

The Hon Tony Abbott
Minister for Health and Ageing
PO BOX 450 , Manly NSW 2095
Tony.Abbott.MP@aph.gov.au

Topic: draft Australian National Cycling Strategy 2005 to 2010

Dear Mr Anderson

I write to you on behalf of Healthy Cities Illawarra regarding the *draft Australian National Cycling Strategy 2005 to 2010*. Healthy Cities Illawarra is a non-government organisation which is a part of the worldwide movement started by the World Health Organisation. We seek to improve the health, environment and quality of life for the Illawarra Community. We believe sustainable transport is one of the most pressing issues confronting urban Australia and for this reason we wish to comment on the draft National Cycling Strategy.

The draft, clearly identifies the key issues surrounding the promotion and development of cycling in Australia. It provides evidence for the importance of cycling from health, environmental and transport perspectives. The document sets out a compelling case for the need for a national strategy.

However, I am concerned that the document may simply remain that – a document unless it is provided with some teeth to overcome the inertia which has previously defeated attempts to seriously develop cycling in this country. I suggest that the document and therefore the strategy can be considerably strengthened by:

- a) the inclusion of measurable indicators
- b) an ongoing review and reporting process
- c) an allocation of financial resources for the implementation of an action plan,
- d) appointment of an intergovernmental body to develop and monitor the strategy's implementation, and
- e) a funding plan for the strategy.

Funding for strategies contained within the document is critical. At the local level there is often a willingness to trail cycle promotion initiatives however, major infrastructure costs such as cycleway constructions are beyond the capacity of local and state governments. Partnership funding is required from all levels of government.

It is with some concern that reading the draft of the *Australian National Cycling Strategy 2005-2010* reveals the statement that "it is not a strategy of the Australian Government (the Commonwealth)". We believe that Australia requires national leadership and commitment to complement and build upon the work being done to increase the level of safe cycling happening at the state and local levels. Many of the benefits of increased levels of cycling in Australia are of national significance such as more efficient use of our road system, reduction in preventable disease through increased levels of physical activity, improved quality of life, more efficient workforce and healthier and more active children.

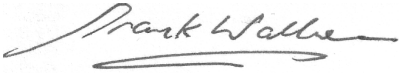
Better Health For All

63 Auburn Street Wollongong NSW 2500 Ph: (02) 4226 5000 Fax: (02) 4226 5339
Email: manager@healthycitiesill.org.au Internet: <http://www.healthycitiesill.org.au> ABN 83 964 176 052

We urge you to ask your department and ministerial colleagues to support changes to ensure that the final strategy includes funding, performance indicators and has a management and coordination structure which will enable the strategy to achieve its aims.

As Australia continues its rapid urbanization, cycling provides a cost effective investment method to impact favourably on transport, health, environment and quality of life for Australian citizens. I urge the government to accept and adopt the strategy with enthusiasm and funding commitment and begin the shift to undermine the car culture which is polluting our air, strangling our cities, making us fatter, more angry and stressed.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mark Waller". The signature is written in black ink on a white background. Below the main signature, there is a horizontal line that tapers at both ends, resembling a decorative flourish or a stylized underline.