

Victorian Climate Change Summit

The Victorian Premier, John Brumby, is to be congratulated for organising a Victorian Climate Change Summit which 'will provide a forum for representatives of the Victorian community to come together to discuss the great challenges and opportunities presented by climate change. In particular, the Summit will assist the development of future Victorian policies and programs designed to address the impacts of climate change and to capitalise on the opportunities that climate change presents'. We will make sure that the opportunities and solutions of Sustainable Cities (including urban design, transport, buildings, & tourism) are clearly noted.

Transport Problems in Melbourne

"The increasingly cramped trains have struggled to run on time and Connex has missed its minimum monthly performance targets on five occasions this year. V/Line, which services the more far-flung areas of Melbourne such as Sunbury, has not met its minimum service targets across its lines for more than a year as it battles patronage levels at a 50-year high. ... Trams, too, are not given priority on the roads and simply end up stuck in traffic. The government is fixing some minor bottlenecks on the rail network and is investigating a new railway line to the city's heavily populated south-east, but senior government figures privately concede public transport spending is not up to the task." Ref: **Mathew Dunckley, Financial Review, 4/3/08**

"If you want to experience public transport in Melbourne, try catching a bus into the city from Doncaster in the morning (or home again for that matter). No seats, people crammed in like sardines and close to an hour of travel time to get you ready for your working day. I read the signs stating 'Soon the buses will be faster' and wonder how that will be possible with the opening of East-Link and more congestion to follow. What a cruel joke that is. It's gotten to the stage where I'm close to giving up on doing this every day, but what other option do I have?"

Ref: **Warwick Tullio, 12/3/08**

Unhealthy Cities (1)

"Children living close to a major road are significantly more likely to have asthma than children who live farther away, according to a study presented today at the American Thoracic Society International Conference."

Ref: **Science Daily, 23/5/05** www.sciencedaily.com

New Tram & Metro Systems for Dubai

"Dubai plans to have a A\$540 million tram network up and running by September 2009 to deal with the growing transport demands of the booming Gulf emirate, Khaleej Times reported on Friday. The completion of the 15-kilometre (nine-mile) network is also expected to coincide with the opening of the first phase of a multi-billion-dollar metro network, the English-language daily reported. Both projects aim to reduce traffic congestion in the popular tourist destination. 'The tram service will not only be an effective solution to the traffic woes but will also become a major tourist attraction,' Abdulredha Abu Hassan, a senior Dubai transport official, told the paper." Ref: **The Age, Travel, 25/2/08**

Tram Extension for Christchurch, NZ

An extension is planned for Christchurch's tram route that "fits with the Council's Central City Revitalisation Project ... Christchurch Mayor Bob Parker says the planned extension of the tram route is part of the



council's continuing commitment to rebuilding the economy and infrastructure of the central city."

Ref: **Fronz 'Journal', March 2008**

New Christchurch Route Shown in Red

Sending the Wrong Messages

"An audit of the Government's own environmental performance, tabled in Parliament today, found that the Government's vehicle emissions were up 5% in 2007 compared to 2006. ... The audit found that the Government's passenger vehicle fleet was "still heavily influenced" by the number of 6-cylinder vehicles reliant on unleaded petrol, which make up more than half of the total fleet and 91% of "executive" vehicles, including ministerial cars. Last month The Age revealed the Government had signed an \$800 million extension to its existing car fleet contract raising concerns about continued emissions from its fleet. In 2007 the Government also outraged green groups by slashing stamp duties on cars costing between \$35,000 and \$57,007, claiming the move would help local manufacturers because most of them produced vehicles in that price range." Ref: **Royce Miller, The Age, 12/3/08**

Word on the Street ...

Roads Minister, Tim Pallas, recently chose to attend a trucking meeting over a debate on the value of inner-city freeways.

Unhealthy Cities (2)

"Children who live in areas with heavy traffic pollution have lower IQs and score worse on other tests of intelligence and memory than those who breathe cleaner air, a new study shows. The effect of pollution on intelligence was similar to that seen in children whose mothers smoked 10 cigarettes a day while pregnant, or in kids who have been exposed to lead, researcher Dr Shakira Franco Suglia of the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston said. She said there was little people can do, short of moving away."

Ref: MX News, 18/2/08

World's first
hybrid car
c 1875



Compressed Air Cars

"The world's first commercial compressed air-powered vehicle is rolling towards the production line. The Air Car, developed by ex-Formula One engineer Guy Nègre, will be built by India's largest automaker, Tata Motors. The Air Car uses compressed air to push its engine's pistons. It is anticipated that approximately 6000 Air Cars will be cruising the streets of India by 2008. If the manufacturers have no surprises up their exhaust pipes the car will be practical and reasonably priced. The CityCat model will clock out at 68 mph with a driving range of 125 miles.

Refueling is simple and will only take a few minutes. That is, if you live nearby a gas station with custom air compressor units. The cost of a fill up is approximately \$2.00. If a driver doesn't have access to a compressor station, they will be able to plug into the electrical grid and use the car's built-in compressor to refill the tank in about 4 hours. The compressed air technology is basically just a way of storing electrical energy without the need for costly, heavy, and occasionally toxic batteries. So, in a sense, this is an electric car. It just doesn't have an electric motor. But don't let anyone tell you this is an "emissions free" vehicle. Sure, the only thing coming out of the tailpipe is air. But, chances are, fossil fuels were burned to create the electricity. In India, that mostly means coal. But the carbon emissions per mile of these things still far outdoes any gasoline car on the market."

Ref: Bob Ewing, Yahoo! Green 13/7/07

<http://green.yahoo.com/blog/ecogeek/66/air-car-ready-for-mass-production.html>

Hybrid Cars & Sustainable Cities

"Innovation Minister Kim Carr will launch a concerted push to secure production of hybrid cars for Australia when he meets senior executives of Toyota in Tokyo ... Senator Carr has been a strong advocate of preserving and expanding the local vehicle manufacturing industry, which receives billions of dollars in government assistance."

Ref: Katharine Murphy, The Age, 28/2/08

On the 22/12/06 the then AWU National Secretary wrote in The Age: "I have gone out on a limb because I believe hybrid cars are the way of the future Thousands of jobs could be created and secured in Australia if we started assembling and manufacturing vehicles that use hybrid technology Let's grasp the opportunities and drive home an initiative that will deliver secure jobs and a cleaner environment."

This of course begs the question as to why the Australian car industry has lagged so far behind on the provision of more sustainable vehicles. But are hybrids really the long term answer? The first issue is the greater cost of hybrids, particularly compared to smaller fuel efficient cars. With our poorly designed cities where we force our residents into car ownership we need to be mindful of providing equitable solutions that do not encourage increasing personal debt. The second issue is that hybrid cars are more complex to build and therefore more complex to recycle. In a responsible society we need to give greater consideration to the energy inputs into our manufactured products and to the life cycle of those products. The major problem however is that hybrid vehicles, while obviously a step forward in fuel and pollution reduction, do not address the issues of traffic congestion, road rage, road trauma, urban sprawl and loss of amenity.

The transport sector accounts for around 25% of our greenhouse gas emissions. If we are serious about tackling the effects of climate change then we need to do much more than just introduce hybrid vehicles. As well as the measures that are the equivalent of 'removing so many thousands of cars off the road,' we need to actually start physically removing some vehicles. We need to start designing our cities so that they are not car based, but rather structured around sustainable transport corridors. Cities that reduce noise and congestion, that make our streets more liveable, that encourage walking and cycling – cities that improve our health!

And Also ... 'Toyoda' was changed to 'Toyota' after a competition to find a better name.