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The WA State Sustainability Strategy
Community Feedback

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SUBMISSION TO THE STATE SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY FROM THE BICYCLE TRANSPORTATION ALLIANCE

The Bicycle Transportation Alliance (BTA) is the major cycle advocacy group for cyclists in Western Australia representing all major cycling groups and all cyclists in WA.

Background

Increased cycling can have major benefits for the Western Australian population in the following areas:

- I **Air pollution** – motor vehicle emissions are a major source of air pollutants in Perth – bicycles made NO contribution towards air pollution.
- I **Global warming** – about 13% of the State's greenhouse gas emissions come from car use. Replacing most small car journeys by bicycle can easily result in greenhouse gas savings of around 1,500 kg of CO₂ equivalents per year.
- I **Oil dependence** – land use planning has taken NO account of oil dependence and the current structure of society is vulnerable to oil prices and oil supply.
- I **Physical activity** - reduced physical activity (including lower rates of non motorised travel) is contributing to ill health and growing health care expenses. A Danish study shows that people who cycle to work have a 40% lower mortality, based on an average of 300 minutes cycling per week (all other factors taken into account)

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Affiliated Organisations: Action Outdoors Association Inc., Audax W.A., Aust. Time Trials Assoc. Inc., Cycle Touring Association of W.A. Inc.,
Bike for Bibles, Cycling 4 Pleasure Inc., Over 55 Cycling Club Inc., Historical Cycle Club of WA Inc.,
West Coast Masters Cycling Council Inc. WA Cycling Federation Inc. Munda Biddi Trail Foundation

- I **Neighbourhood environment** – traffic volume, speed and noise reduce the liveability of our suburbs and increase stress. Cycling increases the presence of people on local streets and is known to make streets safer in terms of community crime.
- I **Social disadvantage** – access to work, shops, community facilities and social support can be severely restricted for those without a car; and
- I **Financial costs** – Perth spends 17% of its gross regional product on transport, mostly on running cars and providing roads for them.

Multiple surveys of the community by Government agencies and other independent surveys have shown that the WA population support cycling, traffic calming and sustainable infrastructure development.

The current WA Government does not need any further studies to show the way forward.

The BTA recommends that the current Government stop going backwards in the area of sustainable development and action the following items immediately.

Major Sustainable Cycling Issues for the Western Australian Government to Address

1 Child Mobility

- 1.1 Every school address targets for cycling and walking to school to actively encourage the use of bicycles for school journeys.
- 1.2 Increase funding to the TravelSmart program, instead of cutting the budget, as has happened.
- 1.3 Develop and implement a Statement of Planning Policy through the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) to recognise the importance of cycling in local transport plans so that every local Government will incorporate cycling into their local plans.

2 Footpaths and Shared Paths

- 2.1 Immediately mandate for local Governments to implement safe footpaths. (Australian guidelines suggest widths exceeding 2 m where both pedestrians and bicycles use the path), with the removal of obstructions such as poles, signage, benches and overhanging vegetation. Changes in the consideration and approach to design and maintenance of footpaths is also needed.
- 2.2 The WA Traffic Code 2000 be modified to allow for adults and children to ride on all footpaths, unless otherwise prohibited by signage, as is the

case in Queensland and the ACT. There are many instances where travelling on a footpath is required to safely complete a cycle journey.

- 2.3 Re-introduce the requirement for pedestrians to keep left on all paths to make the shared use of paths, by all users, more predictable and safe. This requirement was only abolished in the 2000 redraft of the Road Traffic Code because the Office of Road Safety stated that there was no point in having a law that was unenforceable. This flawed and simplistic view of the world ignored the public benefit of good order, safety and efficiency of traffic flows for cyclists and pedestrians alike. Conflicts on paths have increased as a result.

3 Suburban Road Speed Limits

- 3.1 The BTA strongly supports the introduction of 50 kph zones but is very concerned with the absence of effective speed management or enforcement on these roads. Complaints are regularly received from cyclists about speeding vehicles on 50 kph roads. The BTA requests that an enforcement strategy be developed and implemented as soon as possible for local streets with 50 KPH zones.
- 3.2 Introduce 30 kph “home zones” for “green transport” areas. These areas would be small, typically less than 600 metres by 600 metres blocks, would have a total transit time of less than one minute at 30 kph, do not contain any reasons (destinations) why people other than those who live there would travel to that location; and, has the majority support of residents. Many American and European cities already have 30 kph residential “enclave” limits. In Australia, the City of Unley in South Australia has had a 40 kph limit since 1999 following surveys that showed 70% support from residents.

4 Car Parking versus Bicycle Parking and Road Conditions

- 4.1 Adequate operational space for cyclists on all roads and streets be implemented immediately to provide an equitable alternative to car travel. Most roads do not comply with the principles of the spatial requirements for bicycles, as developed in the Austroads Guide to Traffic Engineering Practice Part 14 for Bicycles. Where adequate road space cannot be provided either solely or shared, speed limits and road design should provide adequate operational space to promote cycling, walking and public transport to the benefit of the local amenity and environment.
- 4.2 A Statement of Planning Policy through the WAPC be developed to ensure that suburbs be changed to incorporate cycling. Those suburbs that rely heavily on kerbside parking are squeezing bikes off the road but failing to provide off-road facilities. It is well accepted that segregation of bikes and cars is one of the most important ways to increase cycling.
- 4.3 A cultural shift is needed away from expecting widely available free parking - local planning should encourage off-street parking, and

favour the freed-up space being used for safe transit of bicycles and pedestrians.

- 4.4 A Statement of Planning Policy be developed through the WAPC to incorporate the provision of appropriate cycle parking outside every business – just as is required for car parking spaces outside every business!

5 End of Trip Facilities

- 5.1 A Statement of Planning Policy be developed through the WAPC to incorporate the provision of end of trip facilities for cyclists (but would also benefit walkers and lunchtime physical activists). This would include the provision of showers and changing facilities and secure bicycle storage. There should be wider access for the general community to such facilities.
- 5.2 The implementation and audit of the “WA Government End of Trip Facilities Policy”, which has already been approved by Cabinet, must be commenced immediately.

6 Integrated Public Transport

- 6.1 Access to train travel **MUST** be improved. The current exclusion of bicycles on peak flow train services in the morning and evenings is a huge disincentive to cross modal public transport. This blanket restriction should be lifted with access via a permit system for legitimate cycle commuters through the whole day.
- 6.2 The BTA has been calling on the State Government to adequately cater for passengers with bikes since the announcement of the electrification. All new rolling stock for the Perth Urban Rail System **MUST** provide for easy access for bicycles as well as for prams, wheel chairs, ‘gophers’ etc. This must be comprehensively built into all future tender contracts.
- 6.3 The need for direct consultation with the cycling community as an integral part of public transport development has yet to be fully accepted or practiced by the responsible agencies. Cyclists need to be widely accepted as passengers with bikes by the whole of the public transport sector. A key step in achieving this would be to mandate consultation with cyclists, as is the case for people with disabilities. Cyclists must be treated as legitimate passengers who matter and who must be included.
- 6.4 The quality and quantity of bicycle lockers at train, bus and shopping centres is much less than is required for current demand, let alone, growing demand through Travelsmart or other transport advertising programs. The number and quality of lockers needs urgent improvement, especially where redevelopments of train and bus stations are being undertaken. Several stations on the northern line

are currently having car parks extended – but NO increase in the number of bicycle lockers!

7 Improved Infrastructure Design Standards (including Traffic Calming)

7.1 The current design guidelines for cycling infrastructure (Austroads Guide to Traffic Engineering Practice Part 14 for Bicycles) is inadequate. Main Roads, in consultation with all key stake holders, undertake a review of cycling infrastructure guidelines for WA. When this is complete, the resulting document be refined as a Statement of Planning Policy by the WAPC so that it can be implemented across all 142 local governments in WA. The WA document then needs to be incorporated into new national guidelines, which in turn, need to be adopted as standards. The essential difference is that guidelines can, and very often are, ignored. “Standards”, would ensure that unsafe and sub-standard cycling infrastructure will not be built. These new standards be ratified through the Standing Committee on Transport (SCOT) and the Australian Transport Council (ATC) using Austroads as the project manager. This issue has major ramifications for the implementation of Labor Party policy in regard to:

- Working with local government to incorporate on-road bicycle networks;
- Encouraging use of bicycles for school journeys by making cycling safer on local roads;
- Incorporating bicycle infrastructure and recognising the importance of cycling in local transport plans; and,
- Fostering the TravelSmart program.

8 Perth Bicycle Network

8.1 Increase the current level of funding for the Perth Bike Network – Stage II, to the original budgeted level and provide a forward capital budget commitment to PBN - Stage III. This Labour Government appears to want to promote sustainability through developing a “Sustainability Strategy” but appears moribund in actually implementing, even piecemeal, a key sustainable infrastructure development – the Perth Bicycle Network. This network is thought to be the significant reason for a 90% increase in cycling in the metropolitan area over the last 3 years (based on counts at 13 locations in the Perth metropolitan area).

The amount currently allocated to the PBN is less than half that allocated by the previous Court Liberal Government – AND THEY DIDN'T EVEN HAVE A “SUSTAINABLE STRATEGY”! A Government survey by the Department for Planning and Infrastructure has shown that 75% of our community supports increased spending on cycling facilities, while only 45% favoured additional spending on roads and freeways.

- 8.2 Immediately put resources, staff and “sustainable” effort into completing the principal shared path network along rail lines in the metropolitan area. Since 1993 we have been awaiting completion of the principal shared paths along the railway lines to Fremantle, Midland and Armadale. Some disjointed sections of these paths have been built, but the paths are seriously fragmented. For example, only 30-40% complete on the Fremantle line and very much less so to Midland and Armadale. It would be unthinkable to leave such gaps in a road network.

9 Cycling Carbon Credit Scheme

- 9.1 The Government give support to the implementation of a *Cycling Carbon Credit Scheme*® to be run in conjunction with government and the private sector. This would see a small amount paid to cyclists for their carbon credits where they displace a vehicle trip. A policy on how this would work has already been drafted. The draft policy would see major WA business/es supporting this financially as part of their triple bottom line reporting. It would give industry the opportunity to purchase carbon credits from cyclists and highlight a real alternative to burning fossil fuels for transport.

10 WA Public Sector Restructuring

- 10.1 Re-introduce the BIKEWEST function to the Department for Planning and Infrastructure. The abolition of this key group has lead to a breakdown of coordination for planning and implementation of infrastructure for cycling across government.

11 Modal Share Funding for Cycling Infrastructure

- 11.1 Introduce a requirement for Main Roads, WA Transit Authority and DPI to fund cycling by allocating a modal share of funding for cycling infrastructure, policy and promotion. That is, if 6% of journeys are by bicycle, then the minimum amount of expenditure from the transport portfolio budget should be 6%. This should be seen as a minimum commitment as logic would dictate that this could be even more in order to overcome significant funding shortfalls that have occurred in the past.

12 The Cost – Where is the Money Coming From?

- 12.1 Government processes that are already in place can undertake almost all of the actions listed above. This is a matter for political will to prevail – and CEO performance criteria to be suitably restructured.
- 12.2 Where matters listed above require additional funds, the budget for cycling infrastructure could be more than doubled by rescheduling the construction of just three bridges (around 40 million dollars) over the next 4 years. This would enable all major cycling infrastructure plans to proceed.

- 12.3 Over the next 4 years around \$4,400 million dollars will be spent on roads in WA (Source: MRWA figures). During the same period the Labour Government has promised to spend \$20 million dollars on cycling infrastructure. This is less than one half of one percent (0.045%) of all roads funding – and this has already been cut by \$2 million dollars. Stage II of the Perth Bicycle Network, which runs over the same four year period, has a budget of around \$40 million and this Government has committed to less than half the required capital funding necessary. There is nothing sustainable about this situation!
- 12.4 The BTA calls on the WA Government to immediately budget 6% of all roads funding to cycling infrastructure over the next 4 years – or \$264 million dollars. This represents equity of transport funding by modal share!

The BTA requests the WA Gallop State Government to stop talking about “sustainable” this, and “sustainable” that and “sustainable” strategies; and DO THINGS THAT ARE “SUSTAINABLE”.

No new plans or strategies are required. It appears that this Government is going to leave office having achieved even less than the previous Liberal Government on “sustainable” issues – especially in regard to cycling and walking issues.

The BTA remains committed to working with Government to obtain the best sustainable outcomes for Western Australian cyclists and pedestrians.

Yours sincerely,

David Parkinson
Executive Director
On behalf of the Board of Directors
Bicycle Transportation Alliance

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