

Review of 2007

This Newsletter started life in mid-2006 as a means of promoting commuter ferries on Port Phillip Bay in Victoria. It has since morphed into something else and now has subscribers from around the world. It is on-forwarded by a number of organisations or republished on their websites. It appears to have found a niche, condensing some of the plethora of information on sustainable transport in what I hope is a practical and sometimes humorous manner. I want to thank all of the people who have sent in articles or background material and particularly Andrew McKay who provides the cartoons. Also I must not forget Isabella who proof-reads each issue.

The year started with the drafting of a document proposing a Sustainable Cities Authority¹. The idea was then hawked around some of the federal politicians where it soon became clear that the House of Representatives Standing Committee on the Environment had spent several years on Sustainable Cities including a proposal for a Sustainable Cities Commission. So I now knew my draft – which took five days – was on the right track and just in time for the federal election poney campaign which started at the beginning of the year. But I was warned that sustainable design of cities and sustainable transport was not an election issue, simply because it was not being talked about enough.

And so it transpired. With the election held in November the result was: Roads ? Billions; Sustainable Cities ? Zero. This is of real concern as it will take 50 years or more to reshape our cities to make them more sustainable and yet we are hardly scratching the surface. In fact, increasing road funding and reducing stamp duty on large cars (in Victoria) has sent the opposite message.

The lack of progress on the commuter ferries for Port Phillip Bay has been disappointing because of all the unnecessary procrastination at a time when we need to seek climate change solutions. On the other hand we are starting to make some progress around the idea of Ultra Light Rail for areas of lower density.

Peak Oil and the relationship between oil and war have been constant themes this year, as has the real cost of parking and the advantages of car sharing and car pooling. I certainly hope that you have enjoyed reading the Newsletter as much as I have enjoyed preparing it.

¹ See www.goingsolar.com.au/transport

Solar Taxi

"Shall we wait until everything is gone and the climate has been destroyed? Or is it possible to create a world in which renewable energies make a future worth living in? 75% of the world's CO2 emission could be avoided by using solar energy." Louis Palmer and his team are driving around the world in a 'solar taxi' with *"just one aim: at least 50,000 km, 50 countries, 15 months and 5 continents."*



They are presently in Bali but when they get to Melbourne they are keen to have events organised to coincide with their visit. See: www.solartaxi.com/mission/

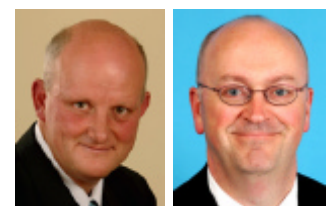
Rail Petition in Victoria

A Doncaster line will make travel **faster** and reduce traffic chaos. It will encourage **greener** travel by providing a more environmentally friendly alternative to cars. Sign the petition before 31 December 2007 and you could win one of three Metlink monthly tickets. See: www.pt4me2.org.au/petition/index.php



Sustainable Transport Champions

OK, so I've wanted to put these photos side-by-side all year! Tim Heenan (left) is Mayor of the Shire of Yarra Ranges and Professor Graham Currie is Chair in Public Transport, Institute of Transport Studies at Monash University. Tim, elected as Mayor for a second term, is a keen supporter of innovative transport solutions such as the use of Ultra Light Rail.



Moving Sustainable Car Use Forward

Australians' dependence on, and addiction to, their motor vehicles is an ongoing reality for many, due to the dispersed nature of our capital cities and the lack of adequate public transport alternatives. In past issues of the *Transport Newsletter* Darren McClelland has put forward an option to facilitate car pooling by commuters through local government. In order to progress this idea and to encourage responsible car use, Darren is seeking expressions of interest from people and organisations to join him in establishing the Australian Eco-Car Foundation. The mission of the Foundation might include:

- Engaging with all levels of Government to arrange more effective car pooling.
- Lobbying the Federal Government to reform Fringe Benefits Tax to reduce absurd incentives to drive more, to reduce concessional import duty arrangements on 4WDs and to encourage local small and hybrid car production.
- Raising public awareness of all the costs of driving cars, particularly for short trips.
- Seeking funding on projects including the nourishment of car pooling and the conduct of research on social behavioural issues inhibiting a reduction in car reliance.

Interested parties can contact Darren at blueymccllelland@yahoo.com or (03) 9370 2837

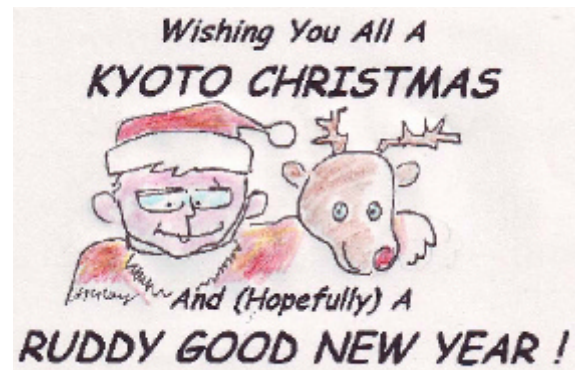
Position Vacant

Public Transport Advocacy Position with Metropolitan Transport Forum

The Metropolitan Transport Forum is seeking an enthusiastic, politically savvy, clear thinking project co-ordinator to help implement its innovative and dynamic 'Public Transport for a Change - PT4Me2' project. The main role of the position is to encourage and support MTF member Councils, in particular Mayors and CEOs, to actively participate in strong advocacy for public transport. The position is a 3 day a week contract position initially for a period of six months. For further information and a position description contact Susie Strain MTF executive officer on mtf@mtf.org.au 0414 893 926 or Cr Janet Rice, Chair MTF cr.rice@maribyrnong.vic.gov.au 0439 363 846. You can also check out the PT4Me2 campaign and download the position description from the website www.PT4ME2.org.au Applications close Friday 4 January 2008.

Online: www.goingsolar.com.au/transport

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More on Bike Paths

Copenhagen and Denmark have the most favourable modal split of low-car and high-bicycle use in Europe, not because of bicycle infrastructure, but because of the high (tax) cost of car ownership. Compare with the Netherlands: their cycle infrastructure is also highly developed and cycling is popular - but so is car driving while public transport has a relatively low share. One can say that the separate bicycle infrastructure in these countries is a way of accommodating the masses of cyclists rather than trying to attract them. Often, bike traffic is so intense, that the cycle lanes protect the cars from cyclists and not the other way around. And the traffic within the bike lane can be pretty wild, creating conflicts between cyclists, who can have very different speeds and attitudes. Separated bike lanes can be a good solution for avenues and national roads where car and truck traffic is intense and fast. However, they are space consuming and there are additional safety challenges at each crossing. In most streets, where speed is moderate and space scarce, the most efficient and safe solution is to ensure that cars and say 'mature' bikes, blend in the same traffic flow while 'fragile' bikes go with pedestrians.

Thanks to Joachim Bergerhoff for this item.

Sustainable Cities

*"She said Rudd told her his top priorities were education, climate change, **sustainable cities**, federal-state relations and broadband. Fix all these, and productivity would rise, he said, leading to a buoyant economy."*

Ref: Margot Saville, 'The Taking of Bennelong', Good Weekend 15-12-07 on Maxine McKew's meeting with Kevin Rudd on January 19, 2007.

Tender

The Victorian Department of Infrastructure has called for expressions of interest in franchise agreements to maintain Melbourne's train and tram networks. Tender closes February 29, 2008.

Ref: Tenders, The Age 15/12/07