

Muffled Message on Petrol

"Driving up the cost of carbon is all about sending price signals. You make petrol dearer so people drive less, use public transport, change to more efficient cars. If the signal is muffled, consumers don't get a message."

Ref: Michelle Grattan, The Age 16/7/08

TOD (without the T)

"Home buyers in Melbourne's north are buying house-and-land packages with a public transport solution that does not exist. The Brumby Government's Aurora housing development spruiks public transport as one of the key features of its environmentally friendly approach, but won't have any rail network operational until 2028 - if at all. Public transport advocates and state MPs have blasted Brumby government developer VicUrban for misleading the state's homebuyers. VicUrban's website originally listed the properties as all being 'approximately 400m from a bus stop and the majority of residents within 800m of retail centres and train station', but has since removed it from the site."

Ref: Nick Higginbottom, Herald Sun, 18/7/08

Freight Emissions

"By 2020, freight transport emissions will have increased 100 per cent on 1990 levels, [a NSW] Total Environment Centre report shows. Between 1990 and 2006, the sector's emissions rose by 40 per cent, the centre's director, Jeff Angel, said. In the same period, all transport emissions, including personal travel, grew by just 27 per cent. 'It's not easy really, but they (the freight sector) need to reduce emissions', Mr Angel told AAP. 'They need a comprehensive plan, and we're urging them to get their act together'. The report, commissioned by the federal government, found road transport contributed 87 per cent of all freight emissions."

Ref: AAP, SMH, 14/7/08



Roads or Public Transport

"Planning and investment in Melbourne's public transport system has been woeful for decades. ... Money spent on new roads in Melbourne by state and federal governments since 1999 has been five times that spent on new public transport connections. Since Labor was elected in Victoria in 1999, \$1.7 billion has been spent on new road projects. Meanwhile, just \$322 million has been spent on new public transport connections, according to the Public Transport Users Association. ... Business, transport groups and the public are unified in their call for a big increase in public transport capability — the question is how to fund the \$8.5 billion worth of rail projects. ... Superannuation funds are particularly interested in making long-term, low-risk investments in transport infrastructure. David Atkin, chief executive of superannuation fund Cbus, said major new rail projects could be attractive investment opportunities."

Ref: Jason Dowling and Clay Lucas, The Age 12/7/08

Urban Design

"The majority of regular urban journeys (such as to work) will need to be made by public transport, bicycle or walking with changed land-use patterns making this possible. Various social innovations may be predicted: neighbourhood car sharing; home deliveries by supermarkets; and so on. Most long distance journeys will be made by train or coach, with freight using rail or water where possible, transferring to motor vehicles for final delivery."

Ref: Michael Jacobs, Sustainability and Markets, Planning Sustainability, Routledge, 1999

"...Rather than good governance and truly sustainable planning, and more money in our pockets because we have been liberated from heavy car dependency, we have the opposite. The clever country I think not. The good news is there are numerous working examples of how we can save ourselves from petrol dependency and associated looming social and economic upheaval. Copenhagen is one: still plenty of room for magnificent parklands and consistently excellent standards of energy-efficient higher density housing design (even for poor people, would you believe?) and complemented by beautiful promenades and excellent public transport 24/7."

Ref: Bernadette George, The Age 31/5/08

And Also ...

"On September 5, 1986, a civil pilot described a UFO that shot past his aircraft. A meteorite? A missile? 'If it's a missile, myself and my crew are not impressed'."

Ref: The Guardian, 23/5/08

Smart Buses

“Melbourne’s \$660 million SmartBus service is ‘seriously underbaked’ and will not succeed in getting motorists out of their cars, an influential public transport academic has said. Monash University’s chair of public transport, Professor Graham Currie, said the Brumby Government’s much-spruiked SmartBus plan must be rethought if it was to succeed. ... The SmartBus program, begun in 2002 and due to be completed by 2012, consists of four orbital and two cross-town bus services that run along major arterial roads to train stations, trams, schools, universities and shopping centres. The buses are scheduled to arrive every 15 minutes from early morning until about 8pm, and then every 30 minutes until midnight. But SmartBus would not carry the millions of Melburnians in suburbs without easy access to trams or trains, Professor Currie said, unless radical changes were made. SmartBus services needed:

- Segregated road space, not just painted bus lanes.
 - Real traffic light bus priority; despite five years of trying, the Government’s existing bus traffic signal priority system did not work well enough.
 - Bus stops that resembled tram super-stops, with better real-time information screens; the existing screens either did not work or were turned off.
 - New rapid transit-style buses, not the same buses that also ran on local routes. ...
- Bus lanes in Melbourne were inadequate, he said, because they were not segregated from car lanes via a separated roadway. ‘Most of the bus lanes are simply painted on, and drivers regularly use them during peak hours’, he said.*

“Public Transport Users Association president Daniel Bowen agreed the traffic light priority system set for buses often did not work, and nor did departure time signs. But he said the SmartBus program had been a success because the buses came regularly. ‘They are a great start — we just need more of them’. The association’s Every 10 Minutes to Everywhere campaign has called for buses, trams and trains on all Melbourne routes to run every 10 minutes.

“The SmartBus program overall has grown annually by about 30% — albeit from a low base. Patronage on Springvale Road’s SmartBus route has grown by 70% since its introduction in 2002. ‘We need more routes, because SmartBus has proven people are willing to get out of their cars and catch the bus if it runs often enough’, Bus Association policy manager Chris Loader said.”

Ref: Clay Lucas, The Age, 14/7/08

Ferry Feedback

I would be interested in cross bay commuting from the Bellarine Peninsula or Geelong to Docklands [but] cost should be comparable to the train \$10-\$15 dollars each way. Parking is an issue - could you bring your bike on the ferry? Or would it be like Holland with a bike at each end or a French style bicycle program like in Lyon? Enhanced public transport - bus services to the ferry terminal - this would apply to other departure / destination points? Do you have a network in mind - my friends on the Mornington side say they used the old Frankston hovercraft on a regular basis. A fast reasonably priced ferry service would attract many patrons; I currently use the Queenscliff / Sorrento ferry on a reasonably regular basis and find that to be a great service although due to fuel price increases, may be less attractive to some users.

(Name supplied)

Response: The proposal at the moment is that hovercraft would service Geelong, Portarlington, Queenscliff (and many other places around the Bay). Main connection points at the top end would be Brighton Beach (rail), Kerferd Road (two trams: #1 & #112), Port Melbourne (#109 tram) and Docklands (trams, suburban rail, country rail, and airport bus). Everywhere walking, cycling, taxis, community buses, and flex-cars and flex-bikes will be part of the mix. Bicycles could also be taken on board the craft. Kiss-and-ride will be possible but expensive new car parking is not anticipated though existing underutilised car parking may be better utilised. Ideally fares will be comparable with existing public transport services – perhaps with a dollar or two premium. Ultimately a full transit study will be required but at this stage I’m just trying to gather objective narratives and would welcome any other accounts to:

steve@goingsolar.com.au

General Feedback

“The ACT Government has put a billion dollar light rail system for Canberra on the top of its wish list for the Federal infrastructure fund.

Also on the list are a solar power station and an Eastern Capital’s Fast Train link. Hmm!!, there must be an ACT election coming up on 18 October! However, credit must be given to them for legislation for the first real FEED-In-Tariff Law. It is GROSS as opposed to the greenwash NET schemes popping up elsewhere.”

Bill Gresham, 15/7/08

And Also ...

“The state media [in China] says the average life expectancy of a traffic policeman is just 43 years.” **Ref: John Garnaut, The Age, 19/7/08**

Taxis & Taxi Drivers

"A 2006 audit of taxi voucher use at the now closed Department for Victorian Communities found that one bureaucrat used a taxi to travel from 55 Collins Street to 20 Lonsdale Street - a journey of about 600 metres or two city blocks. Other staff working in the department's sport and recreation division used taxis to travel from Collins Street to Spencer Street. ... A 2007 report into the same department found increased use of taxi vouchers within the central business district when public transport was available, and that most voucher statements were not signed. ... In 2006-07, the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development (DIIRD) spent \$305,365 on taxi travel ... A Department of Innovation bulletin titled 'Use Public Transport when travelling to meetings around town' stated a large number of these short trips in taxi and fleet cars could be replaced by public transport, especially in the CBD."

Ref: David Rood, *The Age* 2/6/08

"No one could think that everybody's happy with taxis and taxi services in Melbourne at the moment', co-author Robert Kerr [of a Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission report] told *The Age*. The report hinted that a broader range of taxi services could improve the sector."

Ref: Jason Dowling, *The Age* 29/5/08



Advertising for taxi drivers on bus shelter:
'Become a Perth taxi driver and start enjoying the benefits' June 2008

☞ Please advise if any yellow taxis are spotted on the Nullarbor.

Tram Conductors

"Excuse this Sydneysider intruding into things Melbourne, but on our only light rail line from Central to Lilyfield, fare evasion was rampant, the ticketing system was not working and revenue loss was enormous. The company decided that roving conductors, even allowing for their wages bill, were justified - to cut out evasion and for the security of the drivers as well. The line became profitable and the company has never looked back. Melbourne's trams would benefit from such a system for the same reasons. Even allowing for the wages, the incidence of fare evasion would almost be wiped out, as well as protecting the crew from physical attack."

Ref: Frank McQuade, *The Age*, 14/7/08

"So the reintroduction of tram conductors would make economic sense, and sparks a predictable flurry of support? I beg to differ. First, where does the report's author think the connies are going to fit? Commuters can tell you that it's barely possible to get a back-pack on board, let alone another human being. Second, it's time to challenge the nostalgic view that all connies were benign beings focused on the greater good of society. There were good and bad connies. The good ones sometimes made our trips happier; the bad ones were a drain on the public purse. My observation is that other commuters are more likely to come to the aid of a dad with a pram or a traveller being accosted by an abusive drunk than were many connies. And, finally, regarding the possibility of increased patronage, is that a threat or a promise?"

Ref: Julia Hickey, *The Age*, 20/7/08

And Also ...

"Drivers don't have some sort of incredible mind reading ability that allows them to decipher when you are hailing a tram and when you are just waving to a friend, doing your hair, feeding the birds, dozing, knitting, doing up your shoe, stretching, texting or engaged in a battle to the death with a blowfly. So, when you are at the stop please just stick up your hand and wave to the tram you want to catch."

Ref: Yarra Trams Passenger Card #4. July 2008

Rear Vision

"Even as petrol prices skyrocket, nations around the globe continue to invest in highways." ABC Radio National program **Rear Vision**: 'The Story of Highways' produced and presented by Annabelle Quince. Originally broadcast on Sunday July 20 and repeated tonight (July 22) at 8.35pm or see:

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/rearvision/stories/2008/2281165.htm>

Transport Management Associations

"TMAs are emerging in North America as a response to accessibility issues, especially those occurring in activity centres, where numbers of different businesses cluster. They represent partnerships between government, private businesses, managers of trip generators, and transport service providers, who act collectively to improve transport outcomes, in recognition of the various benefits that accrue to each partner. Similar trends are emerging in Europe - the last 18 months has seen a proliferation of 'regional cooperation' initiatives, research papers and policy in the area of demand management, especially workplace travel plans. As well as achieving better coordination and integration, there are critical mass benefits. For example, travel plan initiatives such as rideshare or bike buses are likely to be far more effective if co-located businesses participate, as the pool of potential partners increases significantly, and the establishment costs can be shared across a number of organisations." **Ref: Peter Warrington, The Flyer, PBAI Aust, Feb 08**

Biofuels

"Though biofuels themselves reduce greenhouse gases (GHGs) converting lands from non-farm uses to grow feedstocks could cause a net increase in GHGs. One of the studies called 'Land Clearing and the Biofuel Carbon Debt,' (Joseph Fargione et al, Scienceexpress, Feb. 7, 2008) is the source of the above statistic. The second study, 'Use of U.S. Croplands for Biofuels Increases Greenhouse Gases Through Emissions from Land Use Change' (Timothy Searchinger et al, Scienceexpress, Feb. 7, 2008), calculates prospective impacts from expanding U.S. corn ethanol production six times over the current amount. This study looks at indirect land use change, the new farmlands opened to replace corn diverted to fuel uses, and finds it could swamp GHG reductions from fuel use. Both studies highlight the need to direct biofuels growth in sustainable directions, using feedstocks that minimize competition for prime croplands. These include farm, forest and municipal waste streams; energy crops grown on marginal lands, and algae. These second generation biofuels feedstocks are expected to dramatically reduce GHGs compared to first generation biofuels such as corn ethanol. They could also increase storage of carbon in soils. In other words, biofuels done unsustainably could make the climate problem worse, while biofuels done sustainably could play a leading role in solving the carbon challenge." **Ref: Patrick Mazza, Renewable Energy World, 7/4/08**

Bioenergy

"[There is] enormous potential of bioenergy (energy derived from biological waste matter such as agricultural crop waste). The CSIRO estimates bioenergy could supply 20% of Australia's projected electricity consumption by 2030 with zero carbon emissions, 24 hours a day." **Ref: Business Council for Sustainable Energy (BCSE) 9/5/07**

"Unfortunately ethanol made from sugar (first generation bio-fuel) makes little contribution to greenhouse gas reductions, because the fuel and energy needed to produce sugar and then manufacture ethanol approximately equals the energy gained from the ethanol." **Ref: Eihart Lincke, The Sunday Age, 2/3/08**

"Baked beans make their own indelicate contribution to greenhouse gases, but climate change and the search for alternative fuels means Australians are having to pay more to eat them. A boom in ethanol production has created a corn 'gold rush' in the United States, with farmers abandoning their bean crops to cash in on the 200% jump in corn prices." **Ref: Fran(k) Walker, The Sunday Age, 2/3/08**



'So you've invented fire. Terrific. But have you thought where this could end up?'

"Commonwealth grants to the ethanol industry are under review by the Rudd Government amid mounting global concerns over links between food shortages and biofuel production. ... Last year, \$42 million in commonwealth subsidies was paid to four operators for the production of 110 million litres of ethanol." **Ref: Greg Roberts, The Australian, 1/5/08**

"An adventurous couple have left their fast-paced corporate lives in the UK behind for a challenging 30,000km journey around Australia ... Their passion for travel and the environment has prompted them to do the entire trip 'eco-friendly', by converting an outback icon, the Toyota Land Cruiser, to run on vegetable oil that they intend on gathering from roadhouses and takeaway shops along the way. Suitably the vehicle has been named the 'Battered Fish' due to the aroma that will be emitting from the exhaust." **Ref: GreenRazor #36, 19/5/08**