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### **Introducing the Bicycle Federation of Australia Inc.**

The Bicycle Federation of Australia Inc. (BFA) is the peak council of state bicycle advocacy groups in Australia representing the needs of around three million cyclists of all ages who use bicycles once a week or more.

The BFA is also part of the international bicycle movement and a member of the European Cyclists Federation. The BFA advocates for improved facilities to support increased cycling and the development of ecologically sustainable transport networks.

### **Recommendations for WA State Sustainability Strategy:**

1. Recognise that overseas experience (especially in the Netherlands) over the last 15 years shows that greatly improving road safety, health and the environment is a practical proposition for all Australian and New Zealand cities
2. Encourage Commonwealth commitment to a coordinated National Environmental Plan, including:
  - § a greening of the tax system, so that synergetic outcomes in the areas of safety, health and the environment are possible.
3. Encourage the WA government to take action and give priority to funding cycling, walking and public transport. The implementation of the following WA planning initiatives and strategies need to be continued and given greater priority:-
  - The Travel Smart Program incorporating Cycle Instead.
  - The Bicycle strategy for Perth and the provincial city bike plans.
  - The Walking and Public Transport strategies including the provision of 2000 free bicycle lockers on the rail system over the next 5 years.

4. All new housing developments to be in accordance with the Livable Neighbourhoods design guide.
5. Constrain urban development to within Perth's existing urban areas. Limiting urban sprawl and containing urban growth within Perth's existing urban areas by good design in accordance with point 5.
6. Establish and promote low speed cultures by reducing speed limits, particularly in residential areas.
7. Strengthen laws relating to vulnerability of cyclists and pedestrians and removing the legal leeway given to motorists in enforcing speed limits.

## **BFA POLICY: ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT NETWORKS.**

The BFA has developed a detailed ten point plan to encourage cycling and reduce the bicycle accident rate per distance travelled, which has much in common with the Dutch "whole of government approach" and calls on the federal and state governments to define, establish, and monitor ecologically sustainable transport networks. The ten policies will require incentives, recognition, dissemination and rewards for best practice to implement the following BFA policy objectives:-

- encourage a switch from the car to the bicycle
- encourage a switch from the car to the combined use of public transport, bicycling, and walking.
- encourage improved cyclist safety on roads and bicycle paths
- encourage provision of secure bicycle parking and associated support facilities.

Dutch experience proves that these objectives are achievable if the following policies are implemented (summarised in the BFA ten point plan below).

1. Co-ordinate and plan for interconnected and integrated transport networks in all states and capital cities of Australia that facilitate and encourage bicycle (and pedestrian) access and the use of roads.
2. Establish and then maintain equity in funding for non-motorised forms of transport after an appropriate catch-up period of high funding.
3. Promote cycling as an energy efficient and healthy form of transport by the provision of personal and organisational taxation and funding incentives for non-motorised forms of transport.
4. Reform and reinforce links between the different agencies involved in planning and implementation of infrastructure, planning, health, and environment.
5. Identify and implement successful strategies for safer and more convenient cycling in transport networks

6. Establish and strengthen laws relating to the vulnerability of cyclists and pedestrians
7. Create strategic partnerships with groups promoting sustainable transport networks.
8. Establish model examples of ecologically sustainable transport networks and bicycle/public transport dual mode systems in capital cities.
9. Provide a national data base of bicycle use which includes general travelling statistics, exposure to road risk, bicycle theft and the use of bicycle facilities.
10. Establish short, medium and long distance regional cycling tourism networks as part of ecologically sustainable tourism programs.

This is best achieved within the context of a coordinated National Environmental Plan that is supported by State plans to achieve ecologically sustainable development (ESD). It is essential that the Commonwealth initiates such a plan so that synergetic outcomes in the areas of safety, health and the environment are possible. If this does not happen it will be very difficult to implement an effective WA Sustainability Strategy.

For example Dutch experience shows that “Greening” the tax system within the context of a national environmental plan is necessary. Indeed funding for the implementation of the BFA ten Point Plan is easy if the tax system is “greened”. Without a “greening” of the tax system the implementation of the National Greenhouse Strategy by all levels of government, encouraging ESD, and honouring the spirit of the Climate Treaty will not happen.

While the National Greenhouse Strategy is poor substitute for an effective National Environmental Plan, it does have many positive recommendations and is worthy of implementing. A recent survey commissioned for Climate Action Network Australia (2002) found 66% of respondents were prepared to pay higher fossil fuel taxes if the revenue was partly used to develop clean alternatives and public transport.

The WA Sustainability Strategy needs to spell out clearly how the current tax system is a means of accelerating the emission of greenhouse gases, depleting indigenous oil reserves by encouraging a whole range of unsustainable transport behaviours. Current transport trends in Australian cities including Perth are not sustainable.

The Australian National Bicycle (ANB) Strategy 1999-2004 (Austroads 1999) is not being implemented because of a lack of commonwealth funding. The Commonwealth refuses to accept that it has a vital role to play in changing planning and funding priorities for building the infrastructure to encourage safe bicycling and walking. Experience shows that ESD must become more than a motherhood statement, that is used as public relations garnish for market driven economic development. ESD must become the preferred form of nation building. Having an Australian equivalent of the Dutch NEPP is necessary, which would either include eco-taxes and regulations, or be supported by eco-taxes in other legislation. The BFA believes that the following 13 measures are needed to

supplement the National Greenhouse Strategy, the National Bicycle Strategy and most important of all, to enable the states to deliver sustainable transport outcomes: -

1. An annual petrol and diesel tax increase at the pump to encourage fuel conservation and the use of fuel-efficient vehicles. These taxes to pay for rail infrastructure, bikeway networks and funded programs to support the introduction of viable alternative fuels, and “greener” Australian made cars.
2. Increased GST on energy wasteful vehicles and emissions standards for new vehicles match European standards by 2002 (Allison 1999)
3. The government to provide more support for the gaseous fuels industry by exempting CNG and LPG from excise and providing grants for PT vehicles and fleet cars to convert to using them. More funding for biofuels such as ethanol and methanol.(Allison 1999)
4. New design rules requiring all new car and LCV engines to be designed for easy conversion for the efficient use of CNG.
5. Tax measures designed to phase in an increasing proportion of CNG fuelled vehicles in private and government vehicle fleets and to discourage the import of vehicles that do not comply with this requirement.
6. Salary packaging schemes to encourage cycling and public transport and discourage car travel, car parking and car ownership. Alternatively the commonwealth should be providing incentives or legislation to ensure that all “salary packaged” cars to be powered by CNG.
7. Environmentally responsible taxation of workplace parking spaces to give car commuters an incentive to use other modes (Boyd 1998),
8. Fund research into the scope for effective coordination and harmonisation of both the provision and pricing of paid car parking and controlling the provision of public and private parking facilities so as to constrain unnecessary car use.(C.R.O.W. 11..1994) Make the provision of secure bicycle parking mandatory in all new buildings and whenever a building changes ownership that the building is retrofitted with secure bicycle parking.
9. Public transport should be GST free. Secure bicycle parking should have priority over car parking at rail stations.(Parker 1996) Public transport should provide for the carriage of bicycles where ever possible. Except for urban end of line stations existing railway car parks should be converted to high density Urban Village developments.
10. Encourage employers to reduce travel reimbursement costs for driving on work business and provide reimbursement for cycling on work business.
11. Urban consolidation should be reinforced by a policy of business location that prevents “employment intensive developments in areas not well served by public transport.

12. Planning policies should require new development proposals to include secure bicycle parking.

13. Urban consolidation regulations and forms of car and house ownership should be reviewed to encourage car free housing (Hazel 1999 B). That is to allow new sub-divisions where no car parking is allowed by the choice of future residents who choose not to own a car but use car sharing clubs when they need to, and use other more sustainable transport modes most of the time.(Bakker 1996)(Hazel 1999A).

13. Provide Commonwealth \$200 million funding minimum in the forthcoming year budget for off-the-shelf programs that can quickly be implemented by all state and local governments. In particular Travel Smart programs and the implementation of bicycle strategy plans in all capital cities and major provincial cities.

## **Funding for Bicycling Infrastructure.**

Arterial bicycle networks need to provide short cuts for cyclists and pedestrians over and under freeways, railway lines, rivers and other barriers to motor vehicle travel. Bikeways on or alongside main roads need to be linked up with traffic calmed local streets and off-road shared footways. Also most one way streets for cars should become two way roads for bicycles; and roads with bikelanes should have a speed limit of 50 kph. Many bikelanes or bicycle/car parking lanes are on roads with traffic that is far too fast and mostly unacceptable as a bicycle riding environment by traffic sensitive cyclists especially women and children. Note that the Dutch only use bikelanes on roads with a maximum speed limit of 50 km per hour or less. What is needed is catch-up funding for a bikeway building program.

The WA Department of Transport will need to work up detailed funding recommendations to build up bicycle infrastructure in the next four years to match population growth during the next 20 years. Extra staff will be required to expand the bicycle route network that will have many more local roads as an integral part of a strategic bicycling network.

A State bicycle advisory council to act as a co-ordinating and implementation monitor would meet once a month.

Some of the proposed extra staff needed in the bicycle planning unit will need to:

1. Reduce the incidence of bicycle theft by the provision of secure bicycle parking. That is to build into all planning regulations and building codes the existing voluntary requirements for bicycle parking as set out in the Austroads manual and the Australian standard for bicycle parking and make them mandatory in all states.
2. Establish and promote low speed cultures by reducing speed limits particularly in residential areas. Strengthen laws relating to vulnerability of

cyclists and pedestrians and removing the legal leeway given to motorists in enforcing speed limits.(Parker 1998b)

3. Reduce the need for motorised transport by adapting land use policies and urban and regional development plans to enable people to have easy access to settlements, housing and working areas, and shopping and leisure facilities by cycling, walking and public transport;
4. Raise the attractiveness of public transport, walking and cycling, and promote inter modality between them, not least by prioritising public transport, walking and cycling in connection with the extension of infrastructure.
5. Establish short, medium and long distance regional cycling tourism networks to foster eco-tourism.(Gellie 2000)
6. Continue to provide a state database of bicycle travel generally, exposure to road risk, bicycle theft and facility use and encourage the Commonwealth Government to do likewise

The West Australian government is now extending these programs to a 10 year Plan for the City of Perth and it will be crucial for limiting the growth in car travel and encouraging the all the more sustainable modes of transport.

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