

30 June 2011

David Mayes
Manager, Strategic Planning
City of Melbourne
GPO Box 1603
Melbourne, VIC 3001

Note: Submission to Draft Melbourne Transport Strategy Update 2011

Via email: transportstrategy@melbourne.vic.gov.au

Dear David,

Re: Draft Melbourne Transport Strategy Update 2011 – Planning for Future Growth – submission by Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand

The Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand (EIANZ) is pleased to have this opportunity to provide a submission to the City of Melbourne's consultation of the Draft Melbourne Transport Strategy Update 2011 – Planning for Future Growth.

The EIANZ is the peak professional body for environmental practitioners in Australasia. Our mission is to promote independent and interdisciplinary discourse on environmental issues. The Institute advocates that 'best' environmental practices be delivered by competent and ethical environmental practitioners.

I am forwarding this submission to you on behalf of the Victorian Division of the EIANZ, which represents 310 members out of a total membership of 2,111 (approximately 14% of total membership in Australasia). Our membership is represented by a diverse range of technical disciplines including scientists, policy makers, engineers, lawyers and economists.

EIANZ POSITION STATEMENTS

EIANZ has adopted a number of position statements that set out our position and policy on environmental themes. These are available at our website www.eianz.org under Home > Publications > Position Statements.

In commenting on the Draft Transport Strategy Update, three of the EIANZ position statements are particularly relevant:

- Position statement on sustainability
- Position statement on climate change
- Position statement on energy

The key elements of the position statements relevant to this submission include:

- In alignment with the EIANZ Position statement on sustainability: EIANZ considers that sustainability should be incorporated into all government decision making
- In alignment with the EIANZ Position statement on energy: The EIANZ believes that all planning and assessment of energy system initiatives and projects should: ensure the provision of safe and reliable energy infrastructure; minimise the negative environmental and social impacts; encourage the use of energy conservation programs and renewable resources to decrease dependence on the use of non-renewable resources;

- In alignment with the EIANZ Position statement on climate change:
 - It is Government's special role to provide strong, clear leadership and policy frameworks that encourage rapid implementation of emission reduction strategies and protection of the natural environment;
 - Governments, businesses, communities and individuals need to progressively reduce greenhouse emissions through the use of a range of approaches with multiple, sustainable development outcomes;
 - Mitigation and adaptation strategies require new approaches and partnerships ensuring actions and investments deliver multiple, sustainable benefits; Greenhouse policies must consider intra- and inter-generational equity and sustainability with implications for the economic, social and physical fabric of societies worldwide; and while the issue is global, the answer requires actions and encouragement at all levels.

Our submission draws on these principles to provide the following comments.

SUBMISSION COMMENTS

The release of the Draft Melbourne Transport Strategy Update 2011 – Planning for Future Growth is welcomed by the EIANZ and is a positive step in providing a vision for a sustainable, low-carbon, integrated transport system. EIANZ provides the following broad comments relating to the five key directions within the Draft Transport Strategy Update:

Improvements to public transport in Melbourne

The EIANZ supports the key direction that "the service provided by Melbourne's public transport needs to be significantly improved". The EIANZ is of the opinion that:

- Conversion of the train network into a modern metro system with separated lines, as per the Eddington Report, can provide a step change improvement in the accessibility, connectivity, capacity, frequency and reliability of the rail system. New lines to double train capacity to the Central City, and the Footscray to Caulfield rail tunnel project can significantly increase rail capacity and alleviate existing pressure on the system, as well as prepare it for future increases in demand.
- The rail and tram systems utilise electricity generated from brown coal, which is a highly greenhouse intensive fuel. Transition to renewable energy sources would contribute to reducing transport greenhouse gas emissions.
- Reducing the impact of traffic congestion on tram and bus services is essential to improving reliability, capacity and speeds on the networks, encouraging greater use of these transport modes.
- Integration of the public transport system (rail, tram and bus) with a view to optimising the efficiency of the entire system will allow public transport to provide similar levels of mobility to private vehicles, increasing their appeal.

Better use of existing infrastructure, especially roads, by improving priority for the most space-efficient transport modes

The EIANZ agrees with making better use of existing infrastructure, especially roads, by increasing priority for the most space-efficient transport modes.

Increasing priority to high-capacity public transport vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists will help reduce congestion, which has negative economic impacts on the state, road trauma, urban pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. The EIANZ supports the City of Melbourne's proposal to redesign road space allocation, traffic signalling, off-street parking provision and improving taxi and car share options, to assist in achieving this.

Walking City

The EIANZ is supportive of the direction of the new pedestrian plan for the City of Melbourne, which would give greater priority to pedestrians especially walking to and from public transport.

Walking is an extremely beneficial transport mode in comparison to other transport modes, reducing transport localised air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, and providing health, social and economic benefits for the community. The objective of increasing pedestrian access around public transport is important in maintaining and improving the attractiveness of public transport as a preferred transport option.

The EIANZ also supports the increased priority of pedestrian access over car access when considering new developments in the city, and the introduction of 'Ciclovia' type car-free events and days in Melbourne, transforming roads into shared public spaces.

Cycling City

The EIANZ supports the proposed planning and construction of high-service bicycle lanes in the centre of the city, and believes this will increase cycling as a transport mode in the City of Melbourne. The EIANZ recognises the multitude of benefits to the environment and community that would arise from an increase in cycling, and supports the City of Melbourne's goal to transform Melbourne into a cycling city.

The lack of connectivity in Melbourne's cycling network is a serious obstacle to cycling and significantly deters cyclists. The EIANZ supports the timely development of an extensive cycling network in Melbourne. Any cycling network improvements must be connected to networks in the middle and outer suburbs, as well as public transport routes. The hierarchical bicycle network developed in Bogota, Colombia could provide a good example of a well-connected, efficient case study.

Cycling could be further encouraged through promotion of cycling as a transport mode, safety initiatives and increased parking facilities which prioritise bicycle parking over cars, rather than occupying footpath space.

Car Sharing and Smart City Driving

In light of the environmental, social and economic impacts of congestion, the EIANZ strongly endorses the Strategy's emphasis on increased public transport and active transport over private motor vehicle usage in the inner city area. This includes efforts to minimise off-street car parking in the inner city to reduce the incentive for car travel in the CBD. The density of public transport in the inner city and proposed improvements to the system support off-street parking being placed outside the CBD wherever possible, with good access via walking, cycling, tram and taxi.

The EIANZ encourages further support for car sharing as a catalyst for reducing car reliance and improving efficiency of use.

The EIANZ strongly supports the SmartRoads Network Operating Plans and integrated transport planning as excellent approaches to managing traffic in the inner city. Establishing priority routes for traffic and pedestrians paves the way for the conversion of more CBD streets into pedestrian only malls in the future, permanently limiting congestion and maximising commercial and user amenity of these areas.

The EIANZ also recommends that the City of Melbourne aim to eventually reduce car travel speed, particularly on roads with high bicycle and pedestrian traffic, further than the proposed 40km/h to 30km/h. The World Health Organisation promotes 30km/h as the speed at which serious injuries from pedestrian and cyclist accidents decrease significantly¹.

Summary

The EIANZ supports the five key directions as aspirations of the Melbourne Transport Strategy, and is highly supportive of a significant shift towards sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling. The Institute also commends the recognition that Melbourne's public transport needs to increase in capacity, frequency and distribution in order to become a more attractive alternative to private car use.

EIANZ welcomes any further opportunities to discuss details of this or other draft strategies developed by the City of Melbourne. For more information please contact Sri Patnaikuni at Sri.Patn@gmail.com.

Yours sincerely,



Sri Patnaikuni, Gordon Young and Simone Stevenson
Committee Members - EIANZ Victorian Division

¹ World Health Organisation (WHO) (2008), *Speed Management; A road safety manual for decision makers and practitioners*. Geneva, Global Road Safety Partnership.