

More Cars

"Despite a year that saw soaring fuel prices and a shift towards the smaller end of the market, Holden managed to sell almost 11,500 Commodores powered by a six-litre V8, a record for the company.... It was a big year, too, for the luxury marques. According to the chamber's figures, last year there were 17 more Rolls-Royces crowding Australia's roads, fighting for space with an extra 170 Bentleys, 160 Aston Martins, 145 Ferraris, 46 Lamborghinis, 134 Maseratis and 855 Porsches."

Ref: Barry Park, *The Age* 8/1/08

"Last year Thomas Wright became the proud owner of a new Nissan X-Trail — as did more than 12,000 other Australians....Mr Wright said filling the tank had not been a deterrent, despite petrol prices creeping towards \$1.50 a litre. He said although he was yet to go off-road in the month he has had the new car, he plans to later in the year. In the meantime, he uses the car to travel to and from work at the airport and on the weekends. 'You've got to buy petrol, it doesn't matter what car you've got,' he said. 'People criticise four-wheel-drive owners but I just drive along normally and I like it because it's compact and I feel safe in it.'"

Ref: Bridie Smith, *The Age* 8/1/08

More Bicycles

On the matter of the 1 million car sales last year, it was reassuring to hear that national bike sales were not only greater (1½ million) but are growing faster! - despite the best efforts of Connex and V/Line. (OK, 1¼ million might have been little ones with pink ribbons trailing from the hand grips, but many cars are just toys after all!)

Thanks to a reader for this item

Unhealthy Cities

"Pregnant women exposed to heavy traffic fumes are more likely to have smaller fetuses than those in less polluted areas, world-first research has found. An Australian study of more than 15,000 ultrasounds found women exposed to heavy pollution had fetuses with shorter femur bones and smaller head and abdominal circumferences. Researchers say the 10-year study should act as a warning for expectant mothers to avoid sitting in traffic for too long and not to walk near busy junctions."

Ref: Jill Stark, *The Age* 8/1/08



Banning Bikes on Trains

"The real cause of train crowding, as in any peak demand time, is lack of space to transport the available demand. So we need more trains, more often, so they are all less crowded and all travellers can be comfortably accommodated. Contrast the Government's haste to ban some users on trains with what they do with cars and freeways — just build more space."

Ref: Phil Bourke, *The Age*, 3/1/08

"Surely, the severe overcrowding that has prompted this decision would be best addressed by increasing the number of services. Connex is being hugely irresponsible in forcing commuters who care about the environment off trains and back into their cars. Bicycles and trains can work together to promote travel that is healthy for us and the environment. Why do Connex and the State Government want to destroy that relationship?"

Ref: Alice Burnett, *The Age*, 3/1/08

"Melbourne should have a more integrated system of sustainable transport to encourage people to get out of their cars get active and reduce their carbon emissions."

Ref: Sarah Rodgers, *The Age*, 3/1/08

*"The ban on bikes on V/Line services during rush hour comes despite the trains having special bike spaces. The V/Locity trains have space for a small number of bicycles, while its 32 locomotives have a special luggage carriage, with ample room for cycles." **Ref: Clay Lucas, *The Age*, 8/1/08***

Flexi-time

*"The negative reaction of public transport advocates to the proposal for city workers to vary their working hours is disappointing. I have recently returned from Cardiff, in Wales, where such a scheme has been implemented. Workers vary their start and finishing time by as much as three hours and the positive impact upon peak hour demand for rail and road transport is significant." **Ref: Jack Keating, *The Age*, 14/1/08***

Meantime...

Initial concern related to storing rails on the cycle path (rather than in the car parking spaces) but now the temporary tram track works in Swanston St (north of Victoria St) has caused more disquiet because of the lack of specific signage warning cyclists.

(Picture: 12/1/08)

Railway Investment in Australia

"According to Wollongong University rail expert, Professor Philip Laird, track upgrades, including the removal of steam-age alignments, would reduce freight train travel times by more than two hours and allow passenger tilt trains to travel from Sydney to Melbourne in 6½ hours. For about a billion dollars, rail would pick up 50 per cent of the freight share and save 77 million litres of diesel fuel a year, which translates into 200,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions, not counting greenhouse savings by providing a real alternative to air travel between the two capital cities."

Ref: Kenneth Davidson *The Age* 9/11/07

"Your correspondents Robyn and John Wallace (Letters, 30/11) seem to have bought the myth that building more roads will alleviate traffic problems. Labor and Liberal governments have used this myth to sell every new billion-dollar road project, and within years we have the same old congestion, except worse. Worse because the transport solutions we were promised never fund public transport and never at the levels required to provide a service to compete with cars. If the Doncaster rail line had been built back in 1969 (when first promised) we would not even be having this debate now. This city needs a revolution in how it thinks about traffic and we need to start building rail infrastructure to service the whole metropolis. More roads are costly investments in more congestion and more pollution at a time when we need to make urgent and deep cuts to our greenhouse emissions. Let's get on with building the new rail lines needed to make Melbourne sustainable long into the 21st century."

Ref: John Cox *The Age* 1/12/07

More on Traveling to Work

"Other reasons for Melbourne's poor performance include no significant heavy rail extensions since the opening of the Glen Waverley line in 1930 and Melbourne's public transport system having been mismanaged since its privatisation in 1999. According to the Victorian Auditor-General, subsidies to Melbourne's public transport operators have doubled in real terms since 1999. Walking is the healthiest mode of transport but it receives no attention from policymakers or the media, with the result that the pedestrian environment continues to deteriorate as preference is given to motor vehicles." Ref: Kenneth Davidson *The Age* 13/12/07



welcoming [according to the parliamentary secretary for planning Jenny Mikakos]."
Ref: Danielle Perkins, *Ballarat Courier* 18/10/07

Picture: The 'Walking Bus – Feet-01' at the 2007 Sustainable Living Festival at Fed Square

Sustainable Transport: Cycling

"The number of cyclists entering central Melbourne has doubled in the past year, according to the first comprehensive study of cycling in the City of Melbourne. [The] inaugural Bicycle Account summarises cycling trends, behaviour and safety in the CBD and inner suburbs. A copy of the account obtained by *The Age* shows:

- ◆ Cyclists account for 8 per cent of all trips in the morning peak, up from 4 per cent last year.
- ◆ On-road cycling increased by 10 per cent and off-road by 20 per cent.
- ◆ Cyclists make up 22 per cent of traffic on St Kilda Road.

The number of cycling accidents is also decreasing. In 2005, there were 155 crashes, dropping to 146 in 2006. In the year so far, only 46 road crashes have been recorded. Crash figures could be much higher as many incidents go unreported or police are unable to prosecute because cyclists have been thrown from their bikes and cannot identify other vehicles involved. But only 46 per cent of cyclists surveyed in the data said they felt safe riding in the City of Melbourne and 41 per cent said cyclists observed road rules.

Lord Mayor John So said cycling had become a preferred mode of traffic in the CBD. 'More than half of cyclists surveyed for this initiative described Melbourne as a cycle-friendly city. We want to ensure that even more cyclists share that view in the future,' he said"
Ref: Stephen Moynihan and David Rood *The Age* 17/10/07

Sustainable Transport: Walking

"Maps and signs will be installed around Ballarat to promote the city as a paradise for walkers. A \$50,000 State Government fund grant was announced ... to start implementing a Ballarat City Council pedestrian strategy ... developed to improve Ballarat's pedestrian network and make the city's central business area more 'walkable' for residents and visitors.... The program is about assisting councils like Ballarat to create well designed public spaces that are safe and