

3rd international conference on

SMART

URBAN TRANSPORT

featuring **Sydney's Liverpool to Parramatta T-way**
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Opening Address

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Transport Roundtable Australasia Pty Ltd

<http://www.transportroundtable.com.au/sut3>

Good morning. On behalf of the NSW Transport Portfolio State Transit Authority of NSW, I wish to welcome all delegates to the Smart Urban Transport Conference – the first time this important forum has been convened in NSW.

It is fitting that this Conference is being conducted in western Sydney where the NSW Government is presently focussing so much effort on infrastructure and on developing public transport.

This is especially visible in the Parramatta to Chatswood rail link and in the recent commencement of our first rapid bus transitway – the T-way – running from Liverpool to Parramatta.

Planning is already underway for a major rebuild of Parramatta Station precinct to provide a major interchange facility for the public and transport providers.

This focus on the provision of efficient, reliable public transport services applies particularly to the T-way - which has now been in operation for three months with steady passenger growth. 1500/day week 1 – 3300 last Thursday.

State Transit, as the biggest operator of public bus services in Australia with some 1900 buses and 32 ferries operating in Sydney and Newcastle – is pleased to be sponsoring this Smart Urban Transport Conference.

You will be hearing more today and tomorrow about how we run our services, as well as getting a chance to see first-hand how the state-of-the-art T-way operates.

So, there is a lot happening in Sydney, but as public transport professionals you would all be aware that there is still much to do – particularly in building and promoting the public transport culture and clearly that means developing a common approach to the opposition.

We live in a country where the car culture dominates – and there are some good (?) reasons for this.

Post World War II cheap land, affordable energy, boom conditions – our parents thought it would go on forever.

As a relatively young and a big country, urban sprawl is a feature of our cities' development right across Australia.

Large, rambling cities and low-density populations make it hard to provide effective public transport and it is clear to see why Australians predominantly use their car – they now have to.

But, that being the case and even though it might take years to gain sensible planning outcomes, we don't need to make it harder than it is by actively supporting car use.

It is frustrating to see how the motor car is a protected species, while public transport is undervalued and under-appreciated.

Consider this...

Over the past few years we have seen car prices drop by around 5 to 6 per cent post-GST, tax credits of 9 per cent for new business vehicles, FBT benefits provided for extensive car usage the further you drive the cheaper it gets and the discontinuation of petrol excise indexation.

Alongside these initiatives, fares have increased by 8 to 10 per cent with no tax relief.

Moreover, with last week's Federal budget, there was more wind back in petrol taxation but - we are set to see increases in the cost of alternative fuels - most of which are used by commercial vehicle operators.

We need to have Federal Government policies which encourage people out of their cars and into public transport - but the Commonwealth does not seem to be too interested in this issue.

Frankly, the time for "tinkering at the edge" of passenger transport policy has passed - but it will require leadership to change the current policy direction.

Vehicles from the west will still drive in and unless we can get a significant modal switch from private to public transport, our cities will continue to congest as population increases and densifies - accordingly making us less competitive.

Clearly, support for new and improved public transport initiatives are the way to go - and this starts with a sound policy basis and a secure financial model - need Federal Government to recognise that transport exists in cities.

But there is much we, as transport professionals, can do - even in the current climate.

We live in a world of technology and it is our Intelligent Transport Systems and clever planning which will take us forward in delivering efficient public transport services.

And we are doing our bit .

STA and the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority are working closely together to develop PTIPS - the Public Transport Information Priority System - as well as a Bus Priority Systems at many major intersections.

The PTIPS and Bus Priority System is co-ordinated through the RTA's world-leading Transport Management Centre and the RTA's SCATS system - Sydney Co-ordinated Adaptive Traffic System.

We are working hard to Integrate planning which also plays a major role in providing efficient public transport - combining urban and transport planning is good.

The increase of priority bus lanes and transit lanes improves mobility for our buses, particularly in the exhausting Sydney peak hour traffic. (in all senses of the word)

And the integration of State Transit's bus radio room into the Transport Management Centre's central control room also ensures effective real-time awareness of issues on the Sydney road network and communications with our bus drivers throughout Sydney.

The much-heralded integrated ticketing system, the Smartcard, the Integrated Transport Information System, ITIS – which provides easy access for the public to a wide range of transport information – and co-ordinated event planning across government agencies all contribute to the development of a more public-friendly public transport system.

These are all components in developing an efficient public transport system that can serve the needs of a truly cosmopolitan city such as Sydney.

At State Transit, we continue to improve and expand our service delivery to the public.

Our bus fleet expansion increases the number of low-floor, low-noise, environmentally friendly buses.

We have expanded our operating territory to now include Sydney's north-west, the west and now the Liverpool to Parramatta T-way.

We have introduced new services in the T-way, the L20s which run express from Parramatta into the City, in the north-west and the 525 cross-regional service from Parramatta to Burwood.

And State Transit is also an internationally recognised best practice service provider under the ISO:9001:2000 certification - the recognised international benchmark for quality systems of organisations across many different industries.

Our challenges are not dissimilar to other developed countries – maybe a bit more complex because of the sprawling nature of our suburbs.

But we can and should learn from others.

Fundamentally, what drives public transport patronage is good quality, reliable, affordable services that reflect the community's needs. At the end of the day it's the service that matters.

It is the challenge we – and you – face....to tackle this motor car culture and encourage people onto public transport.

We need policy support at all levels to provide the framework for reversing Australia's car culture.

So, I wish you all well over the next two days and look forward to your recommendations to examine and address this challenge.

In closing, I would just like to take a minute to thank the Conference organisers – Phil Charles, Phil Sayeg and Katie Scott of Transport Roundtable Australasia – for a great organising job.

I look forward to another successful Smart Urban Transport Conference next year and hope you find this a rewarding experience.



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