

When is a Ferry not a Ferry?

While it claims that it is supporting industry, Victoria is likely to lose another innovative manufacturer overseas. Mariah Hovercraft Australia, presently building a fire fighting and rescue hovercraft for Changi International Airport and a potential ferry builder for Port Phillip Bay is having a wee problem with bureaucratic nonsense. The size of the vessels means that construction needs to be near the sea. One site was ruled out by the local council because the factory permit only allowed the construction of boats, and although a hovercraft is a marine vessel it was not considered to be a 'boat'. Meantime, another site at a regional airport (on the coast) is under threat because construction is not in line with permitted use, that is, the vessel is not considered to be an 'aircraft'.

The hovercraft by nature is one of the most environmentally friendly craft on the market. It has a low foot print pressure (110 kg/Square meter compared to an Adult male who weighs 90 kg exerts a pressure of 3000kgs per square metre) the air pressure required to lift the hovercraft is less than ½ PSI. It creates no wake when travelling at speed across the water. It does not exhaust fumes into the water. The engines meet the European Emission standards. There are no propellers in the water to cause injury to marine life or for that matter human. The vessel's noise meets Marine Safety Victoria's requirements.

Yarra Trams

The free City Circle Tram will operate from 10am to 6pm Sun-Wed and to 9pm Thur-Sat all year round. The #86 (Bundoora) tram will extend to the north-west of the Docklands precinct from mid-2008 with four minute intervals in peak times and six minutes off-peak. Tram Tracker can now be accessed from the www.yarratrams.com.au homepage. Enter your Tracker Stop ID to check when the next three trams are due at your stop.



Ref: (inc photo) Tramlines, December 07

And Also

"I am gravely disappointed to learn that the Hummer H3 has a fuel consumption of 'only' 18.4 litres/100km. I had been seeking to make a purchase that would have the worst possible environmental impact. I thought I'd found it in the H3. Now I am at a loss as to whether I should buy an H3 or 100 hectares of burning Amazon rainforest. Maybe I'll just pay someone to harpoon a few whales."

Ref: Alexander Szabo, The Age, 3/1/08

Car Free Cities

"Melbourne City Council will join Moreland Council's Cyclovia festival; Sydney Road, parts of Royal Parade, and all of Swanston Street will be closed from 8am to 2pm on Sunday, February 17. It will coincide with the final day of the Sustainable Living Festival at Federation Square. Roads Minister Tim Pallas remains cold on the idea, believing it will disadvantage too many road users for little or no benefit. 'We don't support a one-day stunt — we are about investing in a sustainable transport system for everyone,' a spokesman for Mr Pallas said. The Government's lack of support for the plan follows the controversial decision this week to ban bicycles from trains in ... during rush hours, outraging many cyclists and sustainable transport experts.

Car groups, the most vocal opponents of the original car-free day plan, opposed the new concept as well. 'It will cause traffic chaos,' RACV policy manager Brian Negus said. But Melbourne City Council's environment chairman Fraser Brindley said it was appalling that the Government would not support a car-free day. 'It is blindingly obvious that we have got to start planning for the world beyond the car and this is something that can make people think about that,' Cr Brindley said. 'John Brumby is so entrenched in a car-dependent future that he can't even conceive the enormity of the problem we are facing.' Moreland Mayor Joseph Caputo, a Labor Party member, said every major city in the world now had regular car-free days. 'It has a very positive effect on traders, because people are not rushing past in their car,' he said. 'Some major European cities have these things on a monthly basis, to really make people aware that the car isn't the only way.' The car-free day movement has spread to 1500 cities around the world, and comes amid hot debate across the globe about how to reduce city congestion. Car-free days have been a success in many world cities, including Vancouver, Canada, which has run one annually since 2003. Last September, London for the first time banned cars from its busiest roads for a day, throwing them open to cyclists for its Freewheel London event."

Ref: Clay Lucas, The Age, 3/1/08

RACV & the Environment

"RACV and AAA are investigating methods to reduce the carbon footprint of the motoring sector. RACV is advocating Victorians get valid public transport options, especially to Melbourne's CBD and the developing suburbs. RACV actively supports cycling, especially in achieving improved safety for cyclists and proper facilities for on-road cycling." Ref: RACV Public Policy Department, Royal Auto, Dec 07/Jan 08

Meeting our Greenhouse Challenges

"The Brumby Government is on a dangerous collision course with the new and energetic Rudd Administration over transport and energy policies. The Victorian economy, in particular, will be rocked in the next few years as it struggles to meet Federal Government emission targets. Victoria has commissioned a \$5 million report from Sir Rod Eddington on a new east-west transport link, but the Eddington inquiry may already be road kill. State cabinet has anticipated the outcome by setting officials to work on a big road tunnel from the Eastern Freeway to the west, estimated to cost up to \$10 billion. State officials and VicRoads are also considering pleas for spending billions more on upgrading the West Gate Bridge and the Western Ring Road.

The critical problem is that Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has stated that he wants prompt action on greenhouse gas emissions, and he wants targets. The favoured target is a reduction of 25-40% by 2020. This implies a possible 33% reduction over the next 12 years, at a cost to governments, producers, exporters and consumers of at least 5% of gross domestic product, or (in current terms) \$50 billion a year. From where are these reductions to come?

The most intense users are transport and energy, where Victoria is highly vulnerable because of its brown coal emissions, and because it has fallen behind most other states in the provision of public transport. Motor vehicles are responsible for 80% of transport emissions, with public transport putting out only 3%.

Rudd can act quickly by abolishing the subsidies and tax concessions given to road transport. This would be relatively painless for the Federal Government but not for Victoria, because the demand for public transport would increase in a system in which peak trains and trams are already packed. With oil approaching \$US100 a barrel, demand for mass transport in Victoria has risen 20% since the beginning of last year and is likely to rise another 10% next year. The last thing Brumby needs is Rudd demanding that Victoria cuts its road transport emissions by 50%. But the transport and energy sectors will have to cut emissions because they are the largest emitters, and the other sectors have much less capacity for reductions....

To compound Victoria's problems, in Rudd's enthusiasm for carbon gas reductions and the world stage, he has indicated a target of 60% by 2050. Biofuels are not the answer because they

use a lot of land normally used for food, a lot of water, and usually need a government subsidy to compete. Victoria is the worst placed of all the states to meet Rudd's targets. Yet it is persisting with policies that subsidise road transport, favour trucks over rail freight, and turn brown coal into water at high cost. Brumby would be better served calling Eddington off his concrete and bitumen expansion inquiry, and concentrating his forces on the future of Victoria under the impact of Rudd's Bali targets, and the possible decimation of the transport and energy sectors."

Ref: Brian Buckley, *The Age*, 20/12/07

"Annual greenhouse gas emissions from energy in Victoria have soared by nearly 30% since 1990, challenging State Government claims that it is serious about tackling climate change. While coal-fired plants are the chief emitters, [Climate Group's Australian director, Rupert] Posner said, more action was also needed at a domestic level, including designing homes to better cope with temperature extremes and encouraging people to use more public transport and switch to fuel-efficient cars. 'At the moment we have got the ridiculous situation that you pay less tax if you buy a four-wheel drive,' he said. 'It just shouldn't be the case'." **Ref: Adam Morton, *The Age*, 7/1/08**

Sending the Wrong Signals

'Trade in your old wheels...' (with a picture of a bus ticket) 'for some new ones' (with a picture of car keys) says the bank ad (The Age Online 10/1/08). Are our banks really trying to encourage people away from public transport and into cars?

And on the same page:

"Ten accidents, involving 70 vehicles, killed four people and injured 38 others. Five of them are in critical condition, according to the Florida Highway Patrol. The largest of the accidents involved 43 vehicles."

Ref: *The Age*, 10/1/08



Photo: The Age 10/1/08

Online: www.goingsolar.com.au/transport

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