Submission to the South Australian Transport Strategy, 2024.

On behalf of the Port Adelaide Bicycle User Group ('PortBUG'). 16/12/2024.

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Please Note: Apart from some minor editing, this slightly revised version of our submission to DIT includes additional explanatory notes under Recommendation 4.1 & indicated by **.

1. Introduction: I make this submission in my capacity as Secretary of the Port Adelaide Bicycle User Group (PortBUG). PortBUG is the oldest bicycle user group in SA. We work in a voluntary partnership with the Port Adelaide/Enfield Council to represent community needs & priorities & to support Council's development of effective active travel provisions across the very large PAE Council area (including building a connected Bicycle Network). We maintain a web page/blog and an active facebook forum (with approx. 400 members in all).

The recommendations made in this submission stem from our collective experiences over 3 decades as bicycle & active-travel users, as well as drivers & motor vehicle owners. They also reflect our particular experiences as residents of the extensive Port Adelaide/Enfield Council which takes up a substantial sector of Adelaide's northern & north-western margins as well as many of the city's major industrial areas.

2. Submission Context: Despite it's relatively small population, Adelaide ranks high in a list of the world's cities in terms of the size of its urban area (approx 90km long), which - with its relatively small revenue base - inevitably makes the development of an effectively networked & 'connected' transport system particularly challenging.

It seems obvious that transport strategies developed in the world's more compact cities may NOT easily translate into Adelaide's situation. It seems very likely that our transport planners will need to think 'outside the box' & develop quite unique & integrated 'large scale' strategies to meet the cities future transport needs!

Adelaide is a flat city! Although geographically large, it contains few hills & is a relatively easy city to ride in. It is in many ways ideally suited for the development of an extensive & connected secure bicycle network.

The creation of a comprehensive city-wide & thoroughly integrated Active Travel Plan to support development of such a network will be the key tenet of this submission.

3. Key Issues & Principles: Day-to-day bicycle transport generally meets commuting needs up to about 20km. Over such distances bicycle use is an extremely efficient, inexpensive, equitable, safe & convenient form of transport, particularly up to around 8km, which coincidentally is the travel distance of around 80% of daily motor vehicle trips across our city.

3.1. *Car-Replacement:* The bicycle use has the potential to replace a very significant proportion of day-to-day trips currently made by private motor vehicles, if given sufficient encouragement & infrastructure investment. Such an outcome would be of enormous benefit to our city & society:

- providing very significant health & productivity dividends
- radically & rapidly reducing traffic congestion (& associated pollution) at relatively small cost & virtually no risk to government

- ensuring a very significant resilience benefit & 'equity dividend' for large sections of our population unable to use private motor vehicles (particularly younger folk & the aged).
- significantly extending the 'reach' of public transport, particularly if bicycle travel incorporating both train & bus travel was made more accessible!

It is NO LONGER sufficient to simply see bicycle use as a 'life-style' choice or even as a 'default' transport mode for those unable to use or afford a motor vehicle. Multiple health, resource, resilience, security & ecological imperatives now clearly demand that transport strategies aim to provide *real alternatives for ALL transport system users,* including those currently utilising motor vehicle transport!

In our car-dominated transport culture, the overt principle of 'car-replacement' MUST BE the primary guiding objective & imperative underlying Active Transport planning & investment.

3.2. ***Qualitative Principles:*** Two key issues experiences by every bicycle user are **Continuity** & **Connectivity**. Continuity is directly related to the efficiency of bicycle travel & can be defined as the ease a bicycle user experiences when riding through an urban area. Connectivity can be defined as the ability to directly reach an intended destination along a particular route.
The two concepts are related & both are obviously closely tied to urban design & infrastructure. Because bicycle users are 'vulnerable road users', these concepts are also inherently dependent on perceptions of transport security & safety. An effectively connected bicycle route - for most cyclists - must also be seen as a 'safe' one!

'Continuity' & 'Connectivity' are the governing qualitative concepts by which the planning & implementation of an Integrated Bicycle Network must be guided & assessed! Their use in countries such as the Netherlands, Germany & the UK has ensured that city-wide networks are 'joined-up' & allow efficient travel by bicycle (combined with walking & public transport) to all metropolitan areas.

3.3. State & Local Gov't: ***Complementary Planning & Development Roles:*** A major planning principle for incorporating bicycle routes into our transport network must be their division into 3 hierarchical levels:
- **Local Routes:** enabling efficient bicycle travel within a suburb & between easily linked suburbs
- **Local Connectors:** enabling more extensive travel across Council areas between residential areas & major shopping/service centres & sports, schooling or recreational destinations
- **Inter-Urban Connectors:** often referred to as 'trunk' or 'arterial' connectors, these are the *most important* routes for commuting to work across one or more council boundaries. They also provide the *essential framework* or *network structure* upon which Local Routes & Connectors build! As such they have enormous potential for facilitating the development of a truly integrated active travel network & for facilitating realistic car-replacement choices for daily commuters!

In utilising this route hierarchy approach it's important to note & understand the complementary roles of both Local & State Government in development of a comprehensive bicycle network:
- **Local Government** will always be best placed to take responsibility for the development of Local routes & Local Connectors through the development & implementation of their own **Council Bike/Walking & Cycling** or **Active Travel Plans** *in consultation with* local communities
- **State government** is far better placed to provide for bicycle travel over longer distances via the development of the necessary 'suburban connector' & 'arterial' bicycle routes that cross one or more Council boundaries & functionally replicate the roles of arterial roads & highways. These routes must often take advantage or railway, drainage, roadside or similar reserve spaces that are State Government controlled!

The recommendations that follow reflect this complementary division of roles.

4. Recommendations:

4.1. That SA develop a comprehensive, city-wide active-travel/bicycle network plan for the Adelaide Metro Area as a planning reference & resource integral to it's Transport Strategy.

At present SA lacks any such over-all plan:
- it's major funding strategies for walking & cycling appear mostly limited to the funding of painted bicycle lanes on main roads & the relatively limited State Bicycle Fund, supporting those few councils with active bike plans via annual matched, project-specific funding
- DIT has published no comprehensive strategy illustrating a framework of potential 'trunk' or 'arterial' bike routes around which local government might develop their own local & inter-suburban networks ******
- the future of the very few long-distance 'legacy' routes commenced during the early 2000s appears entirely obscure with no clear or obvious direction or development schedule published by DIT! ******
- there appears to be no *compulsion* nor any *incentive* for councils to develop their own bike plans, nor any *accountability mechanisms* to ensure their implementation!
- there appears to be no overall-design strategy guiding the development of council-level bike plans that would ensure they effectively complement development of a coherent, city-wide network

As a result network development remains structurally & qualitatively inconsistent from one council area to the next & the the development of the 'trunk' or 'arterial' bike routes essential to an effective & integrated network remain very limited.

Particularly relevant examples of this lack of overall guiding strategy within the PAE Council Area are:
- the lack of a direct, long-distance secure (that is, largely off-road) route connecting the eastern end of the PAE area (& surrounding residential suburbs) with the Port CBD, coastal & Peninsula industrial precincts. Such a route would perhaps replicate the function of Gand Junction Road with regard to motor traffic!
- the lack of effective & safe connections between the PAE & Salisbury Council bicycle networks.

Both of these examples require state-government initiative & investment in major infrastructure, including possible 'bike bridges' over the Port River Expressway & sections of the Dry Creek Rail Yards! Such investment must start with an indication from State Government that it is willing to consider such investment (perhaps vis appropriate federal funding)! Thus we recommend a Comprehensive Integrated Bike Plan for Adelaide that identifies need for such arterial & trunk routes & the key infrastructure & investment targets required for their construction.

4.2. That the State Government require *all* Metropolitan Councils to develop & implement fully integrated Active Travel or Walking & Cycling Plans (as appropriate).

As mentioned, there appears to currently be no compulsion or incentive for Councils to develop & implement such plans, nor even to consult with their constituents to ascertain their 'active travel' needs! The absence of this requirement is no longer appropriate in the 21st century context, beset as our communities are by the pressures of declining affordability of transport, increasing inequity & health burdens & alarming ecological pressures! State Government has an essential role in ensuring that Local Government more generally takes up its essential role in building a more resilient, sustainable, healthy & equitable transport system!

4.3. That the State Government increase its investment in implementation of local bicycle network development via a major increase in the State Bicycle Fund.

At present the SBF sits at around $1.5-2.5M p.a. This is completely inadequate when the challenges facing even just those few councils actively implementing bicycle plans are considered. If the SBF is to adequately fund the development of integrated (& localised 'granular') bicycle networks within *&* across Council boundaries, as well as incentivise currently 'inactive'

councils to do more, then it must be increased substantially! Based on our own experience the PortBUG would recommend an increase to *at least* $6M p.a & preferably $10p.a!

5. Conclusion: Thankyou for the opportunity to contribute to this new Transport Strategy. There are many other issues we would have considered given adequate time & resources, perhaps most notably the need for state government to *engage much more consistently* with the community on key issues facing our Transport Future.

Sam Powrie,
Secretary,
on behalf of the PortBUG Coordinating Group & Members.