ELIAS DUEK-COHEN 10/26 Simpson Street BONDI NSW 2026 tel: 9300.0092

Submission No 94

Mr Kevin Greene MP
Chairman, Standing Committee on Public Works
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Tuesday 31st May 2005

INQUIRY INTO INFRASTRUCTUE PROVISION IN COASTAL GROWTH AREAS

Dear Mr Greene

re (a) NSW Coastline Cycleway : suggested accelerated progress
(b) bicycle transport in general

I am writing this as a personal supplement to the recent submission made to you by Bicycle New South Wales regarding the NSW Coastline Cycleway project.

I believe that this project has the potential to become an increasingly significant item in the infrastructure of the coastal areas (a) because of its international tourist attractiveness and the resultant boost to the local economy (enough, I believe, in the long run to more than pay for itself); and (b) because of its value to the quality of life for residents and holiday makers in terms not just of health and recreation, but also as a form of personal transport.

It is for these reasons that I wish to go beyond BNSW's recommendation that DIPNR's current funding be continued and to suggest that, if anything, it be increased. I would like, as well, to fervently support BNSW's next recommendation that the RTA's funding for the project also be increased - but substantially.

Under current funding arrangements (DIPNR + RTA + local councils), only about 60km of the Cycleway is being completed each year. I believe this rate of progress needs to be accelerated, and I would like sometime to suggest other measures besides increased State government funding that might help in this regard.

Meanwhile, I attach for your Committee's consideration, the following items:

(A) extract from a 9th January 2004 letter from me to the Minister for Roads;

(B) copy of a Sept 1st 1998 Sydney Morning Herald article on the Cycleway;

(C) sketch showing NSW population distribution (the logic behind the Cycleway idea);

(Di & ii) two letters from the Premier to me (May 03 and July 04); and,

in broader terms, relevant to other places as well as to the coastal regions:

(Ei & ii) a two page extract from a recent paper of mine, *Slow Ways and the City Forest.*

Thank you for your attention.

Yours sincerely,

Elias Duek-Cohen

Elias Duek-Cohen

former Associate Professor, School of Town Planning, University of NSW
Life Fellow Planning Institute of Australia

ELIAS DUEK-COHEN **10/26 Simpson Street BONDI NSW 2026** tel: 9300.0092

extract from 9th January 2004 letter to
The Hon.Carl Scully, MP, Minister for Roads

".... in Nov.1993, after some 20 fruitless years badgering Planning and the DMR/ RTA, the RTA, Southern Region, commissioned a pilot Study relating to four coastline local councils south of Sydney; followed over the next few years by a number of other Studies covering all of the non-metropolitan coastline.

The Studies helped convince me that, among several possible strategies to encourage greater bicycle transport usage, the Coastline Cycleway is the most important. I believe that the development of its ***non-metropolitan length*** *(over 90% of the total)* ***deserves to be given top priority****, even over the Sydney Region, and I now suggest this be done for the following reasons:*

1. ***the transport need is greater here:*** *although the Sydney Region contains by far the bigger population, the non-metropolitan areas are largely devoid of public transport and contain a larger proportion of unemployed, elderly and other transport-disadvantaged people;*

2. *it is* ***easier and less costly*** *in most cases to build a cycleway network in country areas than in the more traffic-congested metropolitan areas;*

3. *the* ***tourism potential*** *is huge. A 1500km cycleway, much of it alongside an attractive coastline with closely-spaced communities, can be of international tourist significance. Overseas examples suggest that something such as this can be worth tens of millions of dollars a year in tourist income, a boost to the economy of local communities (cf. the comparatively short 40 km existing stretch in Wollongong);*

4. *it can* ***attract funding from other sources****, including the Federal Government (no other cycle project in Australia can compare with it), and, because of its high-profile, from private corporations, etc.;*

5. *a* ***strong bicycle culture*** *is more likely to develop in some of the small communities along the route than anywhere in metropolitan Sydney; and this, in turn, being experienced by big holiday crowds, could act as*

6. *a* ***catalyst*** *for more action and funding in general for* ***bicycles for transport*** *in Sydney itself and elsewhere. "*

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1998 www.smh.com.au The Sydney Morning Herald

ELIAS DUEK-COHEN

Keen cyclists to face wheels within wheels

A PROPOSAL for a cycleway running about 1,500 kilometres along the entire NSW coastline has recently been put to the Government by Bicycle NSW – the State's peak cycling body with more than 10,000 members – with a request for special funding for the project.

The idea was first put forward well over 20 years ago, receiving a sympathetic hearing from Tom Uren, the then Federal Minister for Urban and Regional Development, and a first small stretch was actually built in 1976 in Nowra, with Federal funds. But little happened after that.

Although a 1983 survey of the 25 non-metropolitan coastline local councils showed that most of them favoured the idea in principle, few undertook to do anything about it without special outside funding, and this was not forthcoming.

Among criticisms made was that the idea was absurdly unrealistic, likely to cost hundreds of millions of dollars, and that any money allocated to cycle facilities would in any case be much better spent in urban areas – and especially in the Sydney region (an attitude at the time shared by Bicycle NSW itself).

At the same time, the nearest route to the coast for any continuous cycleway, it was claimed, would have to follow the existing Pacific and Princes highways, including long, boring, unpopulated stretches where cycleways would get little or no use.

However, recent studies, undertaken with the backing of the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) and other government bodies and with the co-operation of coastline councils, have revealed that, by using existing ferry crossings and building small cycle bridges, a continuous route could indeed be created close to the coastline, where most of the regional population resides and where visitors throng in holiday periods.

NSW has a unique settlement pattern, with a string of communities lining the coastline, nearly all within 20 kilometres or less of one another. The cycleway, by creating linkages between these communities as well as safe cycleways within them, would perform an important transport function – besides being of great recreational value for residents and holidaymakers alike.

A plan for a cycleway along the NSW coast will need some new funding options to get up.

The cost of developing the whole non-metropolitan route (which comprises more than 90 per cent of the total cycleway length) is estimated at $140 million. Of this, only about $40 million would be sufficient to complete the parts serving local transport needs (not a vast amount when compared with an average cost of more than $50 million for just one kilometre of some recent motorways).

The suggestion is that these transport-related parts be developed first, both because the need is greater in non-metropolitan areas where public transport is non-existent or scarce, and also because development here is easier and less costly than in the Sydney region. Work on long, sparsely populated stretches and the Sydney region could follow later.

To complete the cycleway under existing funding structures – principally involving the RTA's present 1:1 bicycle program subsidy to local councils – might take 15 to 20 years.

The setting up of a separate "Coastline Cycleway Fund" is therefore suggested, offering local councils a subsidy of 2:1, or more, as an incentive to accelerate progress. This additional funding, it is argued, could be justified by the project's tourist potential.

Overseas, long-distance tourist cycleways are proving to be great income earners. For example, Austria's 350-kilometre share of the popular Danube cycle route was calculated to have earned the equivalent of about $50 million in 1991 alone; while in the Netherlands, cycle tourism was estimated to have earned the equivalent of about $170 million in 1986 alone.

While NSW does not have the big, concentrated populations of Europe that make such large earnings possible, the great scale of the proposed Coastline Cycleway makes it of international significance. Once completed, it would allow travel agents to promote successfully special cycle packages attracting overseas visitors that would benefit the economies of many coastline communities.

Already, even without a proper cycleway, overseas backpacker cyclists are to be seen braving the dangerous Pacific Highway. The demand is clearly there, and Wollongong provides some evidence of how even a 30-kilometre stretch of cycleway can increase local tourism and stimulate cycle-related businesses.

A project of this sort could conceivably be expected to attract contributions from the Federal Government, and, once under way, from corporate and other sources as well. (For example, a trans-Canada cycleway project – much longer than the NSW proposal – even has individuals buying a metre or more of the route.)

In the event, by attracting more funds for cycle facilities generally and by the examples it sets, the Coastline Cycleway could act as a catalyst to encourage greater transport usage of cycles (including models with auxiliary motor power) throughout the State.

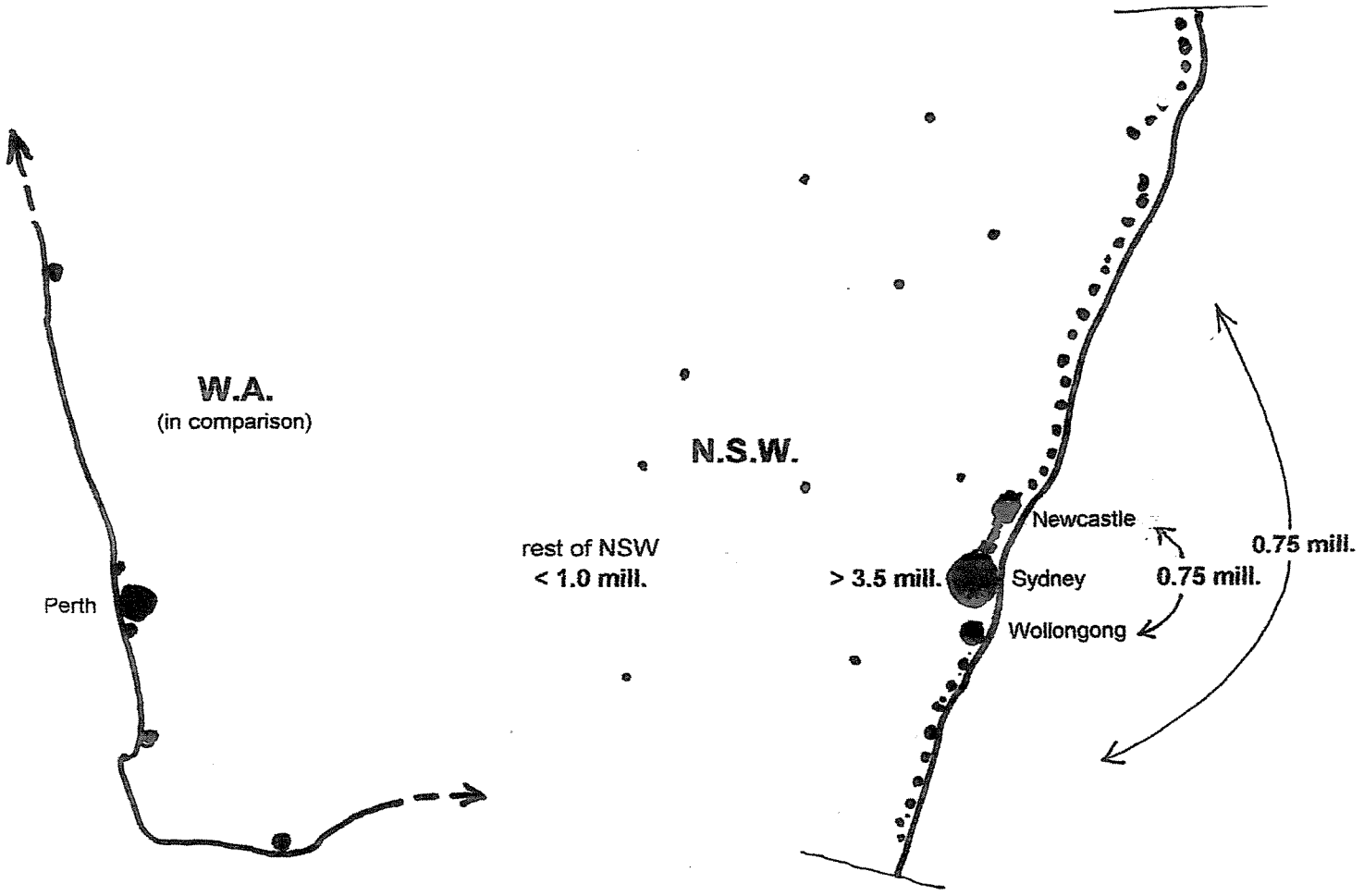
We might then, in years to come, have better health and cleaner air, and people who do not have cars would be able to get around as never before.

In short, the combined recreational, transport and tourist value of the cycleway would appear to make it well worth developing right now. The project is particularly applicable to NSW and much of the groundwork has already been prepared.

Elias Duek-Cohen, formerly Associate Professor, School of Town Planning, University of NSW, is Bicycle NSW Coastline Cycleway Project co-ordinator.

NSW population distribution

(diagram only)



NOTE:
population figures in this Diagram are based on 1995 population estimates but are still indicative of the current relative population distribution pattern

A unique settlement pattern:

coastline settlements closely spaced - mostly 20km or less, of one another

1.5 million aggregate residential population in 25 non-metropolitan coastline councils - big additional holiday population

(proposed cycleway route is within 5km of over two-thirds of this population)

Premier of New South Wales
Australia

Mr Elias Duek-Cohen
10/26 Simpson Street
BONDI NSW 2026

Thank you for your letter of 24 April and your congratulations on my election win. I value your support for the cycleway project and can assure you I will be taking a close interest in it, as will my department.

(irrelevant item)

With all good wishes

Yours sincerely

Bob Carr
Premier

recd. 15 MAY 03

LEVEL 39, GOVERNOR MACQUARIE TOWER, 1 FARRER PLACE, SYDNEY 2000, AUSTRALIA, TEL: 9228 5239 FAX: 9228 3935
G.P.O. BOX 5341, SYDNEY 2001 TTY: 9228 4869

Premier of New South Wales
Australia

20 JUL 2004

Mr Elias Duek-Cohen
10/26 Simpson Street
BONDI NSW 2026

Dear Elias

Thank you for your letter of 6 July.

It is good to know you are maintaining your interest in the coastal cycleway project. You raise some interesting points in your letter to the RTA. I have referred your correspondence to my department for further attention.

With all good wishes

Yours sincerely

Bob Carr
Premier

LEVEL 39, GOVERNOR MACQUARIE TOWER, 1 FARRER PLACE, SYDNEY 2000, AUSTRALIA, TEL: 9228 5239 FAX: 9228 3935
G.P.O. BOX 5341, SYDNEY 2001 TTY: 9228 4869

Slow Ways and the City Forest

two new concepts for urban settlements

Elias Duek-Cohen

(This is an abridged version of a text prepared following a PowerPoint presentation at a Planning Institute of Australia National Congress held in Melbourne in April 2005)

"Slow Ways" refers to a design concept that aims to create a safe traffic environment by giving preferential treatment to bicycle-type vehicles over cars everywhere so that children, the elderly and all non-car owners living in our car-dominated societies may once more have a means of independent personal transport – a new freedom of movement not just for them but also on occasion for car owners.

The "City Forest" is a concept of P.A.Yeomans, a farmer and environmentalist who claimed to be able to quickly create over 1200mm of deep fertile soil out of hard barren land. The aim was to provide a great biomass which, in combination with uptake by fast-growing trees, could absorb and purify urban wastewater. Rich soil, water recycling and forest plantations would be the outcome.

The two concepts were subsequently the subject of design exercises instigated by the author to see how they might work together when used in a real planning situation. Greenfield sites for this purpose were located, one in South Penrith in Sydney's outer west (1976), and another in the Jerrabomberra Valley in the A.C.T. (1994).

Meanwhile, unbeknown to the author, the Slow Ways concept was already being implemented for a new town in the Netherlands. He had first presented a paper on the subject at an Institution of Engineers, Australia, Conference in November 1975. A few months later, he gave a talk on Slow Ways at the Forum of the 1976 United Nations HABITAT Conference on Human Settlements, in Vancouver, Canada, after which a woman excitedly asked for more information on the matter. She said that she was a planner from Utrecht, and he gave her a copy of the paper.

It was the author's turn to be excited when, nearly thirty years afterwards, in 2004, he was given a brochure describing the new town of HOUTEN in the Netherlands, where the main principles of the 'Slow Ways" concept seem to have been applied. The brochure explained that planning for the town had started in the mid-1970's based around a small village just near Utrecht, expanding its population from about 3,000 to over 40,000. Described as a "Velo City", or Bicycle City, the design proved so successful that the town is now in process of being extended still further and is being used as an example for other new towns.

Either Houten's use of Slow Ways principles was a huge coincidence or it is something influenced by the paper given to the Utrecht planner at Vancouver. Either way, the important point is that Houten provides us today with a wonderful ready-made case study demonstrating the effectiveness of the Slow Ways concept. A chance offer to view the brochure was the spark that set off what was to become a presentation at a PIA Congress of the two concepts and of Houten and of the two design exercises, all of which are now discussed below.

(a note on the Houten brochure)

The brochure has two diagrams comparing Houten with the averages for Dutch cities of similar size, showing how the percentage of daily short trips (defined as under 7 ½ km) by bicycles in Houten is greater (44% compared with 36%), and the number of car trips proportionally less, and how the "accident risk per 100 million km" is down to 16 compared with 29 elsewhere.

It further states that what makes Houten unique is its emphasis on bicycles. *"The city is a model for safe cycling....It is not possible to drive between neighbourhoods without travelling via the Ring road. In contrast, the dense, star-shaped network of cycling lanes provides more direct access. The rail station is in the centre of the town....This integrated system of car, cycle and public transport has become recognized internationally as the 'Houten' system".*

Significantly, it adds, *"....the rise in house prices showed that residents appreciate the amenity that Houten provides, with more rapid rises than in towns built along more traditional urban planning principles."*

Altogether, this performance is a big vindication of slow-way type planning. Allowing for the fact that conditions, traditions and habits in Holland are different from Australia, the adoption here of a similar design approach in new developments could result, at least to some degree, in greater bicycle usage for transport and a corresponding lesser car usage.