

## Public Transport *Network* Key to Post Oil Mobility

Lateral thinking on planning public transport is proposed as the key to transport solutions in Australian cities in a post-petroleum era.

A paper published today in **Australian Planner**, draws on a post World War 2 transport study done after petrol rationing in Melbourne, and the performance of various transport modes over three decades to argue its conclusion.

Titled 'Planning Public Transport Networks in the Post-Petroleum Era', the paper argues there is great scope in years rather than decades, for transport planners to increase the number and types of trips for which public transport is a convenient option.

The paper by Dr John Stone from the Australasian Centre for the Governance and Management of Urban Transport (GAMUT) at the University of Melbourne, and Paul Mees at RMIT's Global Studies, Social Science and Planning, suggests proper networking of quality public transport is the key to future urban mobility.

Stone and Mees analyse what happened in Melbourne when urban Australia had to deal with constrained oil supplies after petrol rationing was introduced during World War 2.

In a 'Back to the Future' scenario the paper suggests that walking and cycling rates will increase and public transport will dominate travel in Australian cities post oil as happened in Melbourne in the fifties.

"The petrol rationing era was a boom time for Australian public transport. However the need to conserve fuel and labour saw service levels constrained," Dr Stone said.

"Public Transport in Australian cities declined dramatically once petrol rationing was lifted and rising incomes made cars more affordable."

The paper shows that even though population grew rapidly and density increased during that period the use of public transport still fell behind the use of the car. It argues that massive changes in urban densities are not the key to getting more people on public transport.

"Many planners and other commentators on urban issues appear to believe that getting significantly more people on public transport will not be possible until massive changes in suburban densities are achieved. The evidence challenges this view."

Stone and Mees say the decline of public transport since 1950 occurred at a faster rate than changes in density and can be reversed without the need for widespread re-creation of the urban form.

"The key to making these changes lies in the approach to public transport planning used in successful European and North American cities: service-based network planning. This model offers hope for greater public transport use in Australian cities, and is outlined in the central part of the article."

"This approach enables 'anywhere to anywhere' travel while keeping occupancy rates high by carrying different kinds of travellers on the same services. Transfers are integral to a public transport system that offers access to a large number of potential destinations at an affordable cost."

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