



Hell On Wheels

A publication of Eco-Transit Sydney

A Quiet Year?

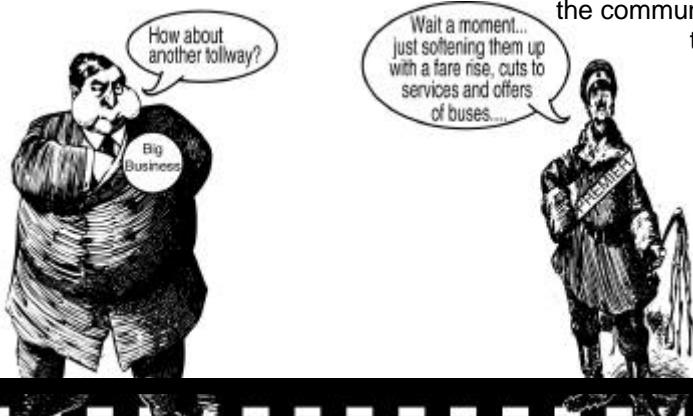
I don't know if quiet is the right word. We started the year with the Waterfall inquiry, and began planning for Local Government and State elections. The much-needed integration of planning and transport emerged and in the form of a new integrated department and then BANG! - we were in the middle of a public submission process about Public Passenger Transport! Add a spot review of Buses, a fare hike and serious questions about Carr's commitment to Public Transport and you've got an opportunity for action in the next six months.

Eco-Transit started the year thinking about the best ways to get public transport on the agenda of candidates for local government, and doing some work on the Kensington section of our proposal for the Baylight Light Rail line. Randwick Council had been talking about taking out the green belt in the middle of Anzac Parade, so they could shuffle the cars into the middle and provide parking where the lanes had been previously - something we objected to in the last edition of Hell On Wheels. A big thanks to all that took part in the production and distribution process. You'll find an update on the Kensington situation on Page 4.

With the announcement that Local Government elections would be rescheduled to March 2004, we began to focus on the state government candidates in that area as well. We sent out a letter regarding this issue to all current members of parliament to gauge their response to the issues of public transport and light rail in particular. As expected the replies were generally - 'thank you, I'll pass this on to the relevant minister' (with Lee Rhiannon an exception), but we didn't take that for an answer. We pointed out to the various ministers and shadow ministers for transport, health, resources, infrastructure, etc., that this is not just about moving people around. The next set of responses proved much more satisfactory. The moral of this story? Never accept a passed buck!

Thanks to Clover Moore (member for Bligh) we found out about the Inquiry into Public Passenger Transport with 4 days to spare. We managed to submit our view that this issue should be looked at in terms of the benefits for the whole of the community rather than the just those who are patrons.

Our submission has been posted on the Transport NSW website! See them all at <http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/ministerial-inquiry/>



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Upcoming Events

Eco-Transit Meetings - 11th December

Want to get more involved in the Mass Transit movement? Come along to the monthly meetings at Caffeine Cafe, Erskineville Road in Erskineville.

Meetings start at 6:30pm

Eco-Transit AGM

The annual general meeting will be held in November this year at the Green Iguana Cafe, on the 13th of November. Members will find membership, nomination and proxy forms have been included with this newsletter. Membership forms are also available from our web site at www.ecotransit.org.au

Deadline for Next Issue:

1st December
Send your contributions to lmason@smoothlooming.com.au

EcoTransit is transport that supports a sustainable economy and environment. The less resources used by the transport sector, the more efficient our economy is and the less damage is done to the environment. Public transport, walking and cycling fits these criteria!



Driving Into The Sun

The Impacts of Global Warming on Individuals

Most people know that Australia's greenhouse gas emissions are steadily increasing. By 2000, road transport emissions had increased by 25.5 per cent compared to 1990. Car emissions had increased by 22.2 per cent over the same period. Our per capita emissions are the highest in the world, higher than the United States, and they are predicted to continue increasing.

Most of us see global warming as something that affects "the environment", but few of us have begun to consider its affects on us as individuals - our lifestyles and personal economic situation. It's easiest to get a feel for this by looking at impacts on agriculture, insurance and tourism.

Agricultural output will drop

According to the CSIRO, some of the most significant effects will be on agriculture. This is because of increased frequency of extreme weather events such as droughts, floods and hurricanes, and because of increased temperatures and an overall decrease in rainfall. Less rainfall will reduce wheat and fruit yields. The quality of produce will also decrease. Temperate fruits need winter chilling to ensure normal bud-burst and fruit set. Milk yields will also decrease with poorer pastures and higher temperatures. All of this will reduce the availability of agricultural produce and increase prices.

Insurance will increase

The insurance industry is also becoming increasingly concerned regarding the effects of global warming. According to the Swiss Reinsurance Co, extreme events that result in insurance claims have increased from once every ten years to once every six years or eight years. It is expected that insurance costs and premiums will rise because of the increased frequency of these events. Cover will also be withdrawn from high-risk areas. This has already occurred in the cyclone belt in North-West Australia where AMP has withdrawn from home and vehicle insurance because of global warming.

Tourism will decrease

Tourism will be affected through damage to natural attractions like the Great Barrier Reef. Coral bleaching that is caused by rising sea temperatures has already affected significant portions of the Reef. It is predicted that within 20-30 years severe bleaching will occur at least annually. Because recovery from such frequent bleaching events takes from 10 to 30 years, it is likely that large areas of the Great Barrier Reef will remain permanently bleached. This could seriously reduce the \$1.5 billion that the Great Barrier Reef generates annually.

Australian tourism also relies heavily on other natural attractions such as Kakadu and a variety of old growth forests. In the past, natural changes to climate have taken place over thousands of years allowing such systems to adapt. Global warming will take place more rapidly than any change known to occur in the last 10,000 years. Natural ecosystems throughout Australia will have difficulty adapting rapidly enough to ensure their survival. Whether they are mangrove swamps, coral reefs, rainforest, wetlands, grasslands or alpine ranges, all may be damaged to an extent that they no longer provide habitat for the variety of species they support. As the effects begin to hit home so that fewer of us can deny the problems of global warming, international restrictions on the use of fossil fuels will begin to impact heavily on those economies that ignored the warning signs.

Promoting car-based transport is irresponsible

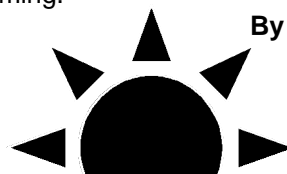
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The cost of everything that involves the use of fossil fuels will increase. This includes all agricultural food and fibre products, any goods that require transport, and any activity that uses electricity (94 per cent of which is derived from coal, gas, or oil). There's not much that isn't affected! Australians have built cities and lifestyles that are highly reliant on fossil fuels by world standards. In Sydney 70 per cent of all trips are made by private car.

In light of this, the ongoing construction of motorways is both socially and economically irresponsible. The resulting increased car use will continually increase costs for personal transport - as fuel costs increase due to international restrictions and possible oil shortages - as well as increased costs due to the effects of global warming outlined above. All these changes will have significant flow-on effects to our economy and lifestyles. In the long run, reducing greenhouse emissions won't cost much. Not reducing them will.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has indicated that a 60 per cent reduction on 1990 greenhouse gas emission levels will be required to stabilise the global climate. The longer we put off building appropriate mass-transit infrastructure like light rail, the greater will be the costs of both reducing our emissions and dealing with the consequences of global warming.

By Dr. Robert Passey



Parramatta Link - A Modern Fairytale

The Fairy Tale Begins - February 2000

Once upon a time, a very short time ago, comparatively speaking, there was a plan to connect a major regional centre on one side of Sydney with a major regional centre on the other. These cities were called Parramatta and Chatswood. Transport planners saw that this was good and gave it their support....as long as things were done properly....

"In the last decade several new motorways have been constructed in Sydney. These have simply generated more traffic and moved bottlenecks to a new position in the road network. The Parramatta Rail Link, on the other hand, has the potential to reverse this trend, heralding the start of what could be a genuinely progressive program of urban transport improvements by the Carr government," said Eco-Transit president, Michelle Zeibots, at the time of the announcement.

It was not long, however, before important changes began to limit the usefulness of the proposed link, not the least of which was the decision to cut it in half! Other elements began to raise their heads...

Rail Viaduct Controversy In Lane Cove

"Are they really the guardians of Lane Cove?" asked public transport lobbyists. "It is of deep concern to committed environmentalists that a local residents group calling itself the Guardians of Lane Cove National Park are opposing a rail viaduct crossing the Lane Cove River in the vicinity of Fullers Bridge. The viaduct is a vital component of the Parramatta Rail Link. If the river were to be crossed by tunnel, as the Guardians advocate, the rail tunnel would have to be constructed at a great depth and two important stations - at Delhi Road and UTS Kuring-gai - would have to be abandoned. About 12,000 passengers a day are expected to use these stations".

In 2003, Delhi Road has survived via a move westward. The outlook for UTS Ku-Ring-Gai is grim.

A prophecy fulfilled - September 2003

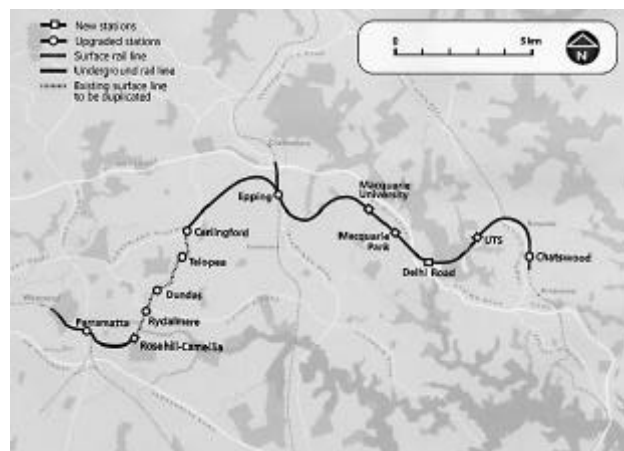
When planning approval for the project was granted in February 2002, approval for the UTS station was withheld pending demonstration that the station was warranted by the patronage it was likely to receive. This warrant was not proved, and the railway is being constructed without the UTS station. Further, it will not be practicable to restore the station later in the event that sufficient patronage can be shown.

UTS has responded to the loss of its station. The University could move the campus facilities to somewhere near its main campus at Broadway. And it has begun a program of public consultation which seems to foreshadow such a move. The University explains that the Ku-Ring-Gai campus is already suffering from its poor access - for example, many students who accept places there for nursing courses never begin their courses and are lost to both the University and to the profession of nursing. This disadvantage will get worse in about 2008 when the nearby Macquarie campus has a railway station and UTS doesn't.

UTS has considered other alternatives, such as running different courses there. However, subjects of interest to people who live in the northern suburbs are already well served by other institutions. So, the likely outcome of the residents' campaign against campus expansion will be that the campus is sold by UTS. Its speculation on my part at this time, and not certain that they'd sell, but that seems more likely than putting housing there for students at St Leonards and city campuses.

If the campus is sold, it is not clear what it might then be used for. The land is apparently affected by a covenant that it must be used for educational purposes but there are many precedents for escaping covenants. There is a zoning on the land but that can be altered and application has been made to alter it. So a plausible forecast for the land's future could well be medium-density housing, resulting in far worse road traffic than a campus with a railway station would ever have caused.

By Jim Donovan



A dream that once was...

Transport Snippets

F6 Murmurings...

A letter in response to our National Conservation Council of NSW Motion regarding the F6 has garnered an interesting response. Motion 56 called upon the NSW Government to confirm the future use of the former F6 corridor for public transport and community use, to which they have said "Heavy rail, metro rail, light rail and rapid bus systems are being evaluated." Busses hmmm? So does this imply a road for them to run on or an O-bahn? Something else? The study into the matter of use should have concluded in August so we will be following that up shortly. In the meantime, if you are a resident of the 5 councils who have a stake in the F6 corridor, you should be getting your local representatives moving on this... Start now, 'cause there's an election coming!

NRMA Reports on its Environment Conference

Interesting dancing around the confirmation that Climate Change science has matured and is still saying much the same thing...we're in trouble. The other 'major' scientific paper, presented by Lisa Corbyn of the NSW EPA, detailed her assessment of Greater Sydney's air quality problems. She noted key pollutants in the form of reactive hydrocarbons and particles with diesel soot coming in for a specific mention.

Other notable quotables (in the NRMA's opinion) was research that "showed that:

- 35% of the Sydney population were affected by traffic noise
- 50% of whom had sleep disturbance"

There was a figure for rail noise too, but for some reason the editors chose not to include this figure as a percentage of the Sydney population, which looks much less impressive as such. When 60,000 people are put into context (% of approximately 4.1 million people by the ABS figures for 2001) it is less than 2%!

Ms. Corbyn also related the EPA's interest in slowing down the increasing vehicle kilometres being driven, and will be looking at fuel taxation, and salary packaging for public transport. This last was heavily debated a couple of years ago by the Eco-Transit talk list!

Other NRMA scuttlebutt...

In their review of the Sturt Highway performance audit, the NRMA publication 'Hub and Spoke' noted the NRMA's intention to call upon the federal government to "increase funding to progressively upgrade the route to an *acceptable*[our emphasis] standard and to ensure maintenance funding is kept at a level to replace and upgrade ageing infrastructure".

Kensington Update

Waverley mayor, Paul Pearce was one of the few candidates who responded to our concerns about the future of light rail in the Kensington area, as part of our Baylight East proposal. His response made mention of his place in a 'working party' composed of Eastern Suburbs MPs. They have reached an agreement in preparing a 'scoping' document funded at the local government level, which would lead to a feasibility study for the extension of light rail through the Eastern Suburbs.

Public Passenger Transport Inquiry

This Inquiry will be reporting as of December 2003, with public submissions deadline on the 30th of June. Eco-Transit made its submission with supporting documents by Michelle Zeibots and Chloe Mason. We were immediately asked for permission to post the submission on the Transport NSW web site and will shortly make it available on our own. Big thanks to all those involved.

Web site Revamp

We will be revamping the Eco-Transit web site in the next month so check back in late October a subtly new look and more information than ever before.

Eco-Transit On The Telly...

Our illustrious President and Vice President appeared recently on Channel 31's 'Voices Of Protest' program sounding mightily cool about the ill effects of the NSW Governments decision to make Public Transport Users pay and pay and pay. Good work!

STOP PRESS! – Interim Report on Inquiry Out Now

A 227 page pdf is now available from the Transport NSW web site.

See it at

<http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/ministerial-inquiry/parry-interim-report.pdf>

Written submissions on this report are due on the 10th of October.

IMPORTANT!

Your membership:

- is now due!
 will be due on

Post your membership fees to:

Eco-Transit
 PO Box 630, Milsons Point, NSW 1565

**Schedule of Membership Fees: Family \$15
 Individual \$10 / \$5 Community Group \$25**