

Sustainable Jamboree!

27 February 2009

The Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Email: rrat.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Senate Inquiry into Public Transport

We wish to extend our thanks to the Senate of Australia for establishing the above Inquiry. Sustainable Jamboree is deeply concerned about transport emissions and under-investment in public transport.

Sustainable Jamboree was established more than two years ago to reduce our ecological footprint in the Jamboree Ward of Brisbane, the Centenary Suburbs and surrounds. Sustainable Jamboree's Steering Committee Terms of Reference have always included advocacy for sustainable transport and reduced car dependency. We believe increased use of sustainable transport will likely result in safer, healthier, physically appealing, socially connected, less polluted and overall more sustainable communities.

Our own website includes an array of references in relation to sustainable transport:
http://sustainablejamboree.org/index.php?option=com_weblinks&catid=23&Itemid=39

Public transport is more critical to our collective futures than most people may realise and we hope that this Inquiry dramatically builds on past Inquiries as mentioned in your Terms of Reference¹ (refer Appendix 1).

Australia certainly lags behind other countries in the area of public transport provision and other mechanisms for enticing people out of cars and onto public transport. For many people in Australia, public transport is simply not a viable option. Governments need to lead the community, planners, employers², motorists and so on about why and how we need this shift. Everyone has a role to play.

¹ Transport recommendations from 'Sustainable Cities', Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage, Aug 2005, <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/envirom/cities/report/chapter5.pdf> and Report of the Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee, Australia's future oil supply and alternative transport fuels, Feb 2007. <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/envirom/charter/report/front.pdf>

² <http://www.bikesatwork.com.au/>

There are many reasons why the Commonwealth should take a lead role to urgently transform our cities, our workplaces and our culture away from car dependency. Climate change is upon us and oil is a finite, intensely polluting resource³, already affecting human health and incurring injury. Many people are unaware that pollution “car drivers and passengers face pollution levels inside their vehicles that are two to three times higher than those experienced by pedestrians and cyclists in the open air”⁴. Oil shocks of the future are likely to be very disruptive. Cars, car parks, roads and so on, consume a great deal of space and public funding at an unsustainable rate.

On behalf of Sustainable Jamboree I offer the following against each of the committee’s terms of reference.

- 1. Audit of the state of public passenger transport in Australia; and**
- 2. Current and historical levels of public investment in private vehicle and public passenger transport services and infrastructure**

While investments in passenger transport may be growing all the time, we are yet to see the critically needed shift away from private car use needed to avert dangerous climate change and prepare for the alarming consequences of peak oil.

The Commonwealth should increase its efforts in relation to public transport funding as States and local governments are in great need of assistance.

In addition, funding should be specifically and overtly prioritised towards sustainable transport modes rather than building roads which encourage private car use.

In recent years disappointing populist policies by Brisbane’s Lord Mayor Campbell Newman have led to the abolition of bus lanes. We continue to see bus schedules disrupted daily by over-crowded roads during peak times (and often over-crowded buses and trains too).

On the other hand, it has already been useful to see increases to parking fees in Brisbane City in lieu of a congestion tax which the Lord Mayor denies he would support.

Governments have made some inroads into flexible and community responsive transport services, for example:

- providing a taxi subsidy service called LANDS through Home and Community Care funding;
- funding taxi schemes to take groups of patients to kidney dialysis services; and
- trialing bus routes that are not fixed but responsive to travellers on any given day.

These kinds of innovative models need to be expanded to meet the needs of a diverse population.

Dedicated school transport services are limited to private schools or regional areas. These services not only need to be expanded to address the dangers of traffic congestion, but also could be funded to employ bus ‘conductors’ to help bus drivers manage student behaviour.

3

<http://www.racv.com.au/wps/wcm/connect/Internet/Primary/my+car/advice+%26+information/motoring+%26+the+environment/impact+of+cars+on+the+environment/>

⁴ <http://www.science.unsw.edu.au/news/air-pollution-worst-inside-cars-research/>

3. Benefits of public passenger transport, including integration with bicycle and pedestrian initiatives

Many reputable sources have advocated for and outlined the benefits of the above over many years (see Appendix). For example in 1999, the World Health Organisation developed a Charter for Transport, the Environment and Health.

Benefits as stated by QCOSS⁵

“...an efficient and affordable public transport network is essential because:

- People on lower incomes are likely to spend a larger percentage of their income on travel to and from work, health and community services and recreation activities. This cost burden can result in reduced access to health services, social and employment opportunities.*
- Families (particularly sole parents) on low incomes cannot afford private car ownership and limited public transport in disadvantaged locations creates barriers to accessing other life opportunities (employment, recreation, education, health).”*

There are strong benefits associated with the integration of transport modes. Trains and buses can't be everywhere so walking and cycling can make up for that shortfall without the same polluting effects of car use to/from bus and train stations.

Any public transport must incorporate things like secure bicycle racks, nearby lockers, showers and storage facilities to encourage pedestrian and cyclist use. Connectivity with bicycle paths is critical, as is good road crossing facilities.

Taxis could be better recognised as a beneficial form of passenger transport. They are well-suited to those who are not able-bodied as mentioned earlier. For example, if subsidies are extended, they could reduce car trips made by carers ferrying people around.

4. Measures by which the Commonwealth Government could facilitate improvement in public passenger transport services and infrastructure

A leadership role is needed to ensure that the public understands how and why greater investment in and uptake of public transport is needed.

A range of powerful sticks and carrots are needed to influence all levels of government, private operators, transport users and urban planners.

Clearly, it is time that we not only invest in much more widespread, convenient and fast public transport but also provide the kinds of sticks and carrots which would entice people out of their cars through social/workplace change, urban planning, better services and well designed infrastructure.

This would need to be broad ranging.

For example, it could include incentives to change employment patterns such that people can better access part-time work (eg to ensure that getting children to/from school can more readily be supervised on foot). There should be incentives to employers who minimise the need to travel (eg, by offering more teleworking, locating services/workplaces nearer to housing using mixed land use patterns and innovations like carefully designed 'Transit Oriented Developments').

⁵ <http://www.qcoss.org.au/Article.aspx?type=news&id=3104>

Road rules and planning guidelines could be changed to ensure that public transport is prioritised over private vehicle use, for example at shopping centres and other trip generating facilities.

Prioritisation could occur via strategies like:

- attractive, prominent walkway entry routes, crossings, overpasses and so on;
- lower speed limits for cars;
- rules like those in parts of Europe to ensure cars give way to buses, bicycles and pedestrians (needing strong policing).

Regulations should ensure that housing densities near transport nodes are dramatically increased where possible. There is a strong need for national regulation towards appropriate urban planning to support public transport as our cities are too sprawling – refer to the film, *The End of Suburbia*⁶.

There is a need to consider well-connected, safe and appealing pedestrian and cycle access to bus and train nodes. Cyclists should be able to take their bicycles onboard buses and trains.

Cul-de-sac designed communities have been shown to be less conducive to walking and cycling whereas a grid design allows a shorter trip (as the crow flies).

Design of infrastructure needs to be in line with Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to improve levels of safety for all users (for example, including those who are not able bodied or have failing eye sight). Train stations themselves should not be darkened, dangerous places at night.

While TravelSmart initiatives have been useful in the past, the results of these projects can only be maintained if marketing messages are reinforced on a much larger scale together with the provision of quality public transport information services (with a person on the phone).

Any future behaviour change initiatives should draw upon the innovation literature that recognises factors affecting unlearning⁷.

5. Commonwealth Government legislation, taxation, subsidies, policies and other mechanisms that either discourage or encourage public passenger transport.

Governments should remove the wide range of perverse incentives that keep people in their cars and away from public passenger transport.

The Queensland Government's petrol subsidy should not exist. It sends the wrong signal to road users. There are other options available for supporting people suffering financial hardship, if this is what it was meant to achieve.

6. Best practice international examples of public passenger transport services and infrastructure

Refer to the Appendices for an extensive list of good sources of international examples of the above.

A few examples in brief

⁶ <http://www.endofsuburbia.com/>

⁷ Becker, K and Hyland, P. 'Overcoming barriers to innovation by facilitating unlearning' in 'Inside the Innovation Matrix – finding the hidden human dimensions', Australian Business Foundation, pp 179-195, 2008.



- In the UK, there are some areas in which traffic signals favour buses and pedestrians over cars – that is, cars get the red light when a bus or pedestrian activates a button.
 - Systems to make using public transport easier to use can be found within projects run at UNSW⁸.
- In Switzerland, there exists excellent undercover parking (and other facilities) for bicycles at homes, tram and train stations. In addition, trains include carriages to accommodate bicycles. There, the road rules ensure that cars give way to cyclists and trams. Switzerland has also resisted the temptation to build mega shopping malls which tend to attract cars and repel pedestrians and cyclists. Instead towns maintain the traditional markets and promenades with trams travelling down their centre.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to make a submission to the Inquiry. We hope that the committee's report will have the power to bring about the dramatic and urgent changes that are needed to preserve our societies, our economies and our environment.

Yours sincerely

Ngairé McGaw MHSoc BA
Convenor, Sustainable Jamboree
<http://sustainablejamboree.org>

⁸ http://www.isf.uts.edu.au/publications/CM_JB_KS_1999.pdf

Appendix 1

Supported transport recommendations from the report of the House of Representatives Inquiry into Sustainable Cities, Aug 2005

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/envIRON/cities/report/chapter5.pdf>

Recommendation 6

The committee recommends that:

- transport infrastructure planning decisions be benchmarked against the recommended Australian Sustainability Charter; and
- the Australian Government significantly boost its funding commitment for public transport systems, particularly light and heavy rail, in the major cities.

Recommendation 7

The committee recommends that the provision of Australian Government transport infrastructure funds include provision of funding specifically for sustainable public transport infrastructure for suburbs and developments on the outer fringes of our cities.

Recommendation 8

The committee recommends that the Australian Government review the current FBT concessions for car use with a view to removing incentives for greater car use and extending incentives to other modes of transport.

Recommendation 10

The committee recommends that the Australian Government provide adequate funding to develop new programmes and support existing programmes, such as TravelSmart and the National Cycling Strategy, that promote and facilitate public and active transport options.

Appendix 2

Reputable sources of information about public transport, other sustainable modes of transport and appropriate urban planning to support these

Sustainable Jamboree did not wish to reproduce a wide ranging body of work to justify investment in public transport and related urban planning. However, we urge the Inquiry to ensure that the following sources are explored when devising the committee's recommendations.

1. World Health Organisation's Charter on Transport, Environment and Health, June 1999, http://www.euro.who.int/document/peh-ehp/charter_transporte.pdf
2. International Association of Public Transport (UITP), <http://www.uitp.org/>
3. European Union and the European Platform on Mobility Management, <http://www.epomm.eu/>
4. Australian Association for Peak Oil, <http://www.aspo-australia.org.au/>
5. 2001 Kuiper, G. & Penman, R. 'Environmental information, decision-making and communicating, Proceedings of 'Conference on Communication and the Environment' Cincinnati, 27-31 July <http://www.esf.edu/ecn/coceprc.htm>
6. Black, J., Mason, C. & Stanley, K. 1999, 'Travel Demand Management: Policy context and an application by the University of NSW as a large trip generator', *Transport Engineering In Australia*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 1-11. Retrieved: 1999, from Sharp, L. & Lee, A. 1998, 'A Proactive Approach To Transport Needs A Large Organisation.' in 22nd Australasian Transport Research Forum, Sydney, Australia.
7. Bruce Robinson and the WA Sustainable Transport Coalition, <http://www.stcwa.org.au/>
8. Elizabeth Deakin, Christopher Ferrell, Jonathan Mason, John Thomas, 'Policies and Practices for Cost-Effective Transit Investments: Recent Experiences in the United States', *Journal of the Transportation Research Board*, Issue Volume 1799 / 2002: 1-9.
[http://www.garnautreview.org.au/CA25734E0016A131/WebObj/D0839880ResponsetoIssuePaper5-AssocProfChrisRissel/\\$File/D08%2039880%20Response%20to%20Issue%20Paper%205%20-%20Assoc%20Prof%20Chris%20Rissel.pdf](http://www.garnautreview.org.au/CA25734E0016A131/WebObj/D0839880ResponsetoIssuePaper5-AssocProfChrisRissel/$File/D08%2039880%20Response%20to%20Issue%20Paper%205%20-%20Assoc%20Prof%20Chris%20Rissel.pdf)
9. Jan Gehl, Architect from Denmark, refer http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jan_Gehl
10. L . Frank , M . Andresen , T . Schmid, 'Obesity relationships with community design, physical activity, and time spent in cars' *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, Volume 27 , Issue 2 , Pages 87 – 96, 2004
11. L. Frank, 'Land Use and Transportation Interaction: Implications on Public Health and Quality of Life', *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, Vol. 20, No. 1, 6-22, 2000.
12. Marc Schlossberg and Nathaniel Brown (Oregon, USA), 'Comparing Transit-Oriented Development Sites by Walkability Indicators', *Journal of the Transportation Research Board*, **Volume 1887 / 2004**
13. Any works authored by Dr Chloe Mason, such as 'Transport and health: en route to a healthier Australia?' *MJA* 2000; 172: 230-232
http://www.mja.com.au/public/issues/172_05_060300/mason/mason.html
14. Prof A Capon, 'Framework for Sustainability and Population Health'. ANU National Centre For Epidemiology & Population Health,
<http://www.aph.gov.au/HOUSE/committee/environ/charter/subs/sub103.pdf>
15. Prof Ian Lowe and Prof Brendan Gleeson's entries into the book, 'The Ten Commitments', CSIRO Publishing, 2008.
16. Promoting active transport : an intervention portfolio to increase physical activity as a means of transport : planning framework - case study, Melbourne : National Public Health Partnership, c2001.
<http://www.nphp.gov.au/publications/sigpah/active.pdf>
17. Ralph Hall, Introducing the Concept of Sustainable Transport to the U.S. DOT through the Reauthorization of TEA-21, <http://www.uitp.org/Public-Transport/sustainabledevelopment/>
18. Reid Ewing and Robert Cervero, 'Travel and the Built Environment: A Synthesis', *Journal of Transportation Research Board*, Volume 1780 / 2001

19. Reid Ewing, 'Using a Visual Preference Survey in Transit Design', Public Works Management & Policy, Vol. 5, No. 4, 270-280 (2001)
20. Socialdata / TravelSmart - <http://www.socialdata.de/info/Switching%20to%20Public%20Transport.pdf>
21. The Warren Centre at the University of Sydney, <http://www.warren.usyd.edu.au/transport/>
22. Works authored by Dr Chris Rissel, for example, refer to his response to the Garnaut Review:
23. www.livingstreets.org.uk
24. www.sustrans.org.uk
25. The Centre for Sustainable Transport, Canada, <http://cst.uwinnipeg.ca/>