



**Conservation Council
of South Australia Inc**

**Investment of Commonwealth and State
Funds in Public Passenger Transport
Infrastructure and Services Submission**

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Conservation Council of South Australia Inc (CCSA) is the peak conservation body for South Australia, representing over 55 of the State's environment and conservation organisations.

CCSA is an independent non-profit, non party-political, community based organisation which provides resources, advice and representation for the SA environment movement, and which leads many of the key conservation campaigns in SA.

CCSA is known for its success in developing long term community development, education, and on-ground environmental restoration programs.

CCSA regularly liaises with Local, State and Federal Governments, Government agencies, media, educational institutions, NGOs, unions, industry, business and other groups on matters relating to the environment and social justice.

As a community organisation, much of what CCSA achieves is through a large network of skilled volunteers from all walks of life – for its office, on-ground, governance and campaign activities.

CCSA is committed to a healthy environment for South Australia.

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Opening Comments

The **Conservation Council of South Australia (CCSA)** welcomes this opportunity to make a submission to the **Senate Inquiry on Investment of Commonwealth and State Funds in Public Passenger Transport Infrastructure and Services**.

CCSA believes Australia is at a crossroads. We face a 'perfect storm' as the impacts of climate change, the global financial crisis and a sustainability crisis all converge.

Transport is one area that makes a major contribution towards our greenhouse gas emissions and contributes so much towards our society's economic development. If we get transport right, we will have gone a substantial way towards an appropriate and effective response to climate change.

Our comments and recommendations below have emerged from a number of processes that CCSA has undertaken, including a series of policy reviews which included the topics of Planning & Urban Development, and Energy. These reviews started by analysing input from our member groups and combined that with feedback from stakeholders including Local & State Government, Business, Universities and other NGOs.

Introduction

CCSA strongly supports the development of an efficient, integrated public transport system utilising Federal & State funding to deliver multiple environmental, social and economic benefits.

As a low-density, car-dependent city spread out over 1800km², Adelaide in its current form is inherently unsustainable. It is particularly vulnerable in a future of the cumulative impacts of climate change and peak oil. Massive changes for South Australia's society, economy and environment lie ahead as a result.

Transport will be one of the sectors that will be heavily impacted. It has a significant impact in its own right - at present nearly 20% of South Australian GHG emissions are transport related with further increases projected under most scenarios.¹

Residents on the outer-metropolitan periphery are likely to be the hardest hit and face substantial increases in fuel and energy costs. Rural and regional dwellers will also face particular hardship in a carbon-constrained era and are currently poorly served by public transport options.

Transport Planning for Sustainability

CCSA believes Australia needs to develop a sustainable vision for its future in a climatically-changed and 'oil-poor' world.

The South Australian State Government's Tackling Climate Change strategy identified the overarching goal for the Transport & Planning sector to be: "*South Australia to substantially reduce transport-related greenhouse emissions while maintaining accessibility and economic development*".² Its foremost principle calls for **integrated land use and transport planning**.³ This is strongly supported by CCSA and should be adopted uniformly across Australia.

CCSA has previously called for the State Government (along with its federal and local counterparts) to incorporate planning for peak oil into its future planning strategies and projections across the board through an **Oil Vulnerability Assessment** and a **Peak Oil Action Plan**.⁴ This will have obvious implications for transport policies given our dependence on fossil fuels.

Recommendation 1.

A Transport Master Plan and an Oil Vulnerability Assessment & Peak Oil Action Plan should be developed and integrated with existing planning strategy and the Government's climate change response.

¹ Tackling Climate Change – SA Government (2007), p34,

Transport Sector Greenhouse Gas Emissions Projections 2007, Dept of Climate Change (2008), piii

² Tackling Climate Change – SA Government (2007), p34

³ *ibid*

⁴ CCSA Submission to the ERD Committee on Peak Oil 2008

Holistic Planning – Reducing Urban Sprawl

Climate change and peak oil are interlinked and can be effectively addressed simultaneously. CCSA believes it is essential to develop a holistic long-term strategic vision that would revolve around major infrastructural investment in transport, particularly public transport and active transport. The earlier this is enacted, the cheaper and more cost-effective it will be. Using the planning system to create more compact and energy efficient urban development is a win-win option for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and moving towards sustainability.

Recommendation 2.

If we are to continue to expand our population, growth should be directed away from the fringes, and instead channelled into Transit Oriented Development (TODs). These are medium to high density, multi-storey, mixed-use developments clustered in nodes along electric light rail corridors. TODs (based on successful examples from Portland, USA and Subiaco in Western Australia) should form a central focus of an integrated approach to land use in a Transport Master Plan.

Recommendation 3.

TODs should be a showcase of world's best practice in terms of carbon neutrality, passive solar design, energy and water efficiency and waste management.

Recommendation 4.

Urban Growth Boundaries (UGB) should be established for all urban areas to minimise the physical and the ecological 'footprint' of urban areas and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transport emissions.

Recommendation 5.

All levels of government should co-operate towards progressively reducing private car use. A number of cities around the world provide examples of mechanisms to achieve these outcomes. These may include increasing the CBD resident population (that don't own cars), prioritising pedestrian access within the CBD, emphasising increased use of both public transport and active transport through cycle lanes and pedestrian precincts, 'transit' lane priority (eg bus lane or multi-occupant vehicles) and reducing car parking within the CBD. Establishing frequent reliable public transport shuttles from Park'n'Ride nodes around the city and congestion pricing (the London model) are other initiatives worthy of consideration.

Public Transport

CCSA believes investment in public transport will deliver substantial returns across a triple bottom line. Benefits include reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, pollution, noise, oil consumption, congestion and road accidents. In a carbon-constrained world, public transport development is more sustainable.

Even if all private vehicles could be converted/replaced with electric/ hybrid/ bio-fuelled vehicles, investment in public transport is still a more efficient, environmentally-friendly and cost-effective way to move large numbers of people (and freight) around. Rail in particular provides substantial greenhouse emission reductions on a per passenger basis (especially compared to flying) and when electrically powered, will be capable of operating on a zero emissions basis.

Recommendation 6.

Targets to improve public transport patronage should be set and (adequately resourced) policies put in place to ensure they can be met.

Recommendation 7.

The Federal Government should direct a substantial proportion of the Building Australia Fund to be invested in public transport and active transport infrastructure. Specifically this funding would be utilised to fast track the rollout of the electrification, re-sleeping and standardisation of gauges on all suburban lines.

A number of projects that CCSA would like to see Federal support for in South Australia include:

- Fast-tracking of the Seaford-Aldinga rail corridor
- The extension of the train line along the Noarlunga-Seaford rail corridor in tandem with the re-sleeping and electrification on the Noarlunga/Tonsley line
- The development of a TOD around Flinders Medical Centre/Flinders University and Darlington precinct
- Re-routing of the eastbound ARTC freight route northwards via Mallala instead of via the Belair line. Passenger train services through the Adelaide Hills could then be re-introduced with services to Aldgate, Stirling Bridgewater and potentially extended to Mount Barker, Littlehampton and Balhannah
- Feasibility studies to assess the viability of re-commissioning defunct lines along the Willunga, Northfield and Angaston corridors and resuming regional services to Murray Bridge, Victor Harbor, Whyalla, Mt. Gambier and Broken Hill.

Recommendation 8.

The Federal Government should abolish the considerable Federal subsidies for fossil fuel use that encourage private vehicle transport. These funds should instead be redirected into developing better infrastructure for public and active transport and/or giving similar tax benefits to public transport users.

Recommendation 9.

To improve the attractiveness and reliability of public transport services, priority should be given to buses and car pool traffic in dedicated peak hour transit lanes.

In the short term, CCSA supports the State Government Tackling Climate Change Action Plan's Transport & Planning objectives which include focusing on the following four areas: Integrated land use and transport planning, travel behaviour change, vehicle performance and mode shifting.

Conclusion

CCSA believes that Australia's energy future must be an ecologically sustainable, low-carbon and renewably generated. We have the knowledge, skills and wherewithal to do so. The current global financial crisis offers us the perfect opportunity to restructure our infrastructure on a large scale.

CCSA urges this Senate Inquiry to support adequate and appropriate funding for public transport and infrastructure to enable and facilitate the transition to an ecologically sustainable future based on low or zero-emissions transport sector.

Should you require further information or clarification on any point raised in this submission please contact CCSA on campaigns@ccsa.asn.au or ph (08) 8223 5155