**Flinders University**

Fearless Conversations  
Episode 5 – Transport & Infrastructure  
Livestream 22-Sep-21

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

adelaide, road, people, infrastructure, barker, work, transport, freeway, public transport, rocco, solution, technology, fearless, conversations, moment, absolutely, train, city, future, north south corridor

**SPEAKERS**

Matthew Abraham, Mayor Ann Ferguson OAM, Tony Braxton-Smith, Daniel Gannon, Mayor Karen Redman, Professor Rocco Zito

**Matthew Abraham** 00:09

Good morning and welcome to our virtual audience to the fifth fearless conversations, events collaboration between The Advertiser and Flinders University. And it's about being brave and are thinking about how we drive South Australia forward in the future and challenge ourselves to position what is a great state for success in the future. There's a series of fearless discussion panels over 13 weeks on a range of topics from high tech innovation, tourism, infrastructure, education, health and more. And for each, we've assembled a great group of thought leaders to pose a series of questions and want to explore their views on the opportunities and challenges we have in relation to each topic. Today, transport Feel free to join the conversation through Twitter, using the hashtag fearless conversations or in the comment section on advertiser.com.au. And questions come in, we'll try and put them to panel members depending on how we go for time. So thanks for joining fearless conversations. I'm Matthew Abraham. I'm a columnist with the advertiser, and Sunday mail. And I'll be facilitating today's discussion, and encouraging our guests to be brave and fearless. First, I'd like to acknowledge that we're meeting on the traditional country of the Kaurna people the Adelaide plains and pay respect to elders past and present. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage beliefs and relationships with the land. We acknowledge their of continuing importance to the Kaurna people living today. And we also extend that respect to other Aboriginal language groups and other First Nations. Like introduce our experts today. Starting with Karen Redmond, mayor of Gawler glad you got to car park. Karen. Tony Braxton-Smith, CEO of the Department for Transport and infrastructure. Glad your bus was on time. Thank you, Matt. As always, Ann Ferguson OAM mayor of Mount Barker District Council. Welcome. I don't think he caught the train. There wasn't one hand coming. Daniel Gannon is executive director of the property Council of Australia. Danny, you probably had your chauffeur bring you here. And Professor Rocco's Zito's, head of engineering at Flinders University and would have caught your driverless bus. But it doesn't start till tomorrow. Is that right? Day after tomorrow? No kangaroos in the way. But anyway. Let's get into this. I'd like to start if we can with the Adelaide Hills. Because we've got a growing population in Adelaide and the Adelaide Hills of anyone who's driven up there, there's they're sort of booming. What's the solution to ease congestion on the southeastern freeway? And might start with with you if we can, Ann because I know you're in a continuing campaign about congestion but also around like,

**Mayor Ann Ferguson OAM** 03:28

thank you, Matt, for that, yes, so we have our challenges. But we also have our opportunities and the growth of Mount Barker has been stemmed by the rezoning of the land in 2010 1300 hectares was rezoned. We have 1200 new residents coming to Mount Barker each year, which we're absolutely delighted with. But there's a frustration because of the need to get to the city for employment, and also for social activities. Now, at the moment, we've had works on the freeway for some months, and you only need a vehicle accident, and you have made him absolute mayhem. And this causes anger and frustration for those that are kind to the city. And the state government must look at this. They were the creators of Mount Baca growing we need to get all levels of government and all that ministers from around the region from phenos to Hammond to Alexandrina. Mayo, Cavell, Hysen. All those ministers together so we can get a solution. And they because until we've got the state government onside, we will never be able to get the federal government onside and that goes what we need.

**Matthew Abraham** 04:57

Oh, come to come to the CEO, the Department of Transport and justice. moment. But coming to you, Karen, that at the other end, you know about urban sprawl in Gawler. You were saying earlier that 100 years ago, it was faster. The train journey to go from Adelaide was faster than it is now, yes, yes, there was a steam train,

**Mayor Karen Redman** 05:17

steam train. We don't have the train, it was just Tony was saying a bit. She can't wait to get that train up and running again. And yes, that's it. That's it? That's a resounding yes. We also was subject to a ministerial DPA in 2010. So just as in rightly said, the state government put this growth agenda together. But where's the support? Where's the infrastructure? And so we've been following mount Barker's very wisely, they've done some incredible work in that Barker. And we've been the beneficiaries of learning from, from what they had to do to try and get extra infrastructure. So yes, we're waiting for our train to be electrified, China was just saying that it's thrown up all these barriers and all these issues. So that's a really important link. But that's been there for over 100 years, we've got more stations now. Because there's the lion's share of population is in the north, the next 25 years of Greenfield development will be in the north. So we need to get better at planning our infrastructure. Yes, we've got the northern Expressway, that's full, I came down there this morning, it's packed. We do need to think outside the square. And I think public transport is the key, but not just one train line into the city. And we need more than that we need nodes out, we need to think innovatively around how we move people and where the jobs are going to be because most of the jobs are still in the city. Yes, there's more jobs coming in the north, we've got the submarine contract, whatever that might look like we've got defence, huge defence jobs. And that's a wonderful thing is answered, there's lots of opportunity. But the infrastructure and support shouldn't be left up to local government.

**Matthew Abraham** 07:04

Tony, if you can just pick up on that in a in a fearless way. This is is this the problem we have, particularly with brand new roads, the bigger the road, the people will use them, they fill up very quickly. And we end up chasing our tail with transport going down that road.

**Tony Braxton-Smith** 07:22

So very much so in transport. It's a well known maximum policy terms that you can't build your way out of congestion. In fact, what happens when you build better roads, you will induce traffic, which will create more congestion. So you need a balanced solution. And the brave conversation that we need to have is making public transport more relevant to the daily commuter around Adelaide. And for that the public transport network needs to evolve.

**Matthew Abraham** 07:49

But how do we do that? Because for instance, the the government recently, I wouldn't ask you to criticise a minister because there are decisions out of your hands. But the government has recently, for instance, ruled out a rail link from Mount Barker because it's not financially viable, and has had the same argument with the Obahn and extending that to Golden Grove. Well, the

**Tony Braxton-Smith** 08:11

important thing to remember is that any public transport mode, you start from a mode agnostic perspective, it means you don't pick your mode, you actually think about the movement that's required and the capacity that's required to move between between destinations and make journey times between them more competitive. So more competitive with road. So, and different modes have different capacities. So the rail line that everyone jumps to, is a perfectly suited mode of transport, where you need to move up to 20,000 or 20,000 people or more per hour in peak in one direction, because that's what rail has the capacity to do. If you look at the Obahn, the Obahn moves 30,000 people per day, quite adequately as a bus rapid transit system. And in a, you know, city with the urban form that Adelaide has Bus Rapid Transit is probably more suited to the task of moving the sorts of numbers of people between origin and destination, necessarily than necessarily rail would be. So just not enough people for rail. Well, I would say that public transport planning and land use planning have to go hand in hand. So if we said that we wanted in the in some point in the future to have significant industry and urban development throughout the hills district, as they did with a northwest of Sydney and have half a million people live there and plan that purposely as a growth area, then you could think sensibly about justifying the investment in rail to support that urban growth. But that's effectively taking the population of Adelaide and saying wolven Let's take another half or so of that, and have it residing in that area. So we have to think about the two together. We can't just think about one in isolation of the other I'm

**Matthew Abraham** 10:00

Daniel Gannon from property Council. Has it been a tendency in South Australia to have your development like at Mount Barker? Backlund. Park, for instance. And then five years, 10 years down the track think, well, we need some public transport for that.

**Daniel Gannon** 10:18

No, I don't think so. I think I think the best recent case study closer to town Matthews, probably Bowden. If we look a little further down, West terrace there with a Coca Cola development that will come online at some point. You look at where the channel seven headquarters currently is. You can see sites like that being earmarked for future residential developments. And right out the front of the doorstop, you've got light rail, you've got a tram network. So I think that with with projects like Bowden that's the case study for mobility closer to town, you can walk you can walk the town from boat, of course you can. You can you can walk out your front door button, jump on a train at some point, I'm sure but right now the tram to get into town. I don't think that transports been forgotten. With developments in the recent past. I think that with the recent trend to move a bit closer to town. In the last five years, we've seen more people trading in their backyards for balconies in the CBD. For example. When that does happen, people are shifting closer to town, which does of course lessen the pressure on the bus network or the tram network.

11:31

But Rocco just coming to you then we is technology going to sort of solve this by itself? In other words, is there a role for technology like driverless cars? Well, when I say driverless cars, cars, you don't have to necessarily pay too much attention to while you're fanging along. Is that going to help be part of the solution or be part of the problem?

**Professor Rocco Zito** 11:55

Great question, Matthew. Thank you. And so we've heard a lot about the the traditional ways of solving solving congestion stuff, build more infrastructure, public transport, some planning and policy decisions stuff. So I think the technology intelligent transport systems, their vehicles, intelligent highways are all a part of the solution. There is no silver bullet, we cannot do one thing to solve to solve our future congestion problems. I'm really happy Adelaide as a city, we're growing up, and we're getting these problems. We're getting these big city problems now. So how do we plan for that? And I think Tony's in a real bind, actually, as most of departments of transport nationally and internationally. Because we have these new technologies coming online, autonomous vehicles are coming. We're building infrastructure that's going to be here for 50 years or more. within that time frame, these new technologies are going to become prevalent in our society, we're going to have autonomous vehicles that will have very small headways, that the current will be able to squeeze 2030 40% more capacity out of our current infrastructure. So why should a Department of Transport build more infrastructure, when within the lifetime of the current infrastructure, we're going to see those efficiency guides? Does that give

**Matthew Abraham** 13:13

you nightmares, Tony,

**Tony Braxton-Smith** 13:15

it doesn't give me nightmares. But I actually had the opportunity when I was with New South Wales Government to lead a study in the future of transport, transport technology. And we actually came to the conclusion that it's actually going to be dependent on how customers and consumers respond to the technology. So if we, if everyone kind of sticks with my car is king and the cars go autonomous, then we just have the same as we have today more, we're going to have more congestion on the network because people will be able to do more stuff inside their car. So the better answers are in shared mobility and sustainable mobility in the greater use of public transport in any future focus scenario. Rocco's, right? autonomy could bring us a 20 or 30%, uplift in capacity. Even if it doubled the capacity of our high capacity road lane, it's only giving you the ability to move 4000 people per hour in one lane, compared as I said to rail previously, which can move 20,000 on a conventional route network up to a autonomous Metro can move 40,000. So you know, it's still public transport is going to deliver a more efficient solution, a more sustainable solution in the long run, to solve any mobility problem at Mass form for masses of people and we need to think of it as more as a means of mass transit.

**Matthew Abraham** 14:35

Do you think we're in an email back or do you think people just in love with their cars like, Is it just so much more convenient to hop in your car, you've got your coffee, you got your CD, or mp3 playing whatever, and drive down the freeway and just put up with the odd praying, rather than have to stand at a rainy train station and catch catch a train to Adelaide if there was a train. If there was a train In other words, people in love with their cars,

**Mayor Ann Ferguson OAM** 15:03

Will. It's been a necessity in the past because there has been no public transport. In mount Barker, there has been very few taxis available. But things are changing. We have Kia right now, which is absolutely the best thing that's ever happened to mount Barker, your data, you've got your app, you dial it up, it comes and picks you up at your front door, or just down the street from where you live, and delivers you where you need to go. And for $2 people are using that. And the young people are using it. So mum and dad don't have to drive them to school anymore. So it is taking cars off the road. So we're not quite as in love with our cars. I think a lot of people are in love with the type of car they have. And they drive. Because it's a thing. You know, I drive whatever I drive. But you can get nearly everything in Mount back. So the need to go to the city isn't quite what it used to be.

**Matthew Abraham** 16:06

A good question here to from one of you listening and watching at home or at work from Eliza. What's the impact of work from home? And what can businesses do to bring people back to the city Daniel Gannon from the property Council.

**Daniel Gannon** 16:20

Sounds like a Dorothy Dixer I'm happy to step into this.

**Matthew Abraham** 16:23

Auntie Eliza Oh,

**Daniel Gannon** 16:27

look work from home. People were working from home before COVID. So let's not let's not start the conversation thinking that work from home is a new thing that only started last year there was flexibility before COVID it's revved up that will be flexibility after COVID. It has revved up. The question is will it stay revved up? Will it come back down? The property Council has been tracking occupancy in commercial buildings in capital cities since the outset of the pandemic. If we look at Adelaide at the moment, we're sitting at about 75% occupancy in commercial buildings. There's that last 25% that that's a bit stickier at the moment. So the question is, will they ever come back to town, we'd like to think that they will. That's why we've put in place some recent initiatives like the go to town campaign, firmer Fridays, just to give people more things to do in town to come back to Fridays, because Fridays is the one day of the week, that's been disproportionately impacted. Because a lot of people are having long weekends at home. And as a direct result, you've got retailers, hospitality providers, cafe and restaurant operators, whose bottom lines are taking a massive hit moment.

**Matthew Abraham** 17:36

Karen is a huge incentive in places like Gawler to work from home, even if it wasn't a pandemic, this is a golden opportunity for some people.

**Mayor Karen Redman** 17:44

Well, I hear what Daniel saying because we want to have functioning CBD. However, our main street vacancy rate is now 3% 3%. It went from five to three as a result of the pandemic. People when you're travelling from Gawler it's an hour each way if not longer. So it's been transformational for people to work from home. Now. I think they I think there'll be a common sense balance over time, because people will want to engage with their colleagues face to face at certain points. But I think there's real opportunity for the CBD of Adelaide to really look at other innovative ideas ramping up residential accommodation, the apartment living really good quality apartment, not dog box apartment living. So that really encourages you know, areas like Bowden is a real success story. So I think that's the future of cbds and allows people to work from home or even have a balance halftime at home halftime in the office or whatever whatever their role might be. But from a regional point of view and goal is a bit regional, it it really has allowed our businesses to survive by having people at home and doing doing their work in the main street at coffee shops or workspaces shared workspaces, which is pop which are popping up everywhere in the north. So I think that I don't think people will go back full time to travel because it's just so much better for family life as well. You've saved two hours a day. Why would you not want to do that?

**Matthew Abraham** 19:28

Listen to feel us conversations. This is a collaboration between the advertiser and Sunday mail and transported infrastructure at Flinders University. And we're talking transport and infrastructure this morning with our panel. That's Karen Redmond mayor of Gawler Professor Rocco Zito from Flinders University head of engineering Daniel Gannon is executive director of the property Council. Tony Braxton-Smith is CEO of the Department for Transport and infrastructure. And Anne Ferguson is mayor of Mount Barker, District Council. Rock off and come to you in terms of colour over and work from home or changing patents for you as an engineer, but somebody who's you know how to your involvement, your academic and work involvement in GPS technology and all those gizmos? How are you seeing the field as future?

**Professor Rocco Zito** 20:17

Interesting. So there's no doubt COVID has had a big large impact on universities, we've fundamentally had to change the way we teach our students lectures are no longer face to face. But the practical tutorials prax civil engineering background students have to brake concrete in the lab. So that so we still do have that presence. But the balance has absolutely changed. And I think it's up to us as educators now, to make the most of that, do you think there will be a permanent change? Yes, is quite, quite simply, yes. The feedback that we've got from the students the extra flexibility, the modern student isn't like back in my day. So the modern student has many, many different demands that they're trying to meet. Most of them are working in some capacity or another, they desire this flexibility. So the balance is definitely shifting and changing. I think there's a societal one.

**Matthew Abraham** 21:20

Tiny Braxton Smith from the Department of Transport infrastructure CEO. In terms of COVID, we are seeing big shifts, like work from home. But also we're seeing a population shift to South Australia first time for a long time, we're actually seeing sort of net population growth. People see this quite rightly, as a great place to be but also a safe place to be safer certainly has an apartment, how does the department factor that in what sort of projections or is it too early to do projections on those sorts of things?

**Tony Braxton-Smith** 21:52

I think it's too early to do long term modelling and projections on a quantitative basis. But it there's certainly lots of positive signals and indicators. So for instance, as Anne said, I think it's an opportunity for Adelaide to move beyond being just all about the CBD to being much more of a polycentric city where we do have centres like gola Elizabeth Seton Seaford, Marion, but other kind of sub centres around the city that become community hubs. And people will spend more time closer to home. So one of the futures that we looked at in our tech technology transport study was particularly this where people stay close to home, not only because of what's happening in terms of work at home, but a learning, ie health and home delivery. So there's a whole lot of driving factors there that kind of push back towards local communities, thriving local communities, and that will change the nature of the use of the network in the future. And what we might see is more localised travel, but more much more use for freight movements and service movements as people kind of stay in the same or in the village. So do we need to South road tunnels? Oh, absolutely, we need that. So it is for Adelaide, the economic artery. If you look along that artery, then there are four or five of the growth sectors for this economy that are highly dependent upon the efficiency of movement through that corridor. And right now, around Adelaide, around 16% of daily journeys are impacted in some way or another by the section between Torrance and Darlington, not only movements north south, but because we have to optimise the signals for North South movement. Movements north east west are also impacted. So the real value in that is unlocking economic, economic activity and making it a much more efficient prospect for people to get to jobs for goods and services to get from production to Market. But it also optimises all of the East West movement.

**Matthew Abraham** 23:52

we'll extend that because you have this hopefully with the tunnels is beautiful, so called nonstop corridor. And then we've got the southeast and freeway and what thought Do you think needs to be given to linking the southeastern freeway traffic particularly tracks to the north south corridor.

**Tony Braxton-Smith** 24:13

And also long term, it's a long term problem and it's a problem to be solved. I would say Step one is to look at particularly for interstate or long distance freight movements diversion off the freeway and around the back of Adelaide, which is what the freight link the Global Learning study told us and what we're now doing with starting to look at the bypass. Second, I do think that higher quality public transport that provides more journey to work capacity along the southeast and freeways are also part of the equation. And then we have to make some trade off decisions about how much we sweater the existing assets versus what the longer term solution might be. But, but tempering our view by what Rocco mentioned in terms of there could be new technologies that come along that actually Do enable us to get more out of the assets. So we, we need to kind of hold our breath a little bit on this one, I'll bounce it off you in a moment. And but just just quickly when you talk about that, so cross road is not going to be some sort of de facto sort of Band Aid solution to link, the South Asian freeway, the north south corridor, there is no defined corridor when you get to the bottom of the freeway. It's a distributed network. It's amazing. It's a distributed. It's a network, it's under pressure. Yeah. And it's actually the part of the journey to journey to work that's under more pressure, that actually the freeway itself on a day by day basis. But again, we need to see what we can do to get more out of our existing assets whilst we complete the investment. And look what happens over the course of the next five or 10 years before jumping to a solution there,

**Matthew Abraham** 25:52

okay. From

**Mayor Ann Ferguson OAM** 25:54

the bottom of the freeway is an accident waiting to happen, as it's been demonstrated, we don't want any more lives lost. Because we know there is a problem, the government knows there is a problem. It needs to be looking at a solution now, not in five years time, not in 10 years time, because a life is a part of somebody's family.

**Tony Braxton-Smith** 26:19

So Ann's talking about a different problem, which is the bottom of the freeway, which I agree and we are working on at the moment. What are options for that intersection? I'm talking about the connection to potential connections to the north south corridor, and I absolutely share the sentiment, we need to reduce the impact of crashes on lives lost and injuries.

**Matthew Abraham** 26:43

But I suppose what we're saying is you either get out somehow tracks onto the north south corridor and there's no way of doing that slickly down cross road or port Ross road or you do have a route around the hills that the back and is that still alive, I thought globelink had been knocked out. It wasn't

**Tony Braxton-Smith** 27:01

globalink was the concept of a completely separate new built corridor for both road and rail. Right. What the study said was that it was economically the return. The economic benefits were minimal in comparison to the costs. And what we should do is looking look at upgrading our existing infrastructure. So a connection from around Mary bridge across to somewhere near Truro using, I think it's called halfway house road, upgrading Truro bypass and then connecting it across through to through to the port Wakefield. So that's Augusto highway corridor or so it's actively being looked at now we've spent some money initially on that north south road, it was $12 million spending stimulus money. There's more coming through bypass is being upgraded. And we're completing we've got now a funded study to examine that as a long term corridor for freight movement across the state. And that

**Mayor Ann Ferguson OAM** 27:54

news, regional development Australia and southern hills Local Government Association, have been working with this there is a report about to be released, which supports the bypass. And that is a great solution. And don't tell me it's going to cost too much. Because it is paramount that we get freight off the freeway for safety.

**Matthew Abraham** 28:19

Rocco, what is it? So we'll come back to Rocco, in terms of an engineering solution to that just running big trucks, you know, on whatever road? We do we need to be building smart roads, if we're going to have that sort of long term link to keep the trucks a large percentage of trucks out of Adelaide metropolitan area. Are we going to need a future proof some roads so that you can run driverless trucks? That's right, you're almost like trains a rubber wheel?

**Professor Rocco Zito** 28:48

Yeah, yes. So I think the next generation of of safety technologies are actually going to be outside the vehicle. So it's going to be road infrastructure, talking to vehicles warning them of incidents down the bottom of freeways getting drivers or or computer systems to to slow slow down and get those enhanced safety systems that we haven't seen yet.

**Matthew Abraham** 29:10

And you talked about students being just a different generation of students. Are we seeing generations of drivers who, who? I'm not saying you're old, but we've seen generations of drivers who are a lot more comfortable with technology?

**Professor Rocco Zito** 29:24

Are we seeing generations of drivers a generation? Yeah, no, I was seeing a generation that is the next generation are they going to be drivers? The anecdote I always put forward is asked my ask one of my either one of my sons, what would you rather lose your driver's licence or your phone? What do I need my driver's licence for? I'll just get an Uber with my phone connectivity is much much more important to the up and coming generations than having a driver's licence. So what does that mean about transport with transport undergoing a lot of disruption at the moment, there's technologies societal changes. expectations from this younger generation and what future transport is going to look like? And we don't know the answer yet.

**Matthew Abraham** 30:09

Daniel, Gannett, your your thoughts on Really? Not a zombie of globalink. But sort of globalink mark to perhaps, maybe a smarter solution a cheapest solution?

**Daniel Gannon** 30:21

Look, I guess there has been this conversation that goes back a long time now about light rail networks and things like value capture. The view that we've always taken on transport Matthew is is the impact that has on property property prices in particular, naturally, we will defer to the transport experts when it comes to globalink 2.0, whatever that might be to defer congestion of the freeway as an old Adelaide Hills boy. I still remember Devil's elbow in the original freeway. So I actually think that what's there at the moment is a massive improvement from what I started using a long time ago, but I'll leave that to the

**Matthew Abraham** 30:59

so I have memories of the the our walls, Lee's radiator boiling halfway up the road. Rocco might bounce back to you, because thanks to mark for this question, and you can fire questions in on twitter at hashtag fearless conversations. Do the panellists see a future where car ownership diminishes? And people can dial up an autonomous vehicle or hire one from a pool by the day? And you see that starting to happen in in in Mount Barker? Yes, yes. And Rocco?

**Professor Rocco Zito** 31:26

Absolutely. Yeah, absolutely. I see it as transport. I think it's work the next generation of of people that require mobility, I won't call them drivers, you know, they're going to have a plethora of transport mobility options available to them. So it will be public transport, it will be private car, it will be shared shared rides, and it will be up to the user to choose which one's most most appropriate appropriate for them. Now, in the future, if you want to jump in your private car, that's fine. But there might be some charges, some extra charges associated with that compared to driving into some shared mobility compared to using public transport.

**Matthew Abraham** 32:07

Tony, I think you want to pick up on on something when we're talking about that, basically, that the two issues of the southeastern freeway and heavy transport there, the Ann was talking about the the human cost of lives down at that intersection?

**Tony Braxton-Smith** 32:25

Well, the cost generally, so in terms of the cost, you know, engineers given enough money will find a solution to anything. Economists need to do the analysis that say what are the actual net economic benefits, and out of that advice is provided to government elected officials for them to make decisions so innately leveraging the existing infrastructure will give us a much more cost effective solution. We're calling this the greatest state bypass, right and bypass for one of a better term at the moment. But there are economic benefits more broadly to the state and being able to use that to build that infrastructure because it will take higher productivity vehicles. So at the moment, there are restrictions on the size of vehicle you can take down the freeway and through the CBD. I don't think anyone wants that or 3d urban areas, and no one wants the growth in there. So, you know, the right incentive is to build bypasses, that allow higher productivity vehicles B triples, to be able to operate across the state. And that will drive then with an economic incentive a change in vehicle in the vehicle owners behaviours, irrespective of whether they're automated or not an automated trucks are particularly being trialled, I think in Sweden at the moment. But there are some early trials. And if you think about how the technology gets introduced, you know, there's already automated trucks in the mining industry, you can foresee that that might flow on to heavy vehicles because of the economic benefits and then flow down from there. So that's one of the possibilities of how we see autonomy arising, as opposed to necessarily being led by our our own cars.

**Matthew Abraham** 34:07

Karen is mayor of gola. I know, property Council and state governments and you know, the building industry love new developments, Greenfield developments. You see, we've seen a lot of map north. councils, always paying sort of catch up in terms of sewerage roads, electricity, schools, shopping centres. In other words, as does that come after the announcement after the big announcement and the politicians throwing a shovel dirt?

**Mayor Karen Redman** 34:34

Well, I think I think that's right, I think certainly developments have become much more sophisticated and, and Daniel would, you know, I think would agree with masterplanned communities, infrastructure charges that pay for community infrastructure and those essential services is flawed in my humble opinion. It is reliant on developers Buying separate REITs etc. We need to get better. We need to have more innovative ways of paying for the infrastructure that's required to have strong communities. So like Matt Barker Gula had a ministerial GPA. And the only thing that created the glory slink road was a 1000 lot trigger that was eat. And there was no infrastructure deeds, there were no, there was no infrastructure charge, no separate, right, that all came later. And lots of arguments, lots of discussion, lots of upset people, which could have been avoided. Matt Barker had the same thing. Now, we learned a lot from that Barga, because they sought a lot of that out before we came on board. But it can be done better. So we need a better system. I had a conversation with Mark and Lenin a couple of years ago when he was here. And he agreed, he said, we need to get better at how we bring in our trunk infrastructure. You know, we've got roseworthy going ahead now and only now doing trunk infrastructure, through gola to connect up so roseworthy can survive, you know, there's still no train out there. You know, it's so it, it you do pay to play catch up. And I think that, you know, filas conversation should be around, how do we plan better for our communities so that we can do these community hubs so that people can live work and play in their in their communities and be happy you Why should we not want that? So yes, I think we can do better.

**Matthew Abraham** 36:36

Daniel, would you agree? Now look, if

**Daniel Gannon** 36:38

there is more taxes for the property industry or developers, then I think we're asking the wrong question. And it's actually a really important question for the role that councils play across South Australia. There was a story in the advertiser earlier this week by miles camp, looked at the disproportionate levels of council rates, the different councils are charging for their ratepayers. But I don't think the answer is as simple as let's charge developers more. So only they had to deliver the community infrastructure that people need.

**Matthew Abraham** 37:10

What was the outcome? The ratepayers have to pay more? Is that what you're when you're looking at the differentials between council? Right.

**Daniel Gannon** 37:16

So to Karen's point, I mean, I think we've got to, we need to determine what infrastructure, local communities,

**Mayor Karen Redman** 37:23

first and foremost, I don't disagree with Daniel, I think that there has to be a better system. And currently, it's the developer, and the right payer that pays. And so every now and then councils have to go into a competitive grant system, which is flawed, to try and get money to pay for essential infrastructure, things like libraries, things like, you know, even schools come like in the pace that changes you don't always have any say on where your, where your school is developed. So for example, golar, and district college became a super school, soon after the ministerial DPA to put a shopping centre in front of the school 1400 Kids new shopping centre, all in the one spot. I'll show you just how what a dog's breakfast is. Great school,

**Matthew Abraham** 38:14

great shopping centre,

**Mayor Karen Redman** 38:16

great shopping centre. All together. No planning and the planning came after. So we can do better. We can do better than that. And I think that state and federal government get a free kick when it comes to developments. I think. So I think I don't disagree with you do that there's a better

**Matthew Abraham** 38:33

this is an historic moment.

**Daniel Gannon** 38:35

It's unexpected.

**Mayor Karen Redman** 38:39

I think the cost needs to be shared more equitably. Because it comes down to the right part comes down to developer gets an uplift. I don't think it's unreasonable for a developer to thrive. But every year, there's an argument around that and we can do better than those

**Daniel Gannon** 38:52

being fearless, but turns out has been quite bad.

**Matthew Abraham** 38:57

River. I don't think we can say that about any of our panellists today, here on fearless conversations. I'd just like to change gears if we can and pick up on a personal bugbear and Adelaide was meant to be the once was a 20 minute city. But we really were the 1525 40k and our 60 back to 2040. City with roadworks and it is if you ask. Well, anyone I talked to about it, it drives people absolutely not. Rocco, is there a better way for us to use tech, you know, leverage technology so that we don't have this constant frustration in terms of delays on our roads,

**Professor Rocco Zito** 39:39

maintenance and upkeep of infrastructure is going to be with us forever. infrastructure needs to be maintained. Those roadworks out there because they're not necessarily absolutely required to keep the safety standards and going. And it's a great question because the next phase of our autonomous vehicle trials are going to be precisely precisely that How do how do the modern day vehicles? How does my autonomous bus, talk to infrastructure? Part of that talking to the infrastructure is about roadworks. We'll get warnings about roadworks that are coming up that are happening, where they are the best way to avoid them how to get how to get around, there are absolutely technological solutions for the butt. So I think in the future part, part of this new infrastructure that we're going to build is going to need to have communications Connect connected technologies. And we have that that technology at the moment, in fact, there are some companies here in South Australia that are leading that they can really help with the maintenance, those roadwork

**Matthew Abraham** 40:42

issues, Tony, despite the technology being available, we do just run into people with a lollipop sticks, the the traffic cones all over all over Adelaide. And it seems to me that while we spend vast amounts of money on on great projects, great road projects, our roads, our choke road works.

**Tony Braxton-Smith** 41:02

Well, I was reflecting that the problem of the pain point has moved because what we've seen in terms of maintenance is the maintenance backlog of in the road network in this state has grown over the last 20 years to $750 million of maintenance backlog. As it was back in 2018, when it was last actually measured. Now I would hazard a guess at the time, people were complaining that more work needed to be done to fix up the roads. Now, by virtue of stimulus, and by virtue of quite a step up in the investment programmes, a lot more work is being done. So now the pain is shifting from Why can't you fix the road up to boy, I'm being disrupted while this road is being fixed up, there is a better, brighter future. Once you do that work, it's generally good for 20 to 50 years. So put it in proportion. It's necessary and it's unavoidable. Could we find better technology solutions to communicate better with customers? Absolutely. And that's, that's something we need to now turn our minds to and have

**Matthew Abraham** 42:04

a look at. Is anyone actually doing that though?

**Tony Braxton-Smith** 42:06

We've got a team that we've got a team that's kind of turning their mind to thinking about, well, how do we communicate better. And part of it's got to be about a kind of a better understanding of the community. For instance, when we finish a road in inverted commas and open it to traffic, we actually need to allow the road surface a period of time to cure and harden. So we it doesn't have the skid resistance. So we need to keep road speed low during that period, and often were criticised for while the roads finished and the sir Why can't I take the speed limit off? Well, there's a very good engineering reason. So as much as we're trying to deliver a benefit, it's being seen as an impediment. So there's a little bit of education and understanding. But there's definitely a technology solution and a communications task there that we could do better at

**Matthew Abraham** 42:51

I know you've got mayor's on each side of you. However, does the transport department sometimes find itself in terms of traffic flow handcuffed by councils doing their own thing. And I'll give you an example of most council seem to concentrating on making roads narrower roads like King William road and prospect road, for instance, turning them into boutique shopping strips, when their primary purpose should be shifting lots of cars pick out? Well,

**Tony Braxton-Smith** 43:23

particularly in road planning terms. There's a new and evolving model that Infrastructure Australia has just been very explicit about called place and movements. So when you look at a road, you need to think not just about its function for its movement, but the character of the urban environment that it moves through. So I'm not going to opine on one particular road because we haven't got the assessment in front of us. But we do need that balance. We are in the present time doing corridor studies, with certain in certain areas and sitting with counsel to try and understand how the local traffic movement would articulate with what our analysis and thinking is for the corridor. We I would say work pretty well with councils, but we could work better. But we do talk to each other quite frequently about our challenges. And we both kind of face the shared issue, which is there is more work to be done than funds available.

**Matthew Abraham** 44:16

Let's go to the river bank arena. $670 million have written recently in the Sunday mail that 81% of people in one survey think that rather than money spent on health, that is Labour Party's policy, we don't have to get into the partisan politics of it here. But could that money be spent better? That's a lot of money. Daniel ganar

**Daniel Gannon** 44:39

I feel like the questions coming my way. Okay, step one is broadly speaking, this is actually the perfect type of social infrastructure that should be built schools, hospitals. You know, convention centres like this because of course, don't forget this is effectively stage three of the Convention Centre convention centres. There's not a basketball court. Well, it's it's three things, it's conventions. It's court sports, and it's concerts. So it's more than a basketball Stadium, we are now about a chance into the potent like the political arena there, Matthew, but it's 660 ish million dollars. In terms of construction, there's about four, four and a half 1000 jobs. During the construction phase, the business case was released two or three weeks ago. And that tells us that, you know, there'd be about 830,000 tourists that will flock through that particular arena every year. When we look at a convention like land forces, which Adelaide hosted only three years ago, you know, there were 15,000 delegates that came to Adelaide 25,000 bid nights $34 million was injected into the economy on the back of one event, one event alone, one conventional on, so productive infrastructure like this needs to be built. And we can't just stop building things like this because of COVID. Or because of health pandemics. Governments will always continue to spend big bucks on health and, and the state government is is of course doing that. But we shouldn't push a pause button on this particular project because the politics, we've got to get on with it and do

**Matthew Abraham** 46:14

it. And Ferguson as as mayor Mao Baca Well, what was it like when you look down on the hills, and you see rain has been built for nearly a billion dollars.

**Mayor Ann Ferguson OAM** 46:25

Fantastic. Because it's not just about mount Barker, this is about the state of South Australia, we want to be known as a really forward progressive state. And you can't just look at one piece of the jigsaw puzzle, you've got to look at Adelaide as a destination, people come into Adelaide, and then they go out into the regions. And that is vital. But they stop in Adelaide must be memorable. And it doesn't matter. If it is not spent at Mount Barker, as long as summers spent in the regions, Adelaide is the destination to start from. And anything along the riverbank is great. You go to Brisbane, you go to Melbourne. And they've got it.

**Matthew Abraham** 47:16

We need it. Rocco, why would you go to an arena in a city and all the hassle of catching a bus or something in day when you can have your gee whiz computers at home? Watch the event in surround sound? You can see I don't have any of that. But

**Professor Rocco Zito** 47:33

I think is what I mentioned before. It's just part of Adelaide growing up as a city, any major city that you go to absolutely, there's entered the entertainment and arenas that are based in that city centre and stuff. So yes, it does have to compete with education and health. And the arguments are always quite strong. But it's probably a political argument getting that balance is up to politicians

**Matthew Abraham** 47:59

and the like, but that city infrastructure in terms of regional infrastructure, Karen, what what's your wish list?

**Mayor Karen Redman** 48:06

Oh, it's endless. I don't agree with the arena. I there's actually another argument and that's about the obesity epidemic in young children. And we've gone late sport, which is great. Everyone loves going to watch. But it's it's exclusive because most people can't afford to actually go and get a ticket and watch. But that's that's, that's good for a destination point of view. But then you've got community sport, which is crying out for money. We have we have recreation centres, football club rooms, netball courts, that are over 60 years old. And one of our netball courts, our association courts don't even come up to code. They can't get any decent netball games there because they don't come up to code, it's going to cost 4 million just to fix that. There's a whole list, the regions are crying out for some money for community sport, and recreation, to try and get the kids to play sport and to be affordable. And yet, we're going to spend $600 million on an arena. And I I just don't I just don't agree.

**Matthew Abraham** 49:20

Tony Braxton-Smith, the transport department in terms of the pool of money of God and all these competing sort of interest in terms of regional roads, particularly an important you know, a lot of lives are lost on on regional roads and no money is being spent to fix that in terms of shoulder you know, increasing shoulder works, and so on. But these these unlocking tourism potential, particularly things like the victor harbour duplicating a road to Victor harbour. Where's that on our list of priorities and where should it be?

**Tony Braxton-Smith** 49:53

Well, more broadly, the states identified nine economic growth sectors of which tourism is one ag A business and a whole bunch of others are also on the list. And there are some that are dependent on road infrastructure. What we're seeking to do is to better understand supply chains, and be able to provide advice to government as to where investments in road infrastructure actually provide most economic benefit to the state. Tourism clearly is going to reorientate next year in the year after I was actually reflecting earlier this year, I was talking about counterpart and Queensland he said that actually, he was seeing more movements between Brisbane and Adelaide than between Brisbane and Cairns such was the popularity of Adelaide as a destination. And I would hazard a guess when borders open up that will endure. So the more that we can do to make ourselves a magnet city, it will have a flow on effect to regions because while they're here, they will go out into the regions, particularly with a great road infrastructure we've now got where you can get to the valleys or anywhere, you know, for a day trip within an hour. So So I think we're already well on the on the way. But But our advice, the government's got to be kind of sharp on where the economic, the greatest economic opportunity lies in investment in road infrastructure. And as far as regional roads are concerned, absolutely the safety benefit comes along with it. It is unfortunate that the fatality rate on regional roads is about five times the fatality rate on our suburban road network. And that's something that we do have to address and is being addressed through a lot of safety stimulus, investment that's now flowing.

**Matthew Abraham** 51:33

You find it incredible. There's no passenger train commuter train to Mary bridge. I know we're talking about mount Barker. But Mary bridge surely has got great potential as a satellite city of Adelaide proper. One, it's sort of quasi one at the moment. There's a rail line that runs through it for further your interstate train, passenger train and freight but no commuter train to edler. Well,

**Tony Braxton-Smith** 51:54

I guess I missed missed the bus. Well, as I go back to I go back to what I said before, which is that in terms of transport solutions, we need to be a little bit more agnostic. Yes, there is an existing rail line, but it was built in the 1870s. I think when the overland first came from mobile, I think that happened in the 1880s. And it follows an alignment that is built for 19th century technology 21st century technology will not be able to travel add competitive travel times on that alignment. Whether it's the mount Barker or Mary bridge, you will always be able to get there faster on the road than you would on the existing rail alignment. So again,

**Matthew Abraham** 52:39

so rather than fast train, we've got super slow train trying to marry bridge well and we don't ever train America

**Tony Braxton-Smith** 52:46

unless we have a vision for a different future of Mary bridge which envisages lots of industrial development, and lots of day around two way flows for mass transit solutions. We got to be looking at other forms to meet the transport task.

**Matthew Abraham** 53:02

Daniel Gannon, what do you think about having, you know, a satellite city Mary bridge?

**Daniel Gannon** 53:08

Look, to be honest, I haven't thought much about my bridge for a long time up until I went to Gifford Hill, the new race course up my bridge two or three weeks ago, that's got to be one of the greatest horse racing facilities in the country, in terms of community facilities. But also up until recently, Matthew, you couldn't hail an Uber, I think from anywhere deeper than Bridgewater in the hills. That's now caught up, to be honest. Now having been to marbridge and then travelling to town after the races, and I went to this great hotel for a drink after the races. The infrastructure up there is changed a lot. It's strengthened. There's a lot more reasons to go there now. But But does that mean that we should lie tracks for a train? Probably not. I mean, that's a funding priority for state governments. But I've got to say Mary bridge in my mind has now changed. Wonderful racing experience up there care of kinberg and his company's help transformer bridge.

**Matthew Abraham** 54:05

Okay, Karen, do we you've got a rail line being upgraded there. And that's there's been some controversy over that as well, in terms of the COVID workforce in terms of getting people here. I know. Is that something that the people of colour say? Yeah, we need an electrified railway line here. Do you think it's gonna make it much much difference is it gonna be a game changer for colour,

**Mayor Karen Redman** 54:30

almost always had the train line and it's been critical to move people. The electrified line will be cleaner and greener. So you won't breathe in diesel smike, which is good for your health. So from that point alone, it's a major improvement. That line is critical. It's I think it's the busiest line, even though it's probably taken quite a long time to do but it is a complex line to fix up. People from the north of gola use the golden line because that's the only route No, no load into the city. So it's a major catch point for people coming from player from the rasa Valley, etc. So it is important. It will save Tonio Bella to exactly how many seconds and minutes it will save. But it will only be one option. And I think that more efficient public transport, smaller boutique, whatever, whether it's shared rides, whether it's autonomous buses, whether it's electric buses, it has to be green and clean, I think in the future, but it there is a lot of opportunity to move smaller groups of people around so that it's more nimble. Because I think currently, it's quite clunky. at North tiny, I wouldn't disagree, you know, the bus service is pretty ordinary. It's okay, but most people don't use it because it's easy to catch it to drive your car. So until we get to the point where it's actually easier and more efficient to catch public transport. That's when we grow up. We're not there yet. But I think there's real opportunity, as Ann was talking about the shared ride serving service in Mount Barker. That's the future smaller groups of people choosing to get around so they don't have to have a car at the moment you need two cars, you know, your goal away 42 K's from the city, so you can't move without without having a car in my humble view. So I think we're halfway there, once we get the electrified train, then improve the public transport other options because it does require more flexible options than just a train line.

**Matthew Abraham** 56:42

Rocco's as an engineer who teaches engineers. What's your biggest bugbear? You know, we've been talking about feelers conversations, but you must look at some of some of our transport options or some of our infrastructure options and think why are we doing it like that? Is there a better way?

**Professor Rocco Zito** 56:58

Thank you, Matthew, you've opened up a can of worms. On the engineering side, I think Tony mentioned that before an engineer or engineer a solution. There are many, many different types of solutions that can be engineered for various problems. So but actually, to be honest, I probably want to wouldn't want to live in a society where every solution was was engineered? Because what would that mean for hospitals, education, and all the social services and the like? So I think what I'd like to see is, and this is what we're teaching our students, you know, we just don't dig holes and fill them with concrete because we like doing that they actually serve a purpose. And getting that purpose, right, getting the priorities right, and stuff actually goes beyond an engineering solution.

**Matthew Abraham** 57:49

Okay, do we have that balance now?

**Professor Rocco Zito** 57:54

Kinda. We were I don't think we would be having this field as compensation if we had the balance. Absolutely right. We'd all be just patting each other on the back and supporting ourselves. So

**Matthew Abraham** 58:08

we're almost running up to the end of the clock here. But I'll just quickly pick up on that with our panellists. Daniel, if what what drives you nuts? What's something you you'd really like us to be more fearless about in Adelaide, South Australia,

**Daniel Gannon** 58:24

embracing growth as a mindset to be honest, I think the easy thing in a post pandemic environment will be to look at population growth and get scared but because that might lead to increased densification of suburbs or of cbds in a residential sense, I think that we need to embrace our grad status is Australia's most livable city. I think we will embrace that and attract more businesses attract more people, we've got a great opportunity moving forward to essentially be a bit of a zoom city, maybe maybe the world versus me city where you can hold a job in Sydney, but work from an office in Adelaide. And then of course, that means buying a house here raising your family here and contributing to the taxation revenue of South Australia. And Ferguson.

**Mayor Ann Ferguson OAM** 59:08

Well,

**Matthew Abraham** 59:09

you'll feel us wish.

**Mayor Ann Ferguson OAM** 59:12

We have growth. We have 15 developments as we speak. So growth is something that we've embraced. And we're trying to get the very best outcome for South Australia. And through our land tax. We are holding up South Australia because of our development. So we would like to see more support from state and federal government for infrastructure for our community.

**Matthew Abraham** 59:38

Tony your chance to be fearless here.

**Tony Braxton-Smith** 59:41

I would call for better integrated public transport solutions that look forward to where communities are developing and how people move now, so that we make it more relevant between public transport active transport and shared transport for daily use in the way that people get around between work and home.

**Matthew Abraham** 59:59

Karen Then you get the last word here.

**Mayor Karen Redman** 1:00:02

Well, everything they said, but I think growth without compromising on quality, so maintaining our livable city status so that we get town character, we get quality growth, not just growth at any cost, but quality growth. And that, as Anne said, feeding into, you know, support from state and federal government, so instead of them wiping their hands and going, that's your problem. That's the property sectors problem. That's Council's problem. That's the humble ratepayers problem. Let's all do this together. So that quality is not compromised.

**Matthew Abraham** 1:00:35

Thank you, Karen. And I think we'll wrap up there. Our field is conversations. I never did get around to asking you about boat ramps, Tony, but we'll have a private fearless conversation about that one on attorney. So thank you for joining us and keep the conversation going. Use the hashtag fearless conversations on Twitter, and can go to Adelaide now.com.au forward slash fearless conversations and look forward to next week's fearless conversations.

**Mayor Ann Ferguson OAM** 1:01:07

Thank you.

**Matthew Abraham** 1:01:08

Thank you. Thanks. Thank you.