

## Submission - from Brian Garsden, Shelly Beach QLD

It's scary. Prof. Graham Currie's advice to the Forum that urban traffic congestion costs Australia \$10.5 billion p.a. is frightening enough. That it is set to double by 2020 must trigger drastic action. Unless we start developing new solutions it is hard not to be pessimistic about winning a war against pollution, urban gridlock, associated morbidity, accident trauma, road deaths and other nasties. We observe the largely ineffectual results from present efforts that consume bulk dollars.

We need a fresh approach. We need to drastically change the way that we do some things. It will soon be the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the human achievement of placing a man on the moon and bringing him safely home. In this 40 years, despite wonderful progress in other fields, we have seen no major breakthrough in the way we move people around the inner zones of major cities. In many cases travel is slower, due to greater congestion. When it comes to public transport we fiddle at the margins of our largely 19<sup>th</sup> century technology.

The SP Express Commuter (SPEC) System is a visionary, fresh approach, highlighting the possibilities and the degree to which service can be made superior with the application of our existing technology. No major breakthrough is needed. The features of the SPEC System and steps necessary to start building it are clearly explained in "Goodbye Gridlock", Seaview Press, 2006. (More details are to be found at [www.seaviewpress.com.au](http://www.seaviewpress.com.au) with clicks on "General p3".) In summary, the system will provide speedy (100 km/hr), express travel in seated comfort (all passengers) in a lane width that has more capacity (exceeding 40 000 people per hour) than 30 freeway lanes. The system will be continuously available (24/7) therefore timetables will become obsolete. By its nature it cannot be gridlocked. Therefore its high carrying capacity cannot be compromised by other traffic. It will make possible a great reduction of national GHG emissions that come from present urban vehicle and public transport use. Yes - it is so good that the concept really needs to be treated seriously at the highest levels and promulgated widely for discussion.

Then what next? It is vital that we create a partnership to develop such superior public transport. This needs to be a cooperative venture consisting of government (providing direction) universities (R&D) and business (manufacture and construction) to build a prototype. We need the best brains in the nation on the job. Present plans for spending on conventional infrastructure need urgent review. The schemes in this category that proceed (driven by short-term imperatives) should do so, but in parallel with a new, really visionary thrust, with focus on this mid to longer term solution. A percentage (2% will be enough for progress) of previous budgets for conventional projects should be diverted, initially to research. Not only is the SPEC System project worthwhile for the promise it offers to solve present ills, but also it is exciting for the job opportunities it will create. Export markets are potentially huge for intellectual property and manufacturer's products. Australians should seize an opportunity to lead.

In the battle against GHG emissions let's not wear blinkers; fail to think laterally; and accept that all we'll ever have will merely be more of what we have now. More roads, more tunnels, more buses. **Let's radically change the way we do things – starting now.**

Brian Garsden