

Introduction by Chair

Welcome to Transport For Melbourne's annual forum which we have titled Delivering Melbourne Better Transport Outcomes by Doing More With Less. Understanding and advocating what has to be done, priorities and a plan and strategy to implement should be the easy bit. Making it happen is always the challenge. The first part of today's forum will focus on the "what". The "how" will be the focus of the forum discussion/workshop after the speakers presentations.

Before I introduce our first speaker I would like make some brief comments about the context of this forum – it raises many issues and will demand new thinking on how these can be addressed.

You may ask why do we have to do more with less?

My answer is **that** should always be the goal – to carry out works and services in the most cost effective manner – it is what you would do if it was your money – it is simply good governance to do so

In Zurich efficiency and effectiveness are key. Quoting Ernst Joos Vice Director, Verkehrsbetriebe Zurich

"Readers will no doubt expect a representative for well-to-do Switzerland to present a solid and correspondingly expensive answer to city traffic problems. However I am going to disappoint you. Zurich's transport policy is worthy of attention because:

- *It is not spectacular, but is efficient*
- *It costs little and protects the environment*
- *It imposes self-restraint on politicians, but the population accepts and participates in it.*

The lesson here is to keep investment in infrastructure as low as possible – keep it simple, do not spend more than is necessary but make sure it is well designed, fit for purpose and well maintained. The focus must be on "service" and meeting travellers' needs - not the infrastructure that supports it.

In Curitiba low cost implementation was vital – the city could not afford a costly or monumental transport system, but Jamie Learner (mayor who presided over Curitiba's transformation) went further "If you want creativity, cut one zero from the budget. If you want sustainability, cut two zeros!" It is a philosophy that could and should be applied here in Melbourne.

The need for efficiency is not confined to transport operations and servicing, it must also be reflected in management and administration at all levels including government departments. Unfortunately the lessons that could have been learnt from these cities have not been applied here in Melbourne – the emphasis continues to be monumental mega infrastructure projects – the Big Build which will not solve our transport problems but it will leave our state with a legacy of debt that will become a burden in future years.

The need to do more with less will be forced upon governments and communities generally by increasingly difficult times driven by environmental pressures resource depletion, environmental degradation, climate change and global warming will result in shortages of everything and demand we do more with less whether we like it or not.

So doing more with less is a given but we also need to ask what we mean by better “transport outcomes” – for whom? If you ask Scott Charlton he will insist City Link has delivered great outcomes (for Transurban) and Cbus will agree that the big build project has done the same (for its retirement fund). The government will also say that north east link and suburban rail are inspirational projects we need and are vote winners.

I argue that the aim of transport plan must be to deliver the transport system in a way that meets community obligations, environmental goals and targets, as cost effectively as possible for the benefit of the population as a whole – travelers and non travelers alike.

In this context system costs include direct, indirect and externalities associated with provision, management and administration of transport services, supporting infrastructure typically financed by government from taxes or borrowings. It also includes direct, indirect costs and externalities borne by the traveler and the broader population.

There are many ways in which this can be achieved. We can drive more efficient motor vehicles, less often (car sharing/ride sharing) or not at all using virtual travel/working from home), by using more efficient modes of travel – walking, cycling, scooters or skate boards and their electric and folding variants, public transport or combinations such as bikes, scooters, skate boards using public transport.

There are plenty of options but no simple single fix solutions. The key will be to use these opportunities in a way that achieves optimal outcomes in terms of

cost and emission reductions for the transport system as a whole.

For personal travel this must be achieved by travelling less, less often, over shorter distances, more efficiently in a way that places less demand on supporting infrastructure and services.

So our transport strategies and plans must be designed to achieve this. There are many measures (carrots and sticks) that can be used to achieve this, but we need to measure outcomes to ensure we are meeting our goals and targets.

This may sound obvious – even elementary but this thinking is absent from government transport strategies and programs today which remain focused on business as usual.

The challenge is to develop programs to achieve this, strategies to implement them, and most importantly overcome resistance and barriers to make it happen.

We will attempt to address some of these issues today.

We will start by establishing what needs to be done and where possible apply lessons that can be learnt from international best practice.

We will then look at strategies for making it happen, identifying points of resistance overcoming barriers and strategies that may be used to do this. We will apply this first in a general sense then look at how this may be done in local government, using Merri-Bek as a case study.

We do this within the context of declining economic fortunes, and increasing environmental pressures.

Finally we accept that the window of opportunity to do all of this is closing that incremental change is no longer sufficient and that we need system change now and will need to look at levers that can be used to achieve this.

This is a very challenging agenda – it will require an open mind and new thinking but I am sure our speakers are up to the challenge and I look forward to everyone's participation in the workshop in the second part of our forum.