

Transport in Victoria

"Commuters are crying out for a better public transport system while the State Government pours hundreds of millions of dollars into the city's roads. Almost one in three Melbourne drivers have reduced their car use in the past year, research by public transport promotion and information service Metlink found. And 94% believe the Government should be spending more on public transport. Extra spending on roads was supported by 55% of those surveyed."

"The survey, taken last month by Sweeney Research, involved 601 respondents in Melbourne and 2000 nationally. Of all state capitals, the highest support for more spending on public transport was in Melbourne. Of those driving less, two-thirds said they had switched to public transport. The survey comes as the State Government commits hundreds of millions of dollars to new road projects, including a \$1.4 billion upgrade of the West Gate-Monash Freeway and a \$700 million Frankston bypass, announced last week. Metlink said Melbourne's 'rail infrastructure has not changed significantly since the 1950s, yet the urban area has nearly doubled'. Chief executive Bernie Carolan said the survey showed many car users prioritised investment in public transport over roads. 'For this city to continue to be the sort of place we like it to be, we need a rich mix of public transport', Mr Carolan said..."

A Public Transport Users Association analysis shows money spent on new roads in Melbourne by state and federal governments since 1999 has been five times that spent on new public transport. Association president Daniel Bowen said the Metlink survey was further proof that people were switching to public transport and that it was time government funding reflected this. 'There is a lot of talk about funding public transport, but when it comes down to allocating the money it seems to go to new road projects', he said. RACV public policy manager Brian Negus said the Government should spend money on 'both public transport and roads - we don't believe you solve all the problems by spending on one or the other. Obviously Melburnians need a valid choice of mode and you can't solve all the congestion problems, for example, just by building roads', he said."

Ref: Jason Dowling, The Age 20/10/08

"Yes, Tim Pallas, new roadways will create more jobs, so will new railway lines. But they obviously require more vision and leadership."

Ref: Graeme Martin, The Age 18/10/08

"The State Government announces a new freeway to Mornington and the addition of new lanes to the Tullamarine Freeway (The Age, 17/10) but there is still no news of any new public transport investments. When will this Government break free of the mindset that we can build our way out of congestion and add liveability to our city and prosperity to its citizens by adding more freeways? Melbourne already devours more road space per capita than any other city in Australia and has more kilometres of freeways than even Sydney. Building more roads will lock more residents into reliance on a private motor vehicle for their transport needs, leaving them spending increasing amounts on fuel costs rather than supporting the local economy."

Ref: James Christou, The Age 18/10/08

"The Greens yesterday called on the Brumby Government to provide public transport on the Mornington Peninsula, instead of the [\$700m] bypass. 'The Frankston area has one of the lowest rates of public transport use in metropolitan Melbourne', Greens MP Sue Pennicuik said. 'This is partially due to the poor public transport options available'."

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Ref: Clay Lucas & Jason Dowling, The Age 18/10/08

"As [Victorian] Roads Minister, [Tim] Pallas has managed to build and push through EastLink, the Deer Park bypass, probably all of the Eddington road tunnel and freeway extensions and another new freeway as a Frankston bypass. With

Tim Pallas as minister for public transport, maybe some of the rail, tram and bus extensions, links missing for more than 50 years, would find a real champion at ministerial level."

Ref: Phil Bourke, The Age 20/10/08

Comment: Funny how the Victoria Premier can find money for roads but said that because of the economic meltdown there may not be money for public transport (ABCTV News 27/10/08). Building more roads attracts more cars and shifts the congestion problem.



The Perfect Solution

Secretary Takes Moral High Ground

"A new tollway proposal in Sir Rod Eddington's transport plan for Melbourne has split the Victorian Labor Party's transport policy committee. The committee's secretary has resigned in disgust at a decision to endorse all 20 recommendations in a decision to endorse all 20 recommendations in Sir Rod's report to the State Government, including a new multibillion-dollar road tunnel linking the city's east and west. The committee's response to the Eddington proposals will be presented to the ALP state conference today, and Premier John Brumby will release his transport plan for Melbourne next month.

"The secretary, Pat Love, has written to his committee colleagues, along with Roads Minister Tim Pallas and Public Transport Minister Lynne Kosky saying he would bring forward the end of his term because of the committee's support for more freeways. 'Recent decisions of the committee, most importantly the decisions to support all 20 recommendations from the (Eddington) study, prompted me to bring this forward prior to the state conference. I handed my resignation to Kevin Bracken last Monday', he wrote in an email sent on Thursday night and obtained by The Age. 'As you know, I have argued both internally on the committee and externally in public forums that now is not the time to build another road tunnel'.

"Mr Love, who has been secretary of the committee for three years, said: 'If it is implemented by State Government, I firmly believe that it will lead to more long-term problems than solutions for people in Melbourne, and especially the people living in the west'. It was wrong to argue that the 'massive expenditure of an 18-kilometre tunnel, whether funded by government or private or both, will solve our congestion problems in the inner west, north and inner east'. 'I don't believe it will improve transport options for many people in the west, but will further entrench them in car dependence', Mr Love wrote. 'Overall, it will lead to more greenhouse gas emissions from transport in Melbourne, not less'." **Ref: Jason Dowling & Paul Austin, The Age, 6/10/08**

"We can always choose to build a road option later, but it is declaring boldly that we accept the challenge implicit in Garnaut's assessment by redressing the dearth in transport options other than the car that are available to large sections of our city. This great imbalance of travel options has Melbournians today being amongst the most car dependent societies on the planet. The imperative for this is not just

our environmental and economic future, but the social equity for poorer people in the west, who will be hardest hit from the inevitable hike in fuel costs as peak oil and carbon taxes start to impact on household transport and heating and cooling costs. To merely provide more road space is not an answer for people in the west, or anywhere else in Melbourne's outer suburbs."

Ref: Kevin Bracken and Pat Love, Future-proofing Our City, 14/7/08

See their full submission to the EWNLA at: http://210.15.220.118/ewlna_submission/EastWestResponse_150708_KevinBracken&PatLove.pdf

Congestion

"The Bureau of Transport and Regional Economics found that the cost of congestion in Melbourne was \$3 billion in 2005 and this is expected to double by 2020. The major contributor to congestion is private automobile use (Bureau of Transport and Regional Economics, 2007). In the past, it has seemed reasonable to provide additional roads as a response to traffic congestion. Professors Peter Newman and Jeff Kenworthy, of Curtin University, have conducted a global survey and found that road building has a poor track record in reducing congestion (Newman & Kenworthy, 1999). It's akin to putting more holes in a belt to solve an obesity problem. ...

"Urban planning expert Jane Jacobs, along with many others, argues that too many governments focus on symptoms and ignore causes. This approach sees the problem as traffic congestion so, the obvious solution is to provide additional road capacity. However, congestion, as argued by Jacobs, is the symptom. Dependence on cars is the problem. Given that Melbourne has among the highest ratios of freeway per resident of any city (Scheurer et al, 2005), the Victorian Government needs to develop a sharper focus on the problem rather than the symptoms. Developing a well integrated public transport system is an effective method of increasing the efficiency of the Melbourne economy by cutting congestion and time spent in traffic."

Ref: Melbourne Transport Plan - PT4me2 for a change, Metropolitan Transport Forum

See www.pt4me2.org.au/downloads/mtf_plan.pdf



Kabul Traffic, Afghanistan
Photo: S. Bahawoon Oct 08

Slow Trains Coming

"While Melbourne's trains groan under the pressure of 40% more passengers in the past three years, the Brumby Government's much-touted plan to fix Victoria's transport system is travelling at a glacial pace, new analysis shows. Just 2% of a \$10.5 billion transport plan promised in 2006 has been spent, a frank assessment by the Property Council of Australia has found. The property council's research — disputed by Public Transport Minister Lynne Kosky yesterday — found only five of 76 commitments made in 2006's Meeting Our Transport Challenges strategy had been delivered. The Government was not moving fast enough on big transport projects, the powerful business group that represents major building owners and developers said. 'Victoria is choking because of a lack of transport infrastructure', executive director Jennifer Cunich said. 'The commitments ... need to be delivered at a much faster pace to keep Melbourne moving'."

Ref: Clay Lucas, The Age, 17/10/08

"Works to upgrade the 525km Mildura rail freight line reached Mildura this week. The Mildura rail freight upgrade is a joint project of the Australian and Victorian Governments, with the Federal Government providing \$20 million and the Victorian Government contributing \$53 million. Federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Anthony Albanese, said the project was progressing extremely well with approximately two thirds of the project completed. 'About 75 per cent of the track has been re-sleepered, that's a staggering 220,000 sleepers', Mr Albanese said. 'The Mildura freight line is of great importance to the State of Victoria and both governments have allocated the necessary resources to ensure the future of the line'. Almost two in every five sleepers along the line will be replaced and a third rail added at level crossings to allow for future standardisation. Victorian Minister for Public Transport, Lynne Kosky, said 47 level crossings along the line had already received a third rail. 'Once complete, freight trains will be able to operate at 80km/h, reducing travel times along the line from 14 hours to less than ten', Ms Kosky said." **Ref: Joint Federal/State Media Release, 17/10/08**

Photo shows the new PPM departing Brownhills West for Lakeside (UK) – a journey that represents the Stourbridge Town branch for the purposes of crew familiarisation.

Ref: PPM Website, 13/10/08
<http://www.parrypeoplemovers.com>



Innovative Tram-Train in the UK

"The first of two revolutionary railcars has begun final testing on a private railway in Staffordshire. The 60-seat vehicle has been specifically designed to run on one of the UK's shortest branch lines. It's more environmentally friendly than conventional rolling stock and could herald a new era for the railways.

"It could go down in history as, perhaps, one of the most logical pieces of railway thinking for many years. Swap a heavy rail train, which is rarely full, but badly needed to solve capacity problems elsewhere on the rail network, with a new design of railcar that needs a good testing ground. Hey presto, the idea of the revolutionary 'Parry People Mover' was born. It will run on a line that carries passengers between Stourbridge Junction and Stourbridge Town stations on the shortest branch line on the UK rail network. It's a vital link for those who want access to the mainline from the centre of the town, hence the reason it's not gone the same way as other small branch lines. Currently passengers are conveyed using a large single carriage Class 153 railcar. In the past there simply wasn't a viable alternative. But in December this year, the new PPM60 railcar will take to the tracks and the Class 153 will be deployed elsewhere on the rail network.

"Some in the industry have expressed surprise that it's taken so long, while others maintain that getting any innovations accepted can take time, particularly on the railways. ... The PPM technology rests on a simple, but effective engineering device: a flywheel. It rotates and at the same time stores 'kinetic' energy. The energy is then used to power the vehicle. A typical PPM flywheel is made from large steel laminates and it rotates at a maximum speed of 2500rpm. Parry People Movers claims that it's simple, reliable and easy to maintain. ... In the future it could form part of the much-fancied tram-train concept. A government-backed trial has been earmarked for a rail line in Yorkshire. [Company Chairman] John Parry says: 'In the UK, we see the people mover as a particular species of "tram-train". We share the view of some leading figures in the transport industry that tram-trains should not be a "one-size-fits-all" concept, but a description of any passenger vehicle that is suitable to run both on railway and on street. Eco-towns and re-opened branch lines should open up a useful market for such tram-trains'." **Ref: Peter Plisner, Rail Professional, Sept 2008**

"one-size-fits-all" concept, but a description of any passenger vehicle that is suitable to run both on railway and on street. Eco-towns and re-opened branch lines should open up a useful market for such tram-trains'." **Ref: Peter Plisner, Rail Professional, Sept 2008**
<http://www.railpro.co.uk>

Feedback

☞ On the Police Blitz (#82)

"Last year travelling home along Royal Parade after the football on a Saturday, a day when the Adelaide Crows played in Melbourne a number of cars with SA number plates didn't stop when trams had stopped to let people alight. The issue happens quite regularly. I agree their needs to be an education campaign, coupled with enforcement." **Mike Walsh**

"About time they did one on drivers opening car doors in front of cyclists as well." **Paul Judd**

☞ On the F1 Greenwash (#82)

"F1 + Green = Oxymoron" **Paul Judd**

☞ On the Exit/Enter Platforms (#81 & #82)

"Exit/enter platforms operate at Sydney's Olympic Park train station to manage the crowds at large events - they appear to work very well."

Kylie Huard



Future Melbourne Underground Loop Station with exit/enter platforms?

Concept: Matthew Wright Graphic: Scott Bilby

We are a little surprised by the lack of response to Liam Davies' proposal for the Melbourne Underground Rail Loop (see #81). If it is flawed, then let us know. If it is brilliant, then start the implementation. (NB: Correspondents receiving government pay can sign their feedback with 'Insider' or 'Tunnel Rat', etc.).

Walking

"Every kilometre that we choose to walk instead of drive is half a kilogram less of greenhouse gasses released into the atmosphere ... [and] according to Access Economics, the loss of productivity as a result of obesity amounts to \$3.6 billion a year with a further \$2 billion spent on treating the health problems associated with the condition. Walking has also been shown to assist in the treatment of mild to moderate depression, which accounts for three to four days off work a month for those who experience it. ... Every kilometre walked instead of driven represents a saving of 20c in car operating costs." **Ref: Paul Bibby, SMH, 3/10/08**

More on Park(ing) Day



"As an urban design and architecture firm based in downtown [Los Angeles] and focused on responsibly shaping the city, Torti Gallas and Partners has commandeered a parking space and staked it out with a For Sale sign, a picket fence, and a welcome mat", the firm says in a news release. 'Our concept for Park[ing] Day acknowledges the potential of a parking spot not only as a green space, but also as a place that can be reprogrammed with a variety of more valuable and dynamic uses'." **Ref: Steve Hymon, Bottleneck Blog, LA Times, 19/9/08**

Trams, Trains and Solidarity

"On Friday 1 October the old ETU office in Carlton played host to a meeting of rail and tram industry shop stewards and officials – AMWU, RTBU, APESMA, ETU - in preparation for the upcoming EBA negotiations. The majority of maintenance EBAs in rail and tram expire in June 2009. 'It's great to have officials and union delegates from the different unions all together at the one meeting. After privatisation the emphasis was on individual workshops meant the idea of workers being part of an industry was undermined'. It was a view shared by ETU assistant secretary and organiser Howard Worthing, rail organiser Gerry Glover and AMWU organiser Peter Douglas. The unions have been arguing the case for a joint approach to the industry and for the need to pressure government to build rolling stock in Australia. The ETU has long believed that we have the capacity to build our own trams and trains and will be doing its bit to convince government accordingly. There are many challenges ahead, says Howard Worthing. 'The franchise changes to workshops has many members nervous and is something we have to work our way through, along with the new EBAs. And of course we're keen to challenge the government's procurement policies and will lobby to have rolling stock built here,' he says." **Ref: eTU Newsletter, 6/10/08**

And the Rail, Tram & Bus Union (RTBU) has an online petition for safer railway stations. See <http://www.saferstations.com.au/>