



Eastern states miss out on bikepath funding

Bicycle facilities

Now that the Federal Government Community Employment Program is being wound up bicycle advocate groups in three States are beginning to realise that they have missed out badly on what was possibly Australia's largest ever source of funds for bicycle pathways. What worked well for cyclists in the West and the North did not have a significant impact in the more populous States as ALAN PARKER reports.

The Community Employment Program (CEP) was launched by the Federal Department of Employment and Industrial Relations on August 1st, 1983, and provided for the first time in Australia the opportunity to spend up to \$20 million each year on bicycle facilities.

To assist this Federal Transport Minister Peter Morris, redefined bikepaths and shared footways (Bikepaths) as local roads so they could be built with CEP funds under the Jobs and Local Roads Program (JOLORS).

Local government also had to provide matching funds to qualify for these projects and the total value of shared footways and bicycle paths was \$52 million to August 1986. Note the funds referred to in the following article are the CEP funds only.

Three hundred and eighty four bikeway projects worth more than \$38 million have been completed using CEP funds of which \$25 million (65%) went to NT, Queensland and WA which have only 26% of Australia's population. In those Australian States with large bicycle groups and the oldest State Bicycle Committees, Victoria, NSW and South Australia only \$13 million (34%) of CEP funds were used for the benefit of 70% of Australia's population. The distribution and per capital allocation of CEP funds have provided more than 3,500 jobs throughout Australia which is just less than 2% of the 106,700 people who have been employed on the 19,500 worthwhile community projects funded by the CEP.

There is no reason why there would not have been another 3,000 jobs on CEP bicycle projects in SA, Victoria and NSW, what was lacking was a lack of political competence by the State Bicycle Committees and the cycling groups involved to get a commitment from the State Government. Such a golden opportunity has been passed up and it's impor-

The end result of Melbourne's share of the CEP bikeway funding is this wonderful shared footway along the Maribyrnong River in the city's western suburbs.

tant that this does just not happen again. The CEP saga needs to be discussed and not just ignored like a ship passing in the night.

As we now know, only the City of Perth and Darwin really benefited by the use of CEP funds and most of the \$10 million CEP funding spent in WA was for building shared footways in the Metropolitan area. In Victoria the Ministry for Planning and Environment partly stimulated by this writer's lead letter in *The Age* set up a \$2 million CEP bikeway construction project on which this writer was employed for one year as a bicycle planner. The main problem in Victoria was the impractical attitude of the State Bicycle Committee, which could

BIKEWAYS FUNDED BY CEP
COMMONWEALTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM JOBS
CREATED AND BIKEWAYS FUNDED AS OF AUG
1986 TOTAL FUNDS OVER 3.5 YEARS

STATE	TOTAL JOBS	NO. OF PROJECTS	\$ MILLIONS	\$ PER CAPITA
QLD	1068	74	12.4	5.0
WA	909	113	10.2	7.5
NSW	576	76	7.8	1.2
VIC	574	88	8.0	1.5
N.T.	273	10	2.8	16.3
S.A.	88	11	0.7	0.5
TAS	82	12	1.1	1.5
	3579	384	38.4	

not latch on to the idea of concentrating on bikeway construction while the funding source lasted and then going back to a more balanced program when the funds dried up.

The Ministry of Planning and Environment took the initiative in Victoria and the photographs show some of the most innovative schemes by some of Victoria's most go-ahead councils. Essendon and Knox City Councils have done a great job in using both their own and CEP funds to build shared footpaths.

CEP was launched with the aim of creating job opportunities for the long-term unemployed and others disadvan-

taged in the Labour market such as the disabled aborigines, migrants with English language difficulties, older job seekers and women. Bikeway projects are shown in the table. These figures speak for themselves, and bicycle groups concerned should investigate their own inaction and inquire why more of these funds were not used and in particular why the Adelaide, Melbourne and several minor Bikeplans in Sydney were not implemented more fully with these funds. The use of \$10 million of CEP funds as the result of the actions of one man in WA Michael Harding, the Deputy Secretary of Local Government shows quite clearly what could have been done in Victoria, NSW and South Australia.

Cyclists' Views Ignored

This writer in *Freewheeling 19* in an article entitled *Bicycle Planning Projects Bridge the Employment Gap* outlined the opportunity to use CEP funds to implement Bikeplan but these proposals were opposed by small bureaucratic cliques that control the State Bicycle Committees of Victoria, NSW and South Australia. In Victoria this writer tabled these documents for discussion, but they were put in the too hard basket, because the Minister for Transport disapproved of CEP projects. What the Bicycle Institute of Victoria (BIV) proposed was practical and realistic, but was never acted upon but is set out in the box, so that readers can judge for themselves.

Bicycle Institute Proposal for Melbourne — May 1983

That the \$20 million bikeway network, proposed in the nearly complete Melbourne Bikeplan be designated as an employment creation scheme, and that Federal employment creation funds could be used to supplement Victorian Ministry of Transport Funding.

This proposal would enable the Bikeway network to be completed in five or six years instead of 12 to 20 years, which is how long it would take given the level of funding established by the previous state Liberal Government and being adhered to by the new Labor Government. (Until 1986).

The proposal is based on detailed knowledge of the type of construction needed and the direct labour content. The Institute claims its proposal would create more jobs per million dollars spent than roads or railways because building bikeways is much more labour intensive. Building and repairing bicycle paths, painting bicycle lanes and repairing the edges of roads where cyclists ride have between 40% and 70% direct labour content. This work cannot be highly mechanised and requires some skill that can be got through experience on the job.

If a decision was made now it would be possible to start construction very quickly because a bikeway plan is nearly complete in Melbourne.

Most of the work would be done by local government. Additional employment creation funds would greatly encourage local councils to build bikeways. At present Melbourne councils are funded on a \$1 per \$1 basis. The Institute proposes that this allocation be increased to approximately \$3 for every dollar.

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