



## **OLD TECHNOLOGY IS OFTEN BEST**

We often highlight some of the world's newest and most bizarre technologies but one of the older ones in our society is probably more of a necessity today than when it was invented. In regards to some of our modern marvels there are some life-spans that have been ingrained into our psyche without us probably even realising it. For example after about 10 years it is thought a good time to replace the car as running and repair costs start becoming excessive. After about 3-4 years it is thought a good time to replace a computer as it starts to slow down or not function at all when running the constantly evolving add-ons. In the case of mobile phones it is thought a 2 year lifespan is a good run with the massive changes as to what modern phones look like and can do. Did you know in January 2000 it was not possible to SMS people on a different network to yourself (i.e. a Telstra phone messaging an Optus phone)? It seems absurd now doesn't it. However not all old types of technology are bad and in the case of one in particular even if we were using the technology of 20 years ago, it should still be heavily expanded and invested in today.

If you are still unsure as to what I am talking about, then think how you would get to work tomorrow if your car broke down or was stolen. Yes I am talking about Public Transport, which these days seems like a dirty word for Governments of all persuasions. Those wonderful trains, trams and to a slightly lesser extent buses that have been around in some cases for well over 100 years.

With Sydney's and Melbourne's population tipped to top 5 million in the coming decades and long travel times already a major issue, moving people around our cities and greater areas will be nightmare if our current system doesn't undergo a major overhaul. It is not so much the technology that needs changing because the trains, trams, etc. themselves are fine as vehicles now but it is the ability to link many parts of the city that have no access to transport but large amounts of people. Sydney have made a start by constructing new lines, inter line links, Airport service, etc. but Melbourne is very much dragging its feet. However both cities have a lot more to do unless they want one major traffic jam in the years to come.

We are a city of close to 4 million people yet we have no train link to the airport. Our greatest population centres and also growth areas in recent times has been the South East corridor, past Glen Waverley, down to the Rowville area, etc. There is no train service there either which is even more bizarre considering over 2 million people live in the South East making it similar in size to Brisbane and bigger than all other cities in the country bar Sydney. The thing many foreigners find strange and frustrating is that lack of inter line links. Whereas a car trip from Brighton to Bentleigh would take barely 5 minutes a train trip via South Yarra may take 40 minutes not including waiting at stations.

Fossil fuels like oil are a scarce resource and are rapidly running out yet the only infrastructure successive State Governments have invested in has been roads. Some of these have been a necessity like the Western Ring Road and City Link roads but it would seem the powerful lobby groups representing these industries see any push by Government backing public transport a threat to them.

The Commonwealth Games are coming up and it will be interesting to see how our city copes with people being ferried all around the city and suburbs and to and from the Airport. Many argue that we are not an old traditional European city or Manhattan with vast amounts of people in relatively small areas, which is true, but consider these benefits even though our population is increasing; shorter travel times, fewer traffic jams, less pollution and cleaner air, fewer cars meaning fewer accidents and fewer fatalities, increased visitors to the CBD due to easier access, less travel fatigue and more sleep time, etc. Those outcomes sound like something worth investing in!

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