

Public Question re Active Transport Strategy 2 April 2019

It is YCAN's view that as the City of Yarra's population continues its rapid growth, it will be necessary to develop new strategies to increase the percentage of public transport, walking and cycling trips as a proportion of all transport trips within and through Yarra. If population growth is allowed to outstrip development of the necessary active transport options, there will be a decrease in amenity for residents, shoppers etc and an increase in negative impacts on environment, locally in the form of toxic pollution and globally in ongoing greenhouse gas emissions.

On the 4 Corners program last night about Australia's greenhouse gas emissions and how they are rising not falling. Transport emissions represent 19% of Australia's emissions. Council needs to ensure that they are doing all they can to reduce vehicle emissions in Yarra.

We refer Council again to last year's City of Melbourne discussion paper *Bicycles for Everyday Transport*, which stated that a) 83% of people are confident to ride in a protected lane, compared with 22% in a non-protected one, and b) that the number of Yarra cyclists travelling to the CBD could more than double if people felt safer and better facilities were supplied. The streams of cyclists travelling along Canning and Rathdowne Sts to and from the CBD at peak hour is evidence of the enthusiasm for cycling, but also off-putting for less experienced cyclists.

More cyclists and pedestrians mean fewer vehicles on Yarra's roads. Numbers of people cycling and walking will only increase with better and safer infrastructure, more integration and interconnectivity.

We have been critical before about the lack of an ongoing Bicycle Strategy and as this year's budget approaches, we believe that what is needed is an integrated Active Transport Strategy that investigates what is required for the extension of bicycle routes and additional safety. This should include an audit of existing bicycle routes. Are they working well? Or are they avoided by all but the most kamikaze cyclists, like the Trenerry Crescent route. (If ever there was an example of why a painted line isn't enough separation between bikes and cars, this is it. The painted lines have been completely erased by cars!)

Walkers are mostly left out of the equation when it comes to transport. Pedestrians are considered in local shopping streets etc., but YCAN feels that Council should be encouraging destination walking, such as walking to work, shopping areas, fitness and entertainment venues. Many parts of Yarra are within a comfortable walk of the city, for instance. And would be even more so, if thought went into the best route for walkers, rather than motor vehicles always getting first priority. More shade is becoming urgent for all outdoor activities and proper landscaping should also be integral to Active Transport planning. Walkers are either not considered at all, or are made to walk indirect, unshaded and longer routes that encourage them to cross roads where there are no crossings.

We could give examples if time permitted.

Looking through our archives, we found the 2005 City of Yarra document *Encouraging and Increasing Walking*, which mentions "auditing the 'walkability' of a local community". That sounds like a great idea, and we think that volunteers could be enlisted to try out walking routes, and suggest improvements based on their local knowledge.

We also think that the current Bicycle Advisory Committee should be expanded to become an Active Transport Advisory Committee, which considers all aspects of active transport.

Our questions are:

1. Will Council consider formulating a Yarra Active Transport Strategy?
2. Will Council also consider expanding the Bicycle Advisory Committee into an Active Transport Committee?

Council's Response

The Director Planning and Place Making advised that the questions are for Councillors to consider, whether an Active Transport Committee be formed or the Bicycle Advisory Committee be expanded.

Council does have a Cycling Strategy, cycling refresh and a number of relevant strategies in relation to the question but few would be a place making approach, safety for pedestrians and cycling, the urban forest aspect and car parking policies.

Council will also be commencing stage 2 of the Wellington Street Bike Lane very soon. The State Government are certainly looking at some aspects of cycling; there is a Preston to CBD cycling route proposed by VicRoads.

Council are preparing for the budget next year and there are budget bids in the budget for a number of things including cycling aspects. Bike lane improvements are a constant matter and there have recently been improvements along Rathdowne Street and Princes Street to try and increase the safety and flow of cycling. Protected lanes are very important, they can't be done overnight and there are trials and pilot thinking that may be done across the city which we might be able to activate.

The Mayor also advised that Council are in the process of reviewing all committees and would consider the two proposals that have been suggested.