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Dear Dr Newman

### Comments on the Draft State Sustainability Strategy

At the October meeting of the Western Australian Bicycle Committee, the Draft State Sustainability Strategy (DSSS) was discussed. Members also attended the Public Workshop on Sustainability and Settlements held on 13 December 2002. Key among the observations of the Committee is that the very important role that cycling can play in improving community and transport sustainability has been understated in the DSSS. Cycling is one of the most sustainable, environmentally-friendly forms of transport, and with the right support by Government, can be a substantial contributor to reduced greenhouse gas emission, improved health, ie "sense of place" for all.

The Committee is also aware of a number of substantial submission during the development of the DSSS from cycling groups and associations such as the Bicycle Transportation Alliance and the Australian Bicycle Federation. In support of the Committee's views noted above and to avoid "re-inventing the wheel" the Committee thinks that it would be useful to revisit these submissions to enhance the profile that cycling has in the final strategy.

In addition, the following comments were raised by the Committee as its October meeting and are included for consideration:

#### **General**

- The final Strategy needs to challenge the assumptions about the future availability of oil and natural gas; the latter in particular, as it seems that the WA public acknowledges the reduction in oil availability but not natural gas.
- Education of the community in terms of cycling as a significant transport alternative needs to be emphasised in the document. A Proposed Action that advocates and promotes cycling as a sustainable transport choice, possible under the Education aspect of Sustainability and the Community is needed.

#### **Specific**

- In the Overview of Selected Strategies, the reference should be to the Perth Bicycle Network Plan. Also, the *TravelSmart* program is not mentioned and

should be referred to in this summary, ie "...rail system, continuing and expanding the *TravelSmart* program and revamping and reconfirming the commitment to the implementation of the Perth Bicycle Network." The continuation and expansion of *TravelSmart* should also be identified as a Proposed Action in the relevant section

- Proposed Action 4.16 should be amended to read "Enhance the new and existing suburban railways by providing for the physical integration of cycle paths as part of and near these facilities and..."
- Proposed Action 4.24 should be amended to include a reference to the inclusion of bicycles in available salary packaging arrangements.
- Proposed Action 5.14 should be amended to include a reference to cycling and walking; either: "refer section 4.15" or "...approaches to such activities as cycling and walking in order to reduce...".
- Proposed Action 4.18 should be expanded to include parking for all modes (ie including cycling) as part of planning suburban centres, and to expand new Residential Design codes to require the provision bike parking in development approvals.
- Wherever possible, references to public transport such as in Proposed Action needs also to include a reference to cycling/cycling facilities.
- In Proposed Action 4.22, the need for the development of and agreement on suitable transport mode share targets needs to be noted.
- A new Proposal Action should note that the provision of funding for cycling facilities to meet these targets need to link to a whole of Government considerations as part of the State budget process. Cycling benefits are broader than can be funded by Department for Planning and Infrastructure and Main Roads; the preventative and sustainable health and environmental benefits to the community also need to be included in the budget equation.
- The requirement to provide suitable end of trip facilities, which provide for cyclist, also needs to be required under formal local and State Government Planning regulations.
- Some strategies or proposed actions may be out of date, but it was thought that these would be picked up in the public consultation Workshops.

While these comments focussed primarily on the Proposal Action, it needs to be recognised that there is a danger that some suitable previous initiatives and some Actions Underway could be lost through this strategy development process. Some current initiatives may need their funding continued or enhanced if these programs are to remain and/or become more effective; however, they may lose their priority in favour of implementing Proposed Actions. A proposed strategic approach needs to be created "to review existing programs with a view to extending them where there are demonstrable sustainability benefits."

Lastly, some reference to the costs of and mechanisms to implement the final Strategy would be useful. The Committee was concerned that Government will expect organisations to “absorb” the costs of initiatives within already very tight budget allocations. This may prove very difficult for some agencies and could significantly and negatively affect the implementation of the final Strategy.

I trust these comments will be useful during the final consideration of inclusion in the State Sustainability Strategy.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide the comments on behalf of the WA Bicycle Committee.

Yours sincerely

***Howard Croxon***  
***Chair***

## Submission to the Machinery of Government Taskforce from the Western Australian Bicycle Committee – 9 April 2001

- A. “Transport Funding”, not “Road Funding”. Funding for transport should be provided by Government and prioritised between different transport modes by methodical, equitable strategies. Overseas examples (US TEA-21, European and UK models) should also be considered to provide a more rational basis for allocation of transport funding for all modes, including bicycle transportation. Far too much money has been allocated for private motor vehicle transport and not nearly enough for cyclist and pedestrian transport.
- B. The previous policy of having the road construction authority responsible for road planning and design has biased transport planning towards providing more roads for motor vehicles at the expense of other modes and of other road users.
- C. Government proposals to amalgamate Transport, Main Roads and the Ministry for Planning to create a Department for Planning and Infrastructure are supported. Improved liaison and coordination with other transport bodies like WA Government Railways (WAGR) and the Fremantle Port Authority (FPA) are also important for access to land reserved for transport purposes for cycle ways and shared paths.
- D. Current interdepartmental arrangements and structures are highly inefficient for promoting whole-of government views and actions across sectors within Government. For instance, the enormous benefit to the Health portfolio of increased physical activity from increased levels of bicycle transport and recreation are not yet widely recognised. The links between Education, Health, Sport and Recreation, Environment policies and bicycle transport **are inadequate**. As an example, bicycle trips to school are an obvious target to keep children fitter, to save a lot of short polluting car trips and local traffic congestion and ever increasing demand for more road space to cater for trips to school.

A cooperative whole-of-government approach is needed for the broad benefits of cycling (both transport and recreational) to begin to be realised. For instance, the growing problem of obesity in children and adults is due much more to lack of physical activity than to diet problems. A concerted, cooperative, interdepartmental approach is needed to avoid the current “silo mentality” where bottom lines and core business obscure the greater community good.

- E. Funding and strategic planning should consider the possibility (and the probability) that the existing high level of urban car dependence is not sustainable, even in the medium term, due to the following factors:
  - Greenhouse problems and obligations
  - Economic costs
  - Health problems from air pollution and lack of physical activity
  - Oil supply problems and more frequent and critical oil crisis*(see the authoritative predictions of the “Big Rollover” decline in the world’s oil production from the US Geological Survey).*

- F. Bicycle transport is a “No Regret” option (in Ecologically Sustainable Development terminology). 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.
- G. Very substantial funding and organisational improvements, at a macro level, and at a mind level, and at a detailed level, are needed if the State Government is going to be successful in meeting the Metropolitan Transport Strategy targets for increasing bicycle usage. Current bicycle transport infrastructure provision is diminishing (as previous bicycle-friendly roads are being harmed by some common engineering practices and increasing volumes and speeds of traffic). There needs to be a major drive to implement stages 2 and 3 of the Perth Bicycle Network and to defend the sections already installed. This will not be possible without substantial structural changes to Transport and Planning.
- H. An enormous amount remains to be done if bicycle transport infrastructure is to meet the current and potential demands for safe, separated paths and well-designed, safe, on –road bicycle routes.
- I. The result of the Taskforce on the Machinery of Government should recommend a follow-up, detailed review of what mid-level organisational (intradepartmental and interdepartmental) arrangements are needed to provide for and to facilitate bicycle transport, and to narrow the current large gap between policy and practice. This should include:
- a) A review of the detailed structure of the new Department of Planning and Infrastructure as it applies to bicycle transport
  - b) A review of the links between the new department and other related departments and bodies such as WAGR, FPA, Health, Education, Sport and Recreation, and so on
  - c) A review of the across-sector effectiveness of the WABC including whether it should report directly to the Minister (as the Committee has done in the past), and the consideration of very substantially increased resources to employ staff to follow up matters (like the long-standing concern about quality assurance), which are currently not receiving adequate attention from responsible bodies.
- J. Bicycle transport spans State and local government levels. There is at times poor coordination or antipathy between the different levels to the detriment of the facilities for cyclists. The serious problems on two Perth Bicycle Network routes at Shenton College are one example, and local government opposition to a proposal for an underpass for cyclists to be built at Barrack Street is another.
- K. State transport funding for local authorities should be conditioned on a rational approach integrated with overarching schemes like the Metropolitan Transport Strategy, AND funding should be conditional on all road and path facilities meeting or exceeding Austroads standards for cycling and pedestrian facilities. Road funding provisions should strongly encourage local region balanced

transport planning, including regional and local-level bike plans and bicycle network plans.

- L. Quality Assurance (QA) for bicycle transport is a very serious concern in all levels of Government. There is a large gap between the strategy level statements (of the Metropolitan Transport Strategy and the useful high-level policies of Transport and Main Roads Western Australia) and what actually happens on the ground. Funding for bicycle transport infrastructure should be conditional on improved QA, and when problems reported, they should be rectified and not repeated, which is all too commonly the case. Existing road safety audit procedures have not solved the problem of low level QA for cyclist in road construction and modification.
- M. The existing State regulatory powers for control of roadworks (signage and line marking) should be retained and strengthened to avoid hazardous differences in road construction standards. These powers should be used to ensure that all roadworks are as safe as possible for bicycle transport and that none make an existing road more hazardous. This will need the services of a substantially increased number of skilled bicycle-literate transport engineers to check ALL road work proposals for compliance with at least minimum standards if safety and convenience for bicycle users. Both the skill levels of general traffic engineers and the normal road design practices need to be improved so bicycle-safe roads become the norm. The resourcing for State Government oversight of all road construction and road modification needs to be significantly raised so that project review and approval is comprehensive and timely without compromising safety standards for cyclists.
- N. Road safety audits should be a required part of the planning approval process for new subdivisions and large-scale commercial developments such as shopping centres. Trying to retrofit road safety and bicycle facilities into subdivisions after they are built is either expensive or impractical. The current road safety audit process is controlled by the road construction authority and this has lead to conflicts of interest and to some very unsatisfactory results. Road safety audits should be independent and transparent, and reports of audits should be readily available to the public – for instance on the World Wide Web.
- O. End-of-trip facilities for bicycle transport should be required to be part of all new town planning schemes including for large and small commercial developments and office buildings. Showers and facilities for safe, secure bicycle parking are essential to facilitate bicycle transport, as well as for other activities such as jogging at lunch time which can do a lot to improve both the health and productivity of staff. Failure to include these in town planning schemes means that they are rarely provided, while facilities for car parking are always considered.
- P. Providing equitable access for disabled people in wheelchairs and gophers is crucial in addition to providing for cyclists. The design standards for safe and user-friendly bicycle path construction (with a few easily included addition) cater equally for wheelchair users. Transport and road constructions should be required to comply with a code of practice analogues to the disability-access provisions of the “Australia Building Code” to ensure that road and path building

no longer discriminates against low-powered wheeled vehicles, pedestrians and people with disabilities.

- Q. The lowering of urban speed limits in both residential and arterial roads is essential to provide a safe and inviting environment for pedestrians, cyclists and the community as a whole. The foreshadows 50km/h changes should be implemented as a matter of urgency and should be extended to more and more arterial roads. This is because a major proportion of pedestrian fatalities (and those of other road users) occur on arterial rather than residential roads. Progressive lowering of speed limits should aim at proven 40km/h (USA) and 30km/h (European) models.
- R. The WABC wishes to be closely consulted in the details of the implementation of changes to the Machinery of Government that impact on bicycle transport. We realise that much of our suggestions are at a mid-level and interdepartmental level, and would be considered later in the review and reorganisation of the Machinery of Government.