

# An integrated Transport, Health and Environmental Policy

## *will make everyday walking and cycling safer*



### An abstract from Alan A. Parker's paper at the Road Safety Conference.

Over the last five years, national road safety plans have been targeted at reducing the per capita death and serious injury rates of all road users.

However what little reliable data there is for pedestrian and cyclist exposure reveal a robust trend towards increased car driver and passenger safety and a relative decrease in pedestrian and cyclist safety. Since the 1950s there have been steadily increasing levels of unsustainable motorisation and a decline of the only completely sustainable and healthy forms of transport: walking and cycling, the benefits of which are quantified herein. This trend is enhanced by the fact that the majority of transport infrastructure investment is allocated to road infrastructure and motor vehicle safety measures.

Over-reliance on motorised transport is resulting in adverse environmental and health effects. These effects may increase in the future if no effective preventive and structural actions are taken that reflect best European road safety practice. There is a need for policies on transport, road safety, environment and health to be better coordinated, with a view to integrating them, as envisaged in the new "Charter on Transport, Environment and Health" adopted by the Ministers and representatives

of the European Member States of WHO and Members of the European Commission (EC) responsible for transport, environment and health. (WHO 1999)

The Pedestrian Council of Australia (PCA) and the Bicycle Federation of Australia (BFA) have concluded that unless State and Commonwealth road safety policy is changed to strongly comply with this new "Charter" the health and environmental benefits of walking and cycling will not be realised nor will the death and injury rates of these modes ever be reduced to the level of best practice in Europe.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The BFA and PCA conclude that in the greenhouse world of the new millennium walking and cycling are the only transport modes which both healthy and sustainable which is why they must be given priority (WHO 1999). The health benefits of non-motorised travel need to be recognised and targets set for reducing the non-motorised user death rates per 100,000 population. Australian governments should accept the new European Charter as model to follow. The EU/WHO Charter recommendations set out below are what both the BFA and PCA would consider appropriate for Australian to act upon.

*We will:*

*1. Develop and implement policies to promote modes of transport which lead to health and environment benefits, aiming at a shift to modes of transport with lower specific emissions and accident risks. In particular, we will promote safe and environmentally friendly cycling and walking by providing safe infrastructure and*

*networks, implementing measures for traffic management, enforcing speed controls and speed limits that are appropriate to local circumstances, and designing roads and settlements taking into account the needs of pedestrians and cyclists.*

*2. Reduce the need for motorised transport by adapting land use policies and urban and regional development plans to enable people to have easy access to settlements, housing and working areas, and shopping and leisure facilities by cycling, walking and public transport.*

*3. Raise the attractiveness of public transport, walking and cycling, and promote inter modality between them, not least by prioritising public transport, walking and cycling in connection with the extension of infrastructure.*

*4. Provide incentives to use the best available technologies and encourage ambitious vehicle emission standards and fuel quality requirements, in order to improve safety and reduce air pollutants, noise and fuel consumption.*

What this means in Australian cities is the creation of a non-violent and sustainable transport system by constraining the increase in motorisation with traffic demand management measures and the creation of a low speed culture with 30/40 km/h in residential precincts with a 50 km/h default limit on undivided main roads and strip shopping streets. Car free city centres and district centres that give priority to walking, cycling and public transport is the way the great tourist cities of Europe have gone and so should we.

A complete version of this paper is available on the BFA website or from Alan Parker. Email: alanpar@ozemail.com.au

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