



Planning Melbourne: A Political Football

With the State election rapidly approaching, politicians are making rash promises to garner votes. Planning for Melbourne has become a political football, with the Coalition promising to scrap the Government's proposal to permit high-rise development along tram and bus corridors. This idea was first mooted by TCPA three years ago, in its submission to the Melbourne 2030 Audit Expert Group, and it was subsequently developed, researched and promoted by Rob Adams, for the City of Melbourne. Our view remains that higher densities in the existing urban area of Melbourne are needed to reduce the rate of growth on the suburban fringe, which, in some areas, particularly to the southeast, is consuming valuable agricultural land.

It is not in the long-term interest of Melbourne to have its planning scheme subjected to changes of direction at every election to suit political imperatives. The planning scheme should be a long-term vision for Melbourne that is developed and periodically reviewed in consultation with citizens, and then adopted by Parliament.

Advocates of public transport are calling for an independent authority to oversee and plan all public transport services in Melbourne. Melbourne also needs a statutory Metropolitan Planning Authority to develop an agreed land-use plan for greater Melbourne, coordinated with transport planning, and then to oversee its implementation, free from political interference. A planning authority with defined metropolitan-wide responsibility would end the uncoordinated fragmentation amongst local councils that has been a feature of land planning since the creation of the Planning & Environment Act in 1987. Until the removal of its land use planning powers by the Cain government in 1985, the MMBW was an effective, if imperfect, metropolitan planning agency, albeit without transport planning powers. One of its best legacies was the preservation of green wedges.

Ray Walford and Peter Hill

Introduction of Melbourne Bike Share is a Positive Move

The concept of sharing bikes, not privately owned by the user, has been around for some time. However, with the development of ever improving technology, the provision of bikes from unmanned on-street storage has become a practical option for many communities. To the best of my knowledge, no totally cost-neutral bike share projects are currently in operation. All schemes are subsidized through advertising, community obligation payments and/or grants. The health and social benefits to an urban community and the positive environmental outcomes from bike share operations justify financial support. How much financial support the wider community, supporters, or "beneficiaries" will contribute over time remains to be seen.

Melbourne Bike Share (MBS) has been in service with nearly 400 bikes distributed across 50 docking stations since the beginning of July 2010. Maximum bike rides, at the time of writing, on a single day number just over 50. Daily usage rates are still increasing, with rainfall being a significant determinant on days of low usage.

Three principle user subscription schemes are in place. Subscriptions cost \$50 for a year, \$8 for a week or \$2.50 for a day. Read more details at <http://www.melbournebikeshare.com.au/>

For MBS there are no additional payments required by the rider providing the bike is docked within 30 minutes. For riders seeking longer journeys it is possible to just dock a bike for 5 minutes and then continue riding the next 30 minutes of free time. Corporate members receive the first 60 minutes free as a single time unit. The TCPA are corporate subscribers to MBS, so avail yourself of the MBS service by contacting me to borrow the key.

Horst Kayak

Doncaster Rail Line

The promise by the Liberal Party to commence planning for a rail line to Doncaster, if elected to government, opens up possibilities for the further development of a true metro-style rail network for Melbourne, offering direct travel between suburbs without the need to go into the city loop and out again.

According to the leader of the Victorian Liberal Party, Ted Baillieu, the planned line “would link Doncaster with the city via Clifton Hill and north of the city”. We interpret “north of the city” to mean the university and hospital area of Parkville. A connection at Parkville with the planned line from Footscray to St Kilda Road (and eventually to Caulfield) would allow direct east-west travel. Connection with the Clifton Hill lines would offer possibilities of direct travel between the east and the north, and would also shorten the trip from Clifton Hill to Parkville. An alignment for relatively easy “cut and cover” and/or underground construction exists along Alexandra Parade and Neill Street in Carlton.

Where the line goes after reaching Parkville is open to debate. One obvious solution is to join the proposed line from Footscray at Parkville and terminate it at St Kilda Junction. This would double the frequency of trains on the busiest section of the route, between Parkville and St Kilda Junction. The Footscray line would continue to Caulfield, as planned.

Improving connectivity between inner urban nodes such as Footscray, Clifton Hill and St Kilda would be conducive to the development of a multi-nodal central city, such as we outlined in our previous issue (v17, no1) of the TCPA Bulletin.

Ray Walford

Sir James Barrett

Sir James Barrett was the founding president of the Victorian Town Planning and Parks Association in 1914, (which became the Town Planning Association of Victoria in 1918, and the Town and Country Planning Association of Victoria in 1941) and remained president until his death in 1945.

“Having an indefatigable commitment to public affairs, Barrett was particularly interested in the economics and political dimensions of the British empire as well as Japanese affairs, public health, education, recreation, music and the creation and conservation of National Parks.

At the time of his death Barrett was still active in some 28 committees. His involvement and leadership of these groups was characterised by a practical and progressive outlook; however, his domineering style often made him unpopular. Despite this he was highly regarded for his selflessness, idealism, financial generosity and public spirit.

In his advocacy of these groups Barrett was a vigorous correspondent in the daily newspapers, as well as keeping up an extensive correspondence with influential members of the military, political, social and scientific circles both in Australia and overseas.”

Source:

<http://www.lib.unimelb.edu.au/collections/archives/collections/chancellors/barrett.html>

Horst Kayak and Ray Walford

Sir James Barrett Memorial Medal

The Sir James Barrett Memorial Medal was created as an annual award to recognize ‘the best contribution annually towards town planning in Victoria’. The first Medal was awarded in 1952 to Frank Heath, architect and Hon Secretary of TCPA from 1936 to 1948.

This year, we have decided to award the medal to Professor Rob Adams AM, Director City Design, City of Melbourne. The award will be presented at the Annual General Meeting.

Annual General Meeting

The annual general meetings of the TCPA and the Australian Institute of Urban Studies (Victoria) will be held concurrently on Thursday 25th November at 5.30 pm, at Ross House, 247-251 Flinders Lane, Melbourne, in the Sue Healy Room (on mezzanine floor).