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## **Traffic & Transport Policy 2008**

The Carlton Residents Association (CRA) has long-term interests in traffic, transport, parking and related issues, dating back to the Carlton Association and Eastern Freeway debates of the 1960's. Predictions made long ago on traffic congestion, air pollution, noise etc have now unfortunately been realized. Successive State Governments have long favoured roads, freeways and tollways over public transport infrastructure. Private commuter motoring (90% driver only) now dominates the high levels of traffic which traverse Carlton daily. Federal tax law favours commuter motoring and associated car parking against public transport usage.

CRA is concerned that despite many State and Council studies over the years which have identified the problems and suggested solutions little progress has been made. Integrated transport policies, adequately funded, are an urgent requirement for Carlton, considering known future traffic growth and impacts of *Melbourne 2030* development policies. Triple bottom line analysis should be applied to all transport proposals along with demand management, to control growth in traffic levels.

### **1. Specific Issues of concern to CRA**

- **Cycling:** This is an important mode of transport around Carlton. *Bike Plan* is strongly supported along with improved bike safety amid the heavy vehicular traffic. The existing bike path network requires expansion and upgrading in a planned and strategic manner. Bike lanes on Lygon St. have been long lobbied for by CRA.
- **Walking:** Pedestrian traffic is high on Carlton streets. Street safety, environment (noise and air pollution) and green links encourage foot traffic. Shared walking and bike paths can be dangerous for both modes. Traffic speed zones and traffic calming measures contribute to safety for cyclists and pedestrians.
- **Public Transport:** CRA is a strong supporter of the public transport network which services Carlton. The Council funded Tourist Bus Service has usefully added to the transport mode mix but at high financial cost.

We continue to lobby for an extension to the existing underground city rail loop to service hospitals, University and Museum within the Carlton area. This proposed underground loop could terminate at Clifton Hill thence on to Doncaster and Blackburn via the Eastern Freeway median. This rail link together with a "congestion tax" on Eastern Freeway traffic and city car parking levies are responses to the present unfettered growth in commuter traffic through Carlton. Improved *Park & Ride* facilities at suburban public transport nodes would increase public transport use by commuters.

The feasibility of banning commuter car traffic from the CBD should be explored, along with the advantageous tax treatment of cars and parking (GST, FBT, salary packaging etc) against that available for users of public transport. The targeting of roads only for Federal funding, at the expense of public transport modes, should be reversed and is presently under review.

Centralised coordination of all public transport is important for efficiency. *Melbourne 2030* planning regime assumes low impact transport such as walking, cycling and public transport will be dominant in Activity Centres, but offers no policies to ensure funding is allocated accordingly (20% public transport usage by 2020 is a statement of faith). The introduction of free public transport on a regular basis would test the impact of such policy on traffic congestion eg. car free days. *IMAP* and *TravelSmart* initiatives are strongly supported by CRA.

- **Parking:** Carlton Parking and Access Study recommendations (April 2004) have been successfully implemented by MCC. This study was enthusiastically supported by CRA. The effective use of under utilised off-street parking facilities and a wider network of parking meters with extended hours of operation would allow much improved control over parking. Considerable local congestion and driver angst arises from motorists cruising the streets seeking *free* on-street parking, despite the wide availability of convenient low cost off-street parking.

Median areas, now used for car parking (much of it un-metered) in Cardigan and Faraday Streets, should continue to be returned to green space. This is a priority for CRA and in line with *Carlton 2010* (August 2000) policies. Additional street trees are being planted but opposition from traders to streetscape greening and loss of on-street parking continues.

- **Freight:** Delivery trucks and vans contribute considerably to Carlton's traffic and parking demands. The foreshadowed use of B Double and B Triple delivery trucks in suburban streets is of concern. Many competing delivery services operate randomly throughout the area. A centralised freight hub with operators servicing defined areas would substantially reduce freight traffic on Carlton streets. Just-in-time delivery demand by some businesses creates an element of chaos to orderly delivery services. Such demands should attract a premium charge (congestion levy) as a disincentive.

## 2. General Transport & Traffic Issues

- **Melbourne's Road Network:** Carlton sits between the Eastern Freeway and the CBD; it is subjected to substantial through traffic generated outside the area. To remove Lygon St. (Elgin to Queensberry Streets) from the arterial roads network (define it as a "local" road) would have major benefits for Carlton. The ultimate goal would be to turn Lygon St into a pedestrian and cycle friendly mall. Rathdowne St. traffic levels are already excessive and growing; this must be addressed in any overall traffic management plan. Traffic studies show that 70% of Eastern Freeway traffic travels north-south from Princes St. much of it through the inner northern suburbs, including Carlton to the CBD. Traffic demand management on the Freeway is critical and has become even more so since the opening of *Eastlink* (Mitcham-Frankston Tollway). The *Eddington Report* proposed a \$9 billion east-west tunnel extension to the Freeway to ease congestion. This proposal would have

minimal impact on Carlton traffic levels as only 10% of Freeway traffic travels east-west. The long sought rail line to Doncaster should be a planning priority rather than an incidental add-on (to be later deferred) as a response to community unrest over “grand” road plans. Public transport and congestion taxes are urgently needed to demand manage traffic growth on the Eastern Freeway.

- **Travel Demand Management:** CRA believes “demand management” is vital to control traffic growth. Easy car parking availability is often a major determinant of travel behaviour. It is unlikely people will modify their established travel mode choice without economic and legal incentives (carrot and stick). To continue to respond to the unfettered demands by the roads lobby for additional road space is short-sighted and environmentally irresponsible. Escalating fuel costs are already influencing travel behaviour towards greatly increased use of public transport. Traffic calming, congestion and parking levies, changed tax laws, car free areas etc, would all serve to dampen traffic growth. Congestion is a valid component of demand management and is currently the only limiter to traffic growth on some roads eg. Eastern Freeway.
- **Transport and the Environment:** Vehicle exhaust emissions, global warming implications and traffic noise concern CRA. High traffic volumes degrade local air quality and negatively impact community health in Carlton. Vehicle registration and insurance fees and the tax system should better reflect preferred urban vehicle types. The increasing popularity of large 4WD vehicles (SUV) in urban areas must be discouraged (recent RACV data suggests that 20% of new vehicle are SUV types). Rising costs of fossil fuel may self-limit commuter motoring and SUV usage in urban areas.
- **Land Use and Transport:** Although planning schemes define the boundaries on land usage, Government policies and site specific development overlays have had devastating impacts on Carlton (heritage, streetscape, traffic levels etc). The MCC has little influence on planning issues associated with large projects (>25,000 sq meters) which should be challenged at the State Government level. Waiving of car parking and use of relaxed student accommodation provisions have caused major problems in Carlton. The admirable decision by MCC not to grant street parking permits to developments after July 2005 is applauded by CRA. The Council must resist pressure from developers to weaken these resident car parking provisions.
- **Taxis:** Taxis respond to significant random transport demands in Carlton, particularly for visitors, the elderly and infirm and those without cars eg. public housing tenants. Taxis and car share facilities reduce the need for car ownership in Carlton. Taxi pooling and ride sharing would improve efficiency and reduce congestion.
- **Health, Safety, Security and Transport:** Air quality in Carlton is generally poor due to vehicle exhaust emissions and dust; it impacts on community health. High traffic levels and speeding on busy streets eg. Lygon St., make for a dangerous environment for pedestrians and cyclists. The recent introduction of 40kmh speed limit on Lygon St. is welcome, however it must now be enforced. Traffic calming and separation of pedestrians and cyclists from road traffic would contribute to road safety. To remove Lygon Street from the arterial roads network, would significantly contribute to quality of life and road safety in central Carlton; such policy is opposed by traders.

### **3. Melbourne Transport Strategy**

Carlton Residents Association strongly supports the City of Melbourne landmark document “Melbourne Transport Strategy” (MTS, 2006). We believe the document has accurately captured the sea-change in public opinion on transport issues for Melbourne. The late inclusion of an east-west road tunnel extension of the Eastern Freeway, on the insistence of the Committee for Melbourne, was not supported by CRA. Long-term State and Australian Government policies of funding roads infrastructure and providing taxation support for motoring has undermined the development of public transport, cycling and walking. Current transport policies are unsustainable in the face of traffic congestion, freight distribution, air pollution, global warming, peak oil production and other economic considerations. The long held belief that roads, freeways and tunnels will solve Melbourne’s traffic congestion and associated problems is no longer tenable eg. *City Link*, *Eastlink*. The powerful roads lobby, led by *VicRoads*, has won the lions share (90%) of transport infrastructure funding over the past 50 years, it enjoys great political patronage and sets policy directions.

The State Government ignored the *Northern Central City Corridor Study* (2003) and *Melbourne Transport Strategy* (2006); it now appears committed to implement the controversial *Eddington Report* roads recommendations. CRA urges the City of Melbourne to forcefully advocate the MTS to Victorian State and Australian Governments and to resist the Eddington road tunnel. While the challenges ahead might appear daunting, the Council should promote sustainable new and exciting directions for Melbourne’s transport policy into the future.