

Free public transport for unit owners

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Article from:

SundayMail**Darryl Passmore**

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FREE public transport passes could be included with the sale of residential units as part of a strategy to tackle southeast Queensland's traffic congestion.

Private parking also could be eliminated outside unit blocks and occupants encouraged to share vehicles in car clubs.

The ideas are among the possibilities for reducing the number of cars on our roads in a report by an international expert commissioned by the Queensland Government.

British Professor George Hazel says linking residential and commercial development with transport offers the best chance to change behaviour.

"For example, all new residential units could have a free public transit pass for a year built into the selling price," Prof Hazel said.

"At a new development of 250 apartments in Floridorf, Vienna, the developers provided only 25 car-parking spaces, all of which were dedicated to car clubs," he said.

"Each new tenant was offered a year's free membership to the scheme and 57 per cent took up the offer. The reduction in parking saved the developer 9 per cent of the total construction budget."

Prof Hazel, managing director of the MRC McLean Hazel consultancy, also says housing and commercial developments can help fund the costs of solving traffic congestion.

Land and property values next to good transport facilities such as busways, railway stations and ferries have been found to increase by 20 per cent or more than other areas.

Prof Hazel proposes that southeast Queensland follow other fast-growing centres around the world by getting developers to share that gain with government to fund transport projects.

"At the moment, when you put something like the (Brisbane) South East Busway in, the private sector gets an additional profit for doing nothing," he said.

Premier Anna Bligh said yesterday that if developers were going to see financial benefits from new or expanded transport infrastructure to suit their development, some of the cost should be passed on to them rather than the taxpayer having to foot the whole bill.

Prof Hazel presented his draft interim report on a congestion management strategy for the state's southeast corner to the Premier last week and will now work with the Government, Brisbane City Council and other local authorities on drawing up priorities.

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