Making Urban Transport More Sustainable

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Making Urban Transport more Sustainable
Australia – A brief introduction

- Australia’s physical and human geography is a challenge for planning:
  - Large size
  - Small population, mostly along the coast

- Transport planning needs to meet the needs of both:
  - dense, urban communities, and
  - sparse, rural communities
Australia’s Transport Governance

- Australia has 3 levels of government:
  - Federal (or Commonwealth)
  - State and Territorial
  - Local

- Interstate transport (road, rail, sea) is seen as a Federal government responsibility

- Urban transport is considered a State government responsibility

- Minimal local Government involvement
Federal Transport Plan

- **AUSLINK** - 5 year funding initiative for major transport networks linking the nation.

- National network of road and rail highways

- Plan does not include Urban Transport
New South Wales

- New South Wales is Australia’s oldest and most populous State:
  - 34% of Australia’s population
  - 35% of Australia’s Gross Domestic Product
  - home to Australia’s largest city

- Sydney:
  - The greatest urban transport challenge in Australia
  - Greatest traffic congestion
  - Highest population densities
  - Largest freight task
Sydney’s Demographic Trends

• Sydney’s population:
  – Expected to grow by 40,000 per year over the next 25 – 30 years
  – The population is ageing
  – Average households are getting smaller in size

• This has important implications for the city’s transport system:
  – Smaller households mean more dwellings and the need to service these dwellings
  – Sustained population growth means having a transport system able to cope with additional demand
  – Ageing population means greater need for more “flexible” modes of public transport and also places fiscal demands through increased subsidised travel
Sydney Transport Trends

• The pre-eminence of the private motor vehicle in Sydney:
  – Vehicle kms travelled growing much faster than the population
  – Private vehicle share of all weekday trips = 71%
  – For weekend trips = 77%.
  – Vehicles on Sydney streets has increased more than 40% since 1990.

• Rail and bus patronage has been experiencing steady decline

• People are travelling further each day: 18 kms (1991) to 20 kms (2002)
Average weekday mode share

- Private vehicle: 71%
- Train: 5%
- Bus: 5%
- Walk only: 17%
- Other modes: 2%

Sources:
2002 Household Travel Survey, Sydney Travels,
Travel Characteristics of Sydney’s Residents (Mar 2002)
Implications of current trends

• The decline of public transport usage and increase in private vehicle usage is undesirable:
  – Economic costs of urban congestion is estimated to reach US$22 billion across Australia in 10 years
  – Detrimental effect on the environment from vehicle emissions
  – Both should be significant concerns for the Federal Government

• Some causes are beyond State Government’s control:
  – Australia’s strong economic performance and greater personal wealth,
  – Increase in relative affordability of vehicles due to a strong Australian dollar
Governance Reform

- Major reforms have been introduced in NSW in recent years
- Creation of an overall planning and infrastructure body
- Vertical re-integration of Sydney rail operations
- Creation of an independent transport safety regulator
- Creation of the Ministry of Transport
- Leasing of interstate rail lines to the Federal Government
NSW Transport Governance
A Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney

- Vision for Sydney over the next 25 -30 years.
- Developing new regional centres to focus employment and business activity
- Informing the prioritisation of land use with the view to minimise impact on environment and natural resources

- Vision will guide:
  - where to prioritise infrastructure works
  - the best mix of modes to transport people and goods
  - how to get the best “bang for buck”
Inquiry into Sustainable Transport

• In 2003, the NSW Government initiated an independent *Inquiry into Sustainable Transport*:
  – Consider the current method of planning, funding and delivering public transport in NSW
  – Is it sustainable?
  – How can we ensure that the US$1.4 billion spent each year on public transport in NSW is “effective expenditure”?

• Broad recommendations:
  – More rigorous cost-benefit analyses of government transport services
  – Greater exploration of new funding and road pricing options
  – More equitable and efficient government subsidies and concessions
  – Better planning across government
Reviewing Bus Services

- Declining patronage over many years
- Many private operators in financial distress and relying on government subsidies
- Unsustainable model
- Government’s priority is to get people back into buses
Sydney’s Bus Contract Regions

• The previous situation:
  – 87 contract regions
  – A fractured, disjointed system with no real city-wide network
  – No incentive for service improvement

• The new situation:
  – 15 contract regions
  – An integrated network linked by strategic corridors
  – Incentives for good performance
  – Requirement to consult the local community
Sydney’s Rail Services

- CBD centric: nearly half of all commuters to Sydney’s Central Business District take a train, yet trains only have 5% share of all weekday journeys across Sydney

- Average weekday task comprises 900,000 passenger trips across 300 stations over 2,000 km of track (geographically large network)
Rail Reform

- In 2002, RailCorp NSW was created - vertically re-integrating Sydney’s rail system.

- Major initiatives commenced by the NSW Government, including:
  - Rail Clearways
    - $1 billion over 5 years
    - 15 projects
  - PPP for rollingstock
    - $1.5 billion
    - 498 trains
Other Initiatives

• **Fares Reform:**
  – Harmonising fare scales and concession products across government and private bus services

• **Bus-only transitways:**
  – Fast, frequent bus corridors

• **Tcard** – seamless integrated ticketing for all transport modes
  – Being progressively rolled out across Sydney since 31 January 2005
Funding Issues

- No Federal Government funding of urban transport
- Disparity in road and public transport pricing
- Developer levies to fund new transport
- Public-private partnerships
- Pursue commercial development opportunities around public transport hubs to help finance infrastructure upgrades
- Aggressively pursue efficiency gains across all public transport operators
- Charge real fares
Key Messages

• All levels of Government need to be involved in urban transport

• Governance model must promote efficient service delivery

• Work to a broader strategic plan

• Funding now for future growth

• Robust core system before adding new modes or expanding

• Set pricing signals for the private motor vehicles

• Taxation benefits for public transport users
Thank you

Dōmo arigatō

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