

## Armstrong Creek, Victoria

*"The financial and economic benefits of incorporating sustainability into precinct development have been demonstrated in a new business case produced by Sustainability Victoria. The business case focuses on a planned urban, commercial and industrial development at Armstrong Creek. Located south of the city of Geelong, Armstrong Creek is one of the principal urban growth areas for the Geelong region. The area comprises 2,350 hectares of developable land. When complete, Armstrong Creek will include up to 22,000 homes in a range of densities, generate 22,000 permanent jobs in the two commercial and industrial precincts and support a population of around 54,000 people. ... The business case found that around \$466 million could be saved over 15 years compared to the traditional approach to precinct development."*

**Ref: Sustainability Victoria email, 21/10/09**

[www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/www/html/2844-armstrong-creek.asp](http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/www/html/2844-armstrong-creek.asp)



**'Armstrong Creek - they say it got divine planning approval.'**

## Counterpoint: Roads are for Cars!

*"Whoever made up the [NSW] Roads and Traffic Authority's 1990s slogan 'the road is there to share' has a lot to answer for. It's a big fat lie. The road is not there to share. Roads are built for cars. Pretending otherwise is unfair to motorists and cyclists alike. ... Most bike paths turned out to be little more than white paint on a road, with no room for a bike between parked cars and traffic. But they sent a signal to cyclists that motorists were somehow in the wrong. ... Bikes and pedestrians are allowed on to roads only under the good graces of motorists, and only when they do not pose a traffic hazard. The ideologues who have fostered the road-sharing lie must think a few dead cyclists and pedestrians are a small price to pay for getting cars off the road, because that is their ultimate aim: to make driving so unpleasant, slow, expensive and fraught with hazards that motorists give up. So far, all they have done is create a dangerous sense of entitlement among other road users. Harold Scruby and his Pedestrian Council are much to blame for the attitude that far from sharing the road, cars are there under sufferance. Pedestrians no longer stop and wait for cars to slow before launching themselves on to a zebra crossing. They stride out, like Moses parting the Red Sea, expecting cars to defy the laws of physics. The result is an increase in pedestrian injury."*

**Ref: Miranda Divine, SMH, 29/10/09**

## Transport Fee Survey in the US (Pt 2)

*"The five options tested were:*

- **Feebate:** Create a new tax and tax-rebate system on all new vehicles, based on how much they pollute. People buying a new vehicle that doesn't pollute much would receive a rebate of up to \$1,000, while people purchasing a new vehicle that pollutes a lot would pay a tax up to \$2,000. People who buy an average-emission vehicle would not pay additional fees or receive a rebate.

- **Flat vehicle registration fee:** Increase the state's vehicle registration fee from its then-current rate of \$31 per vehicle per year to \$62.

- **Green vehicle registration fee:** Increase the vehicle registration fee

*to an average of \$62 per vehicle per year, but vary the fee according to the amount of the vehicle's emissions. Vehicles that pollute more would pay higher fees, and lower emissions vehicles would pay lower fees.*

- **Flat mileage fee:** Eliminate the eighteen-cents-per-gallon state gas tax altogether and replace it with a fee based on the number of miles driven. Each driver would pay a fee of one cent per mile for every mile driven within the state. For example, every one hundred miles driven would incur a fee of one dollar. Vehicles would be equipped with an electronic means to keep track of miles driven and the fee would be paid when drivers buy gas.

- **Green mileage fee:** Create a variation on the mileage fee previously described, where the fee varies depending upon how much the vehicle pollutes. On average, vehicles would pay one cent per mile, but vehicles that pollute the least would pay less and vehicles that pollute the most would pay more per mile.

*"This selection of measures therefore covered three different transactions: (1) When a person purchases a new vehicle; (2) when owners register their vehicle annually; and (3) when drivers purchase fuel. Majorities of the respondents supported all three green taxes and fees tested. Even the green mileage fee, the least popular option, had 50% support. The green vehicle registration fee and feebate policy, by contrast, both had support levels over 60%."*

**Ref: Asha Agrawal, et al, Green Transportation Taxes and Fees: A Survey Of Californians, Mineta Transport Institute, June 2009**

[http://www.transweb.sjsu.edu/MTIportal/research/publications/documents/GreenTaxes%20\(Final%20with%20Cover\).pdf](http://www.transweb.sjsu.edu/MTIportal/research/publications/documents/GreenTaxes%20(Final%20with%20Cover).pdf)

### Senate Report Extracts (Part 3)

**3.23** *"The economic case for congestion charging is strong, and some peak organisations now support it. However it has been politically difficult because of the perception that it is 'yet another tax on motorists'."*

**3.24** *"One review of 25 examples around the world found that 'the common experience was that pricing was only acceptable if this objective could be seen as the solution to an already accepted problem, and a sufficiently widespread acceptance that other existing policies are not capable of solving it.' To win support for a proposal it was very important that the revenue was hypothecated to transport improvements. It was found that channelling revenue to public transport in particular increases public and political acceptance."*

**3.28** *"Submissions argued that planning to give more priority to public transport, and less priority to roads and cars, improves the the general urban amenity (that is, the pleasantness of the urban environment for activities other than driving). Car-limiting and public transport friendly planning policies economise the amount of land needed for roads and parking, land which may be put to more attractive uses; and they strengthen older activity centres which are usually more accessible by public transport and have a better environment for pedestrians: '[NSW Waverley] Council's transport policy aims to reduce the land area of the public domain devoted to cars: private motor vehicle movements, vehicular access and parking by 5% by 2010. This would free-up and allow the re-allocation of land to other uses: widening footpaths, cycleway, parks and community gardens. Where significant investment in public transport has taken place, such as the construction of the northern and southern rail lines or bus enhancements like the CAT in Central Perth within the more established areas of the region; the public transport network has contributed to the overall vitality and cohesion of the wider city. This has typically occurred through 'place making' or by reinforcing the role of existing activity centres and former strip developments'."*

**3.29** *"There is strong worldwide evidence that public transport improvements (particularly congestion-free railways or busways) increase nearby property values ...."*

**3.30** *"Better public transport should improve the viability of car share schemes, since it makes it*

*practical for more people to avoid owning a car by using a mixture of public transport and car share cars as needed. Less car ownership will reduce pressure on roads and parking space, particularly in inner suburbs."*

**3.31** *"Environmental goals, other than the urban amenity goals just mentioned, are -*

- *to reduce oil dependence; and*
- *to reduce transport greenhouse emissions."*

**3.32** *"These are closely related, since greenhouse emissions from transport are roughly proportional to fossil fuels burnt."*

**3.33** *"Public transport is relevant to these goals because it is more energy efficient than car transport. Urban buses, trams and trains use about a fifth to half as much fuel as cars per passenger kilometre, depending on the mode and the conditions ..."*

**3.34** *"Most of Australia's oil consumption (77%) is used for transport, and almost all transport is fuelled by oil (95%). Australia's reliance on imported oil is increasing ..."*

**3.37** *"Demand for oil is relatively inelastic because for its major use - transport - there are no easy substitutes. This means that a relatively small shortfall in supply can cause a large increase in price. This will increase the volatility of the price in response to small changes in supply when there is little spare capacity."*

**3.39** *"It is regrettable that the discussion papers for the Energy White Paper now under development do not mention the possibility of an unexpectedly early peak oil which might require active mitigation. Given the risks involved, it would be wise for Australia to pay more attention to 'peak oil' concerns, and to adopt strong policies to reduce its oil dependence in the long term. Public transport, because of its energy efficiency, has an obvious role to play in that."*

**Ref: Investment of Commonwealth and State Funds in Public Passenger Transport - Senate Transport Reference Committee, August 2009**  
[http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/rrat\\_ctte/public\\_transport/report/report.pdf](http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/rrat_ctte/public_transport/report/report.pdf) {Cont. in #133}

### Nurse on Two Wheels

*"Port Phillip [Melbourne] maternal and child care nurse, Denise Thompson, is leading the way in sustainable transport. Denise rides a bike to complete her home visits all around Port Phillip, and has been awarded the newest addition to the council's staff bike pool."*

**Ref: Divercity #45, June/July 2009**

## Europe's Trains Beat Planes

*"With the advent of high-speed trains, rail travel in Europe has become so popular that some intercity flight routes are being cancelled. Why would you fly from London to Paris, for example, and tackle Heathrow and Charles de Gaulle airport check ins plus security when you can catch a high-speed train that lands you right in the centre of town? Now about 90% of people travel by Eurostar between these two cities. And there's no longer any flights on the Paris-Brussels route. Many now also go by train between London and Brussels.*

*"High-speed trains are continually being introduced to new routes. 'If you are travelling less than 1500km, taking the train wins', says Rail Europe CEO Pierre-Stephane Austi. 'It gives the sensation that Europe is really becoming smaller. ...Rail has completely changed because of the high-speed system'. He predicts that in two years most of the shorter airline routes will be 'finished' in Europe. And because of this train stations have been recreated as bustling centres in their own right. 'They are modern, bigger, more beautiful, offering centres of real shopping and leisure'. ...*

*"Customers here can buy rail passes and the system has been made simpler to try to ensure they always get a seat. ... Austi says train travel is much more environmentally friendly than planes or cars. Less than 17kg of CO2 is emitted per person on a Paris to Frankfurt train journey as compared to 116kg by car or 67kg by plane for the same trip. He says the onboard services are also being improved, such as availability of organic meals and WiFi access."*

**Ref: AAP, The Age, 9/10/09**



An AVE Train in Spain

Photo: The Age 9/10/09

## Innovation to Reduce Diesel Emissions

*"The Mazda CX-7 uses a special man-made liquid similar to human urine to reduce emissions of oxides of nitrogen (NOx). The compound, called AdBlue, is a mixture of roughly one-third pure urea and two-thirds demineralised water. It is already widely used in the trucking industry in Europe and Australia and is common in diesel cars in Europe, but Mazda is the first to use the technology on a passenger vehicle in Australia. The technology, called selective catalyst reduction, involves injecting the urea-based liquid into the car's exhaust system to turn NOx emissions into harmless nitrogen and water. The car also has a particulate filter to reduce the amount of soot emitted by the vehicle. Diesel vehicles are a double-edged sword when it comes to environmental impact.*

*"They are more efficient than petrol engines, which means they emit less carbon dioxide, but they also pollute more. Particulate matter and NOx from diesel vehicles has been linked to a variety of health problems, including respiratory ailments and cancer. For that reason, diesels don't rank highly on the Government's Green Vehicle Guide for environmentally-friendly vehicles. Regulatory authorities in Europe and the United States are planning to introduce strict new limits on diesel emissions in the future, which will eventually make the urea-based systems mandatory equipment on all cars."* **Ref: Richard Blackburn & Bruce Newton, The Age, 14/10/09**

## More on Human Sacrifice

*"Bruce Corben, from Monash University Accident Research Centre, said slashing local road limits to 40 km/h would save lives as pedestrians hit at 40 km/h were 75% less likely to die than those hit at*

*50 km/h. 'All the evidence from other places around the world shows if you cut speed limits ... fatalities and injuries invariably head in the right direction', he said. But Dr Corben said politicians were reluctant to act because of a widespread community belief that it would increase travel times when in fact it would add just a minute to most journeys."* **Ref: Reid Sexton, The Age, 11/10/09**

**And Also ...** *"A VicRoads spokeswoman suggested the toll could be partly due to a surge in the number of people walking to work."* **Ref: Reid Sexton, The Age, 11/10/09**

### Making Transport Attractive (Part 8)

*“Somewhat paradoxically, the most extreme example of public transport-friendly land use comes from Curitiba, a very large (pop. 1.7 million) bus-only city. Moreover, Curitiba is the centre of Brazil’s national automobile industry and has one of the highest automobile ownership rates. The concept was developed by Jaime Lerner, an architect, three-time mayor and presently governor of Parana State. To make buses competitive with cars, all large roads have a double lane reserved for buses (to be used later for light rail). Access and exit is through an elongated shelter where all ticketing and waiting takes place. Multiple doors make the boarding and alighting very fast. The commercial speed of 32 km/h is similar to a metro. Patronage includes all levels of society and links all parts of the city, including the airport. This idea has been replicated in Bogota and Delhi. Another land-use feature is worth mentioning. To increase development along the corridors served by the transit routes, the city has sold development rights to realtors who are ready to build there. These development rights were acquired from owners of marginal land, such as dilapidated brownfield sites, gravel pits, wetlands, etc. The city acquired this land in order to transform it into city public parks and recreation grounds, while also increasing the density of land occupation along the development corridors.*

*“In 1985, the Zürich city authorities decided to introduce a blue zone (allowing the residents unlimited parking) after a survey of the number of public parking spaces occupied by non-Zürich commuting drivers. This blue zone covers the entire Zürich electoral district - everybody else is only allowed 90 minutes of free parking. This measure instantly created a new market for public transport. In addition, it increased the value of the city-owned parking concessions and encouraged suburbanites to return to the central city, pay their taxes, and invest in housing. Drug-riddled areas, such as the notorious ‘Needle Park’ next to the central station were rehabilitated. Shopkeepers soon realized that 90 minutes parking was ample for shopping if street parking was easy to find. Increased demand for commuter public transport triggered additional commuter rail (S-Bahn) services within the Zürich transport community. Last but not least, the scheme proved a lasting electoral success. Additional features include an efficient right of way in favour of trams and buses (coupled with a shortening of the traffic light cycle). The entire scheme gives a little more urban space to public transport and a little less to individual transport, but much more mobility to citizens.*

*“Over the years, the City of Ghent (pop. 500,000) has gradually reduced car traffic in its historic and commercial centre while keeping trams, making the latter very successful. The number of people over 65 shopping in the centre has been increased by giving them a free pass, and policies to limit traffic have found favour with voters. Freiburg in Germany (where apartments and car parking spaces are traditionally sold together) has a long-standing record of public transport and bicycle-friendly land use. There is an excellent tramway system and a large Bike & Ride multi-story bicycle park next to the main train and tramway station. In 1985, the city started developing a car-free quarter on the site of the former French army barracks. High density low-rise energy-efficient apartments for the middle class have proved a successful investment.”*

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

### No Desire for Streetcars in Brisbane

*“Yesterday [Queensland Premier Anna] Bligh ruled out a return of trams to Brisbane’s streets. ‘There have been many discussions about a return of trams and light rail to our city streets’, she said. ‘But outside of our busways, which were designed to accommodate light rail if needed, the time for trams in the CBD is over. The future of rail planning for the centre of the city is underground’.”*

**Ref: Tony Moore, Brisbane Times, 20/11/09**

*“Brisbane (inner high density area) will eventually have a surface light rail network (modern tram) I have no doubt. This will be additional to the heavy rail underground extensions. The light rail on the Gold Coast will be a catalyst for much change. I don’t take too much notice of the expert transport planners. Their best effort was removing the trams in 1969 as according to them roads was the way to go. They got that wrong then and have it wrong now.”* **Ref: Comment, Brisbane Times, 20/11/09**

*“The demise of Brisbane’s trams had nothing to do with transport planners at all but a Lord Mayor personally hell-bent on getting rid of them to make way for car traffic. Putting transport underground is a prohibitively expensive exercise. It is all the more so when politicians simply lack the balls to give public transport the priority above-ground it should have. So Anna Bligh now intends to waste even more taxpayers money with a totally unnecessary solution. Light rail might well be a major part of the overall solution but not underground. The money spent on digging enormous holes would fund a much more extensive above-ground system.”*

**Ref: Comment, Brisbane Times, 10/11/09**

## History of VicRoads (Part 2)

*"The CRB [Country Roads Board in 1913] began by conducting a two year investigation of Victoria's roads (which it found to be 'anything but satisfactory', according to its first annual report). It decided which roads would be declared main roads and liaised with local governments, who were to be operational and financial partners in building and maintaining main roads. The Board, in its first year, approved contracts for permanent works amounting in total to 94,876 pounds consisting of contracts placed directly by the Board and those placed by municipalities. The very first contract to be placed under the terms of the Country Roads Act was signed on 23 December 1913. Interestingly, the first annual report also commented on matters such as the false economy of cheap construction, maintenance methods, setting of standards, conservation and aesthetics. These ideas helped to shape road making in Victoria and are still reflected in the approach by VicRoads today.*

*"Its first investigations completed, the CRB hoped to begin major construction work. However, this plan was set back by the start of the First World War. The hostilities finally ended and, from 1918 to 1943, the CRB's brief evolved to include a number of other classes of road to its portfolio, including:*

- *Developmental Roads (1918)*
- *State Highways (1924)*
- *Isolated Settlers Roads (1925)*
- *Tourists' Roads (1936)*
- *Forest Roads and Stock Routes (1943).*

*"The most significant was State Highways, which were to be developed and maintained by the CRB to relieve municipalities of providing for long distance 'through traffic'. In the meantime, the increase in the number of motor vehicles had led to the establishment in 1921 of the Motor Registration Branch (MRB), as an adjunct to the Police Department. Originally a means of identifying vehicles, the MRB soon became a significant revenue collection agency.*

*"The competition for the carriage of freight between unregulated road vehicles and the regulated state railway was also becoming an issue, and in 1933, the Transport Regulation Board was established. After numerous investigations and enquiries, the Board determined that freight carrying vehicles should be regulated by a system of vehicle licensing which restricted a vehicle's operation by either the type of goods it could carry, or the area in which it could operate. This system remained in*

*force until the early 1980's. Other responsibilities undertaken by the Board during its existence included:*

- *the licensing of aircraft used for carrying passengers and goods for hire*
- *motor boat registration*
- *the licensing of tow trucks, taxis, hire cars and buses and the certification of their drivers.*

*"Nearly 50 years later, in 1981, the MRB was transferred from the Police Department to the TRB, bringing together the 'registration and licensing' duo that we are familiar with today, as well as the important regulation activities now part of VicRoads responsibilities with respect to vehicle mass and dimension." {To be continued in #132}*  
**Ref: About VicRoads, VicRoads Website, 2009**

## Interview with Oz Kayak (Part 2)

Oz Kayak started as an engineering cadet with the Victorian Roads Authority, later worked with Victorian Railways and today is passionate about active forms of transport, community health and urban design. Here continues our discussion:

**Stephen Ingrouille:** When and how did you start at the roads organisation?

**Oz Kayak:** I started as a cadet. I was the first foreign-born cadet - apart from some English people. I came from McKinnon High. I was 17 and they put me through university. It was called cadetship and we were bonded for five years. The engineering course in those days was four years. They looked after us and we got very good training. We were 'officer class', there was no secret about it. Ted Phipps and I took the side of 'the man' on a couple of occasions and we were slapped on the wrist for it. The cadets [selected] were the best, generally from middle class backgrounds. Later private schools were favoured, but in my time they were selected from state schools and from particular geographic areas. There was a lot of informal selection: 'who are the boys we want to cultivate to take responsibility for society?'

**SI:** So there was a long-term recruitment program to select people who could deliver a roads development plan?

**OK:** I would say there was, yes. And then they trained them. When I graduated, there was two weeks of indoctrination. We sat around, fellow cadets, and some people who were already employed, and having our mission explained to us. They didn't ask what our mission would be, our vision was told to us at the time: 'To build infrastructure, not wasting any money, not wasting

in resources, to put a top class operation in place'. We were the *Country Roads Board* (CRD) - we were set up to get roads and transport set up in regional areas, not in Melbourne.

**SI:** So the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) had responsibility inside Melbourne?

**OK:** But the MMBW was getting political flak. The planning map that we still have - that shapes Melbourne - is an MMBW map of land use, very generously providing for road ways. I think that team [MMBW] thought that they were going to build the roads, but they lost the battle, and were absorbed into the Roads Board.

**SI:** What year was this?

**OK:** In the mid 70s. We took over their mess. We had to finish the job of Alexandra Parade because they weren't allowed to, they were dismantled. Within the Roads Board we could see the future was changing, societies expectations had already changed [particularly following the first oil crisis in the early 1970s]. Believe it or not the environmental movement, after 1965, was already active.

**SI:** This is the objection to building freeways? ...

**OK:** ... In creek valleys. My team designed the F2 down the Merri Creek and we planned to line the whole lot with concrete but I knew that even though we were working overtime on Tuesdays and Thursdays that it was a gesture ...

**SI:** ... It was never going to be built? ...

**OK:** ... Yes. You see some of the bosses, despite how good they were, had a dilemma. They could probably read the signs, and they told me to shut up, but they were politically astute, and if they turned around and said 'hey, want a linear park down this creek' because this is what is happening elsewhere [overseas], they would not have survived very long [in their positions]. But they did invite a guy called Pellacoski, an urban landscape designer, out [from overseas] to speak. So the Roads Authority would foster these people - by now CRB had become the Roads Construction Authority (RCA) because we now had responsibility for all major roads. {To be continued in #133}

## Fixing the Skewed Tax System

*"It has become a popular tradition in some of Australia's most plush corporate suites. As the end of the financial year approaches, the keys to luxury company cars are tossed around the office, and staff are urged to use the car for a trip to the bush or the beach. The aim is to get the mileage up and take maximum advantage of the tax concessions on company vehicles. But the City of Sydney Council wants to reverse the tax bias in favour of public transport and cycling. In a submission to the Herald-backed Independent Public Inquiry into transport needs in Sydney, the council says train, tram, bus and bicycle riders should get tax concessions on travel costs. It suggests the policy could be introduced through concessional salary sacrifice or personal tax deductions of cycling equipment and public transport tickets. 'Australia's current tax system actively encourages people to drive but does not reward those who make sustainable transport choices by cycling or catching public transport', the Lord Mayor, Clover Moore, said. The Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics says traffic congestion costs Sydney about \$4 billion a year. It also estimates the health and environmental costs of transport to be \$1.4 billion a year. Cr Moore estimated that a city worker earning about \$80,000 a year could claim back \$315 on the \$1000 spent on a bike, helmet and lock. A commuter travelling to Sydney from Parramatta, earning \$80,000, would get \$630 back on a \$2000 annual yellow travel pass."*

**Ref: Andrew West, SMH, 28/10/09**

*"Canberra public servants could soon have a bike and bus pass included in their salary package*

*under a new plan the ACT Government has given approval for in principle ... provided the Australian Taxation Office approved it. ... ACT Ride To Work Day organiser Leon Arundell, from cycling lobby group Pedal Power ACT, welcomed the proposal, and urged all employers to consider similar schemes. 'That*

*would be a very good thing because there are so many different benefits from riding to work instead of driving a car', he said."*

**Ref: Victor Violante, Canberra Times, 28/10/09**



**Gyro-Wheel Car** Modern Mechanix, 1935