

# Advantages of public transport



A new study conducted for the World Bank by Murdoch University's Institute for Science and Technology Policy (ISTP) has demonstrated that public transport is more efficient than cars. The study compared the proportion of wealth poured into transport by thirty-seven cities around the world. This included both the public and private costs of building, maintaining and using a transport system.

The study found that the Western Australian city of Perth is a good example of a city with minimal public transport. As a result, 17% of its wealth went into transport costs. Some European and Asian cities, on the other hand, spent as little as 5%. Professor Peter Newman, ISTP Director, pointed out that these more efficient cities were able to put the difference into attracting industry and jobs or creating a better place to live.

According to Professor Newman, the larger Australian city of Melbourne is a rather unusual city in this sort of comparison. He describes it as two cities: 'A European city surrounded by a car-dependent one'. Melbourne's large tram network has made car use in the inner city much lower, but the outer suburbs have the same car-based structure as most other Australian cities. The explosion in demand for accommodation in the inner suburbs of Melbourne suggests a recent change in many people's preferences as to where they live,

Newman says this is a new, broader way of considering public transport issues. In the past, the case for public transport has been made on the basis of environmental and social justice considerations rather than economics. Newman, however, believes the study demonstrates that 'the auto-dependent city model is inefficient and grossly inadequate in economic as well as environmental terms'.

Bicycle use was not included in the study but Newman noted that the two most 'bicycle friendly'<sup>1</sup> cities considered - Amsterdam and Copenhagen - were very efficient, even though their public transport systems were 'reasonable but not special'.

Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 1?

*In boxes 6-10 on your answer sheet, write*

*TRUE*                      *if the statement agrees with the information*  
*FALSE*                     *if the statement contradicts the information*  
*NOT GIVEN*            *if there is no information on this*

- 6 The ISTP study examined public and private systems in every city of the world.
- 7 Efficient cities can improve the quality of life for their inhabitants.
- 8 An inner-city tram network is dangerous for car drivers.
- 9 In Melbourne, people prefer to live in the outer suburbs.
- 10 Cities with high levels of bicycle usage can be efficient even when public transport is only averagely good.

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