

Wrong Signals

We have been critical of the Victorian Parliament for sending the wrong signals on stamp duty on cars (see #22 & #23 & also Transport Extra #3 and now we note this item: *"Expense figures released yesterday by the cash-strapped Melbourne City Council, which in May sacked 26 staff to cut costs, show ... the council paid \$10,379 in the last financial year on petrol and eTag charges for the low-profile councillor Carl Jetter to drive from his home in Ashwood to the Town Hall, even though he works full-time in his private business from an office next door.... Cr Jetter ... defended spending public money to get to his private workplace, saying he was legally entitled to claim local travel expenses when visiting the Town Hall for council-related work. 'I am just spending what I am entitled to,' he said."*

Ref: Clay Lucus The Age 28/7/07

Note for the future: Catch a train at either Holmesglen on the Glen Waverly Line or Ashburton on the Alamein Line. Change at Parliament, Melbourne Central or Flinders Street. Catch a tram or walk to the Town Hall. If this is not convenient, work really hard to bring Melbourne's public transport system up to an acceptable level. Annual fee is \$1094 (Zone 1). Use the balance of the \$10K to fund part of an investigation into a new tram/metro system in Russell Street.

Political Transition and Transport

"Frustration with poor services has now passed to city commuters, yet most projects promised in last year's \$10.5 billion transport plan are years from completion. Steve Bracks set a goal to get 20 per cent of all trips on public transport by 2020 but the emphasis has so far been on roads. Elsewhere in the world, city transport planners are turning to cleaner, more efficient forms of transport. The Government needs to make a clearer stand about where its transport priorities lie."

Ref: Steve Moynihan The Age 28/7/07

"Mr Brumby [the new Premier of Victoria] has promised a decisive Government that will keep the promises made at the last election and develop new policies to improve education, the health system and public transport. 'They'll make our state a better state, a stronger state, a better economy,' he said. 'They'll mean more opportunities and a better lifestyle for the people of Victoria'."

Ref: ABC News 30/7/07

From the Minister

At an industry conference in Cairns at the beginning of this month, I asked the Federal Environment Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, the following question: 'What are the barriers to getting the Federal Government to implement the House of Representatives Standing Committee Report on Sustainable Cities [see # 29] and in particular on Federal funding of sustainable transport?' Here are some extracts from his response:

"We are considering the report ... the big idea in the report was to establish a sustainability charter and a sustainability commission and to condition grants to the States on the basis that they achieve certain sustainability outcomes such as a reduction in automobile dependency, for example; now that is a big idea and its a great idea at a conceptual level but the practicalities of it are still being debated....In terms of the Federal Government funding public transport ... there is no more passionate advocate of urban mass transit than me ...now the one virtue of public transport is that when the train is late at Linfield Station people know it is Morris Yemma's fault and not John Howard's, so there is clear line of accountability ... but the minute we get involved in that we will end up owning the problem ... but the neglect of urban mass transit has been incredible, you know if you look at a city like Sydney...in the last ten years or so there must be 12 -15 billion dollars or so invested in tunnels and big roads ... and the city has become more congested. So what the Federal Government tries to do, through AusLink, which is an enormous transport infrastructure fund, is focus on roads that go from one centre to another ... like the ring road in Sydney, we put money into the M7 ... but leave the local urban mass transit to the States and in some cases local government."

Stop Press

At 1pm today, the Victorian Premier will announce that the existing franchise contracts with Connex and Yarra Trams will be extended until November 2009. This will allow time to set up a competitive tender process for future system operation. The government will continue to own the system.



More Copenhagen-Style Bike Lanes

"Melbourne City Council has also reported a huge increase in cycle traffic entering the CBD, with bikes accounting for 7.9 per cent of all vehicles in March, up from 3.9 per cent in 2006. Overall, it is estimated that 4700 riders enter the CBD each morning." "A feasibility study has begun into putting [Copenhagen-style] lanes on East Melbourne's busy Albert Street, and also on Rathdowne and Queensberry streets in Carlton."

"The City of Port Phillip and Bicycle Victoria have planned for a two-way Copenhagen lane on the north side of Fitzroy Street as part of the council's designs for St Kilda foreshore.

The lane would then connect with a new bike route and run the length of Albert Park before connecting to new Copenhagen lanes along Cecil Street in South Melbourne." **Ref: Clay Lucus and Steve Moynihan The Age 28/7/07**



New Oil Flow

"New Zealand Oil & Gas Ltd is celebrating the bringing of its Tui oil field off the Taranaki coast of NZ's North Island into production. The company said the first oil flowed from the field overnight. This was three years after Tui was discovered. Tui is 50km offshore in the Taranaki Basin and has an estimated 27.9 million barrels of oil. The intention is to ramp up production to 50,000 barrels of oil a day."

Ref: The Age 31/7/07 Sounds good but at the stated rate of production the field will only last 558 days or about a year and a half!

And Also ...

"Heard at Earl's Court: 'The train at platform three is not going to Parsons Green but to Richmond. The train approaching platform two is also not going to Parsons Green but to Ealing Broadway. These trains are not going to Parsons Green despite what the signal men think.'

Ref: www.jokefile.co.uk/numerical_order/1214.html

Electric Vehicles in Nepal

Following items on Took-Tooks in Sri Lanka [#23 & #24], and the wish for electric versions, one of our engineers, **Suraj Neupane**, prepared this article:

Commercially viable electric three-wheelers were introduced in Nepal in 1996 after the successful operation of seven such vehicles for six months in 1993. Currently, more than 600 electrical three-wheelers run on the streets of Kathmandu catering for more than 120,000 commuters each day. There is a million dollar private investment in this sector and the vehicles are owned by more than 100 entrepreneurs. There are plans to introduce electric four-wheelers as well, and test operations are being conducted on three different four-wheelers. A typical three-wheeler costs around A\$12,750 while the costs for four-wheelers which are currently being tested vary from A\$20,000 to A\$27,300.

The running cost of such vehicles is comparatively low at around 18c per kilometre and these vehicles are capable of running up to 100 km a day. Battery charging stations can be found in different locations in Kathmandu. There are many visible benefits of these electric vehicles (EV) including: zero pollution (no PM10 emission); less GHG emission (as they utilize hydro-power for charging); local value addition (local assembly and fuel i.e. electricity); no petroleum requirement (saving in foreign currency); generation of local employment and health benefits. Another important aspect of the EV industry is that it has been employing many female drivers!

Nepal imports petroleum products from India, but the daily import quota of petroleum products to Nepal was curtailed by India recently creating a huge gap in demand and supply. This has led to long queues of vehicles requiring petrol at stations in Kathmandu. This in turn has increased the demand for EVs and has provided food for thought to the Nepalese government to further develop this sector. EV entrepreneurs are looking forward to expanding use of these vehicles in schools, offices, tourist services and private uses. They are planning to introduce these vehicles in other major cities of Nepal too. However, lot still needs to be done to develop this sector as EV are not considered as a mainstream transport sector.

Online: www.goingsolar.com.au/transport

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