

Port Adelaide Bicycle User Group ('PortBUG').



24th April, 2015

Ms Wendy Campana
Chief Executive Officer,
Local Government Association,
GPO Box 2693
Adelaide SA 5001

Dear Wendy,

I write on behalf of the Port Adelaide Bicycle Users Group (PortBUG) to congratulate the LGA and Metropolitan Local Government Group (MLGG) on its initiative in developing a Metropolitan Cycling Strategy as outlined in your March MLGG agenda and minutes. We were very pleased to see the initial proposals for this project and write to offer some comments which - being from a 'consumer' point of view - we hope might be useful. We'd be grateful if you would pass these comments on to the responsible officer.

The PortBUG is an entirely voluntary community coalition and has had a long association (over nearly 3 decades) with the development of facilities and conditions for safe and convenient bicycle use within Port Adelaide and environs, as well as those *beyond* the immediate confines of the Port Adelaide Enfield (PAE) Council area. We are proud of the contributions we have made to the development of Adelaide's bicycle network facilities. We have made many submissions to statewide planning exercises including:

- Safety in Numbers (2008)
- the Integrated Transport & Land Use Plan (ITLUP – 2013)

We have also contributed to consultative processes on major transport-related works across the City, including the Torrens-to-Torrens Project, the Port Road Wetlands Project, the Bakewell Underpass, the South Road Redevelopment Project, the Outer Harbour Greenway, the redevelopment of Semaphore Road, the tram overpass on South Road at Black Forest, the Port Adelaide Local Area Bike Plan and numerous other council bike plans.

The PortBUG would like to see Adelaide provided with the sort of bicycle 'Greenway' facilities so often seen in European cities. To this end we believe that it is vitally important that the LGA play an active role in advocating a more *comprehensive and strategic level of investment* in cycling facilities for communities across Adelaide and regional South Australia. We see a united 'LGA voice' as an essential component in this process for two major reasons:

- Local Councils – even those seen as 'cyclist friendly' - are necessarily focused on the immediate needs of their constituents and often find it difficult to consider broader 'network' issues - participation in an integrated and city-wide 'movement strategy', and continuity and connectivity *across* Council or geographic boundaries. These are the issues that are central to establishing an efficient and accessible bicycle network
- The State Government is beset by conflicting financial demands and policy pressures and - from a cycling point of view - often seems to find it difficult to *maintain focus* on strategic investment in 'Active Transport'.

The science is now clearly telling us that effective Government investment in comprehensive bicycle networks for car-dependent communities demands strategies that go well beyond simple 'engineering'. They require Government to consider emerging risks to the economic, social and physical well being of communities and put a persuasive case to the community for alternative forms of transport investment. State Government often seems to find such innovative thinking difficult and – from our point of view - it seems essential that there be a 'third voice'. For many years voluntary organizations such as the Bicycle Institute, PortBUG and other 'grass roots' groups have attempted to fulfill this role but as voluntary organizations, advocacy resources are necessarily limited. The LGA, as a key coordinating and leadership body, is ideally placed to circumvent such constraints and articulate – for both Councils and State Government - the *scope, priorities and objectives* within which further development of a City-wide cycling network needs to be framed.

In the March MLGG agenda mention is made of a strategy for officer-level consultation and agreement on:

- the prioritization of an existing list of cycling routes (derived from those identified in the State Government's Integrated Transport & Land Use Plan)
- the nomination of *additional* possibilities for major cycling routes *not* identified in the ITLUP.

While we will also liaise with staff at Port Adelaide Enfield Council with regard to this consultation process, we would also like to draw your attention to several route possibilities identified in the recent review of the PAE Local Area Bicycle Plan and which we believe *have not* have been identified by the ITLUP. These include:

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- a rail reserve-based route extending from the Rosewater Rail Yards through to Ottoway and thence onwards to Mansfield Park and Days Road (we are nominating this as the 'Rosewater Greenway')
- a potential Greenway extending from the Port Expressway along (or adjacent to) Ocean Steamers Road to Torrens Island (nominated as the 'Torrens Island Greenway')
- an existing route, already partially developed by the PAE Council extending from the Port Expressway & Victoria Road/Nelson Street Junction along Mersey Road (and associated routes), adjacent to the Western shore of the Port River and reaching Biodiversity Park at the Northern end of Le Fevre Peninsula (nominated as the 'Port River Greenway').

We note that *none* of these existing or proposed routes currently appear on the ITLUP map appended to the MLGG agenda. This suggests to us that identification of *emerging and potential 'Greenway' routes* is an *ongoing process*, which itself deserves recognition and acknowledgement as a key issue in the MLGG's Metropolitan Cycling Strategy.

We would also draw your project group's attention to the recently released draft Port Adelaide Enfield Local Area Bicycle Plan. The Plan refers to several potential & additional *off-road* network possibilities along public reserve land in the PAE Council Area, much of which is currently disused rail or drainage reserve. These include rail and drainage reserves through Rosewater, Ottoway, Gillman, Angle Park and Mansfield Park. We believe that these and other similar *off-road* route possibilities ought to be considered within the MLGG Strategy as well as those based on the existing road network.

We note that the project's consultation process seeks to identify priorities and support for ITLUP cycling routes forming a "network of greenways and bicycle boulevard routes across metropolitan Councils." The project's outline points out that ITLUP's notion of a network is based on two components - routes that "within 10 kilometres of the CBD... are typically radial spokes centred on the city" and routes that "further than 10 kilometres from the CBD... link to regional centres."

The PortBUG believes that employing this 'dual' approach to the modeling of a metropolitan cycling network, particularly across a city with a 'footprint' as large and diverse as Adelaide, overlooks the practical realities of bicycle use across the city. Cycling for 'everyday transport' in Adelaide – even at less than 2% of all daily trips – is already far more complex than this approach would imply. Building a comprehensive and effective cycling network requires investment in a more extensive, refined and 'granulated' network than either "radial spokes centred on the city" or "CBD routes link[ed] to regional centres" would suggest. This is particularly the case for those *more localized* facilities most likely to be the responsibility of local government.

The PortBUG believes that the MLGG project needs to recognize the complexities associated with the many 'route transitions' and linkages *beyond* these radial 'spokes' and the many daily commuters who:

- use their bikes on a regular basis to ride *more* than 10kms (ie; outside of the CBD's 'catchment' area)
- do *not* use radial, CBD-focused routes and...
- are *not* riding to or from regional centres.

Some more obvious examples would include:

- the many bicycle commuters cycling long distances to work along *non-radial* routes such as Grand Junction and Military Roads.
- students cycling to schools and other campuses along significant local bikeways such as Semaphore Road, Grand Junction & Bridge Roads etc.

Such commuters frequently cycle on disjointed routes that can't be characterized as a 'networks' simply because they lack of continuity, connectivity, convenience or appropriate levels of safety! We are concerned that this problem will *not* be resolved by adopting an over-simplified model for network development.

The ITLUP is a valuable resource, particularly to the extent that - as a major Government planning document - it has for the first time sought to identify possibilities for a major bicycle network across Adelaide. For the purposes of action by Local Government however we feel that it remains somewhat 'coarse grained'. Some of the routes identified could well be the responsibility of Local Government but the development of most seems likely to remain a State Government responsibility. What is *not* described in the ITLUP are the many 'local linkages', route-access points and qualitative improvements that are required to make such a cycling network viable and which *do* fall squarely into the area of local government responsibility!

Adding to the complexities involved in developing a 'network model' is an inevitable diversity of needs across the

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range of 'commuting' and 'local' bicycle users. A route that is satisfactory for one user at a particular time of the day, week or year may be less than ideal for another or at other times. For some, the new Outer Harbor Greenway will feel more isolated and less safe than Port Road *at night or in winter*, even though it has been seen as the more 'secure' route. As a consequence the 'less secure' option - Port Road and Old Port Road and their various local linkages – also need further development with continuous, well-lit and adequately protected and defined bike facilities. We hope that the MLGG Strategy can acknowledge this range of needs and assist Councils to focus their bicycle planning accordingly.

On a final note we applaud the MLGG Metropolitan Cycling Strategy in seeking more coherent and purposeful *funding* for bicycle infrastructure development. We believe that the pressing need for an improved cycling network demands an up-to-date approach. We need to see annual and ongoing investment capable of funding a continuous, connected and highly efficient Bicycle Network such as those that have evolved across many European countries, cities and regional areas. Such networks are *planned* rather than simply opportunistic and are based on a detailed understanding of the *established Active Mobility needs* of the communities they serve, rather than on simple supplementation of the existing road networks!

To this end we would encourage the MLGG's adoption of a broader focus on an '*Active Mobility Network*' rather than a cycling network per se. Focusing on Active Mobility is a strategic recommendation endorsed by the European Cycling Federation at Adelaide's international Velo-City Conference in 2014. This broader focus aims to ensure that cycling is *seen and valued* as a critical part of Government strategy across multiple investment domains – notably, community health, economic development, social resilience and environmental protection. The PortBUG believes that investment in an active mobility *system* - which must include walking and public transport facilities - needs to be driven by all such priorities if a truly efficient, connected and continuous bicycle network is to be achieved.

We trust these comments prove useful to the MLGG Cycling Strategy project group. While we understand that the project's consultation focus is likely to be restricted to Council officers, we would be pleased to consult further if the project group feel we can assist.

Yours sincerely,

Sam Powrie,
Secretary, on behalf of the PortBUG.