

Public Transport Matters 15th August 2012

Welcome to Public Transport Matters

Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter **Public Transport Matters**.

RAIL Back On Track will be publishing every couple of months an online newsletter to highlight public transport users opinions, experiences, suggestions for improvement of the public transport network. It is not intended to be an 'expert' level publication but reflective of actual non-expert public transport users viewpoints.

Articles suitable for publication are welcome.

Please email admin@backontrack.org with your contributions.

Articles may be edited, with author's permission prior to publication.

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RAIL Back On Track backontrack.org is a web based community group that advocates for sustainable transport solutions mainly rail and advocates strongly for rail commuters, and at times other public transport commuters e.g.. bus and ferry.

We are also concerned with the interface of other modes of public transport with rail.

Robert Dow

Administration

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Some mural art work at Darra Railway station

Why public transport matters ...

Congestion and gridlock are all too common, Jonno explains why indeed public transport matters

Why Does Public Transport Matter?

As this newsletter title suggest "Public Transport Matters" but why does it matter?

Since the late 60's we have been endlessly expanding our road networks to initially cater for growing car use but most recently to reduce congestion or keep up with population growth. If you look at our cities today all you will see is congested roads, divided or destroyed communi-

ties, billion dollars road projects draining State and Federal Budgets, rising Council rates, bankrupt tunnel operators, increasing obesity levels, unsafe streets, ugly overpasses, isolated communities and people driving further and further every year.

Our nation has spent 50 years trying to out-build congestion with more and more roads and instead of fixing congestion, we have actually created today's conges-

tion woes. It has been estimated that in the 30 years to 2004, the Federal Government spent \$58 billion on roads and only delivered more cars and trucks on the roads, peak hour traffic chaos, increased travel time and worsening air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

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Why public transport matters (continued)

There are two overarching concepts to understand and accept in transport planning that are simply irrefutable.

These are:

The **Law of Road Congestion** - this law states that **"no matter how many lanes of road you build in and around cities, you can't stop cars from jamming them up"**. Despite the claims of highway advocates, urban congestion can't be addressed by increasing road capacity. To put it bluntly...the congestion choking our city today is the direct result of the road capacity constructed over the last 50 years. It is not because of previous Governments failing to plan or spend enough on road projects.

Efficiency of Transport Modes - The motor vehicle is the least efficient mode of transport for moving people as shown. It is also equally inefficient for moving freight. Yet our cities and transport networks are planned to have 80-90% of trips made by the least efficient mode. Even more alarming is that our road network is designed for the majority of these trips to be made during peak hour. The end result is a road network massively over engineered and draining more and more taxes and rates away from vital services such as health, education, policy and drives up the cost of living.

It is these two concepts that have worked together to create the congested and economically unaffordable cities we live in today.

Whilst the idea of being able to drive wherever you want, whenever you want in uncongested traffic with plenty of parking at your destination and no tolls sounds great, it is unfortunately an Urban Myth.

The 'Unmentioned' Cost of Road Transport

There is no greater waste than spending money hoping to fix a problem whilst actually creating the problem being solved. And we are spending a lot of money not fixing our transport problem that goes well beyond the showroom, the bowser, the registration sticker and the construction of roads. There are many hidden cost of our current levels of car usage which are rarely discussed or considered when comparing road transport to public transport.

Continued page 3 ...

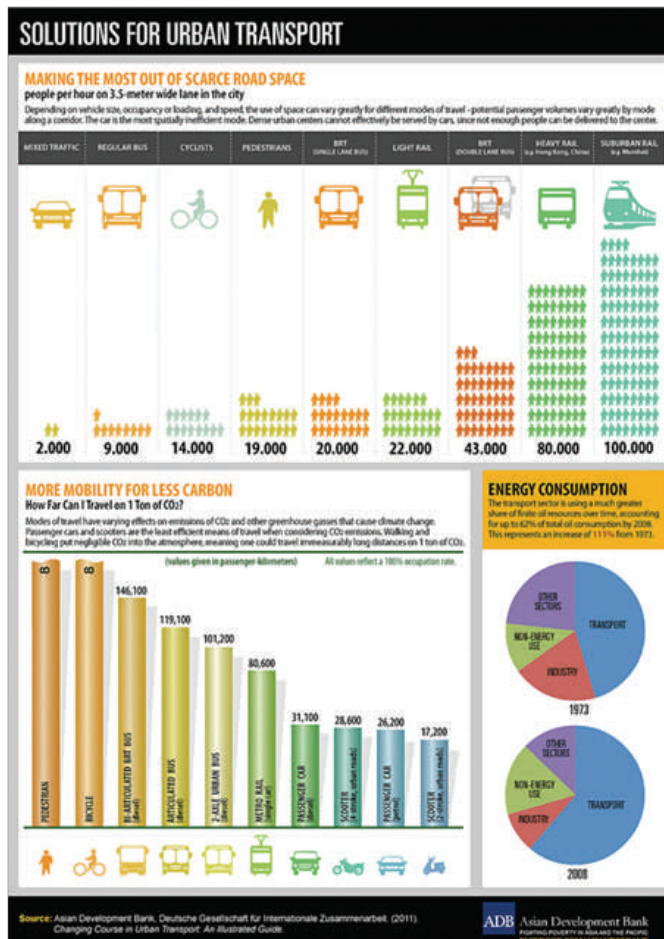


Each full bus removes 50 cars off the roads.

"no matter how many lanes of road you build in and around cities, you can't stop cars from jamming them up".



Each full train removes 600 cars off the roads.



Why public transport matters (continued)

Petrol Taxes and Road Subsidies

The RACQ regularly claims that the petrol taxes paid at the bower and registration fees exceed the taxes invested by all level of Governments in our road network. Nothing could be further from the truth. Taxes and charges on motorists fail to cover the cost to the public of car use. The confusion arises because the Federal Government collects most of the tax revenue, but state and local governments are responsible for most of the spending. The Victorian Public Transport User Association's analysis below shows that the road subsidy is approximately \$17 billion each year having grown from \$15 billion in 2005.

The equivalent subsidy of public transport is hard to quantify easily but is believed to be no greater than that for motor vehicles users with a positive return on that investments unlike motor vehicles.

Car Industry Subsidy

As reported by the Financial Review on 2 April 2012, car making is still heavily assisted relative to other industries. The Productivity Commission's latest effective rate of assistance estimates for cars of 11.1 per cent is equivalent to an annual net subsidy of \$1.6 billion.

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Annual costs of car use in Australia	
Item	\$million
Road construction and maintenance	14,100
Land use cost	6,000
Road trauma and damage	16,900
Noise	700
Urban air pollution	4,300
Climate change	2,900
Tax concessions for car use	7,400
State fuel subsidies	0
Total	52,300

Annual revenue collected from Australian motorists	
Item	\$million
Petrol and diesel excise (net of rebates)	10,300
GST on fuel and vehicles	5,000
Vehicle registration fees	3,500
Insurance premiums	12,100
Tolls	2,000
Other revenue	2,400
Total	35,300
Road Deficit	17,000

Sources: Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics, *Transport Statistics*, various years; *Public road-related expenditure and revenue in Australia* (2011 update). Connelly et al, The economic costs of road traffic crashes: Australia, states and territories. (*Accident Analysis and Prevention*, 2006.) Bus Industry Confederation, submission to the National Fuel Tax Enquiry, 2001. Australian Tax Office, *Taxation Statistics*, various years. Australian Prudential Regulatory Authority, *Half Yearly General Insurance Bulletin*, June 2009. Laird et al, *Back on Track*, UNSW Press, 2001.

Track Work Calendar

A track work calendar is now available at :

<http://www.queenslandrail.com.au/closures>

to help you plan future travel. Planned closures for years 2012 to 2014 can be easily viewed.

“Taxes and charges on motorists fall to cover the cost to the public of car use.”

Why public transport matters (continued)

Road Deaths

The Federal Department of Infrastructure and Transport documents the annual economic cost of road crashes in Australia an estimated \$27 billion and the social impacts to families, friends and colleagues immeasurable. No price can be put on the personal trauma caused by the loss of a family member, friend or colleague.

Since record keeping commenced in 1925, there have been over 180,000 deaths on Australia's roads. Whilst road trauma levels have declined substantially over the last four decades the number of road deaths there were still 1,288 people killed in 2011. The aviation industry would be shut down over night if it lost ten 737's each and every year. Further it is estimated that for every road death 20 people are injured in traffic accidents.

In comparison in 2009 only 24 people were killed on Australian railways. The injury rates for car per km travelled is around 10 times that of rail rate and fatalities around 4 times.

Obesity

Australia is today ranked as one of the fattest nations in the developed world. The prevalence of obesity in Australia has more than doubled in the past 20 years. Obesity has overtaken smoking as the leading cause of premature death and illness in Australia and has become the single biggest threat to public health in Australia. On the basis of present trends we can predict that by the time they reach the age of 20 our kids will have a shorter life

expectancy than earlier generations simply because of obesity.

Car dependence is now the real driving force of the obesity epidemic. Kids who used to walk or ride to school are now driven by parents. Busy roads make residential areas dangerous thus forcing children indoors while low-density living requires long trips to centralised shopping malls. And our new sprawling suburbs are often built without back yards or bus routes.

The result is a fatter population, with the costs borne by the city's children through shorter lives, and by taxpayers, through the heavy burden of obesity-related medical costs on a straining healthcare system.

Physical inactivity due to car dependence costs over \$10 billion per year in direct health costs.

Congestion Costs

The Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics has predicts that the excess, or avoidable, national costs of traffic congestion in Australian cities will exceed \$20 billion by 2020 reflecting the extra travel time, fuel usage, travel time unreliability and pollution arising from congestion. Reducing congestion is difficult as explain previously, but the more freight and passengers moved by active and public transport the lower the impact of congestion will be on the overall economy.

Community Isolation

The 2009 Senate inquiry into public passenger transport

highlighted the importance of public transport in reducing transport disadvantage and social isolation for both young and old and in reducing the need for urban fringe dwellers to spend an excessive proportion of their income on car maintenance and running costs. The current over reliance on the motor car especially for suburbs on the fringes out our cities recues the access to employment, educational and other community facilities for those with the most need.

So in closing, the inability to reduce congestion with more road capacity, the inefficiency of the motor vehicle and the sheer impact our car dependency has on lives, taxes, rates, other Government services, communities and the environment is **Why Public Transport Matters** and why a paradigm shift to active and public transport and long-distance rail is needed **Now!!**

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Interested in public transport?

Keen to see frequent, accessible, affordable services for all?

Tired of the congestion, the car centric failing transport paradigm?

Sickened by road trauma?

Come and join our discussion forum ...

<http://backontrack.org>

“ ... a paradigm shift to active and public transport and long-distance rail is needed Now!!”

City Stop Locations

Simon details why it be might time to review these bus stops.

Currently when one is heading home from the city it is not entirely clear where the next bus departing will leave from. A sizeable portion of the suburbs in the Brisbane City Council area are affected by this problem. This is not an artifact of the road network, or any particular difficulty, but comes from poor service planning. I am unaware of anywhere else in the world where this applies and I have asked around.

This is the reason why a number of Rocket services leave from Adelaide St with few passengers, while the full time routes leave from Queen St bus station packed out. Examples include the 201, 156, 151, 129, 131, 133, 137, 141, 119, 179, 181. Education of affected users is not reasonable nor should it be necessary.

Similarly, a number of full time services to the same parts of town suffer from the same problems. Nowhere is this more severe than the corridor from Auchenflower to Indooroopilly school. This is now the only corridor to have routes heading towards it travelling in both directions through the Cultural Centre. What this means is that while you are waiting to use the services which come on one platform, annoyingly a different service can go through on the other side. It is too difficult to wait on the overbridge and run down to the next service as they arrive, which means intending passengers must decide which service(s) they are going to target. There are similar problems within the

CBD.

Brisbane Transport receive a far lower patronage rate than the other major public Australian bus operator, Sydney Buses. Taken on boardings per total km (meaning including dead running (1)), Brisbane Transport in has approximately 0.9 (1,2) vs Sydney Buses with 2.2 (3). While density is surely a factor, it is not the only one and service planning is a big problem particularly with the former. These figures have been relatively static over time in Sydney but reduced in Brisbane since that figure as it pre dates the 40%/20% fare rise in 2010. This has caused static to negative growth in boardings with increasing service km.

While King George Square Bus Station was being constructed, all the routes for the Auchenflower to Indooroopilly school corridor left from near the Casino except for the 412 and the all stops routes. This meant most of the routes on the corridor were utilised in both directions. Now, approximately half the routes are under utilised on the outbound and the 444 was getting overcrowded leading to late running, denied boarding and complaints (4). The problem for the above mentioned corridor was created on the opening of the new bus station at King George Square. This has led to the need to create route 88, which does indeed solve the problem of insufficient outbound capacity from the 444 stop in King George Square, however it is far more expen-

sively solved than what is needed. It is similar for the 111, 160 and 88, although without the problem of the reversed direction through the Cultural Centre.



It is relatively simple to fix these problems. Regarding the 444, the ideal fix would involve moving the 444 to Queen St Bus Station platform B. Inbound could remain via Roma St busway mostly because that avoids needing to do the slow turn-around manoeuvre at the south end of King George Square Bus Station. The GoMA service would be tagged on to another route such as the 385, which would also ease pressure on the Hope St layover area. If it is essential to have Disability Discrimination Act compliance before QSBS B is upgraded, it is possible to layover at King George Square stop 2D and serve QSBS B on the outbound only, and move the southbound 88 to the more appropriate stop 2F. It is not clear why layover underground would be unacceptable in King George Square Bus Station when it is acceptable in Queen Street Bus Station.

Continued page 6 ...

“Currently when one is heading home from the city it is not entirely clear where the next bus departing will leave from. “

City Stop Locations (continued)

The second phase would involve the 412 and 109 being moved to platform B but that may well require the Centenary services to be moved to King George Square Bus Station and run via the Western Freeway. It would also require the 109 to be operated by two axle buses exclusively, which would be unfortunate but a price worth paying in the author's opinion. Additional traffic through the Cultural Centre from this move is minor, more than compensated for by increasing the utilisation of other rocket services and relatively easy to resolve with the Cultural Centre third platform proposal which is beyond the scope of what is discussed in this article.

Other moves possible which do not require infrastructure would be moving the 214, 215, 220 express services from Queen St Bus Station stop A2 to combine with the 184, 185, 210, 211 and 212 services presently leaving from Ann St. This would free up stop A2 for the 204 and 207 at a minimum. Sensibly starting the 160 from the Cultural Centre in the PM peak would free up stop A9 particularly for services such as the 129, 131, 137, 141; perhaps requiring some re-shuffling.

These sorts of moves could and should be extended to Ipswich Rd, Kelvin Grove Rd, Wynnum Rd and Lutwyche Rd services, regardless of stopping patterns.

Best practice or even reasonable practice would require that these problems are fixed.

References:

- (1) http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/2010%20Library/2009%20PDF%20and%20Docs/1.About%20Council/1.10%20News%20and%20publications/news_and_publications_a_t_earney_report.pdf
- (2) <http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/about-council/council-information-and-rates/news-and-publications/annual-report-and-financial-statements/index.htm>
- (3) http://www.statetransit.info/performance-information/annual/performance_information_09_10.pdf
- (4) <http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/southeast-queenslands-worst-bus-route-444/story-e6freon6-1225766088074>



**Queen St
Brisbane City
359 Bus**

Help! I live in Brisbane and public transport is terrible! *By Tramtrain*

Why is it so hard to get decent, frequent and useful service around Brisbane?

Why can we intuitively drive straight down a main road to get from A to B, and yet when we take the bus, the service detours off the main road and turns into a Safari Tour Of Suburban Brisbane stopping at C, D & E and all the other letters of the alphabet, and all the while we are running late for that Monday morning 9 am meeting?

Ever wondered why there are 10 different bus routes that go to Your Suburb, and yet the service is so so bad because none of them are useful and they all go to slightly different places? Do you find yourself playing BusLotto™ in the morning because there are so many route numbers and variations?

Confused about which one of 450/452/453/454/P455/P456/P457/P458/P459/Ipswich train will turn up first and get you to Milton in the mornings? Or do you pick 'car' because there's only one of those and you can't make a mistake?

Ever wondered where 'City Precincts' is or whether it even exists?

Ever wondered if hitching a ride with the Garbo would be faster because your bus has more stops and starts, absolutely everywhere all the time, like constantly, than the twice weekly citywide bin run?

Ever found it hard to decide where to rent a house or locate your business or next housing development

close to public transport? Have you moved next to a train station only to discover that there are little/no services/the station has been decommissioned when you want them and actually the bus service the next suburb over has double the frequency and span, but you didn't know because the transport authority decided to draw multiple different maps based on whether the vehicle had steel wheels, rubber tyres or propellers or ran on an expensive-to-construct guideway or had big stations, but you didn't care about that, you just wanted a map showing where all the decent services were?

Do you live in a suburb with more developer proposals than Hong Kong and yet you are being told that the density in your suburb isn't high enough to justify decent public transport?

Does your bus service behave strangely around train stations, as if there is almost an invisible anti-bus force-field around it that prevents the bus actually getting anywhere near the train platforms?

Does your train have identity issues? Does your local service have difficulty deciding whether it is a bus or a train from one hour to the next?

Are you an ex-resident of Perth, Western Australia, bamboozled by the fact that we have a larger city, run identical trains but run half the train services that Perth does?

Can't wait for Brisbane to turn into New York, London, Paris or Tokyo?

Tired of excuses from civic leaders and waiting for that big, multi-bazillion dollar, high-concrete, super-massive engineering project that is coming next decade/next century/next eternity/never before things can change?

There's something about bad public transport service in Brisbane and the inertia against change that goes with it. In the next article, we will discuss the concept of RAIL Back on Track's Core Frequent Network, and how it can be done, right here, in Brisbane City.

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“Why Is It so hard to get decent, frequent and useful service around Brisbane?”

Visit to Gold Coast Light Rail Project – July 2012

Robert Dow

Six of us visited the Gold Coast Light Project on the 13th July 2012. Our hosts for the day, GoldlinQ escorted us through the project after a briefing. There has been a lot of progress with the project, but much of the early works has been upgrading and repositioning of a lot of the underground utilities. Future proofing in fact. This phase is almost complete and track will now start to appear at a rapid rate. The light rail should be commencing operations from the middle of 2014. This project will be trans-

forming for the Gold Coast and will be a turning point in public transport options for residents and visitors.

More details for the project can be found at

<http://goldlinq.com.au/>

More photographs can be viewed at

<http://railbotforum.org/mbs/index.php?topic=8522.0>



Cardboard model of the FLEXITY 2 tram



Gold Coast University Hospital Station



Project Visitors Centre Surfers Paradise

**Photographs
R Dow 13th July 2012**

Gallery - Robert Dow



Bicycle Locker Darra Railway Station



New Farm Ferry Terminal

**CityGlider Bus
Adelaide Street
Brisbane**



**WestLander
Charleville
Western Queensland**



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