

Planning Awards Commendation

We are pleased to announce that this Newsletter received a commendation in the Planning Institute Australia (Victorian Division) Planning Excellence 2008 Victorian Awards. The citation reads:

"In spite of a plethora of electronic and print media, this free of charge four page weekly newsletter that is produced with no external subsidy, sponsorship or advertising revenue, enjoys a loyal and steadily growing readership amongst key decision makers, the media and the general public on the concept of sustainable design, planning and transport.

"The panel wishes to commend the dedication of Going Solar in producing such an impressively frequent, relevant and engaging publication which will inevitably increase public awareness on planning and environmental issues." **Ref: Planning Excellence 2008 Victorian Awards**

This has been a busy period for me:

- ◆ Seminar on Road Based Transport (Oct 9);
- ◆ Workshop on transport planning (Oct 11);
- ◆ Presentation to the Parking Industry (Oct 13);
- ◆ Presentation at the State Library (Oct 14);
- ◆ Interview on Radio 3CR Breakfast (Oct 15);
- ◆ PIA Awards (Oct 17)

The Parking Industry Association is to be commended for inviting a number of speakers on the subjects of Peak Oil, Climate Change, Urban Design and Sustainable Parking Initiatives.

The State Library presentation prompted a robust discussion of cars vs Public Transport in emergency evacuation, so it was a welcome coincidence that John Renne's press release arrived the next day (see articles in the next column).

The 3CR interview has led to an invitation for regular monthly spot on their Breakfast Show: November 19 and December 17 at 08:10.

My comments on Light Trams for Wodonga (see #80) were picked up by *On-Track Newsletter*.

And Also ...

"A Sydney woman who refused to register her car because it was her 'God-given' right to drive has lost an appeal to overturn her conviction. Losalina Rainima has been in jail since December after driving while disqualified and will be freed tomorrow. She is barred from driving until May 2023." **Ref: The Age 13/9/08**

Carless Evacuation

"John L. Renne, Assistant Professor of Urban Planning at the University of New Orleans, has released a report titled 'National Study on Carless and Special Needs Evacuation Planning: A Literature Review.' The report is the first product of a four-year study of evacuating those without cars, sponsored by a grant from the Federal Transit Administration. The report is available on the UNO Department of Planning and Urban Studies web site at <http://planning.uno.edu/>. 'The release of this literature review today formally establishes a new academic discipline within the field of transportation planning - carless evacuation planning', Renne said. 'This is the first of a series of reports that will be released by the UNO Transportation Centre under our grant from the Federal Transit Administration to study how plans around the United States address evacuation planning for people without access to automobiles, particularly folks with special mobility needs. ...

"Renne, who moved to New Orleans just a few weeks before Katrina, recalled the 2005 evacuation in the preface to the report: 'In the days following Hurricane Katrina, the world watched in disbelief as all systems indiscriminately failed to respond, affecting young, elderly, poor and disabled alike. However, seniors living independently were disproportionately victims of the flood. As I evacuated, I recall feeling guilty and somewhat responsible that my profession, transportation planning, failed to deliver an effective plan for a disaster that everyone knew would happen. It became part of my mission to ensure that we do not repeat past mistakes, not only in New Orleans but also across the country'." **Ref: Uni of New Orleans Press Release, 8/10/08**

"There are many challenges transportation planners, emergency managers and non-profits must face when designing a successful evacuation strategy. Identifying carless populations and being able to gauge their level of transportation mobility may be the greatest obstacle to a successful evacuation plan. The literature suggests that a coordinated effort between government agencies and non-profits can create an environment of information sharing that will allow transportation planners to accurately account for carless populations. Additionally, demographic characteristics as well as census data can support the identification process if specific, individual data is not available. Governments can also use registries to catalogue special needs individuals but evidence has shown that few carless individuals are effectively utilising registry systems." **Ref: John Renne (et al), extract from the Executive Summary of the Report, Oct 2008**

Solar Assisted Rickshaw in India

"A state-of-the-art, solar-powered version of the humble cycle-rickshaw ... [the 'soleckshaw'], unveiled this month in New Delhi, is a motorised cycle rickshaw that can be pedalled normally or run on a 36-volt solar battery. Developed by the state-run Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), prototypes are receiving a baptism of fire by being road-tested in Old Delhi's Chandni Chowk area. ... 'The most important achievement will be improving the lot of rickshaw drivers', said Pradip Kumar Sarmah, head of the non-profit Centre for Rural Development. It will dignify the job and reduce the labour of pedalling. From rickshaw pullers, they will become rickshaw drivers, Sarmah said.

"India has an estimated 8 million cycle-rickshaws. The makeover includes FM radios and power points for charging mobile phones during rides. Gone are the flimsy metal and wooden frames that give the regular Delhi rickshaws a tacky, sometimes dubious look. The 'soleckshaw', which has a top speed of 15 kilometres per hour, has a sturdier frame and sprung, foam seats for up to three people.

"The fully-charged solar battery will power the rickshaw for 50 to 70 kilometres. Used batteries can be deposited at a centralised solar-powered charging station and replaced for a nominal fee. If the tests go well, the 'soleckshaw' will be a key transport link between sporting venues at the 2010 Commonwealth Games in New Delhi. 'Rickshaws were always environment friendly. Now this gives a totally new image that would be more acceptable to the middle-classes', said Anumita Roychoudhary of the Delhi-based Centre for Science and Environment. 'Rickshaws have to be seen as a part of the solution for modern traffic woes and pollution. They have never been the problem. The problem is the proliferation of automobiles using fossil fuels', she said." **Ref: ABC News, 13/10/08**



And Also ...

"To demonstrate their willingness to embrace environmental concerns,

F1 cars will be sporting some 'green' style in the Japanese F1 GP this weekend. ... The tyres are a token gesture, as F1 officials and Bridgestone executives hope to draw attention to environmental issues that surround the sport and the initiatives that the organisation is already taking. The tyres have bold green stripes that will hopefully encourage viewers to 'think green' about driving."

Ref: Green Razer #57, 13/10/08

Feedback on the Exit/Enter Platforms

I don't think I have seen an exit/enter platform in action anywhere but it is a damn good idea. In Japan lines for the doors are marked on the platform so people know where to stand and let others out. They even inform on a display how many carriages there are on a train (and how many doors per carriage) so the right door lines are used. A humble porter established this idea in Japan as he was fed up with the chaos on his platform. **Paul Judd, 14/10/08**

Comment: In my investigations of transit systems, I've learnt that the acquired knowledge of bus/tram drivers, train conductors, ferry deckhands, etc, should never be overlooked or underestimated.

The good burghers of Vancouver BC have the exit/enter platforms worked out. Here is an extract from my forthcoming report on ferries:

"The ferry is 'captured' by piers on either side of the vessel as it comes into dock. Once the vessel is locked in place, gang planks are robotically lowered on both sides of the vessel, while doors are remotely opened on one side to allow egress of passengers. Once the last passenger has left the vessel the doors on that side are closed and the doors on the other side are opened, allowing the next set of passengers on board. This is a very efficient mode of operation although would come at significant infrastructure cost. Redundant piers were built at the time of initial construction to provide additional capacity if required. At the time of my visit (November 2006) I understood that plans were underway to build additional ferries to work in this system which is an encouraging endorsement of ferries as preferred mode of travel." **Ref: Making the Bay Connect (Draft)**



Vancouver piers as seen from the bridge of the ferry

Apologies for the missing word in the single column version of #81. It was suppose to say "Another idea is to **build** 'exit' platforms in the loop stations so passengers can depart from one side while others enter from the main platform." This idea was mentioned by Matthew Wright and would have the advantage of reducing the 'dwell time' for trains at each stop.

Victorian Police in City Blitz

'Police have issued more than 3000 official warnings to jaywalkers in the past two days ... From tomorrow, \$57 on-the-spot fines will be handed out to those caught ignoring 'don't walk' signals and crossing outside marked lines. ... In the past 12 months, there have been 223 accidents involving pedestrians in Melbourne's CBD and according to police data, the pedestrian was at fault in 56% of cases.'

Ref: Vanessa Chircop, The Age, 16/10/08

Comment: Drivers failing to stop when a tram stops seems to be rife at the moment. I've asked Victoria Police to advise statistics for the number of drivers fined and the date of the last blitz for this offence. An industry spokesperson said that they had asked police for assistance for this and for keeping tram lines free for cars. It was also pointed out that many interstate and overseas visitors may not be aware of the danger, or even be expecting traffic from that direction.

And Also ...

"Iran's hardline Islamic government insists upon gender separation and last year announced plans for a women's bicycle that comes with a special 'modesty cover' to hide the rider's legs and their upper body. A women-only taxi service, with female drivers, has also been launched in major cities, and buses and underground trains are segregated."

Ref: MX News 8/10/08



**Prototype #1:
Rated 5 out of 10**

New Steam Back on Track

"Tornado, the first steam engine to be built in this country [the UK] for almost 50 years, has completed its trials. ... The engine has taken 18 years to build and cost almost £3 million. An almost exact replica of one of Britain's last and most powerful postwar engines, this new 4-6-2 A1 Pacific brings back to life an apparently vanished class: the last of 49 locomotives built in the late 1940s was scrapped in 1966. ... There are a few innovations. A full electronic signalling and recording system has had to be tucked into the cab, under the driver's seat, so that Tornado can conform to safety regulations. Every movement of the regulator, every fluctuation in speed, can now be recorded electronically to provide a record of how the engine is driven."

Ref: Michael Binyon, The Times 9/10/08

www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/travel/news/article4908980.ece

Airline Trash Landings

"Years after recycling became second nature at home, the aviation industry is taking the first steps to introduce recycling on flights and in airports. These early moves - including a Virgin Blue trial of in-flight recycling and the installation of recycling bins at Sydney Airport - follow a report that found American airlines throw out enough aluminium cans every year to build 58 new 747 jets."

"The Trash Landings report, by the Natural Resources Defence Council, also found US airlines disposed of 9000 tonnes of plastic a year, and enough newspapers and magazines to fill a football field more than 70 metres deep. About 600 grams of rubbish is left behind by each US passenger, and despite three-quarters of it being recyclable or compostible, most ends up in landfill."

"Australian airlines and airports have been slow to embrace recycling as they grapple with the quarantine, security and logistics issues that complicate aviation waste management. Over the past year, Virgin Blue has assessed ways to cut inflight waste, including minimising packaging and has conducted a trial in which it trained cabin crew to separate recyclable waste from food scraps and other matter while collecting passengers' rubbish before landing. Qantas recycles newspapers read on board - nearly 500 tonnes a year in Sydney and Melbourne - & glass & plastic bottles, papers & cans are recycled in Qantas Club lounges."

"Mike Nicholls, a RMIT University student who is working with Virgin Blue on inflight recycling, said the success of the project depended on making facilities available at airports to dispose of waste. 'The potential for it is huge but it's almost non-existent in Australia', he said. Sydney Airport has enabled stores and food outlets in the international terminal to recycle waste for several years. But recycling bins for public use were introduced only this year. Quarantine requirements mean all waste from incoming flights or generated by the public in the 'air side' section of the terminal is dumped in landfill after being sterilised at high temperature. No facilities exist at Sydney for the recycling of inflight waste, but talks have been held with airlines."

Ref: Sherrill Nixon, SMH, 6/10/08



Picture: icamhascheeburder.com

Cycling Promotion

"The cycling industry says the Federal Government will save money in the long term if it invests \$800 million now in bicycle infrastructure. The Cycling Promotion Fund has submitted a proposal to Infrastructure Australia, asking the Government to fund the construction of physically separated bike lanes and major cycleways in capital cities. Spokesman Elliot Fishman says the Government should see the proposal as an investment for the future. 'It's cheaper to invest in it than not invest in it because the benefits that you get in term of obesity and diabetes, reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and traffic congestion and also costly petrol, it actually pays for itself by a factor of three to one', he said. 'So it's cheaper to do it than not to do it'.

"The submission proposes projects including \$30 million cycle-way between North Sydney and the CBD, and a bicycle bridge over the Brisbane River. Mr Fishman says the plan would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging more people to leave their cars at home. 'We took a look at some of the international evidence about how cities had developed a strong bicycle culture and one of the key things they've done is develop on-road bicycle lanes that are physically separated from the rest of the traffic so that cyclists don't have to contend with much larger and faster moving vehicles', he said. 'And that's something that helps more people make the decision to get out there on their bike'."

Ref: ABC News, 15/10/08

Problems of Car Dependency

"Ford is to slash 450 jobs from its operations at Geelong and Broadmeadows. [The new company president Marin Burela said:] 'Ford Australia will be making some staffing balance changes to respond to the current business conditions ... these actions will include the reduction of 450 staff spread across our salaried and hourly-paid workforce'. The announcement follows a report in The Age this week that more jobs would go, on top of almost 1000 positions Ford intends to cut in Victoria over the next two years. ... The latest cuts come only two months after Ford revealed it would cut as many as 350 jobs in manufacturing from Geelong and Broadmeadows with plans to reduce output by up to a quarter, or about 18,000 cars a year. In June, Holden announced that more than 500 jobs would go from Fishermans Bend while a swag of smaller car parts makers have said they will cut hundreds of jobs. The cuts in manufacturing and the car industry come as some economists warn that unemployment is set to jump in Australia in the next 18 months from 4.3% currently to as high as 6.5%."

Ref: Ben Schneiders, The Age, 16/10/08

Comment: We have some of the best engineering companies in the world. There is world wide shortage of trams. We used to build our own trams in Victoria. There are plenty of export opportunities. Even Blind Freddie would not have been surprised by rising petrol prices and reduced demand for cars. Why then are our governments bent on continuing to subsidise a failing car industry rather than invest in sustainable transit?



"Streets are for bikes: Mexico City (above) has taken to closing one of its main thoroughfares on Sundays so cyclists can enjoy them. New York City closed Park Avenue for the same reason over the summer." Ref and Photo: Steve Hymon, Bottleneck Blog, LA Times, 23/9/08