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SUBMISSION TO THE STATE SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

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Submission by: SUBIACO BICYCLE USER GROUP
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The Subiaco Bicycle User Group is a local community group advocating for better outcomes for all bicycle riders; it takes a broad vies, seeking more a sustainable and liveable community in which the health, lifestyle, sporting and transport benefits of cycling are more widely available. We welcome the State Government's initiative in developing the sustainability agenda and are grateful for the opportunity to have input.

The Subiaco Bicycle User Group contributed an initial submission on the Sustainability Strategy on 26th April 2002 and this builds on that original submission. We will not reiterate that submission but request that it and others by bicycle organisations be reconsidered – we strongly believe the content of several bicycle-related submissions (e.g. those of the Subiaco BUG, Bicycle Transport Alliance and Cyclists Action Group) is poorly reflected in the consultation draft of the State Sustainability Strategy. Reducing those submissions to little more than Proposed Action 4.15 does not do justice to their content, the importance of bicycles in sustainability (e.g. greenhouse, pollution, health, liveable communities, oil supply) or reflect the reformations needed to enhance use of bicycle transport.

Every street is a bicycle street

A key principle in various bicycle planning policies (e.g. Bicycle Strategy for the 21st Century, Govt of WA, 1996) is that "every street is a bicycle street".

- This is being lost, and needs strong restatement and incorporation in planning policies. At local government level, it is frequently argued that bicycles only need consideration on the Perth Bicycle Network. Good though the PBN may be, it does not cater for the local trips – to schools, shops, sporting facilities, friends houses, and even getting on to the PBN etc. It is akin to saying cars only need consideration on freeways.
- Educational support is needed to reaffirm the legitimacy of bicycles on the road and underline the significant role cycling can play in any sustainability strategy. Planners, road designers, road safety professionals and the general public need to be targeted.
- Major roads are being created or fostered (through diverting local traffic onto major roads) without adequate provision for bikes and pedestrians to cross them, fracturing communities and leading to unnecessary car use.

Bicycle infrastructure and travel demand management

Higher prioritisation of local infrastructure for cycling is needed, coupled with demand management, such as through TravelSmart.

The TravelSmart initiative was not mentioned directly in the document, yet significant improvements in use of walking, cycling and public transport have been obtained. The severe cut in its funding, of about 75%, in the 2002 budget is a concern.

Travel to school needs to be a focus of travel demand initiatives – educating the young, rather than changing old habits is more efficient. Safe Routes to School and TravelSmart to school programs need stronger support, including at the school level.

- Bicycle transport is a 'no-regrets' option, that is it is justified and cost effective now, in its own right, and in addition is very valuable in terms of future sustainability, health, environment, social and community values.
- A cost benefit analysis would show substantial benefits from attending to local needs – South Perth TravelSmart program had a cost:benefit of 30:1, the Perth Bicycle Nework has a C:B of 12:1, while roads commonly have a C:B of only 4:1.
- Analysis of potential bicycle projects should incorporate triple bottom line spillover benefits such as health and exercise, 'community' development, lifestyle and 'sense of place', reduced noise and air pollution, and reduced fuel use. Further, projects should be assessed against the broad areas of government policy, including, but not limited to health, greenhouse, air quality, safety, and increasing cycling, walking and use of public transport. For example, just within the health area, increased cycling can contribute to reduced air pollution, noise, road trauma, and reduced lifestyle-induced illnesses associated with over use of cars; this is especially pertinent with health resources over stretched – 'a penny of prevention is worth pound of cure'.

Bicycle planning / oversight

Bicycle infrastructure and planning needs a dedicated body to oversee it.

- Abolition of the Bikewest function has led to repeated loss of opportunities to promote cycling conditions and no body accepting responsibility to address bicycle issues and advocacy. For example, opportunities to incorporate bicycles paths and crossings during major infrastructure planning, such railway lines and schools are being lost while unnecessarily hazardous conditions are being created.
- There is also no Government body to address operational bicycle planning and infrastructure issues that are causing hazards - quality assurance (QA) for bicycle transport is a serious concern and a body is needed to oversee it and act (and have the appropriate authority) on issues.
- Cycling is not well enough imbedded in Government culture to be adequately addressed without a strong and well resourced championing voice supported by appropriate operational processes to ensure bicycle needs are considered in all community planning, land and road developments.
- Strong direction is needed from Government to reduce car use and lift the profile and legitimacy of alternative transport modes, as is being done in Europe.
- A cooperative whole of State and Local Government approach is needed for the broad benefits of cycling to be realised – individual department bottom lines and core business too often obscure the greater community good. Poor coordination or antipathy between different levels and departments have been detrimental to facilities for cyclists. Vertical and horizontal intra agency coordination mechanisms are needed.

- Key transport agencies (MRWA and DPI) and local governments should have KPIs and targets associated with enhancing cycling, walking and use of public transport, rather than current KPIs which tend to conflict, suh as through fostering greater vehicle movement.

End of trip facilities

End of trip facilities are an important determinant of the attractiveness of cycling as a transport mode.

- Requirements for secure and appropriate bicycle storage and showering facilities need to be imbedded within Town Planning Schemes. Such facilities are also important for encouraging other activities such as lunch time exercise. Town Planning Schemes should place an upper rather than lower limit on car parking and prescribe a minimum amount of bicycle parking, according to the nature of the development. Design considerations for bicycle parking need to be implicit to this.
- Residential developments should also be encouraged to cater for bicycles, possibly within environmentally friendly design codes, and/or under 'parking' provisions. We encourage exploration of the Town Planning and Development Act and Statements of Planning Policy (p 57) to imbed bicycle planning into statutory processes at a local level (p 51 Consultation Draft), and should include provision for bikes within road design and upgrades.

Local road conditions

Provision for bicycles on roads is also a major consideration in personal decisions over transport mode choice.

- Local authorities are too often undermining the safety of bicycles on their roads through traffic calming and other road works that fail to consider bicycles. Austroads Part 14 provides guidance on road engineering for bikes but appears to be poorly used, and without a function akin to the disbanded Bikewest, authorities lack an entity to seek advice from (if they have the desire).
- Serious incorporation of bicycles into road design needs to be mandated, possibly through codifying in road design and construction (equivalent to the Australian Building Code), and implemented through statements of planning intent. Such statements should also recognise the importance of cycling in local transport plans, including school trips.
- There should be an independent bicycle safety audit on the traffic calming devices used in WA.. Sate Government should issue clear recommendations to local governments concerning acceptable designs and acceptable modifications to existing structures to improve safety for bikes.
- State transport funding for local authorities should be conditional on a rational approach integrated with overarching schemes like the Metropolitan Transport Strategy. Further, funding should be conditional on all road and path facilities meeting or exceeding Austroads standards for cycling and pedestrian facilities.
- The skill level of general traffic engineers and road designers needs improving so that bicycle safe roads become the norm.
- The resourcing of State Government oversight of all road construction and road modification needs to be very significantly raised. This should include mandatory road safety audits as part of the planning process.

Integration into the transport system

Bicycles need stronger integration into the transport system.

- Secure storage at stations, provision for bikes in rail carriages and on buses, and for bikes to move freely to and through stations and to cross railway lines and roads is important. Despite the claim on p 42 of the Consulatation Draft, bicycles are no better integrated, and if anything worse integrated since the Machinery of Government reforms. Action 4.16 on an integrated transport system needs to explicitly include bicycle infrastructure.
- Key performance indicators used by DPI and MEWA need to take account of pedestrian and cycling needs and to boost the legitimacy of alternative transport modes. For example, road function performance indicators and criteria used in assessing provision of crossing points need re-assessment, from a focus on rapid movement of cars to safety and use of roads by pedestrians and bicycles. For example, important crossing points for bikes and pedestrians near schools are not being provided because of inadequate current demand – but lack of current demand reflects the danger.
- Riding on footpaths should be legalised through amendment of the Road Traffic Code – this would legalise the present practice. It would also avoid absurd and dangerous situations such as a parent having to ride on the opposite side of a road to a path their children may be riding on when escorting them to school (footpaths sometimes occur on only one side of a road).
- Further, in the event of a crash between a car and bicycle, the presumption of guilt should be shifted from the bicycle to the car, as has been done in Europe within the EU Fifth Motoring Directive.
- Implementing 50 kph in local neighbourhoods has had minimal impact on vehicle speeds and thus not the improvement in bicycle safety hoped for – stronger enforcement and education campaigns are needed. Progressive lowering of speed limits in local areas should aim at proven 40 kph (USA) and 30 kph (European) models. The greatest road safety benefit for the aged, children, pedestrians and bike riders comes from reduced vehicle speeds – accidents are reduced and less severe, and the field of vision for drivers is increased.
- Through project evaluation criteria, ensure all projects cater for multiple transport modes, recognising the importance of intermodal passenger movement.
- Criteria for assessing bicycle and pedestrian facilities, such as cross walks, should assess projected demand in a safe state, rather than in the current unsafe state - conditions need to be made safe before people will change their transport mode.

Perth Bicycle Network

- The Perth Bicycle Network needs to be completed, including the high priority shared paths along railway lines.
- Elements of the PBN already completed need protection, again a function probably best performed by a body equivalent to the old ‘Bikewest’; there are instances of local government disregarding PBN routes and installing bicycle hazards.
- Principal Shared Paths should generally be provided on both sides of freeways – such are the logistics of crossing freeways to use them. Further, that all major infrastructure projects include facilities for cycling and walking, consistent with Austroads Guides to Traffic Engineering Practice.
- Encouraging statistics on the increase of cycling in the last few years are testament to the power of good facilities to encourage uptake of cycling. The importance of bicycles in sustainability should be reflected in their funding, including funding of the PBN. This is supported by surveys that have shown 75% of the community support increased spending on cycling facilities, while only 45% favour additional spending on roads and freeways. Far too much money is being allocated for private motor vehicle transport and not nearly enough for cyclists and

pedestrians, especially when Government policy is to shift transport from vehicles to bicycle and foot – the existing high level of urban car dependence is not sustainable, even in the medium term due to factors such as: greenhouse emissions and air quality, economic costs, and health and oil supply problems.

Relative cost structure of transport modes

The cost profile of transport modes needs attention to increase incentives for public and alternative transport.

- More of the costs of cars need to be shifted from the fixed to variable category to encourage reduced use, and thus as an instrument for demand management.
- Car parking costs should be increased and availability reduced.
- Tax subsidies for urban four wheel drive vehicles should be removed etc (see 4.24).
- Petrol prices should reflect the true environmental costs.
- GST should be removed from public transport fares and bicycles.
- Employment packages that include cars should reduce incentives to use the cars and provide for alternative modes instead, such as public transport and bicycle – Employer provided cars make up 40% of peak hour traffic and skew employee travel choices.

Oil supply vulnerability and greenhouse

- Actions to respond to oil supply vulnerability and greenhouse emissions omit specific actions to encourage cycling and walking, surely the most oil efficient, non-polluting and sustainable forms of transport.
- Work place reforms could also foster these transport modes.

The Subiaco Bicycle User Group is committed to working with Government to obtain the best outcomes for cyclists and pedestrians and to enhance the use of these ‘affordable’ and sustainable transport modes.

Yours sincerely

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