



We The People

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We the People 225 **Intelligent Transport Systems**

Good day to you. In early October an event occurred in Melbourne which heralds a new era for urban civilisation. Melbourne was host to the 23rd World Conference on Intelligent Transport Systems which, as you would expect, deals with and fosters tomorrow's methods of safely moving people around. Intelligent transport systems are developing at a remarkable time in history and these new modes will change the existing transport paradigm. The conference looked at and imagines new ways of transporting people far more efficiently and in safety through computer digital technology and driverless vehicles.

When it comes to technology let's reflect on Edward Hoff who in 1969 invented the microprocessor silicon chip. The Intel microprocessor chip 4004 as it became known would change the world in so many ways. Ted Hoff is 79 today and has a pace maker inserted in his chest to keep his heart rate constant and it uses the progeny microprocessor he invented. The computer chip is now also forever embedded in just about every appliance, machine and vehicle we use today and of course it drives the new age intelligent transport systems and in particular driverless vehicles. Australia, as with most other countries has a road system for cars which give us the freedom to go where we want and at any time we choose. As internal combustion engines and fossil fuels give way to electric vehicles the near future will be remarkable when it comes to transport. The American car manufacturer **Tesla** is at the forefront of revolutionising the motor vehicle including driverless technology with hi-tech sensors and near artificial intelligence.

Now comes the crunch that with all this marvellous modern technology and advancement the Gold Coast Council and State government have adopted an antiquated public transport system based on rails embedded in the road and stick a tram on it without any flexibility to go anywhere but where the rails take it. We then allow high rise high density development in a 1.6 km wide ribbon along the tram route to justify the massive expense which in time will ruin the lives of many. In my view the Gold Coast has now established itself as being utterly low tech when it comes to public transport planning.

As I broadcast, a cute 11 person Transdev driverless shuttle bus is being tested on the streets of Melbourne. This technology is already in use internationally and is rapidly expanding within intelligent transport systems. The folk in Melbourne who have used the driverless shuttle love it and its inherent safety. These vehicles are essentially electric and simply take themselves off the road when a charge is needed then put themselves back in service later on. Central computers take them around traffic jams and accidents and go a long way to easing traffic congestion because of their flexibility. They are convenient, efficient and cheap to use.

Compare this to the Gold Coast tram of thunderous Jurassic proportions each with a driver and unable to leave its rails. The Council want to encourage us to walk or bike everywhere which of course they won't and nor will the elderly or disabled or those who have busy lives with families and so on. Council's view of the future of Gold Coast transport is a stupid one, laced with impractical ideas, meaningless brochures and over population. The tram is about to displace the pleasant seaside nature of Burleigh Heads and then probably march further on displacing the lives of thousands of other ordinary people and their homes through high rise and over population. Have no doubt in years to come the Trojan tram will displace lives and destroy much of what we love. Our government bodies in my opinion represent antiquated inefficient bureaucracies who it would appear, care not for people or real technological advancement and lead me to think that they live in the past. They are, what they say they despise and the Gold Coast tram represents outdated poor planning on a grand scale. If the Gold Coast adopted a modern computer controlled intelligent driverless shuttle bus system it would indeed be at the forefront of technology and common sense and represent an advanced city. Just don't hold your breath while Council and the State government make more poor decisions and are bogged down in politics and bureaucracy and appear unable to plan for intelligent flexible public transport.

**Until next time this is Kent Bayley**