

INQUIRY INTO STATE PLAN REPORTING

Organisation: Bicycle New South Wales

Name: Mr Alex Unwin

Position: Chief Executive Officer

Date Received: 18/12/2007

Mr Paul McLeay MP
Chair - Inquiry into State Plan Reporting
Parliament of NSW
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

14th December 2007

Re: Submission to the Public Accounts Committee Inquiry into State Plan Reporting

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to this Inquiry. I confirm that I will be very happy to attend any inquiry sessions and respond to questions from members of the committee.

In our submission responding to the draft NSW State Plan we made reference to the need for a high degree of government accountability and we are pleased to see the government attention to the creation of suitable accountability mechanisms and performance management budgeting systems to report on the performance of the NSW State Plan.

Bicycle riding delivers outcomes that make a significant contribution to a wide range of government portfolios and the priorities referred to in the NSW State Plan. Recent announcements by the NSW Government in relation to funding from the NSW Environmental Trust for the "On Your Bike" program and the continued creation of bicycle infrastructure in our major transport corridors indicates a growing awareness within the NSW government of the important societal level benefits flowing from increased bicycle riding.

Bicycle riding has a positive role to play in helping us all to meet the economic and social sustainability challenges presented by Climate Change, Community Health, Transport and Urban Liveability, all of which are high on the list of priorities for democratically elected governments around the world. It is pleasing to see these, along with Tourism and Recreation reflected in the NSW State Plan Priorities as follows:

Rights, Respect and Responsibility

- Building Harmonious Communities. R4 - Increased participation and integration in community activities

Delivering Better Services

- Healthier Communities. S3 - Obesity reduction
- High Quality Transport System - S6 Increased use of public transport

Growing Prosperity across NSW

- NSW: Open for business. P1 - Increased Business Investment and Tourism in NSW

Environment for Living

- Practical Environmental Solutions. E3 – Cleaner air and progress on greenhouse gas reductions
- Improved Urban Environments. E7 – Improve the efficiency of the road network

In the light of the fact that NSW is faced with some significant and pressing challenges, many of which it shares with other states of Australia and indeed communities globally, it is important that measurement and reporting does everything it can to support and encourage action towards the outcomes of the NSW State Plan. It is in this spirit of balancing action with accountability that we have used the terms of reference to guide our submission, which is focused on policy fine tuning and the key action initiatives we consider we are able to make most contribution to at this time.



In recent months Bicycle NSW has engaged with a number of NSW Government Ministers who have also demonstrated a balanced approach to action and accountability. These ministers have shown leadership in providing us with valuable guidance as we do all we can to support government and community initiatives as part of the NSW State Plan.

I look forward meeting with you in due course,



Alex S Unwin
Chief Executive Officer
Direct line 02 9218 5410

Copies to:

Barbara Perry MP
NSW Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister assisting the Premier on Citizenship
Level 37
Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
Sydney NSW 2000

Eric Roozendaal, MLC
NSW Minister for Roads
Level 30
Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
Sydney NSW 2000

Matt Brown MP
NSW Minister for Tourism, Minister for Housing
Level 34
Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
Sydney NSW 2000

Paul Lynch MP
NSW Minister for Local Government, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister assisting Minister for Health
Level 32 Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
Sydney NSW 2000

Verity Firth MP
NSW Minister for Women, Minister for Science and Medical Research, Minister assisting Minister for Health, Minister assisting Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water
Level 33
Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
Sydney NSW 2000

Russell Keith
Committee Manager
Inquiry into State Plan Reporting
Public Accounts Committee
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000



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Responding specifically to the Terms of Reference of the Inquiry

1. The adequacy and appropriateness of performance measures for progress in achieving the Plan Objectives

Delivering the transport, health and environmental objectives within the NSW State Plan requires close cooperation between government agencies, corporations, NGO's and communities. Bicycle NSW has actively engaged NSW Government Ministers and agencies that recognise the important role sustainable transport has to deliver the Plan. The NSW Government needs to demonstrate real leadership to deliver the plan's sustainable long-term health, transport and environmental benefits and resist the obvious temptation to focus too much on the delivery of simplistic quick-fixes which might divert resources from the longer term but higher payoff components of the plan.

Bicycle NSW considers the current performance measures outlined in the plan to be inadequate. The government needs to work with stakeholders to establish systems of accountability and performance measurement that demonstrates real on-the-ground progress. Measurements need to be in the form of tangible results such as:

- numbers of bike riders using main routes or for specific purposes (eg commuting or riding to school)
- total bicycle kilometres travelled (CKT)
- avoidance of carbon or other pollutants from vehicle use or
- motor vehicle trips substituted by bicycle journeys (delivering emissions reductions)

Performance measures must be quantifiable, robust, and cost effective if they are to show benefits accruing from the plan in the longer term. They must also support government and community initiatives to mainstream sustainable transport to demonstrate the tangible benefits of these programs. Performance measures must be robust enough to give long-term perspective to trends or change i.e. they must be able to 'compare apples with apples'.

2. The adequacy and appropriateness of audit requirements for performance measures

Bicycle NSW supports the need for transparent audit of all performance measures, as a reflection of our commitment to the responsible use of public resources.

However, a balance must be struck between the resources allocated to deliver the plan and the process of measuring/auditing performance. Experience shows that in large and complex organisational environments there can be a tendency for resources to be over allocated towards measurement and reporting, diminishing the resources available for delivery of the outcomes. This is often exacerbated in an environment where the challenges are many and the level of accountability high – which is fundamentally the case for the NSW State Plan.

3. Mechanisms for the review and updating of the Plan

The NSW State Plan exists in a complex and dynamic environment, subject to significant external factors such as the Global Economy and Climate. In the light of these factors it is clearly important that the plan is reviewed regularly and changes made to reflect the new external environment.

What is not clear from the terms of reference is the basis for future budget allocations, and it is our submission that these should be made on the basis of an estimate of the resources required to achieve the new or revised plan objectives.

More broadly the observation is made that bicycle riding is a key form of active sustainable transport that reaches across a range of portfolios and agencies (eg Ministry of Transport, Road and bicycle infrastructure development, Health, Environment, Police, Education, Tourism, Treasury, Sport and Recreation, and others). The NSW State Plan does not detail a portfolio, agency or formally identified grouping that is responsible for leadership and accountable for the delivery of these programs. Clear lines of accountability for the collection of performance data, results review, and plan updates are critical to allow effective management of resources towards chosen outcomes.

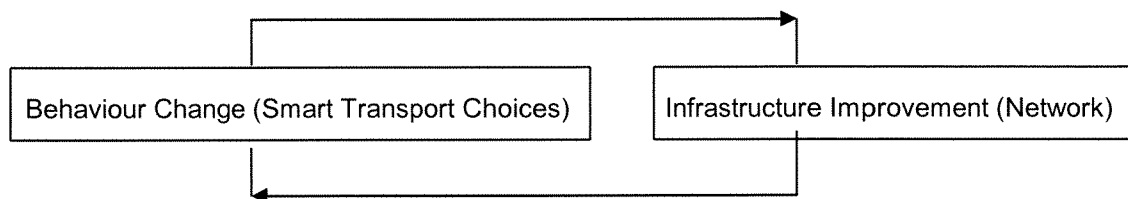
4. Experience in other jurisdictions, particularly Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia regarding effective reporting and review mechanisms

Bicycle NSW contacted other Bicycle Coalition members, Bicycle Victoria and Bicycle South Australia in this respect.

In the case of Victoria, the allocation of resources for the construction of bicycle infrastructure has been guided by Bicycle Count data collected about current bicycle use and subsequent analysis to identify funding priorities which will yield the most “return on investment” in terms of encouraging bicycle usage. In NSW Bicycle Count data is available from the RTA, however this is from a total of 12 loop counters for the entire state, and data is available annually with a delay of some 4 – 6 months. It is our submission that the bicycle count program be reviewed with the aim of providing a more comprehensive and timely picture of bicycle riding, particularly in the metropolitan area wide bicycle network on and off road. The intention here is to improve the quality of the resource allocation decisions with respect to bicycle infrastructure to improve the “return on investment” in terms of encouraging greater levels of bicycle riding.

5. Any other related matters

The purpose of Bicycle NSW is “more people cycling more often” and in pursuing this goal the organisation is guided by a model that links societal level behaviour change programs and the improvement of infrastructure in a symbiotic relationship that ultimately leads to a greater number of people riding bikes thereby growing the benefits that flow to the whole of the community, whether they ride bikes or not. Represented diagrammatically:



There are a number of initiatives fitting within this framework that would benefit from the specific inclusion of progress measures in the NSW State Plan. Some examples are detailed in the following pages.

Rail Trail development

Throughout NSW there are many disused rail corridors which, through the presence of existing bridges and tunnels and a grade separated transport corridor present ideal opportunities for the creation of off road bicycle paths and relatively low conversion costs. Such facilities can offer ideal transport solutions in areas of growing demand (such as the inner west rail corridor from White Bay to Canterbury – where a bicycle path could be co located with a light rail corridor) and in Regional NSW there are significant opportunities for bicycle related tourism growth (the revenue per rider on the Murray to Mountains trail in north east Victoria has been estimated by LaTrobe University to be \$258 per person per day).

It is our submission that a monitoring and reporting framework should be developed to measure progress with any legislative changes and funding commitments necessary to deliver the outcomes sought.

Ride to Work and Ride to School Programs

Bicycle NSW and the Department of Environment and Climate Change are working together on NSW Environmental Trust funded “event based behaviour change” programs designed to encourage riding to work and riding to school. These programs are aligned and integrated with national and international initiatives in these areas.

Bicycle NSW will undertake 6 monthly reporting of progress on these programs and it is our submission that similar reporting be included in the NSW State Plan reporting where appropriate.

An additional useful measure and accountability to include in this respect here would be the level of participation and support for these programs from relevant NSW Government Agencies.

City of Sydney Spring Cycle Series (19th October 2008)

Bicycle NSW is working in partnership with a range of local Councils and a number of NSW Government Agencies, including the NSW Police, the RTA and the Ministry of Transport on a 5 year development plan for the City of Sydney Spring Cycle event. The plan is summarised in the attached schematic, and a key rationale for the development is to encourage community use of the significant bicycle infrastructure existing throughout greater metropolitan Sydney. The plan also involves the development and delivery of smaller specialist activities through the year to guide and support learning for the major event. One such specialist event is the Gear up Girl franchise that in February/March 2008 will include a workshop and ride based on Sydney Olympic Park.

It is our submission that regular reporting on the development plan and participant numbers this and related events should be included in the NSW State Plan reporting where appropriate.

Building Harmonious Communities

Moving through and within a community on a bike provides for communications and the development of relationships that enhance liveability, particularly of our urban environments. The creation of accessible public space, engagement through volunteering, the celebration of diversity and community policing to grow public trust and confidence are important building blocks for the creation of harmonious communities. There are a number of initiatives in which Bicycle NSW has an interest that support these building blocks, and it is our submission that the introduction of suitable systems of accountability and performance measurement would be helpful in delivering the outcomes sought.

- Sustainable Sydney 2030 sets out to provide the framework for the City to deliver a sustainable future. It is a plan for great parks in urban settings, a vibrant arts and cultural sector, lively villages for families and businesses, a dynamic economy with interesting and safe streets; all serviced by a clean and integrated transport system improving pedestrian and cycle access.
- The NSW Police Bicycle Patrol has proven to be effective in delivering results in the context of law enforcement as well as community policing, where the provision of a "human face" is so important. Bicycle Patrol officers have added significant value to Bicycle NSW events, and are involved in the delivery of skills and training as part of the "Gear up Girl" initiatives in 2008.
- Bicycle NSW offers opportunities for volunteers to engage and learn through involvement in a wide range of activities associated with our events and programs – including team leading, traffic marshalling, customer service and hospitality.
- Bicycle NSW is developing programs to link Corporate and Education partners with indigenous communities in NSW around bike related projects.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alex S Unwin".

Alex S Unwin
Chief Executive Officer
Bicycle NSW
Direct line 02 9218 5410

City of Sydney Spring Cycle 5 Year development consistent with NSW State Plan

Strategic Rationale

- Promote bike riding throughout existing and emerging bike path network
- Showcase Olympic Park as major destination
- Engage Communities throughout Greater Sydney

