

Mr Peter Garrett, AM, MP

Labor Member for Kingsford Smith
Shadow Minister for Climate Change,
Environment, Heritage and the Arts
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Committee Member and Technical Advisor

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Dear Mr Garrett

Cycling, Active Transport and the Environment

Introduction

I have long enjoyed your music with The Oils, even growing up far away in The Netherlands. I have admired your efforts with the environmental lobby. I now wish you all the best as the aspirant Minister for the Environment and as my local member.

In your first speech to Parliament on 8/12/2004 you stated:

"The first speech of a member of parliament offers a chance to express one's truest ambitions and hopes for the country. At this point in time, what do I think the nation needs? I believe we need to respond to the decline in our environment and the threat posed by global warming and to further modernise our economy by making it truly sustainable. I believe we need to substantively extend the idea of sustainability so that it encompasses not only environmental but social, cultural and economic dimensions. In corporate terms, our social capital must be protected."

BIKEast Request

In this context, BIKEast requests that the Australian Labor Party "*substantively extends the idea of sustainability*" to include leadership on cycling, walking and public transport, in particular:

- 🚲 **Whole-of-government active transportation policy**¹. Develop this approach for bicycling through more effective administration and by planning and undertaking land use, public transport, roads, public safety, health, education and sport and tourism initiatives.
- 🚲 **Establishment of intergovernmental agency to lead and implement such a policy.** The operational parameters for the Australian Greenhouse Office are too narrow. The resources of the Australian Bicycle Council are seriously curtailed. There are no federal government agencies for walking or public transport.
- 🚲 **Substantive resources and funding to support the agency** both for policy development, and for the planning, design and construction of new infrastructure. The Better Cities program established under the previous Federal Labor Government went some way to meet these requirements, but has since been disbanded. Tony Abbott has offered some funding for educational campaigns on cycling and walking, which is a small step in the right direction.

¹ London, June 1999, the Third Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health: ministers responsible for health, environment and transport from 54 countries adopted the World Health Organisation Charter on Transport, Environment and Health (http://www.euro.who.int/document/peh-ehp/charter_transport.pdf). The International Charter for Walking as promoted by Walk21 is another good example (<http://www.walk21.com/papers/International%20Charter%20for%20Walking.pdf>).

- 🚲 **Safe bicycling network.** To make cycling more widely attractive to even 'novice' riders, requires a basic perceptively safe bicycling network to be planned and developed which connects neighbourhoods with public transport and to centres, schools and other public services and institutions, work places, parks, beaches and other places for recreation and leisure. This is still not happening under current poorly funded State and local bike plan programs. Once safe infrastructure and adequate services are available in an area, promotional programs are required for information and to overcome some cultural and perception impediments to people freely choosing to ride instead of continuing to travel by car for short local trips.

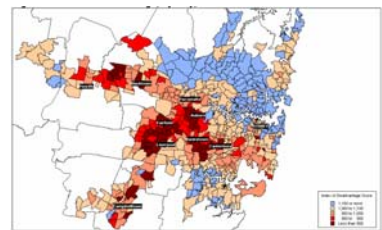
BIKEast is keen to meet with you to discuss these issues.

The Five Global Policy Issues

With a colleague I run a series of training courses for the NSW Government on walking and cycling facilities. While the training program is focussed on engineering design, we provide a brief overview of the five underlying global policy issues that are equally important at a National, State and local level, which together strongly point towards the need for significant improvements in cycling, walking and public transport.

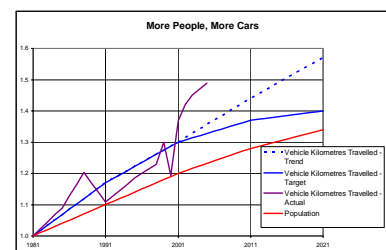
- 🚲 **Social Equity and the Transport Poor**

700,000 people in Western Sydney cannot reach essential services within a reasonable time, such as health care, employment, education and daily needs². The problems are broadly defined as being personal mobility factors (characteristics that affect individual's ease of travelling), transport accessibility factors (characteristics of the available transport services) and urban accessibility factors (characteristics of facilities, services and activities that individuals may need to access). Examples of some transport disadvantaged groups include sole parents, young unemployed people and recently arrived humanitarian entrants. A broader response to the travel needs of these groups is required including, inter alia, improvements to local accessibility through constructing and upgrading bus stops and shelters, foot paths, and cycleways.



- 🚲 **Congestion**

Research by the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority³ in the early 1990-ies predicted a 600% increase in congestion on Sydney's roads unless vehicle usage trends were reversed. Current evidence is that RTA's strategies have been ineffective in achieving the required target. Similar problems are evident in other major cities in Australia and around the world. There is a strong need for renewed investment in environmentally friendly transport in cities, such as cycling, walking and public transport.



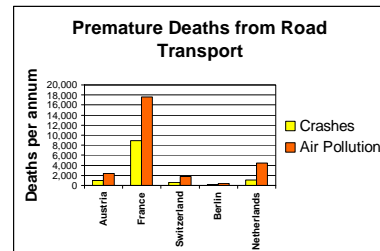
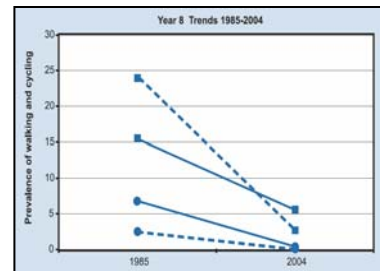
² Hurni, Anne (2006). Transport and social disadvantage in Western Sydney: a partnership research project. Published by Western Sydney Community Forum

³ Action for Transport 2010 - an integrated transport plan for NSW; Action for Transport 2010 - an integrated transport plan for Sydney; Road Transport Future Directions - summary report on options.

🚲 **Health**

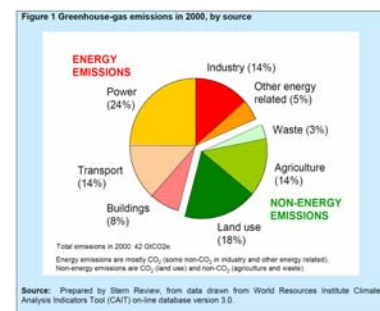
The obesity crises and the lack of exercise are well documented, eg the SPANS⁴ reports by NSW Health which indicate that walking and cycling to school have the potential to provide 50% of the daily physical activity requirement for children.

Less well known is the research flowing from the European Charter on Transport, Health and the Environment which shows that car-based air pollution kills twice as many people as car crashes.



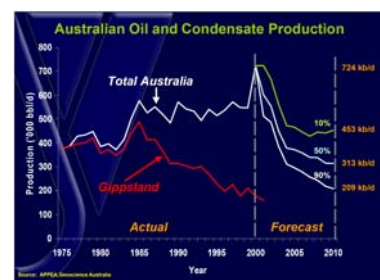
🚲 **Environment and Climate Change**

The Stern Review⁵ has now become the world's authoritative and conclusive document on this topic. While it acknowledges active transport as a key issue, it is weak on recommendations due to the complexity of the issue. It is clear, however, from other research both overseas and locally that there are strong opportunities to substantially increase the role of active transport, eg the City of Sydney has adopted a target of 20% of short trips by bike by 2016.



🚲 **Peak Oil**

Projections by Australian Government forecasting agencies⁶ indicate that Australia is facing a rapid decline in liquid petroleum production over the next decade. Liquids self-sufficiency is expected to decline from an average of 80-90% over the past decade to less than 40% by 2010. On a global scale, the Arabian oil fields have reached their peak production levels. The world is at war over the next oil and gas fields. The Kimberley and Arctic seas are threatened with exploration.



⁴ Booth M, Okely AD, Denney-Wilson E, Hardy L, Yang B, Dobbins T (2006). NSW Schools Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey (SPANS) 2004: Summary Report. Sydney: NSW Department of Health. NSW Centre for Overweight and Obesity (2006). NSW Schools Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey (SPANS) 2004: Short Report. Sydney: NSW Department of Health. Booth M, Okely AD, Denney-Wilson E, Hardy L, Yang B, Dobbins T (2006). NSW Schools Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey (SPANS) 2004: Full Report. Sydney: NSW Department of Health. www.health.nsw.gov.au or www.coo.usyd.edu.au

⁵ Stern Review (2007). The Economics of Climate Change. www.sternreview.org.uk

⁶ Akehurst, John (2002). World Oil Markets and the Challenges for Australia. Presentation by Woodside Energy Ltd at the ABARE Outlook Conference, 2002.

Each of these issues is of global significance and is equally important at national, state and local levels.

Consequently, BIKEast on behalf of the bicycle movement, strongly urges that the ALP develops a 'cities' program that will help the implementation of better public transport, walking and cycling facilities and services and that will more directly address the global issues our community is faced with.

Yours Sincerely

Dick van den Dool
Committee Member and Technical Advisor

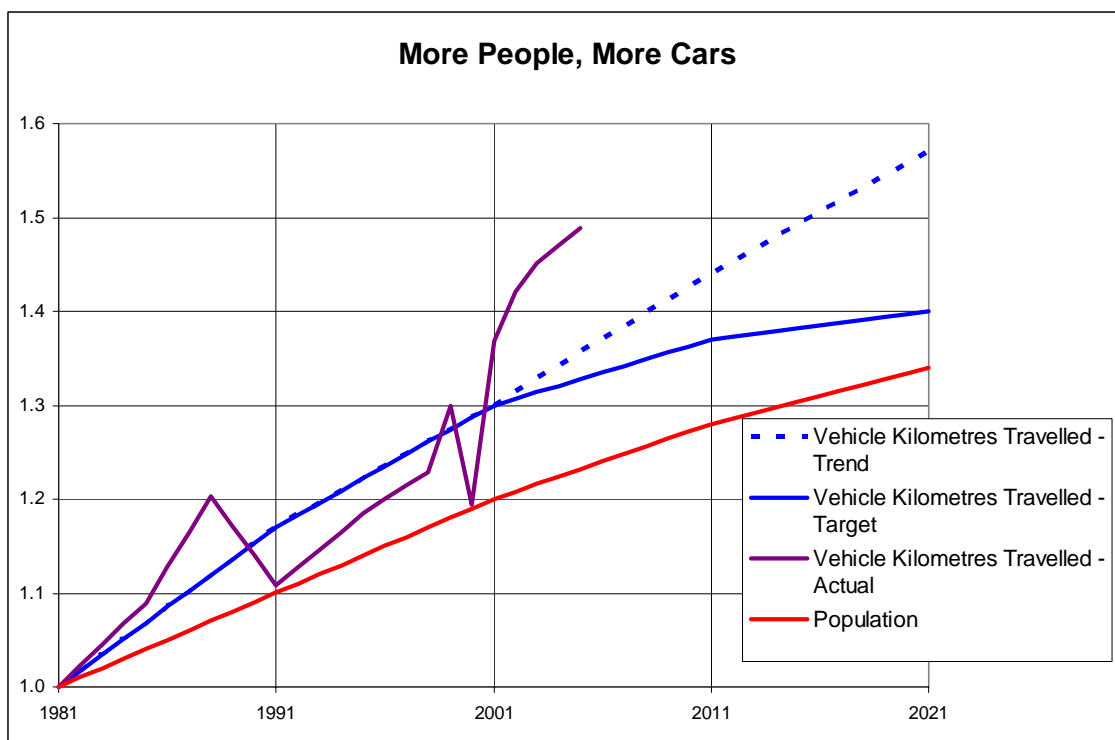
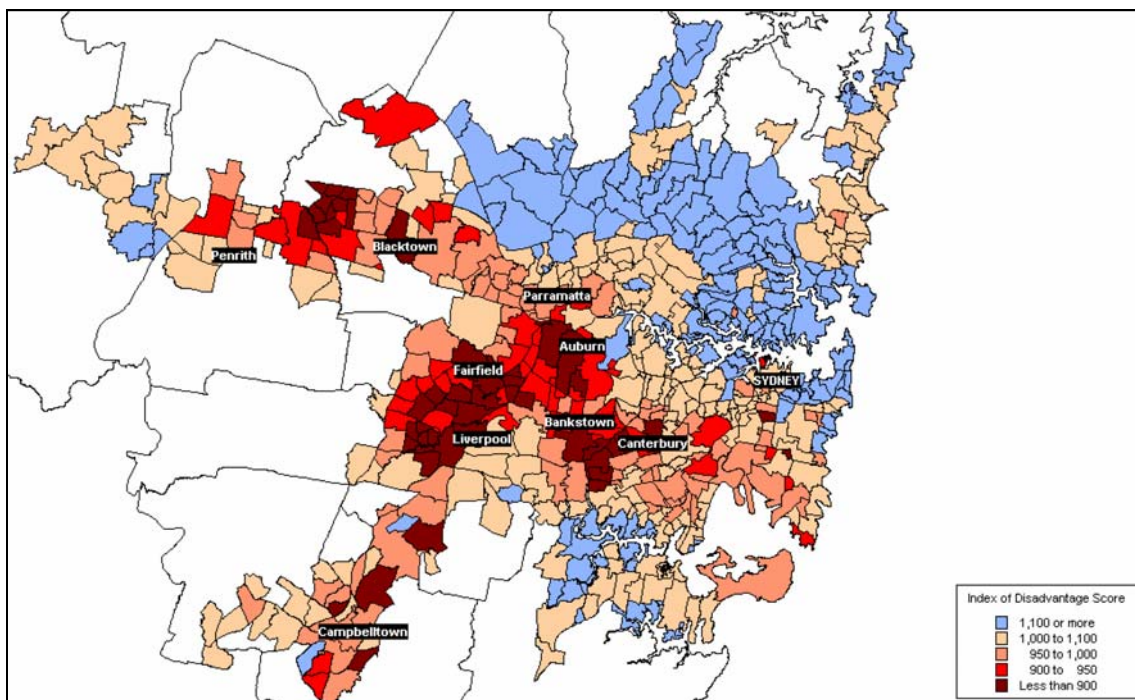
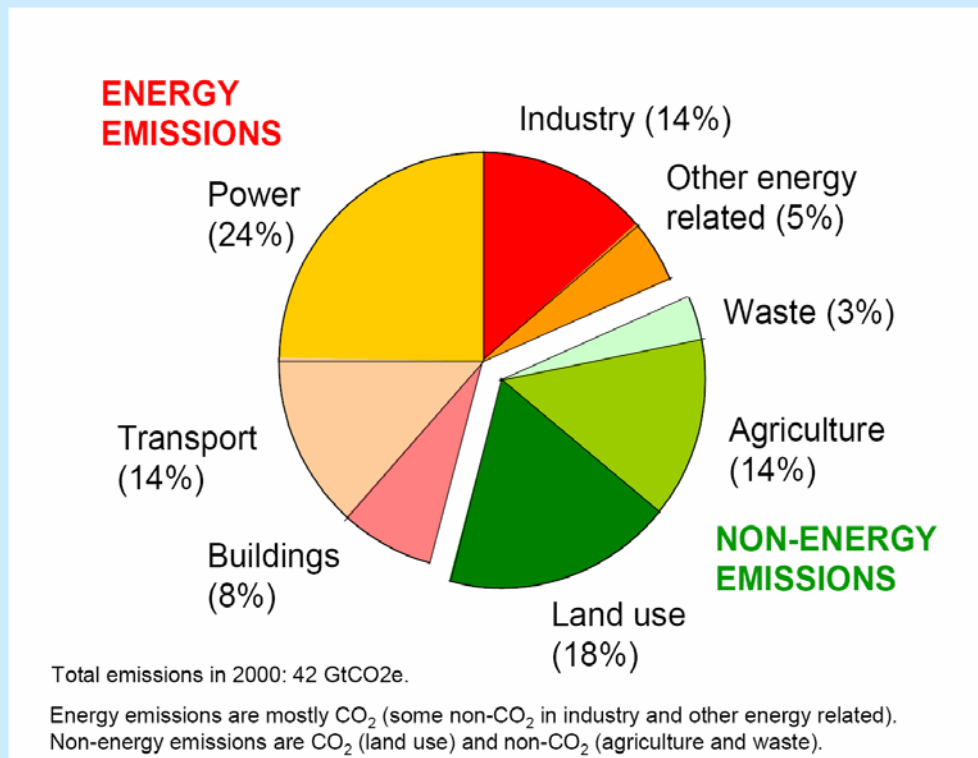


Figure 1 Greenhouse-gas emissions in 2000, by source



Source: Prepared by Stern Review, from data drawn from World Resources Institute Climate Analysis Indicators Tool (CAIT) on-line database version 3.0.

