



Road Management Bill

The government has released a position paper and draft Road Management Bill for public comment. The paper and proposed legislation, which is expected to be an amendment to the Transport Act 1983, can be found on <http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au>, the VicRoads web site home page, thence advanced search for 'road management bill'.

The legislation covers the spectrum of matters relating to management of the State's roads. A central proposal is to allocate responsibility for different road classifications to State and Local Government.

VicRoads will need only to consult local councils before declaring an existing public highway to be a freeway or an arterial road (sn 65). Sensitive sites, e.g. strip retail centres, would not have specific protection for pedestrians crossing or kerb parking. Among the various criteria is the assessment that an arterial road provides a 'principal route' between 'major metropolitan activity centres' or 'across' cities. Congestion will lead to pressures to release motor vehicle traffic through roads which should be protected in the interests of efficient public transport, walking and cycling along AND across the public roads. Non-motorised access to land cut by a road is not specifically guaranteed.

The legislation highlights the serious planning situation in which responsibilities for sustainable planning and road/traffic management have been assigned to distinct government departments.

The TCPA intends to comment on the proposed Bill. The committee would like to hear soon from any members who have views on the proposed legislation.

Sustainable Cities 2025

The House of Representatives Committee on Environment and Heritage Committee is to conduct an inquiry into the future sustainability of Australian cities. The Sustainable Cities 2025 inquiry will look at issues and policies relating to:

- The environmental and social impacts of sprawling urban development;
- The major determinants of urban settlement patterns and desirable patterns of development for the growth of Australian cities;
- A 'blueprint' for ecologically sustainable patterns of settlement, with particular reference to eco-efficiency and equity in the provision of services and infrastructure;

- Measures to reduce the environmental, social and economic costs of continuing urban expansion; and
- Mechanisms for the Commonwealth to bring about urban development reform and promote ecologically sustainable patterns of settlement.

A discussion paper has been released outlining objectives the Committee may consider in developing a 'blueprint' for Australian sustainable cities.

Submissions to the inquiry are being sought by Friday 31 October 2003; late submissions will be accepted. After submissions have been considered, roundtable forums will be held to collect further evidence.

Background information and copies of the discussion paper can be obtained from the Committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4580 or via the website at: www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/enviro

North Central City Corridor Strategy

The draft of the integrated strategy to address the transport needs of Melbourne's inner northern suburbs has been released. Background information and the strategy are available on the DOI web site www.doi.vic.gov.au.

The draft, which presents a number of options to improve public transport, including proposals for a Doncaster area rapid transit link (DART), and to improve conditions for walking and cycling, is open for comment until early November 2003.

Journey to Work Trends in Australia

Alan Parker is presenting a paper in the name of the TCPA to the Australasian Transport Research Forum in October 2003 on trends in journeys to work across Australia since 1976. The picture is not a pretty one. The percentage of commuters driving to work has increased to 72%, largely accounted for by the tripling of female drivers. Behind the car-driving trips are two other subsidiary trends: vehicle occupancy rates have dropped, and the use of cars to access public transport (PT) has increased.

Whilst trips to work constitute only 11% of all urban journeys, they form 24% of total distances travelled and they are concentrated, with significant impacts on congestion and demand for road space.

Melbourne compares poorly with Sydney in the use of PT and non-motorised transport, and is the heaviest per capita consumer of gasoline of all the Australian cities.

Report of Advisory Committee on the Games Village Development

The report of the Advisory Committee on the Parkville site proposal (Games Village and apartment blocks) and the State government's response were released on 5th August.

The TCPA has taken a close interest because the government is treating this development as a 'benchmark for future developments' and uses Melbourne 2030 as a frame of reference

The unsatisfactory planning process employed for this new subdivision (see Bulletin vol. 10, no. 2, Mar-Apr 2003) was underlined by the further revisions to the layout of the conceptual plan after criticisms of the basic urban design by the two affected councils (Melbourne and Moreland). Despite the 130 recommendations for further changes, the report concludes 'All parties acknowledge that the modified master plan did not address all matters to be resolved...' Notwithstanding the input of the two local governments, the reality is, as the Minister has announced, the 'Government and the Village Park Consortium will now develop the final design..'

The TCPA is not satisfied that the revised concept plan meets our basic criticism that:

Bounded on three sides by barriers which are either non-permeable or do not lead to services, its distance from any activity centres and services, and in particular its lack of attractive public transport, will all make this a highly car-dependent development.'

There were the frequent reminders of these issues in the report. Nevertheless, the Cities of Moreland and Melbourne supported increased residential densities in the revised plan. This would appear to reflect the pressures of urban consolidation.

Given the pressures to accommodate the Games Village, the Advisory Committee had no option but to reject any possibility of conserving the 'park-like character' of the site and felt constrained from recommending any change to the housing mix, which is predominantly 4-bedroom dwellings. A mix of housing, including fewer bedrooms, smaller apartments and duplexes, could be designed and constructed to be more affordable.

The Advisory Committee supported the TCPA, and even cited us, on its criticism of the isolation and concentration of housing, and recommended that the Government should 'renegotiate this aspect of the proposals with Village Park Consortium to achieve a greater distribution of the social housing stock and maximum integration.' The Government has accepted this.

The Village Games development could become a litmus test of the government's real commitment to an integrated transport strategy. The TCPA welcomes the emphasis placed on walking and cycling. In addition to improved pedestrian and bicycle links to PT, the report recommended the installation of 10 cycle lockers and 30 stands at Royal Park and Flemington Bridge stations.

The report acknowledges that both train/tram nodes are

either beyond the 800m 'pedshed' (maximum distance which people are usually willing to walk to access PT) or right on the limits. Moreland City Council's proposal to extend the Route 55 tram along Park St was rejected on grounds of cost (\$2.2m per km). The only new service recommended is the diversion of the Route 504 bus through the main collector road of the site.

However, government support for this service remains in principle only. The DOI 'stressed that no budget provision had been made at this stage and upgrade proposal would need to be considered against the needs for improved bus services in other areas.' (p124).

The State government's response is that the exact frequency and hours of the bus service will be '*subject to review of the demand generated from the Village development.*'

The Report of the Advisory Committee and the Government Response can be found on web site www.dvc.vic.gov.au/commonwealth_games.htm.

Melbourne 2030 Update

The release date of the Submission Analysis Report on the 1500 submissions received, which was expected to be July 2003, has now been delayed till 'late 2003'. Implementation continues whilst the community interest groups remain in the dark on public reactions to Melbourne 2030. The report has to be approved by the Minister before release; the draft was not available for public scrutiny.

New Scientist on the Energy Crisis

New Scientist ran a three-week series on Energy, from 2nd to 16th August 2003. In the first on oil depletion, the editorial 'Running dry' and article 'Brace yourself for the end of cheap oil' carried warnings similar to those in the last TCPA Bulletin (v 10 no 3, May-June- 2003). New Scientist puts it bluntly: 'One thing above all else underpins our comfy mobile lifestyle - cheap energy. And on this score we are in for a big shock: we are going to run out of cheap oil. That's not oil per se, but we're approaching the point where global demand for oil will outstrip supply.' Shifting to 'dirtier' sources of oil such as tar sands, with the risks to the global climate, is seen as the worst option. The big question is whether alternatives sources of clean and economic energy 'will kick in before the cheap oil runs out. The 9 and 16 August issues carry articles on the alternatives of nuclear and hydrogen power.

TCPA Committee for 2004

The current committee comprises the four office bearers. This renders the Association very fragile, as occasional illness prevents us from forming a quorum. The lack of responses to the committee's call for expression of interest to join the committee has been disappointing. The committee will be contacting members to discuss our future in the period leading up to the 2003 AGM in November.