

To the Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Cathy Gossel submission into the inquiry into the investment of Commonwealth and State funds in public passenger transport infrastructure and services.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the funding of public transport. The Federal Government currently funds urban road infrastructure but does not fund urban public transport, cycling or walking infrastructure. This increases car dependency and limits the use of sustainable transport in cities.

E. An assessment of the benefits of public passenger transport, including integration with bicycle and pedestrian initiatives

Increasing federal funding of public transport is important because car dependence contributes to climate change, air pollution and oil depletion. In addition, petrol prices are likely to increase due to 'peak oil'. Without improved public transport services people will be forced to spend more and more of their income on petrol, particularly those living in outer suburban areas where public transport is poor. They will also be forced to waste an increasing amount of their day in traffic congestion. Providing good public transport will therefore save many people money and time.

Improved public transport, in combination with improved cycle and pedestrian facilities, will also have significant health benefits. By walking or cycling to and from public transport, people can easily gain the 30 minutes of exercise that is required each day for good health. This is particularly true for people who don't have the time, money or access to formal exercise. The Federal Government has already acknowledged the savings to be gained from investment in preventative health, and an increase in 'active transport' through increased public transport funding will contribute to these savings.

Better public transport, cycling and walking facilities will also create cities that are more enjoyable to live in, rather than cities that are dominated by large areas of parking, wide roads, and traffic congestion.

D. Measures by which the Commonwealth Government could facilitate improvement in public passenger transport services and infrastructure

1. Improve the competitiveness of public transport with the car.

I believe that people will use whatever transport mode is the fastest and most convenient, and that people are currently forced to drive because of a lack of public transport, rather than because of a preference to drive. In order for public transport to compete with the car, it should be frequent and regular enough so that people don't require a timetable, as well as being fast and direct. Increased public transport is also required during at non-peak times so that people are not forced to drive during day or at night time.

Public transport will not be able to compete with the car if significant funding continues to be directed to building and widening roads, and providing large amounts of free parking. More and wider roads do not increase mobility, they just encourage people to drive and reduce the funding

available for sustainable transport. Wider and busier roads also increase the difficulty of walking and cycling to access public transport.

2. Improve access to public transport

In Perth there is a huge demand for car parking at train stations. These car parks fill up early, and if people don't get there in time they are forced to park on the street or return home. When more car parking is built, it is likely that this extra capacity will be quickly absorbed – car parking cannot be provided for every train passenger.

Instead of more car parking, bus services to train station should be more frequent and direct. In addition, infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians is required to allow people to walk or cycle to access public transport. End of trip facilities should also be provided at train and bus stations including secure bike parking, showers and lockers. The City of Fremantle currently provides a large secure bike parking facility at Fremantle train station, while a complete end of trip facility for cyclists is provided in Brisbane. Extra carriages are required for trains so that people can take their bikes with them on the train. In Perth there are restrictions on taking bikes on train during peak hour due to overcrowding. Bikes should also be able to be stored on buses.

3. Travel Demand Management

To ensure the new public transport services provided are actually used, it should be combined with Travel Demand Management programs, to ensure that people are aware of what their transport options are.

E. The role of Commonwealth Government legislation, taxation, subsidies, policies and other mechanisms that either discourage or encourage public passenger transport

Fringe Benefits Tax concessions for company cars increase car use. The concessional FBT treatment of salary packaged cars and staff car parking should be removed, and public transport passes, bikes and sustainable travel allowances should be able to be salary sacrificed.

Yours sincerely,

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