available, take much more time, or are not encouraged by the culture. Such wilful blindness to a preventable danger is nothing less than human sacrifice.*

*"The [US] National Centre for Biking and Walking, whose Traffic Justice Initiative is one of the leading lights in advocacy for traffic justice, has this to say: 'We typically speak of 'accidents,' rarely of crashes or road violence; and rarer still do we treat them as matters of systematic injustice. Yet they are more than an accumulation of random events, more than a series of regrettable yet unavoidable by-products of our transportation system. They constitute a violent and anti-social assault on life, health and community'.*

*"In many jurisdictions, authorities attempt to alleviate traffic hazards with a wholly automobile-centred approach. If pedestrians are in danger from cars, for example, decision-makers opt to make roads less accessible to walkers and bicyclists. In large part this is because they are influenced by the most powerful voices of the road safety community, the automobile advocacy groups. These in turn are often funded by car makers and oil companies.*

*"Consequently, the vital need for streets accessible to multiple modes of transportation gets forgotten. Road safety becomes an excuse for making communities less liveable, vibrant, and environmentally-friendly. Worse, this means that the most vulnerable are paying the price for the habits of car culture. As the growing pedestrian and bicycle-oriented road safety movement has shown, this need not be the case."*

**Ref: Traffic Justice, StreetsWiki, 2/6/08**

[www.livablestreets.com/streetswiki/traffic-justice](http://www.livablestreets.com/streetswiki/traffic-justice)

## The Unexpected Consequences of Investing in Public Transport (Part 2)

*"A lot of this speculative thinking, together with the prospect of using the existing tourist tram network, was brought together by a visit [to Bendigo] in early September [2008] by Professor Peter Newman, of transit oriented development fame and now a member of Prime Minister Rudd's Infrastructure Council. It was Newman who told the assembled in Bendigo that by winning the National Urban Design Award the city could use this as a stepping stone to launching into some great new initiatives including light rail.*

*"Newman said he is currently working in medium sized cities across Australia such as Darwin, Gold Coast Newcastle and Hobart to look at light rail. Quite an irony when you think that places like Hobart, Launceston, Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Newcastle all had light rail (trams) and got rid of them. Newman said the model is to work with the community and the private sector to 'capture' the area around a 'station' and add value to the land by enhancing the node for residential and commercial development. The reality is that the area around many of these old stations in the regional centres is often very sparse on terms of development and they lend themselves to such a development.*

*"Newman's flying visit to Bendigo sponsored by PB has certainly got people talking about a new era of how we look at a regional centre. Can this model be extended? A new station is being developed at Wendouree in Ballarat. Trains now go through to Marshall in Geelong. When other regional centres are examined in a similar way to how I have referred to Bendigo all sorts of ideas are possible.*

*"Can the rapidly growing Bannockburn to the west of Geelong use the existing rail track for light rail carriages to provide a commuter service? Can Warmambool centre connect to the Deakin University campus through the urban area of that city? It's a matter of looking beyond the existing urban form and saying that there aren't enough people and thinking how can we integrate the future urban form with rail and light rail. How can we build a service that will stimulate a new urban form and break our dependency on the private car? Which if you think about it is the same model that so many are advocating for metropolitan Melbourne."*

**Ref: Trevor Budge, Planning News, Oct 2008**

## Dr Henry on Congestion Charges

*"Australia should consider introducing a congestion charge to tax drivers who travel on roads to the CBD, Treasury secretary Ken Henry said today. ... Dr Henry said the first lesson of history is that the case for change must be compelling. And he said taxing road users more was a good example. ... 'Most of the time, most cars impose minimal costs on other road users. However, when vehicles drive on a congested road they impose costs on other drivers. Each*



Bendigo Tram

*driver thinks of their own need to get to their destination, not considering how, by taking up space on the road, they impinge on the ability of other drivers to do so. There is no means for one driver to coordinate with others, to bargain about who should have priority, so that they can all be better off. This results in a predictable 'tragedy of the commons' which is estimated to waste around \$9 billion a year in avoidable congestion costs, increasing to around \$20 billion by 2020. In the face of these costs, why*

*have we stuck to the traditional 'fuel tax and rego' model for roads, when sensible pricing seems to offer such large benefits?'*

*"Dr Henry said while roads appear free they were actually expensive in terms of time and taxes. ... Dr Henry said some truck operators might support road pricing as long as the costs they pay are reflected in better roads - "their 'compensation' is a better functioning road network. They would also like assurance that the compliance costs of road pricing will be low and remain low. At least one automobile association supports road pricing as long as road users are 'compensated' by the abolition of fuel excise", he said. 'In London, commuters were 'compensated' through additional funding for public transport'." **Ref: Samantha Maiden, The Australian, 15/10/09***

## And Also ...

*"Thousands of public servants in the [Victorian] departments of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development, Justice, Primary Industries and Treasury and Finance reported they were not regularly using 'sustainable transport' - public transport, cycling or walking - to get to work. The most car-lovers seemed to be in the department of Premier and Cabinet. In 2007-08, 79% of city-based staff regularly took sustainable transport; last financial year, it was 69%. Treasury staff were also fond of the car, with only 70% regularly using alternatives."*

**Ref: Melissa Fyfe, The Age, 18/10/09**

## Lund: City of Transit Ideas (Part 1)

*"The city of Lund, located in the south of Sweden, is a sustainable transportation jewel with a model practice that the world can learn from. Using methodical and holistic steps, it has succeeded in becoming the 'bicycle city' it aimed to be, in accordance with the principle that effective transportation is vitally important for the well-being of citizens. Lund has a thousand-year old history that has granted it its favoured term of 'city of ideas'. With 100,000 residents, it is the centre of Scandinavia's largest university and a cross-cultural haven, inhabited by people from 130 different nationalities. It is also a main transportation hub, only 20 km away from the city of Malmö. Approximately 36,000 people use the city's central train station in their daily commute.*

*"The first transportation 'revolution' occurred in Lund in 1969 when the municipality managed to block national plans for a highway expansion that would have disrupted the southern parts of the city centre. Traditionally in Sweden, municipalities hold substantive power over what occurs in their land, & Lund has used this power to the utmost. Soon the core of the city centre was designated a protected area. Then it was only a matter of time until the metamorphosis. Two years later in 1971, the municipality decided to make the centre of the city entirely carfree, in what has been aptly termed 'The Lock'. Only buses, the few taxis of the city and emergency vehicles have since been allowed into the centre. This change was supplemented in 1985 by the renovation of the road system to favour pedestrians and cyclists (what the municipality calls 'unprotected road users').*

*"The most comprehensive program of Lund's transport policy is LundaMaTs, developed in 1998. Back then, its aim was to create an 'environmentally adapted transport system'. In 2006, LundaMaTs II was created, shifting the focus into all pillars of sustainability: environment, economy and society (the fourth pillar, institutions, seem already to be well-placed in Sweden). LundaMaTs II poses a vision for 2030 and outlines the tactical steps to reach improvements in six sectors: Pedestrian traffic, Bicycle traffic, Public transport, Road transport, Commercial transport and Urban planning.*

*"The drive behind Lund's ambitious plans was manifold. The city decided to minimise its carbon emissions, to enhance the feeling of community, to increase the health and well-being of its citizens, but also to reap the substantial benefits coming from a local sustainable transportation*

*system in relation to nearby municipalities. An overall assumption central to all this was that it is possible to have economic growth without an increase in the transportation of people and goods. This demonstrates a way of thinking that deviates from 'conventional' standards and embraces the systems thinking that surfaces from the new science of sustainability: the balancing between environment, economy and society in order to lead to a happy community.*

*"In order to fulfil its goals, the city invested ... into making – first and foremost – walking and cycling an attractive alternative. Paths for pedestrians and cycles are well-maintained, safe to use, attractive, and well-lit for the long winters. 'Unprotected road users' have full road priority over cars. At intersections between cycle paths and roads, bumps control the speed of the car, while the surface is coloured to designate that a cycle path is there. The city has also invested substantially in high-quality parking infrastructure for bicycles, especially near bus stops, while near the railway station it has managed to establish 3,800 parking places for bicycles. Cycle routes are clearly designated with coloured pole signs, but also on published maps ....*

*"Every year the system is evaluated through interviews with cyclists, hearing their voice and implementing measures ensuring that their presence on the road is safer, more attractive and always increasing. The consistent upward trends indicate that they are doing a good job: bicycles are omnipresent in Lund. Even during the winter, when the snow covers everything and the wind can get bitter, it is not uncommon to see elderly people on bikes, braving the weather and indicating the presence of a spirit that should be diffused everywhere; a spirit that comes not only through environmental awareness, but also through the municipality's decision to make cycling the best transportation alternative." {Cont. in #128}*

**Ref: Theo Haris, Carbusters 35, 2008**  
[www.carbusters.org/magazine/index.php?issue=35&go=feature4](http://www.carbusters.org/magazine/index.php?issue=35&go=feature4)

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

*"You know that you have been in Sweden too long when: You are no longer scared of Volvo drivers."*

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

## Travelling Exhibition

A twelve carriage train is touring sixty European cities with interactive displays on futuristic technologies that will change people's lives in the decades to come. The travelling exhibition includes solutions to depleting oil and gas such as renewable energy. **Ref: Schott Suntimes, 7/9/09**