

## Response to the Garnaut Climate Change Review

(Issues paper - Forum 5 - Transport, Planning and the Built Environment)

from

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March 31, 2008

### Increasing bicycle transport mode share addresses climate change

This submission addresses the issue of passenger transport (the transport of people) and the questions "What are the key barriers to the adoption of cost-effective and low emissions mode use in the passenger transport sector? How might these be addressed effectively and efficiently by government policy?" I specifically focus on cycling, a **no emission** form of travel, and the active travel mode with the most potential for increase.

The issues paper notes that "Walking and cycling form an important component of passenger transport." While cycling has a low mode share compared to some European cities, it is worth noting that rates of cycling vary across the country, and have been steadily increasing over the last 5-10 years. Census data on the journey to work indicate that Melbourne, Perth and Brisbane have higher rates of cycling than Sydney and have increased by 22% across Australia, suggesting that there is basic potential to increase cycling in Sydney and other cities (Cycling Promotion Fund, 2008a). Over half (55%) the car trips in NSW are less than five kilometres and 33% are less than three kilometres (NSW Department of Transport, 1995), distances considered easily amenable to cycling.

Cycling is the fourth most popular form of recreational activity in Australia (Australian Sports Commission, 2006). The proportion of households in NSW with a bicycle has risen from 32% in 1991 to 39% in 1998 (Transport Data Centre, 2000). Bicycles sales in Australia have been greater than new cars each year for the last eight years (Cycling Promotion Fund, 2008b). These data consistently indicate that the Australian public likes to cycle and more than likely would cycle more if conditions for cycling were better.

The issues paper notes that transport funding has overwhelmingly been allocated to roads for cars, with trivial amounts allocated to bicycle paths and infrastructure. A recent review of transport and health promotion interventions to increase levels of cycling found that despite varying levels of research rigour, most programs did lead to a positive increase in cycling (Rissel and Garrard, 2007). An investment in infrastructure for cycling, and social and behavioural programs that encourage cycling, will readily lead to more Australians cycling.

The barriers to more Australians cycling are relatively well known. A report commissioned by the Australian Department of Health and Ageing of which I am a co-author (Bauman, Rissel et al, *in press*) seeking to raise population levels of physical activity, identified these barriers and recommended strategies that a whole of government approach could use to increase levels of cycling. These recommendations are largely dependent upon each other and would need to be implemented in an integrated, coordinated way:

- 🚲 Improved bicycle infrastructure: to provide safe, attractive and enjoyable on and off road bicycle routes as well as high quality end of trip facilities.
- 🚲 Funding: to better reflect the role and value of cycling in a range of areas including transport, health and sustainability, with support from all levels of government.
- 🚲 Mass marketing campaigns: to promote the multiple health, environmental, transport, economic and social inclusion benefits of cycling, and address perceived barriers such as safety, required fitness level and road user behaviour. These campaigns can be supported through the extensive network of cycling organisations around Australia, and should be combined with infrastructure improvements.

- 🚲 Behaviour change programs such as *TravelSmart*, Ride to Work, and Ride to School programs: to help more Australian children and adults make the daily commute by bicycle.
- 🚲 Bicycle events: to encourage infrequent and novice riders to cycle in a supportive social environment.
- 🚲 Bicycle education programs: to increase confidence and skill levels in both the child and adult population.
- 🚲 Urban design: to create a physical environment more conducive to cycling, such as higher density, mixed use development and shorter trip distances.

Cycling is a carbon neutral, petrol free form of transport, simultaneously helping Australians fight climate change and reduce fuel costs. For peak hour journeys in particular, the bicycle can reduce congestion and increase the efficiency of the transport system.

### References

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