

**Submission
No 70**

COMMUTER CAR PARKING IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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Parliament of NSW
Legislative Assembly
Committee on Transport & Infrastructure

RE: Inquiry into Commuter Car Parking in NSW

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the inquiry into commuter car parking in NSW. Central Coast Local Health District (The District) makes this submission in the interests of the health and wellbeing of the people of the Central Coast and NSW.

Introduction

Transport can be an enabler or a barrier to public health. Physical and economic access to transport impacts living and working conditions and so too, impacts health. It is important to integrate active transport and health into transport and car parking planning. As the population of NSW grows and cities and towns develop, reducing commuter dependence on private vehicles coupled with increasing the use of sustainable transport modes will become increasingly important.

Reducing the number of private vehicles travelling to and from urban centres offers many direct and indirect economic, environmental and social benefits to society, such as reducing traffic congestion, reducing demand on a finite supply of car parking, improving safety, reducing hospital presentations, morbidity and mortality associated with motor vehicle accidents; improving air quality, reducing greenhouse gas emissions; and improving public amenity / liveability.

Active travel can include any type of travel that involves physical activity such as walking, cycling, and incidental activity associated with the use of public transport. Walking, cycling and public transport are healthy and sustainable modes of transport. Active travel is a convenient, accessible and highly effective way to integrate incidental exercise into the work day, particularly for short trips (0-5km).

By using active transport, workers can achieve their recommended levels of weekly physical activity without committing to additional activities outside of their normal routine. Regular physical activity has important health benefits such as reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and preventing unhealthy weight gain¹.

General Recommendations

- The fundamental aim of the inquiry into commuter car parking in NSW should be to reduce demand for car parking and in turn, reduce the need to supply car parking. Building more car park will potentially induce demand. Both incentives and disincentives will be needed to achieve this aim.

¹ Australia Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for adults (18-64 years): Commonwealth Department of Health, 2013
health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/health-pubhlth-strateg-phys-act-guidelines#apaadult

- The inquiry must recognise and prioritise solutions, and allocate resources for local government areas or regions with high commuter populations, such as the Central Coast where over 40,000 residents travel outside the region (mainly to Sydney and Newcastle) for work each day.
- Utilisation of existing plans is recommended. State and local government must work together at a regional level on transport plans and parking strategies to develop a comprehensive solution to transport and commuter car parking issues. The Central Coast Regional Plan and Central Coast Regional Transport Plan detail transport and parking priorities and some proposed solutions. The Transport for NSW Future Transport Strategy (currently in development) should be taken into consideration as part of the Inquiry.
- Consider equity, accessibility and the social determinants of health. Any increased cost to consumers to access programs, infrastructure or services stands to disproportionately impact people of a low socioeconomic status.
- When considering the opportunity costs of improving the commuter car parking experience, balance the cost of improving public health against any cost of improving programs, infrastructure or services. An increase in direct costs may be balanced or negated by indirect or external cost savings by NSW Government e.g. the costs to society of overweight and obesity.
- Ensure that any cost-benefit ratio metrics used for assessing transport infrastructure proposals appropriately consider (do not disadvantage) active modes of transport such as walking and cycling. Current understanding is that traditional economic appraisal tools for transport infrastructure projects may not consider the significant public health benefits walking and cycling offer, yet these tools consider increased risk exposure and increased travel time associated with active transport modes as costs. We recommend consideration be given to employing the use of the World Health Organisation's Health and Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT) for cycling and walking² when assessing transport interventions or infrastructure projects in NSW.

Specific recommendations related to Terms of Reference for Inquiry

a) The effectiveness of current state government policies and programs covering commuter car parking

- Continue the NSW Government Walking and Cycling Program, which commits to working with councils and other agencies to make walking and cycling, more convenient, safer and enjoyable transport options. By targeting investment to improve walking and cycling in the areas where most short trips occur, the NSW Government supports more accessible, liveable and productive towns, cities and centres, by:
 - Encouraging walking and cycling to be the mode of choice for short local trips
 - Reducing congestion on our roads
 - Freeing up capacity on the public transport system for those customers that need to travel further.

² <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/environment-and-health/Transport-and-health/activities/guidance-and-tools/health-economic-assessment-tool-heat-for-cycling-and-walking>

- Environmental planning and development – Use Environmental Planning and Assessment Act and Regulations to:
 - Legislate and regulate the provision of infrastructure to reduce private vehicle trips and support sustainable transport modes. Implement a State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) for Sustainable Transport.
 - Encourage compact settlement patterns, co-locating appropriate land uses (e.g. commercial and residential), which puts workplaces closer to homes, reduces trip distances (and the need to commute to work by car) and enables active modes of transport.
 - Target appropriate land uses via Local Environment Plans (LEPs) e.g. commercial. For all significant commercial (workplace) and public buildings (major trip generators) i.e. those buildings owned and managed or leased by all tiers of government, use the Development Application (DA) process to require as a condition of development consent prior to occupation, the proponent/applicant: provide a supply of car parking to meet the needs of the development/building and achieve a minimum level of self-sufficiency whilst also promoting and supporting sustainable transport modes; produce an operational plan outlining the cost of parking and other measures to manage demand; produce a travel plan for the development/building, detailing mode share targets and proposed strategies that target a reduction in private vehicle trips; and provide bicycle parking and end-of-trip facilities in a quantity and quality commensurate with best practice guidelines and Australian Standards.

b) Processes for selecting the location of commuter car parks

- Selection should be based on State and Regional plans, with provision of transport infrastructure (including commuter car parks) pegged to population forecasts, housing and employment targets.
- The inquiry must recognise and prioritise solutions, and allocate resources for local government areas or regions with high commuter populations, such as the Central Coast where over 40,000 residents travel outside the region (mainly to Sydney and Newcastle) for work each day.

c) The potential for restricted access or user pays commuter car parks

- Consider equity, accessibility and the social determinants of health. Any increased cost to consumers to access programs, infrastructure or services stands to disproportionately impact people of a low socioeconomic status. This may restrict or reduce access to work for these people.

d) Consideration of alternative modes of first mile/last mile travel, including point to point transport, active transport and on demand buses

- Encourage collaborative consumption e.g. carpooling/rideshare, car sharing etc. Incentivise carpooling/rideshare and car share use by providing priority car parking spaces in commuter

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car parks. Mandate local government provision of priority car parking spaces for carpooling/rideshare and car share users in employment zones, urban centres and near major trip generators e.g. hospitals.

- Encourage/stimulate provision of transport by community and private sector e.g. frequent, smaller shuttle buses servicing residential areas, linking with public buses on arterial routes.
- Public transport must be available to people within a maximum distance of 400 metres of home, transport interchanges and work. Four hundred metres equates to a walk of approximately five minutes, which is considered a comfortable distance for most people. Further to this, public transport must be available to people when they need it.
- Park and walk (0-2km) – provide car parks within a 2km catchment of public transport interchanges and urban centres. Develop programs to encourage and support uptake of parking and walking.
- Park and cycle (0-5km) – provide car parks within a 5km catchment of public transport interchanges and urban centres. Develop programs to encourage and support uptake of parking and cycling. Consider encouraging use of folding bikes, which offer users the benefit of not needing a bike rack on their car.
- Encourage / incentivise use of electric bikes, which make cycling easier and quicker and reduce or eliminate the need for users to shower. Provide electric charge points as part of bicycle parking and end-of-trip facilities.
- Provide end-of-trip facilities (namely shower, change and locker facilities) to complement bicycle parking (bike lockers, bike sheds and bike racks) currently provided at many public transport interchanges (train stations). One of the biggest barriers to people cycling to work, town etc. (apart from a lack of off-road bike/shared paths or on-road bike lanes) is a lack of secure bike parking and end of trip facilities. Consider partnering with local government, public-private partnership or tendering for private providers / stimulating private investment.
- Allow folding bicycles to travel on public buses (without any additional fare cost and without the need to be stored in a bag).
- Provide bike racks on appropriate public bus routes to enable more people to access this active mode of transport. Appropriate bus routes include but are not limited to those where 'black spots' exist, off or on-road cycling infrastructure does not exist (the environment is perceived to be or is actually unsafe), topography (steep hills) discourage cycling etc.
- Incentivise cycling for transport via economic levers such as tax concessions e.g. reduced import tax and GST on commuter, folding and electric bike sales. Further, commuter, folding and electric bikes and helmet to be deductible for workers etc.
- Provide public bike share programs in urban centres as done in Sydney and other cities around Australia and the world.


e) Any other related matters

- Reduce public transport costs. Allow salary packaging of public transport by employees of not-for-profit / public benevolent institutions, as afforded to cars.
- Improve public transport by reducing wait times and reducing the need for people to change modes.

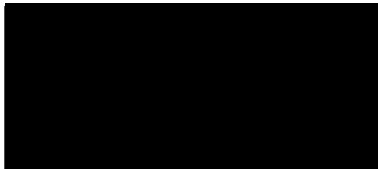
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- Support the use of small cars (which require less car parking space and have less impact on the road and natural environment). Incentivise use via economic levers such as tax concessions, registration concessions, parking concessions etc.
- Support the use of electric cars (which have less impact on the natural environment). Provide electric charge points as part of commuter car parking facilities.
- Investigate the feasibility and cost effectiveness of innovative, technology based solutions.

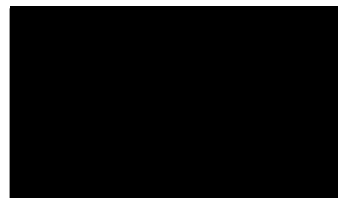
Thank you again for the opportunity to contribute to the inquiry into commuter car parking in NSW. The District appreciates and supports any initiatives the Committee on Transport and Infrastructure may come up with to improve the lives of commuters in NSW and so too, the health and wellbeing of the people of the Central Coast and NSW. For further information regarding this submission, please contact Ms Nicole Kajons, Director, Health Promotion on Tel: 

Yours sincerely



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Date: 4/8/17



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