



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage

**MEDIA RELEASE**

*Issued: 18 February 2004*

## **How to make Australia's cities more accessible: public hearing on sustainable transport *Canberra, Thursday 19 February 2004***

How to develop sustainable transport networks for Australian cities will be discussed at a public hearing in Canberra on Thursday, 19 February 2004. The public hearing is the second for the House of Representatives Environment Committee inquiry into sustainable cities.

As Australia moves to larger urban populations, the pressures on land, resource and waste management increase. To ensure that Australian cities of the future are clean, liveable and accessible places, the House of Representatives Environment and Heritage Committee is conducting an inquiry into *Sustainable Cities 2025*. The inquiry began late last year with the issuing of a 20-page discussion paper.

The *Sustainable Cities 2025* inquiry is looking at issues and policies relating to the impacts of sprawling urban development, measures to reduce the environmental, social and economic costs of continuing urban expansion and mechanisms for the Commonwealth to bring about urban development reform. The inquiry is also looking to develop a 'blueprint' for ecologically sustainable patterns of city settlement, with particular reference to eco-efficiency and equity in the provision of services and infrastructure.

The Environment Committee Chair, Mr Bruce Billson MP, says the inquiry will examine how cities of the future can meet the social, environmental and economic needs of Australia within the unique context of the Australian landscape.

"Integrating the built and natural environment in a sustainable manner requires planning and a clearly articulated strategy," Mr Billson said. "Identifying the issues and articulating a forward strategy for the nation is the target of this inquiry".

Appearing before the committee on Thursday are representatives of the International Association for Public Transport (UITP) and the Australian Automobile Association (AAA).

The UITP is a world-wide association of urban and regional passenger transport operators, their authorities and suppliers. It promotes the development of more efficient and attractive public transport services that gain the maximum benefit from the latest available technology. The UITP advocates strong political leadership to move ahead with public transport and address the issue of larger traffic flows in our cities.

The AAA represents the interests of around 6 million motorists through its state and territory motoring clubs and associations. These interests extend to reducing the costs of motoring and improving the safety and environmental performance of vehicles. It argues that, if the right infrastructure decisions are made by government, then the car will be seen as contributing to the sustainability of cities, not the reverse.

### **PUBLIC HEARING**

**Venue:** Committee Room 1R4  
Parliament House, Canberra

11.00 a.m. International Association of Public Transport [submissions 46 and 171]

11:45 a.m. Australian Automobile Association [submission 121]

For **media comment**, contact: Bruce Billson, House Environment Committee Chair, on (02) 6277 4879.

For **background information, including submissions, and copies of the discussion paper**, please contact the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4580 or visit the inquiry website at [www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/environ](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/environ)

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