



# Town and Country Planning Association Bulletin

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Home Page: <http://www.vicnet.net.au/~tcpa/>

March - April 2002

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Town and Country Planning Association was held on Tuesday 12th March 2002 at the Montague Hotel, South Melbourne.

Single nominations were received for the following positions:

President: Ray Walford  
Vice-President: Alan Parker  
Secretary: David Littlewood  
Treasurer: Peter Hill  
Committee: Oz Kayak

While the Committee, which had re-nominated, was pleased at the AGM's expression of appreciation for its ongoing work, the Committee would like to hear from any member who has particular interests in the Association's work and would like to join as a committee member.

The TCPA remains in a sound financial position and was able to provide financial assistance in 2001 for the delivery of conference papers on behalf of the association at a New Zealand conference on walking and cycling.

The President reviewed the year's activities in relation to the key goals set out in the 'President's Message for 2001' in the Bulletin for March 2001. Considerable work has been done on the association's website to make it easier to use, update information, and provide a more comprehensive source of activities, including a full list of submissions, conference papers and articles prepared in the name of the TCPA since 1993. The website is generating interstate and international inquiries, and now provides links to a full range of related groups. The Association increased its collaborative activities with other groups across several issues. In 2001 the TCPA made two submissions and lobbied the Department of Planning on the issues of open space, accessibility standards for the physically impaired in ResCode, and the Melbourne bicycle network. A report on the year's activities accompanies this Bulletin.

In 2002 the committee aims to expand our advocacy work on walking as a mode of transport and to be more active on the green wedge and public open space issues in co-operation with member groups and individuals active in these planning areas.

The Committee was pleased with the much-improved attendance at this year's AGM and will be looking to invite a guest speaker next time, as well holding a dinner. The Montague Hotel proved to be an excellent venue for the occasion.

## UNIVERSAL ROAD PRICING IN THE UK

Following Peter Hill's article on demand management by a smart and equitable system of road pricing in the previous issue of the Bulletin, there has coincidentally been the release of a proposed radical new system of road pricing for the UK.

The Commission for Integrated Transport, the UK Government's independent transport adviser, has proposed a radical new system of universal road pricing aimed to tackle the problem of road congestion. The recommendations propose:

- Pricing by miles to be set and adjusted according to levels of congestion
- Using the existing Global Positioning System satellites to track vehicles via electronic 'black boxes' fixed to all cars
- A fairer system of road charges by linking motoring taxes to congestion rather than car ownership or a flat-rate fuel duty which penalises rural motorists.

The Commission has taken the position that current rates of traffic growth could not be solved by more roads or public transport. According to The Observer newspaper, the commission chairman, Professor David Begg:

*"believes the travel crisis in Britain is so acute and the growing demand for mobility so strong that the country cannot build its way out of trouble no matter how many new railway lines, bus lanes or motorways it laid - and must therefore 'toll' its way out."*

*"You could double the number of people travelling by public transport in Britain and it would only be equivalent to five years' growth in car traffic. And road building creates more demand. You need a charge to reduced congestion. If it is right for London and Bristol it must be right for other towns and cities."*

The CFIT report is arguing for congestion to be the measure of charging, not distance or time travelled, or city limits. Price setting would aim to smooth out bottlenecks and rush-hour gridlocks. The system envisages that car users would adjust commuting habits in response to their awareness of rates at different times. Technology will allow drivers to price options based on time and route.

Current Government policy is road pricing for all trucks within two years and, if successful, to extend to cars by 2010. While reports anticipate political obstacles, the Mayor of London, Ken Livingston, is expected to announce in March a new congestion charge of five pounds a day for cars. Vehicles are to be tracked via roadside beacons and gantries that display prices.

## **New Directions in British Planning**

Michael Bach's (from the UK's Dept of Transport, Local Government and the Regions) recent lecture on the British Government's "radical" review of planning was of particular interest to those who had been following the examples set by Dutch planning. Michael Bach indicated that the British planning was now moving in the direction of the Dutch National Environment Plan, under which specific plans (e.g. transport, land use) would be slotted. The new directions were placing more emphasis on spatial planning, the quality of public space and strategy planning with a clearer vision of desired outcomes nationally, regionally and sub-regionally.

The parliamentary Green Paper on the new planning proposals is available on the web at [www.planning.gov.uk/consult/greenpap](http://www.planning.gov.uk/consult/greenpap).

### **Recent Visit of Professor John Whitelegg**

Smogbusters sponsored the recent lecture tour by John Whitelegg, Professor of Environmental Studies from Liverpool John Moores University. He was interviewed on ABC Radio National by Phillip Adams and gave one public lecture.

His criticism of transport trends in Britain and data on the threats to the health of Europe's urban population arising from motor vehicle traffic were a message for Australian cities. After the 'road building bonanza of the Thatcher era', 'traffic levels on carefully monitored corridors rose inexorably after new roads were built' confirming research findings that 'new road building does not solve traffic problems and can have the opposite effect through driving up the demand for motorised trips.'

The following extracts from a recent lecture give some flavour of his approach to planning:

*'At a time when national governments and the European Union are making commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emission by 10% or more, car ownership and use is rising, lorry dependence is intensifying, and the distances flown by air passengers are increasing by 10-15% pa. If the design objective is to avoid catastrophic climate change we are not doing well.'*

*'Current levels of car dependency and car use have effectively structured the built environment in the image of that particular technology. Distances that must be overcome in order to make contact with schools, hospitals, shops and friends are greater than 10 years ago, we can travel further in a given amount of time but we continue to allocate significant amounts of time to overcoming the friction of distance. The importance of fossil fuel mobility in developed societies has manifested itself in the illusion that travelling further is better than travelling over shorter distances and that speed itself is a desirable item of consumption.'*

*'Designing a solution means restructuring space time relationships in cities so that space and time can be reallocated to uses that are benign and nurturing rather than cancerous and destructive. Less space for traffic means more space for people and more space for quality, affordable housing near to where people want to live and work.'*

## **State Government Open Space and Links Strategy**

One of our member organisations, the Mordialloc Beaumaris Conservation League, has drawn particular attention to the impact of in-fill residential developments on open space in the middle suburbs. The League argues for planning strategies to provide for new parkland and other public open space to compensate for the loss of private open space under the impact of higher density developments in the middle ring suburbs.

### **TCPA conference papers**

Two papers have been submitted on behalf of the TCPA for the ATRT Conference in Canberra: 'Australian best practice: growing rail patronage with free and secure bicycle parking at Cityrail stations in Brisbane' and 'Green vehicles reduce congestion and greenhouse gas emissions: power assisted bicycles'.

Both papers will be available on the association website.

### **Games Village and 'Parkville Site'**

We have given our formal in-principle support for the concept of a 'Green Games' and for the call of the Royal Park Protection Group (and now the Melbourne City Council) for the Village not to be built on the Parkville site.

We have written to the new Minister for Planning, Mary Delahunty, drawing her attention to the TCPA's 'Charter for Planning' and its principles. In doing so we have expressed the view that the planning process in respect to the Commonwealth Games, and the Village in particular, contravenes the principles of the Charter. We have also expressed the view that the Charter's principles are inconsistent with alienating public land with natural values and potential for future parkland. The TCPA is of the view that the Commonwealth Games should be used as an opportunity to attract developers to invest in the available brownfield sites.

### **Draft Urban Parklands Code**

According to information from the office of the Minister of Conservation and Environment the will now be finally be released early in 2002. The TCPA will be taking a close interest in this and invites affiliated groups with a particular interest in parks and public green open space to forward any views they would like the Association to articulate.

### **Bulletin Contributions**

We invite members to use the Bulletin to report or comment on planning issues, including local ones, and initiatives relevant to the objectives of the association. News of publications would also be of interest to the Bulletin. Send your contribution to: The Secretary, TCPA, Box 312, Collins Street West PO, Melbourne 8007.