

## Premier's Roundtable

The Victorian Premier, John Brumby, is to be congratulated for holding roundtable discussions with industry and community leaders on Climate Change and Congestion. It would be good to follow this initiative with a session on the relationship between Transport & Urban Design.

## Doncaster Rail Petition

So far 5554 online signatures, 114 SMS messages and over 200 signatures on hard copy petitions have been received. Add your name online at <http://pt4me2.org.au> before it is presented to the Minister.

## Melbourne - A Car Free City

*"A new pedestrian junction is needed at Flinders Street. It must be easy to walk down Swanston Street and cross to St Kilda Road. There are several options: blocking Flinders Street, dropping Flinders Street to make a vehicle underpass, or making a diagonal pedestrian crossing and limiting traffic to one lane. The aim should be to connect Swanston Street more comfortably with Federation Square, Flinders Street Station and the arts precinct.*

*The second stage — easy once the first step is taken — is to make the area bounded by Elizabeth, Russell, Flinders and La Trobe streets into a pedestrian precinct. The car parks must be closed. The land is too valuable to waste on car parking. The top end of Swanston Street must be redesigned and landscaped to make more space for walking, and a clear connection to the residential district and Melbourne University. There is a constant flow of students and others between Melbourne University, RMIT & the city.*

*The City Baths corner of Swanston and Victoria Parade is an important city gateway, but at present it's an ugly mess. A car-free central Melbourne can be created without improvement to the public transport network, but it will work much better with improved train, tram and bus services. A car-free city will be not just for the people who live there, but for all Melburnians."*

**Ref: Nicholas Low, *The Age*, 9/9/07**

*"The key to reducing congestion on the east-west corridor is to eliminate many of the single-occupant vehicles that take this route every day. The only transport option that will encourage people out of their cars is a heavy rail link. So, Mr Brumby, build a tunnel, but put trains through it, not more cars."*

**Ref: James Christou, *The Age*, 18/12/07**

## Portarlington Ferry

*"A group of Bellarine Peninsula residents are working to establish a commuter ferry service to cut travel times between the region and Melbourne. The Bellarine ferry group, which has received funding from the City of Greater Geelong and the now-defunct Department of Victorian Communities is working towards a service between Portarlington, about 30 kilometres east of Geelong, and Station Pier. A catamaran began operating on the Portarlington to Port Melbourne route in 2003 but the service was suspended less than two months later. Bellarine ferry group secretary John Rae said a ferry service could cut travel time from Portarlington to Melbourne, currently about 90 minutes, to less than 45. The group is working to ensure ferry berths and fuelling facilities are incorporated into plans for the redevelopment of Portarlington's harbour."*

**Ref: Sunday Age, 20/1/08**

**Note to Advisors:** I understand that out of 155 proposed community projects for Portarlington, re-establishing a ferry service was rated as No. 1.

## Cars, PT and City Design

*"It is distressing to see ... political opposition to a car-free day and continued deferment of investment in public transport given the environmental, social and urban challenges facing us. Streets are not just for cars. They are places to walk, jog, ride, transact business and meet others, and also provide frontages to homes, institutions and businesses. They are not for the exclusive use of one group, particularly a group as inefficient in use of the space and environmentally damaging as the single occupant motor vehicle. Every year since World War II we have spent massively more money shifting people into private car use. CityLink, the Craigieburn Bypass, EastLink, the Geelong freeway, the South-Eastern expansion, have all been completed and celebrated. Yet only a few short years on, 'the freeway' and 'car park' are synonymous. If only we could point to the same investment in public transport. We must have an alternative to the status quo because the roads have finite capacity. We should aim to deliver a city for tomorrow that provides choice for how we undertake a journey."*

**Ref: Robert McGauran, *The Age*, 17/1/08**

## And Also ...

*"On his first foreign trip, Lithuanian farmer Saulius Marcinkevicius, 41, got lost in Leipzig, Germany. Not knowing where to catch his bus, he decided to walk home, covering more than 200 kilometres in nine days before hitching a ride on a truck with Lithuanian plates."*

**Ref: *The Age* 29/11/07**

## Problems with Fuel

*“European Union green fuel targets will accelerate the destruction of rainforests in South-East Asia and threaten the habitat of endangered species, such as the orang-utan. ... the European Commission has admitted that the objective, which aims to cut CO2 emissions, may have the unintended result of speeding up the depletion of tropical rainforests and peatlands in South-East Asia - increasing, not reducing, global warming... Europe is still years away from self-sufficiency in biofuels produced from straw and other waste vegetation. As a result, demand for cheap imports of fuels, such as palm oil, is expected to soar (and) despite setting the biofuel target, the EU has no system to certify that imports exclude palm oil or fuel production that has resulted in the destruction of rare natural resources.”*

**Ref: Bruno Waterfield, SMH 28/4/07**

*“A United Nations expert has condemned as a crime against humanity the use of crops to produce biofuels to replace petrol. The UN special rapporteur on the right to food, Jean Ziegler, said he feared biofuels would bring more hunger. Speaking at the UN's headquarters in New York, he said it was a recipe for disaster to convert food such as maize and sugar into fuel. He described it as a crime against humanity to use arable land for crops that were burned for fuel. He has called for a five-year ban on the practice.”* **Ref: The Sunday Age 28/10/07**

*“President Felipe Calderon [of Mexico] has vowed to tackle the soaring prices of tortillas, a corn-based food that is a staple for millions of the country's poor. Prices have rocketed [as much as 400%] since the US began converting corn to ethanol fuel.”* **The Age 13-1-07**

*“... ‘Biofuels are increasing in popularity. Corn prices have jumped by 50% in the last year, partly due to its use in ethanol production’.” [said NAB CEO John Stewart].* **Ref: Marc Moncrief, Banking Reporter, The Age 30/11/07**

*“Ethanol combustion is carcinogenic (cancer-producing). It releases known carcinogens into the atmosphere: acetaldehyde, and peroxy-acetyl-nitrate/nitrite/nitrile, three powerful eye and lung irritants. The argument that ethanol reduces tailpipe emissions is a fraud. With a modern car engine's oxygen sensors and computer-controlled fuel injection, there's no difference in CO (carbon monoxide) coming out your tailpipe with regular gas or ethanol.”*

**Dr Jack Wheeler, BrooksNews 22/10/07**

*“In 2006, John Howard announced a \$1.3 billion subsidy to the LPG industry, through various grants to encourage motorists to switch to LPG vehicles. It is unlikely to reduce Australia's greenhouse gas emissions by one tonne.”* **Ref: Guy Pearce, High & Dry, 2007** <http://www.highanddry.com.au/stats.cfm>

*“A new ‘non-sniffable’ fuel designed to combat petrol sniffing in Aboriginal communities can kill when inhaled, an inquest has been told... Made by BP, Opal has been credited with dramatically reducing petrol sniffing in Aboriginal communities since first being introduced in 2005, and has since been rolled out across central Australia... ‘(There is) a perception that Opal fuel is not able to be sniffed and indeed ... BP refers to it as ‘Opal non-sniffable’,’ counsel assisting the coroner Celia Kemp told the inquest. ‘Your honour will hear evidence that this is not the case. Like any volatile substance, Opal can be sniffed, and can be fatal when sniffed’.”*

**Tara Ravens, The Age 12-12-07**

## Problems with Cars

*“The explosive growth in the number of motor vehicles in Chinese cities had caused severe traffic jams and posed a grave challenge to the country's energy security and urban development, Xinhua quoted Vice Minister Qiu as saying. Qiu lamented that some Chinese cities were cutting back on bicycle lanes to make more room for cars, even as some Western cities were building more lanes for cyclists. He said his ministry firmly opposed the practice and ordered cities to restore the lanes. The number of motor vehicles on China's roads had risen 20 fold between 1978 and 2004, Qiu said, adding that car numbers could increase another five fold by 2020. In 2004, China had 27 million motor vehicles, and that number could reach 130 million in 15 years, he said... China expects to put another 6 million cars on the road in 2006. It is estimated that in Beijing alone, 1,000 extra cars are added to the city's clogged roads each day.”*

**Ref: Reuters, The Age 15/6/06**

*“The number of cars on the roads in India's capital, New Delhi, increases by close to 1000 every day, the Chicago Tribune reports. An anti-pollution campaign established in 2002, which encouraged the use of compressed natural gas over other fuels, reduced the city's particulate levels by 20% in just three years, but pollution started to rise again last year, reflected in a 15% surge in asthma cases being reported in the city's hospitals this year. Pollution is set to worsen next year when budget cars costing about \$2250 hit the market, ‘putting an automobile within the reach of millions more Indians’.*

**Ref: SMH 21/11/07**