



The Carlton Residents Association Inc.

A0034345G ABN 87 716 923 898
P.O.Box 1140 Carlton Vic 3053
Tel 9349 3615 Facsimile 9347 1411
radiotec@hotmail.net.au www.carltonresidents.org.au

29 May 2006

Hon Bronwyn Pike MP
State Member for Melbourne
484 William St
West Melbourne 3003

Dear Bronwyn,

Meeting Our Transport Challenges

Many thanks for your letter of 18 May in response to mine to Transport Minister Batchelor, 7 November 2005 (copy attached).

The Carlton Residents Association was interested to learn of your enthusiastic support for the *Transport and Liveability Statement* recently released by the Bracks Government. This policy document has drawn significant media commentary and much welcome public debate on transport matters. We applaud any improvements to public transport and encouragement towards increased bike and pedestrian travel. However we are disappointed at the lack of long-term vision in the Statement which appears to be more about spin than facing up to the real issues. Most of the initiatives now publicised have already been announced over the past couple of years. The Northern Central City Corridor Study recommendations appear to be ignored in favour of yet another review. This tactic seems designed to deflect public disquiet over costly and controversial projects such as inner-city road tunnels, until after the forthcoming State election. Community groups, such as CRA, are tired of serving on time-consuming consultative committees which lead nowhere.

Of specific concern to CRA are the following matters:

- A historic opportunity has been lost to return public transport to public ownership and to operate in the public interest, rather than for overseas shareholder profit. Privatisation of public transport has failed in Melbourne and elsewhere around the world.
- The grossly inequitable and environmentally irresponsible tax laws which encourage private motoring and discourage public transport use have not been challenged.
- The dominant role of VicRoads in the Transport Ministry is set to continue at major disadvantage to public transport. CRA along with many others has regularly lobbied for VicRoads to be disbanded in favour of a Sustainable Transport Authority with responsibility for all transport modes. The plan for a "super bureaucrat" to oversee infrastructure will not diminish the overwhelming power of the roads lobby in transport planning. Even the present plan to marginally improve public transport includes a \$4 billion commitment to roads infrastructure.

- There is no plan to deal with the foreshadowed additional 30,000 vehicles per day expected from the Eastern Freeway upon the opening of EastLink in 2008. The long anticipated rail line to Doncaster is no longer even on the agenda; a plan to upgrade the Doncaster bus service has been deferred until 2009. An extension of the underground rail loop to service increased demand to the north and south of the CBD has been rejected. A massive growth in traffic congestion and air pollution is now inevitable for Carlton.
- The popular but unsustainable notion that private motoring is the preferred way to commute has not been questioned. Travel mode impacts of escalating fuel costs are ignored. The laudable policy of aiming for 20% public transport usage by commuters by 2020 now seems lost to history. There are no incentives for public transport operators to lift their performance.
- Costly roads infrastructure, built by public-private partnerships, is set to escalate with substantial economic benefit to City Link and others, but at great cost to the Victorian community. Commercial confidentially agreements ensure the public is kept from the financial realities.

May I draw your attention to *The Melbourne Transport Strategy*, soon to be released by the City of Melbourne. This Strategy is expected to propose innovative and sustainable transport policies for Melbourne which merit positive consideration by the Bracks Government in its transport policy deliberations.

Thank you for keeping CRA informed on transport policy matters. We trust that sustainable policies will ultimately prevail otherwise we are 'on the road' to a Los Angeles style transport disaster for Melbourne.

Kind regards,

Ian Bird
Transport Spokesperson.

cc. Hon Peter Batchelor MP, Minister for Transport
Glenyys Romanes MP, MLC Melbourne