

I have recently been with my family to Singapore where we were amazed at the smooth running traffic flow and no congestion in this tiny but highly concentrated island city state. When asking the locals what is behind this orchestrated flow, simple answer was government measures to manage car ownership.

Way of the fact is that uncontrolled growth of cars will result in traffic jams. You cannot continue to expand roads, by acquiring more land to build on or erecting labyrinth of overpasses and underpasses which is very costly.

To combat this, Singapore instead imposes a Certificate of Entitlement and Vehicle Quota Scheme. In simple terms the Vehicle Quota Scheme **REGULATES** the growth of cars on their roads. And anyone who wishes to drive a car in Singapore then applies for a Certificate of Entitlement (which is very expensive) and it gives the driver **THE RIGHT TO DRIVE** the vehicle for 10 years.

On top of the stringent measures of car ownership in Singapore, they also do pay their share of registration fees, cost of vehicle, road taxes, customs duty, which equates in a very dear exercise of owning and driving a car. But a cleverly regulated system which works for the roads.

The problem that we experience in Australia is that anyone can apply for a driver's licence. This licence is almost given away too freely like candy to everyone who wants to drive. More so, cars are way too freely obtainable in terms of ownership via second hand dealers, where you can purchase an older vehicle for 4 digit dollar figures. Driving should be a privilege and not widely open to everyone.

The comparison of the two systems in the two countries presents 2 opposing environments, where:

1. Flow of cars will always be regulated for the fixed amount of road infrastructure that is in place by rationing and applying vehicle quota. And for those that wish to drive can pay the additional licences (on top of drivers' licence) that are required.
2. Uncontrolled influx of cars from any newly developed suburb or high rise towers, because cars are easily obtainable to everyone. This influx will stop the traffic flow irrespective of how many times the roads are widened.

Could similar measures be applied to Victoria/Australia to manage car ownership? Applying some of the Singapore policies might be a rational solution, if we are to deal with some of the challenges in providing a decent urban quality of life. Instead money could then be allocated on building a better and improved PUBLIC TRANSPORT system (i.e. monorails, high speed trains, extend bus networks) and not revamping our road system.