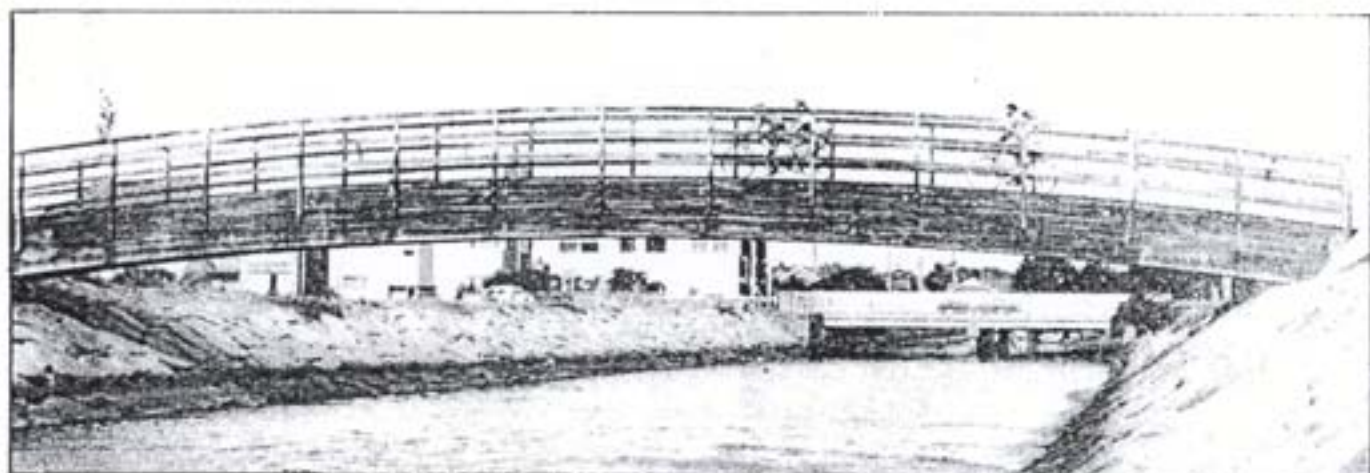


## Bicycles and the New Depression

# Bicycle Planning Projects Bridge the Employment Gap



Elwood Canal Bridge. Photo: P. Mathews.

Bicycles have much to offer in the new depression

With a new Federal Labor Government installed in office and committed to getting Australians back to work the focus on bicycle planning has been subtly changed.

A statement released by the then shadow Federal shadow minister for Transport, Peter Morris, prior to the March 5 election said that the Labor Party is committed to upgrade the status of the bicycle as a mode of travel and recreation.

Now that Labor is in power federally it has the unique opportunity to affect the course of bicycle planning in all of the states where governments have committed themselves to bicycle planning projects.

As the states in question are all governed by Labor administrations, Federal Labor should now be able to co-ordinate the long overdue upgrading of the bicycle as a mode of travel and recreation in a way never before attempted.

Coinciding with the rise to power of Labor in Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, West Australia and Federally, is the release of an important research document which once and for all proves that the bicycle is already receiving widespread transportation use.

In a special three part look at the problems facing the five Labor transport ministers, Alan Parker and Warren Salomon present the case for a closer look at what is currently being achieved if transportation planning only had a rational basis for the allocation of its funds.

### A BIV Job Creation Proposal

The BIV has written to the Minister of Transport in Victoria suggesting that the construction of the \$25 million bikeway network proposed in the nearly complete Melbourne Bikeplan be designated as an employment creation scheme. Either state or fed-

eral employment creation funds could be used to supplement Ministry of Transport funding so that the Bikeway network would be completed in five or six years instead of twenty years, which is how long it will take on the level of funding provided by the State Government this year.

Most of the work would be done by local government. Using employment creation funds (MEAT) to supplement Ministry of Transport funds (MOT). This would create a funding breakdown that would greatly encourage local councils to build bikeways. At present councils are funded on a 1:1 basis and only \$500,000 has been provided to councils by the Ministry of Transport this year.

The Institute proposes that this allocation be increased so that Councils receive approximately \$3 for every dollar that they contribute.

This would provide them with a greater incentive to construct bikeways. This would generate a demand for approximately \$2 million transport/job creation funds in the first year and about \$4 million per year for the following five years.

The Institute believes that transport projects with a high direct labour content should receive top priority until we get through the economic depression that has just started in Victoria.

Several other community groups have sent letters of support for this proposal, as a result of its publication in *The Age* Newspaper. The Town and Country Planning Association of Victoria, the Conservation Foundation, the Victorian Council of Pedal Clubs and numerous bicycle touring clubs have all written to the Minister supporting this proposal.



There is no reason whatsoever why similar proposals should not be made in all Australian cities

#### Shared Pedestrian/Bicycle Facility Job Creation Scheme.

Should the Melbourne Bikeplan job creation scheme be considered viable at a later date the BIV will ask for its extension to include about \$25 million worth of shared bicycle/pedestrian low cost bridges and associated access works over rivers, creeks, freeways and railway lines. Only a few of these projects are in the Melbourne Bikeplan. The Network of rivers and creeks needing shared bicycle/pedestrian bridges is more than 100 miles long.

The structures required all have a high direct labour content. Laminated wooden structures using Victorian forest products could be built over rivers, creeks, freeways, arterial roads and railways. In some cases steel or concrete structures would be required.

Numerous conservation and landscape studies exist showing the location of such bridges across the Yarra and Maribyrnong Rivers and several creeks. The photograph of the Elwood Canal wooden bridge shows the type of structure required.

The Victorian Ministry of Planning and Conservation and the MMBW could prepare a \$25 million short list of such projects. A sufficient number of priority projects already exist that would have been built in a more favourable economic climate over the next ten years, so there is no shortage of well thought out projects.

Alan Parker

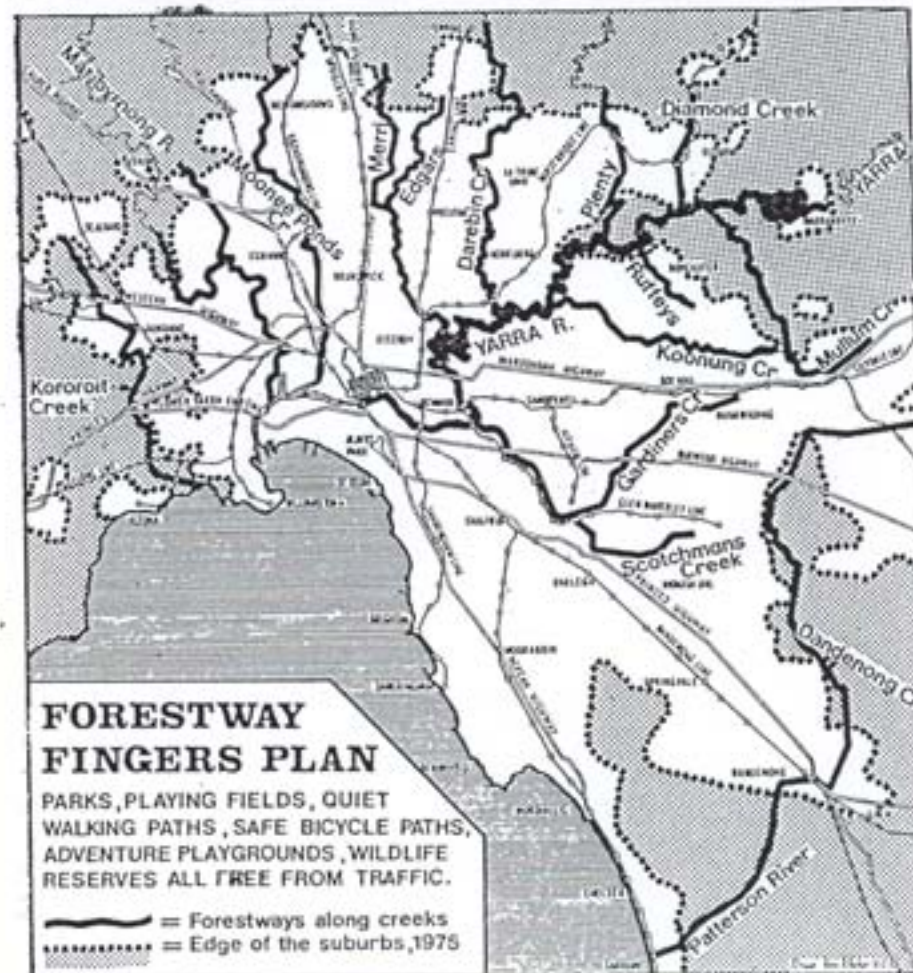
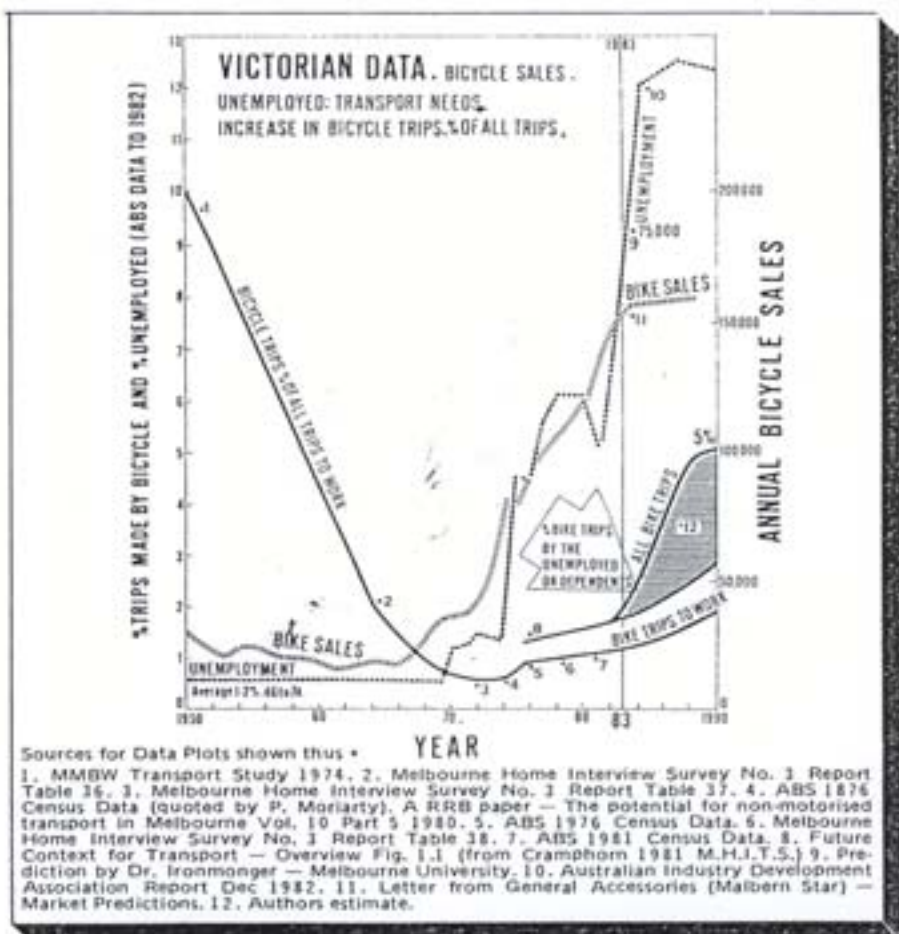
#### New Research exposes inequalities in allocation of Transportation Funds

A report recently completed for the Australian Road Research Board and funded by the State Bicycle Committee of Victoria shows that the role of the bicycle as a mode of transport is much more significant than previously thought of by transport bureaucrats and planners.

The report entitled *Bicycle Ownership and Exposure in Melbourne 1978-9* by Dr Mark Wigan breaks new research ground and provides possibly the first publicly available market research into the ownership and use of bicycles.

Among the major conclusions of the report are the following startling facts:

- Bicycle travel in Melbourne is more important than motor cycle and taxi travel in terms of time spent.
- Average trip rates for active cyclists are very stable across ages and cities.





Bicycle ownership varies little with income compared to car ownership. As expected the report finds that the largest user grouping are children between 11 and 17 years, and on any given week day 13% of all that group in Melbourne use a bicycle.

The report compares available data on usage in Adelaide from a 1977 study and reaches the surprising conclusion that the level of bicycle use is higher in Adelaide than in Melbourne. This study must add extra weight to the case for bikeplan implementation in the city of Adelaide.

Bicycle ownership in Melbourne is given at 32% of all households and from these results it is deduced that 42% of Melbourne's population has access to a bicycle capable of being ridden 1 km or more.

Figures 1, 2 and 3 show a break up of these results. In figure 1 it can be seen how the age of a person determines the access to 0, 1 or 2+ bicycles. At most ages people live in households which have no bicycles at all but between 5 and driving license age (18 years in Victoria) and between 35 and 45 access to a bicycle is at its highest.

The influence of children on access to bicycles is highlighted in figure 2 where the proportion of adults living in childless households without access to bicycles is highest. This is also reinforced in figure 3.

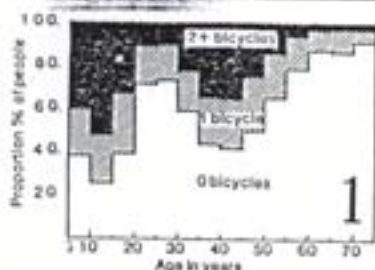
The level of use is shown in figure 4 and figures for Adelaide show a higher percentage of use in that city.

Wigan states the following in relation to figure 5: "The level of bicycle use in the two cities shows that cyclists make an average of 2.2 and 2.4 trips per day irrespective of age or city if they cycle at all. These results show that bicycle encouragement programmes are likely to be effective in increasing the fraction of the population using bicycles and unlikely to increase the use made of bicycles by existing cyclists." He also states that there is a great deal of room for increased bicycle use in Melbourne.

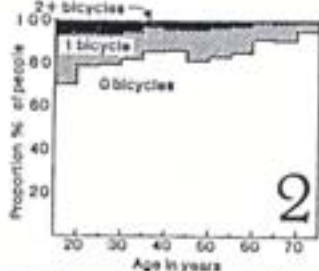
Where Mark Wigan's research should be most valuable to the industry is the area of bicycle ownership as related to income. Figure 6 shows that very few households with family income of more than \$12,000 per year are without a motor vehicle, but approximately half of these households are without bicycles.

One would expect low income earners to be greater users of bicycles but this is not the case. The chart clearly shows that apart from the higher percentage of households in low income brackets not owning a motor vehicle the pattern of bicycle ownership is parallel to that of car ownership regardless of income.

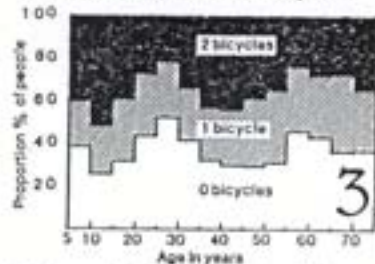
## Access to bicycles in households Melbourne 78



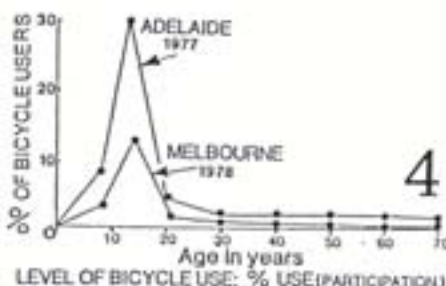
Proportion % of people of given ages with access to 0, 1, 2+ bicycles



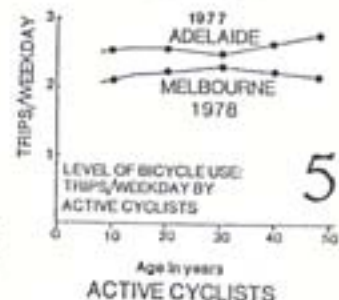
% of people in households with only adults with bicycles



% of people in households with at least one adult plus at least one child (5-17 yrs) with 0, 1, 2+ bicycles

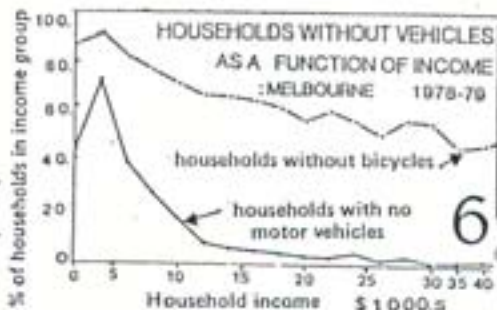


LEVEL OF BICYCLE USE: % USE (PARTICIPATION)

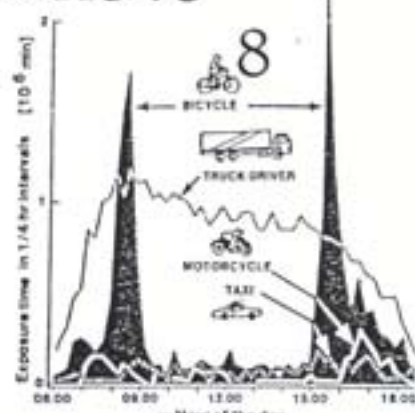
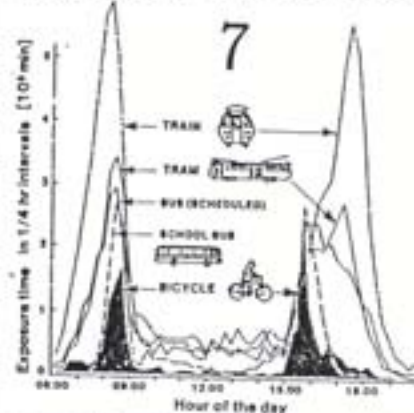


ACTIVE CYCLISTS

## Use and access to bicycles by age and income



## Total weekday exposure by mode Melbourne '78





The big news for the industry is that in this country (as with North America) bicycles are used more by middle class people than by others. A possible reason for this is that in an essentially upwardly mobile society with a heavy dependence on private motor vehicle transport the bicycle is seen by low income earners as proof of lower socio-economic status whereas with the middle classes and the very rich a bicycle is a sign of good health and an active sign of greater available leisure time.

Where Mark Wigan's report breaks sufficient new ground to establish itself as state of the art, is in the study of travel exposure (time spent) for cyclist and other modes of travel. The charts 7 and 8 show that bicycles rate along with other transport modes and are more significant than either motor bike or taxi travel.

The report recommends an extension of analyses to Sydney, Launceston, Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra and the Gold Coast. It also calls for the application of the techniques developed in the report to the areas of young driver safety analyses. This is clearly needed in view of the high accident rates in this age grouping.

The report poses a sufficient challenge to present-day transport economic thinking and provides the decision makers with the first hard evidence of the significance of the bicycle mode of transport.

What is clear is that the various transport lobby groups have been getting more than their share of the transportation funding cake. The Wigan report is a potent device for bicycle promoting interests to make a strong case for an equitable share of transportation expenditure.

Warren Salomon

### Why are bicycle projects so poorly funded?

There is no rational basis to transportation funding. This has been highlighted by a newly released research report by Dr Mark Wigan of the Australian Road Research Board.

This report (A.R.R.B.82) on bicycle ownership and use in Melbourne establishes beyond any shadow of doubt, that bicycles are a significant form of transport. In figures 7 & 8 the vertical scale is given in person, minutes of on-road travel in each quarter of an hour, for each form of transport. Bicycle travel has been shown in solid black to help show the importance of bicycles relative to public transport vehicles, taxis and motorcycles.

The most interesting thing about the figure 7 is that it shows how important bicycling is compared to say train travel. It is most important to realise that with the present growth of cycling the black area shown (1978 levels) will be twice as large in 1986. Cycling will become as important as train travel in Melbourne.

From the point of view of allocating funds this has some interesting implications. Consider the facts: on average, tram trips are about the same length as bicycle trips and the present Victorian Government will be spending \$200 million on tram transport if subsidized-fares for those in need are included. Why then is the BIV having difficulty in persuading the Victorian government to spend more than \$1 million a year on bicycles. For that matter why does the NSW government spend even less on its bicycle projects?

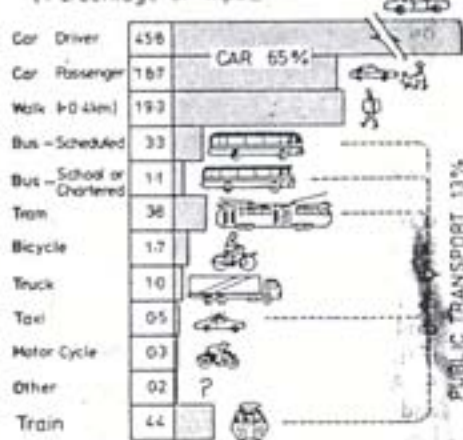
Bikeways are demonstrably more cost-effective and create more jobs per million dollars spent than roads, and two percent of all trips made by transport vehicles in Australia are made by bicycle. On the basis of trips made, about 2% of all the state transport budgets would be \$100 million per year, which gives an indication of the level of funding required if bicycles were to be taken seriously.

The point at issue is that if bicycle transport was taken seriously and a fair and rational means of funding developed it would be in the order of fifty million per year for bikeway construction alone and many more millions would be required for education and enforcement programs. The pittance of \$5 million being spent by local and state governments through Australia is proof that governments are still not prepared to take bicycle transport seriously.

Alan Parker.

## MELBOURNE

Mode of Travel (M.S.D. 1978)  
(Percentage of Trips)



(From Goughn, 1981, M.M.I.T.S.)

# One for the Road

## Federal Labor to Act on Bicycles

In a pre election statement the new Federal Minister for Transport Peter Morris said that Labor would seek to upgrade the status of bicycle transport as a mode of travel and recreation.

During 1981, as Labor's shadow Minister for Transport he called for submissions from bicycle groups across the country in order to formulate a new Labor Transport policy.

The pre-election statement conveyed by telegram to the major bicycle groups says that Labor will undertake to:

- Make grants to states for construction of bicycle paths.
- Establish road safety campaigns and research into safer operations of bicycles and other forms of transport.
- Invite participation of bicycle representatives in road safety matters.

Most importantly he says that Labor recognises that improved safety measures and training are crucial to protect cyclists on the open road and encourage more people to take up cycling.

This is obviously an indication that the lessons of the Geelong Bike Plan approach of Education Encouragement and Enforcement programmes as well as engineering has finally seeped through to the federal policy makers.

The statement concludes that the Labor policy recognises the growing importance of bicycles especially in the provision of low cost transport for unemployed, the young and other groups who can not afford an automobile or wish to minimise the use of private vehicles and public transport.

The policy also recognises the importance of Recreational use of bicycles in the area of improved public health, the role of the bicycle in energy conservation and environmental protection.

One of the first jobs of the new minister will be to convene a meeting of all the Labor state transport ministers to sort out the totally disorganised piecemeal approach currently being applied to the area of cycle planning.

## Newcastle Bikeplan

Newcastle NSW: A new 5.2km east-west arterial bike route has recently been completed in the city of Newcastle as a first stage towards the full implementation of the Newcastle Bikeplan.





An impressive dual carriageway section of the new East West route in Newcastle  
Photo: Stuart Thompson NCM.

The local user group the Newcastle Cycleways Movement (NCM) says that the path is one of the finest bicycle facilities constructed in this country.

The group in supporting the new route stated that it is fundamental to the success of the Newcastle Bikeplan. This once again shows their willingness to support government initiatives when they eventually become reality.

With over 5 years having elapsed since the establishment of the Newcastle Bikeplan Working Party the Government has still to appoint a Project Manager and get the scheme on the way.

A lack of co-ordination and direction from top level bureaucrats still hampers the implementation process.

### State Government Turns Blind Eye to Growing Cyclist Disquiet

Sydney NSW: The states two largest user groups the Bicycle Institute and the Newcastle Cycleways Movement are reporting a growing frustration on their part with the increasingly directionless approach being taken by the State Government.

Both groups represent the state's bicycle riders on the State Bicycle Advisory Committee which is made up of representatives of government departments with sometimes only a vague of interest in bicycle planning projects.

After allocating most of its budget for 1982-83 the committee has settled into a pattern of waffly discussion rather than being involved with actual decision making. Some members are becoming frustrated with what they felt is the government's lack of interest and justice.

In view of the fact that something like 2% of all the transportation trips in NSW are made by bicycle the NSW cyclist is being treated in a very mean way by the Labor Government.

The recent call by Victorian bicycle advocate Alan Parker to NSW cyclists to ride on the Harbour Bridge as a means of making their displeasure felt has apparently fallen on deaf government ears but not those of the bicycle users.

The BINSW is now prepared to provide the necessary leadership to ensure the bicycle movement's case is adequately presented and acted upon by the government.

To ensure that this is carried through to a satisfactory (for cyclists) conclusion, sections of the BINSW (which itself has a large and diverse membership) have begun organizing for the possibility raised by Alan Parker. This is a large non-violent street ride on the Harbour Bridge.

A contact for this group within BINSW says that a proper training campaign similar to the successful 'No Dams' campaign would be commenced. This would ensure an educated and informed community and an effective pressing home to government of the cycling movement's case.

The most interesting thing about the present problems with the Wran NSW Labor Government is that its attitude to cyclists has succeeded in uniting diverse interests within the cycling movement. It has unwittingly achieved what many cyclists themselves have failed to do.