

Victoria's Urban Growth Boundaries

"The state government has scrapped plans to expand Melbourne's outer limits after a tax on land sales in growth areas was defeated in the upper house last night. Planning Minister Justin Madden told Parliament that without the tax the government was not prepared to move the boundary, which would free up more land for development. 'We've made it very clear, time and time again, it would not be responsible to move the Urban Growth Boundary without being able to fund that infrastructure', Mr Madden said." **Sarah-Jane Collins, The Age, 24/2/10**

Integrated Bike-Share in Bordeaux

"An entirely new integrated transit system with a new bike-sharing service started in Bordeaux, France with 1,545 bikes and 139 stations. ... What sets this new system apart from other 3rd generation bike-sharing services is that its design and implementation are integral parts of a new transit system for Bordeaux and its environs. Nine out of every 10 stations are at a transit stop. In the city the stations are close together, no more than 300 metres apart. Outside the city there are 40 stations. There is a new single Radio Frequency Identification Bordeaux transit card that's valid throughout the region. It also allows holders of the transit card to use the bikes at a substantially discounted subscription rate."

Ref: Bike-Sharing Blog, 22/2/10

<http://bike-sharing.blogspot.com/2010/02/bordeauxs-new-v-bike-sharing-flirts.html>

And Also ... False Advertising

I have occasion to go to Flinders, on the Mornington Peninsula on Sunday for an important engagement. Bus Route 782 is billed as Frankston – Flinders via Hastings. Viclink Trip Planner says that to get to Flinders on Sunday morning I need to leave on Friday for the approximately two hour trip from Frankston. A chap from Peninsula Bus Lines informed me that on Saturdays and Sundays the bus terminates at Balnarring and that he thought it was a long walk to Flinders (about 18 km)!

Ref: Stephen Ingrouille, 9/3/10



"And here's your complementary sandwich, map and compass."

Problems with the Grand Prix

"The Grand Prix problems for Victoria are getting worse – in an election year, with the costs and the hype out of control and the loss of the naming rights sponsor we will be hearing more about this problem. Save Albert Park claims the taxpayers supported the 2009 F1 Grand Prix in Albert Park with a total of \$86.631 million, when all subsidies are included. To put this in perspective, last year's Crawford Report into Federal funding of sport found that the Commonwealth spent just \$90 million annually in support of all sports in Australia. I ask: do you think it's wise or fair to fund one car race experiencing declining public, sponsor and spectator support with a similar amount of taxpayer money as the Federal Government spends on all sports in Australia?"

Ref: Peter Logan, Media Release, 20/2/10

"The Grand Prix event promotes and glorifies fast and aggressive driving. At the same time there is heavy promotion of alcohol at the event. Is there a direct link between such promotion and hoon driving? Overseas academic studies link motor racing with increased accidents on public roads. To quote from one of them (Warn, Tranter, & Kingham, 2004), 'young males who were more interested in legal motorsport events were more likely to engage in risky driving behaviours'. Here is an urgent case for independent research on such an association. Under the Grand Prix corporation's Education in Motor Sport program, schools are offered free entry on one of two days in race week. Perhaps the government should ponder the parallels between the Top 10 suburbs and towns for the impoundment of hoon's cars and the secondary schools which figure consistently in Save Albert Park's data on school-group attendance at the F1GP in recent years."

Ref: Peter Logan, Media Release, 24/2/10

Secondary schools attending the Melbourne F1GP	Top 10 suburbs and towns for hoon impoundments since July 2006
St Albans (3)	1. St Albans
Werribee (1)	2. Werribee
Hoppers Crossing (1)	3. Hoppers Crossing
Shepparton (2)	4. Shepparton
Frankston (2)	5. Frankston
Mill Park (1)	6. Mildura
Craigieburn (1)	7. Mill Park
Reservoir (1)	8. Craigieburn
Sunbury (1)	9. Reservoir
	10. Sunbury; Meadow Heights

Port Phillip Bay Ferry Status

I conducted a three-year international study into the viability of a ferry service on Port Phillip Bay and produced a 170 page report last year. In short, the findings were that:

- There is significant potential for a ferry service subject to it being designed around a combination of tourists, commuters and incidental (ie occasional) travellers;
- Due to the size, depth and weather patterns of the bay, and the lack of existing infrastructure, the only viable vessel would be 2nd-generation hovercraft (ie quieter vessels).
- Any ferry service must complement not compete against existing public transport and tourist services.

So where do we stand at the moment:

- The media sense the public interest and are eager to get information on any ferry service;
- The Department of Tourism have been keen on the idea of ferries for years (and see the obvious tourism potential) but have neither money nor jurisdiction;
- Parks Victoria, which has some jurisdiction, does not seem keen on co-operation. This is strange as there are many parks around (or near the bay) which could be serviced by hovercraft with health and social benefits to the community;
- Department of Transport, which one would expect to have a role in supporting a Bay ferry service that linked and supported existing modes of transport has been non-committal, neither damning the idea of a ferry service nor being particularly proactive. They did commission a report on a limited ferry service – it had a freeway on the front cover which gives you an idea of the quality of the material inside. DoT gives the impression that setting up a ferry service is all too hard and it would take too long to get funds through the budgetary cycle.
- The power-bloc within the Government is still obsessed with building freeways – note the Frankston By-pass for \$750 (one tenth of which would deliver a good ferry service) and the \$20 million for fairy lights on the \$1.39 billion West Gate Bridge upgrade. Also the accumulated taxpayer funded losses for the first twelve (to 2007) Albert Park Grand Prix is \$125 million
- Some of the ten bay-side Local Councils have been supportive which is important as they have some jurisdiction, particularly over the landside developments. However Local Councils tend not to look past their boundaries – particularly towards the water – and the benefits that could accrue to all the bay-side councils. This is certainly relevant because eventually petrol prices will rise back to their previous levels (and higher) which will have a detrimental effect

on tourism businesses within a day's drive of the city centres.

- The Federal Government which proudly boasts that it is spending billions on road upgrades have not been particularly forthcoming with funding for innovative transport projects.
- There is a consortium keen to build hovercraft in Victoria – potentially in the Geelong region with which would be good for local employment and export – but there has not been much State Government support and private funding is difficult to obtain due to the world financial crisis.
- A number of major transport operators have indicated that they would be keen to operate a ferry service on Port Phillip Bay.

In summary, it's business-as-usual. Most Victorians have not noticed the bay despite the fact that our two largest cities stretch almost around it. State Government departments and some Local Councils are not being proactive. Public support and comment has been overwhelmingly positive particularly from those that have lived interstate or overseas. Perhaps the next step is garner public support especially from those in the active transport (walking and cycling) and tourism industries around Port Phillip Bay.

Ref: Stephen Ingrouille, 9/3/10

Victorian By-Election and PT

Fran Kelly: *"A 12.3% swing away from Labor at the Altona by-election. ... It appears that the Labor Government has failed in two key areas: fixing the public transport system and tackling violent crime."*

Mike Woods: *"Statistics show that most Victorians use the car as their main means of transport but it seems that polling, and Saturday's result, shows that many commuters are angry that they don't have much of an alternative to the car and are running out of patience with the State Government seeming inability to fix the State's chronic public transport woes."*

Premier John Brumby: *"The two issues that jump out are the issues of transport and ... violence. ... We got the message on that and we'll see plenty of action in these areas over the coming weeks and months."*

Ref: ABC Radio National Breakfast, 15/2/10
www.abc.net.au/rn/breakfast/stories/2010/2819434.htm

"Letters to The Age took Brumby to task for his post-poll pledge to move more quickly on crime and public transport problems in the nine months to the election. What had he and the government been doing for the past 10 years, readers demanded to know."

Ref: Paul Austin, The Age, 18/2/10

Melbourne's First Green Lord Mayor?

"Whatever the explanation, his actions could lead some to believe that Robert Doyle is Melbourne's first 'green' lord mayor. In a little over 12 months the man who began with a pro-car agenda and whom many environmentalists feared would set Melbourne back decades has morphed into a paragon of environmental virtue. With influential urban planner Rob Adams by his side, Doyle has championed everything from a more compact city to greater protection and encouragement for bike riders and pedestrians and cleaner, greener office buildings. Bicycle Victoria is singing his praises and Environment Victoria was pleased at the about-face on Swanston Street and his push for more environmentally efficient buildings. ... People should be encouraged not to drive into the city and builders should consider new inner-city residential buildings without car parking spaces, he now says. ..."

"Doyle may not have followed the example of London's Conservative mayor Boris Johnson and begun riding to work every day, but he says he catches the No. 1 tram as often as he can, despite being entitled to a council car. ... As Doyle has said on many occasions, much of his role is about influencing debate rather than making policy decisions that affect the day-to-day lives and budgets of people. ... But there is another side to this transformation. Doyle's greenness is not just good for the environment; it is a good example of his political prowess. He has led a mostly unified council despite its eclectic mix, and he hasn't spooked the horses in the business community, despite his new green agenda."

Ref: Jason Dowling, The Age, 12/2/10

Melbourne - No. 3 for Liveability?

"Define liveable.... The Economist Intelligence Unit obviously hasn't witnessed the fiasco known as the Public Transport network in Melbourne or the uncontrolled sprawl on the fringe without major commitments other than the so called 'transport plan' to the delivery of much needed infrastructure in the suburbs – to make communities – not just estate after estate. Housing is unaffordable, we're scaring off overseas students... the list goes on and on. ... The Canadian cities on the list get federal funding for public transport and other infrastructure. Where's our share given that 80% of us live in cities? Show us the money Mr Rudd so we can properly build your 'great big Australia'."

Ref: 'Intrigued', The Age, 12/2/10

Melbourne's Road Building Priority

"VicRoads is seeking \$15 million for a feasibility study for the road [Minister Peter] Batchelor swore wasn't even on the government's radar. On the other side of Melbourne, the government wants to fast-track Westlink, a road tunnel linking the Port of Melbourne with West Footscray and, ultimately, the Western Ring Road in Sunshine West. As usual, the further incremental transformation of Melbourne into a junior version of Los Angeles is being undertaken without a proper cost-benefit analysis to see whether there are cheaper, better public transport alternatives or a public environmental impact study. They aren't even on the radar." **Ref: Ken Davidson, The Age, 15/2/10**

"I live in the west. We already have the huge freeway. It's a parking lot. We have the big wide roads and the crap bus service. We have the train network that was built in the thirties. All the plans of the big roads lobbyists have been done here. Western ring road etc. All the money has gone there. Result? One car per adult, the compulsory outer suburbs tax. The dominance of huge roads with no provision for walking or even cycling makes the environment hostile to people. So the people retreat to the malls and their homes. This is the case in the great state of California as well of course ... A place where people get into the car to drive to the other side of the parking lot. How that is something to aspire to I do not know. ... I'd still prefer to see at least a little effort made to make our city function for people rather than be totally subservient to the needs of cars and trucks. Roads have had the lion's share of the money for a bit too long. The spend needs to be balanced. No recent freeway build has made any lasting improvement to traffic flow. It's a colossal waste."

Ref: 'Steve', The Age, 15/2/10

"Remember folks we are going to have 7-8 million people in Melbourne in the coming years. We need to spread the traffic congestion around so we all feel part of the city."

Ref: 'Why101', The Age, 15/2/10

"The government's feeble and belated response to the problems of overcrowding on our all-too-few trains was to add one train to Melbourne's lines last year. It couldn't even deliver that. You may recall that in the dog days of December that the solitary train was rolled out for the cameras and taken for a ride. But it was the voters that were being taken for a ride - the train went straight back to the rail yards at Newport. And that is where it has been ever since. The train is not ready for service. At anywhere up to 410 days late, it must be our latest train ever."

Ref: Michael Epis, The Age, 15/2/10

Active Travel & Adult Obesity (Part 1)

"A recent international study funded by the UK Medical Research Council and the British Heart Foundation amongst others followed the health of almost 1 million people from middle age. It found a strong association between body mass and mortality, with obesity itself a strong predictor of life expectancy. Moderate obesity (BMI 30-35) was found to be associated with three years' loss of life, while those with extreme obesity (BMI 40-50) lost 10 years – equivalent to the impact of lifetime smoking. This increased overall risk of premature death through obesity is a product of increased risks for the many specific health problems with which it is associated:

- 90% of Type 2 diabetics have a BMI of 23+;
- 85% of hypertension is associated with excess weight;
- Hypertension increases risk of stroke and other conditions such as left ventricular hypertrophy
- Atherosclerosis progressively develops above a BMI of 21. Obesity is a contributing factor to cardiac failure in at least 10% of patients;
- Coronary artery disease: 2.4 fold risk in obese women and 2 fold in obese men under the age of 50;
- 10% of all cancer deaths among non-smokers are related to obesity;
- obesity is also a significant factor in liver and gall bladder disease, loss of male and female reproductive function, breathing difficulties, and osteoarthritis amongst older people. ...

"The ways in which we choose to travel impact on our health, weight and well-being. Car use has risen steadily over the past 30 years, while modes of travel such as walking and cycling that involve significant energy expenditure have declined. Until the 21st century, however, little academic attention was paid to the links between these trends and the correspondingly sharp rise in obesity. Australian research has highlighted how, since the 1980s, the proportion of overweight, obese and inactive people had increased in close parallel with greater car reliance. Similarly, research from China – where there has been a rapid growth in car ownership from the late 1980s – reported that adults who purchased cars or motorbikes to travel to work doubled their likelihood of becoming overweight, in comparison to those who made no change in their mode of transportation.

"The growth in car ownership in the second half of the last century was also accompanied by radical changes in land use patterns to accommodate increased car use. Car friendly environments, however, have not proven to be friendly to human health; the opposite, in fact, is

true. Evidence suggests that a car-dominated infrastructure makes active forms of transportation and healthy food options relatively inconvenient, and more costly in terms of time and money than less healthy alternatives. This evidence is corroborated by research highlighting the importance of land-use densities in enabling everyday journeys to be walked or cycled trips. When neighbourhoods were classified as high-walkable or low-walkable according to density and layout, residents in the former took more steps per day than those in the latter, and walked more for transport.

"The fact that our environments influence our behaviour is now accepted and made explicit in official guidance such as that from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) on 'Promoting and creating built or natural environments that encourage and support physical activity'. A direct association between the built environment and obesity has been reported through a number of studies in both the US and Australia. Mixed use developments, at high density, with good connectivity for walking and cycling significantly affect body weight and reduce the risk of weight gain.

"Analysis of national travel survey data from countries in North America, Europe and Australasia found that countries with the highest levels of active transportation had the lowest obesity rates. Research on commuting, for example, suggests that those who walk or bicycle to work are significantly negatively associated with overweight and obesity. US research found that each additional kilometre walked per day is associated with a 4.8% reduction in the likelihood of obesity, whereas each additional hour spent in a car per day is associated with a 6% increase in the likelihood of obesity. The amount of time spent in cars appears to be a key factor and has been reported in a number of studies." {Cont. in #146}

Ref: Sustrans (UK) Information Sheet FH14

http://www.sustrans.org.uk/assets/files/AT/Publications/PDFs/FH14_activetravel_and_obesity.pdf

Australian Car Emissions

"Australia's peak car industry body says national carbon dioxide emissions from new cars have dropped to their lowest level on record. The Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries says average CO2 emissions fell almost 2 per cent last year to 218 grams per kilometre. It says emissions in Europe are much lower, but they do not factor in vehicles like commercial utes."

Ref: ABC News, 16/2/10

www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/02/16/2820592.htm

Investment in Public Transport in Tas

“Premier David Bartlett said today that a \$16 million, four year investment was only the beginning of a long term strategy to further improve passenger transport for all Tasmanians. ‘\$16 million for Metro Tasmania is our first down payment on revolutionising public transport and changing the way people perceive it. This funding will enable the modernisation of the bus fleet, and the roll out of a program of initiatives aimed at increasing passenger numbers. This is about getting people to swap their car for the bus, by making public transport a more appealing option. By increasing comfort and safety, addressing the needs of specific groups like the elderly and the disabled, making trips quicker and providing better customer service and ticketing – we can encourage more people to take up public transport. ... This will help guide how the Government invests in transport for generations, and this \$16 million for Metro is one part of that thinking’. Mr Bartlett said the funding will support initiatives including:

- *The development of a network of park & ride facilities with work well underway for Kingston;*
- *a Journey Planner option using Google Transit and the downloading of timetables to mobile phones as part of improving information;*
- *A trial of Service Officers on buses to help passengers and provide advice;*
- *CCTV on buses to improve safety;*
- *Work on bus priority and bus pre-emption at traffic lights to shorten travel times;*
- *Purchasing new buses and a potential trial of hybrid buses;*
- *A major upgrade of off-road infrastructure, including new well-lit bus shelters, reflective signs and the trial of bikes on buses;*
- *investigating the expansion of Greencard ticketing;*
- *Market research to identify factors which would lead to increased patronage.*

“Mr Bartlett said that the Government would establish an Urban Transport Advisory Group, bringing together both community stakeholders and experts in passenger transport services to look at how the vision in the Framework could be further developed. ‘The decisions we make today about our transport system will determine how we are able to meet our travel needs in the future – for work, education, social and recreational opportunities. The Tasmanian Urban Passenger Transport Framework recognises the critical relationship between urban planning and transport planning. It identifies the importance of strengthening our public transport system, but also looks at how the development of our residential areas and activity centres can assist

in delivering good public transport options. The Framework takes an integrated approach and describes key areas on which we need to focus in order to develop a better transport system for all Tasmanians.’” Ref: Media Release, 30/1/10

Victorian Planning Authority Call

“The Property Council is urging the [Victorian] Government to establish a single planning authority, responsible for strategic, land use, infrastructure and transport planning, to bring certainty back into the planning scheme.”

Ref: Vic Division Media Release, 1/3/10

Interview with Oz Kayak (Part 15)

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:

SI: Coming back to the bike share scheme proposed for Melbourne. It appears that they looked overseas and particularly at Paris but I must say I'm surprised that they thought that this was relevant for the Melbourne CBD. Even though some streets have been calmed there are many streets down which you would not want to ride a bike, like Victoria, King, and Spencer Streets.

OK: Well if we look at the Transport Plan, there are millions of dollars to go into new bike paths and the bottom line would be that car traffic and bicycle traffic are separated. Just as we accept as the norm now that car traffic and pedestrian traffic is separated unless the car is doing less than 5kph. Somewhere along the line the difficult decision will have to be made about speed control on cyclists. There is already speed control and controversy that cars should travel at 30kph in some residential areas at certain times. The RACV has always been hostile to those sorts of things but they're not hostile now. So there's a culture shift. I think VicRoads, State Government, and Department of Transport, do expect that community expectations change and then the laws will change but there still needs to be a lot of education for all users of the road network.

SI: There is also an argument that slowing down traffic can speed up travel ...

OK: ... True ...

SI: ...Because by slowing down traffic you get more people walking, more people cycling, therefore you have less traffic, and if you take away curb side parking: lanes and trams are not blocked by cars trying to park. {Cont. in #146}

More on Tram Freighters

"I have just read Transport Newsletter #143, which included an article on freight trams. Melbourne Tramways [the M&MTB] used to run a daily freight tramcar service for internal freight deliveries. The freight car was garaged in the Preston Tramway Workshops store overnight. During the day, it went on its round throughout the system delivering materials for tramcar maintenance (brake shoes and other tram maintenance parts) to each tram depot: East Preston, North Fitzroy, Kew, Malvern, Camberwell, Glenhuntly, South Melbourne, Essendon and Brunswick. The advantage of the Freight Car was that it could run up and down the depot 'roads' and drop off [items] right where they were needed. It returned to the Preston Work-shops at around 1530h, and was loaded up with supplies for the next day. This service probably began when the Preston Tramway Workshops was built and came into operation around 1926. We must also note that the VR [Victorian Railways] operated parcels as well as goods services. In the electrified suburban area, a number of electric single car parcels vans provided a parcels service every weekday."

Ref: Louis Fouvy, 24/2/10

More on Canadian Tar Sands

"There is no possibility of shutting down the tar sands mining as long as Americans and everybody else with money remain addicted to flying and driving. Imagine what will happen when Saudi Arabia can no longer export enough oil to satisfy both China and the US. Climate campaigners should learn from the War on Drugs. We keep losing the War on Drugs because going after the dealers is pointless if we do nothing to reduce demand. Shell, OPEC, and the other oil majors are like the drugs cartels. As long as demand for their product exists, someone will be there to supply it from whatever source is available. The only way we are going to leave an appreciable fraction of recoverable reserves in the ground is if we see a massive shift in the average person's preferences. We must convince people that burning fuel to push metal boxes around the ground and through the sky is largely unacceptable. The average person must choose to slash his or her consumption of motorized travel by something like 90%, and then power the rest with something that doesn't burn. Until that happens, we might as well try to stop the drugs trade by protesting against the drug dealers."



Masdar City

"I might add that demand for oil is incredibly inelastic in the short term. A doubling of fuel cost only reduces short term demand by a few percent. This means the tar sands are very significant even though they 'only' account for a small percentage of world oil extraction. It would take a very large increase in the price of oil to kill off the portion of present and future demand which could only be met with tar sands and other dirty sources. This is just a reflection of the average person's inflexible determination to keep enjoying a personal automobile and access to air travel. Take a poll of your friends to see who would be willing to travel less, and by how much. The only way to force most people to travel less is to price them out of being able to afford it." Ref: 'Teratornis', Reader's Comments, The Guardian, 18/1/10

More on Masdar City in Abu Dhabi

"Masdar City, whose design and technologies are still being determined, will house up to 50,000 people in a car-less city connected to the rest of Abu Dhabi by a planned underground metro system. A previous 2016 date for completion was recently discarded, with 2020 now a better bet. In a departure from Abu Dhabi's heavily air-conditioned buildings (which, along with massive desalination plants, give the emirate its huge per

capita greenhouse gas emissions), Masdar has gone back to traditional desert Arabian building methods: channelling wind through the city and careful use of shade to take the sting out of the desert sun, with average

maximum summer temperatures near 40° Celsius. The first residents of the city – about 150 students at the Masdar Institute of Science and Technology, which is affiliated with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology – are scheduled to move in during September, with the rest of the city being built in stages to 2020. The city will be powered by solar energy, with almost all the roofs in the 6sq km city covered in solar panels, and other renewable sources. One of the biggest innovations will be driverless cars, which will provide free solar-powered public transport around the city from September. Whether the Emiratis, whose love of huge, fast, petrol-guzzling machines is obvious on any local highway, will embrace this is another matter. According to a survey by UAE newspaper The National, last week, three-quarters of Emiratis are opposed to price hikes in the country's cheap petrol, which sells at about 50c a litre, to fight climate change."

Ref: Matt Chambers, The Australian, 25/1/10