



# Town and Country Planning Association Bulletin

Volume 8 Number 7

Home Page: <http://www.vicnet.net.au/~tcpa/>

November 2001

## **BRISBANE SHOWS THE WAY ON SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT**

### **Bicycle Locker Policy**

Theft and vandalism have been serious problems for 20 years at all capital city rail stations. Regrettably, very little has been done in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth to combat these problems or respect the rights of cyclists, as legitimate rail patrons, to have secure bicycle parking.

In contrast, CITYTRAIN in Brisbane has been prepared to invest in secure lockers, successfully reducing bicycle theft and vandalism over the last ten years. There are now 1700 bicyclists using lockers with a waiting list of a 1000 cyclists, and this is without conducting an expensive marketing campaign. There is a proven and growing demand for bicycle lockers from cyclists and motorists who now park a car at the station but would prefer to come by bicycle. Over much of the rail network local cyclist perceptions of their station has changed from being a place where bicycles are stolen or damaged to a place where bicycles can be securely parked.

A decade ago Queensland Rail accepted advice from its engineer responsible for inter-modal passenger facilities that the theft of bicycles was the overriding barrier to bicyclists accessing the rail system. This persuaded rail management to begin installing an average of 170 new lockers a year; there is now one free bicycle locker for every nine car parking spaces on the rail network. The obvious question is why are the lockers free when every other rail system makes you pay? The answer can be found in its engineer's 1993 report on the policy:

*"It was noted that that there was no charge levied for car parking spaces and the cost of the provision of a car parking space was considerably greater than the provision of secure bicycle parking. After due consideration of these issues, it was agreed that no charge would be levied for the use of secure bicycle storage facilities".*

Queensland Rail decision-makers recognised cyclists' 'rights of access' and that the bicycle was a 'vehicle' in traffic law and should be treated like the motor car. Brisbane's commitment has involved experimentation with various designs of racks and lockers at several stations, with bicycle users being consulted. Lockers are provided when funding permits and are assembled in the workshops of the Queensland prison system.

In 1997 the Integrated Regional Transport Plan for South East Queensland recommended that bicycle lockers be used to increase rail patronage as part of a demand

management program to reduce car dependence. This more recent commitment will apply for many years to come. The provision of free lockers in Brisbane is part of a larger program designed to increase access for wheel chair users and the disabled, and provide a higher level of security for rail patrons generally.

In 1979 Melbourne installed the first 32 bicycle lockers in Australia, but since then the provision of bicycle lockers has averaged out at a meagre 30 lockers a year. This is one of the reasons why the latent demand for bike/rail commuting has never been realised in Melbourne. Victorian management continued to pursue a discriminatory policy against cyclists by refusing to spend funds on lockers when car parking spaces cost three to five times more than a locker.

### **What is needed on the States' rail systems**

In 2001 the Brisbane rail system, which served 37,500 commuters on census day, provides 1700 lockers, which can be simply expressed as one locker for every 20 commuters. This is a useful target for other urban rail systems to achieve in the provision of lockers and other forms of secure long term bicycle parking.

### **Current and Needed Bicycle Locker Capacity in Capital Cities**

Rail system	Commuters	Commuters per locker	Bikes in locker	Locker Target
Sydney	207,794	371	560	9,410
Melbourne	97,900	155	630	4,435
Adelaide	7,780	70	110	352
Perth	19,743	48	412	894
<b>Total</b>	<b>333,217</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>1712</b>	<b>15,110</b>
Brisbane	37,500	22	1700	Growing demand

The table above shows the situation in the other capital cities and the number of secure lockers needed to reach the benchmark set by Brisbane.

At the moment there is no comprehensive data across all Brisbane low density suburbs to provide an accurate benchmark for a desirable ratio of car parking spaces to bicycle lockers. Inspection of six outer suburban Brisbane

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## **Brisbane shows the way of sustainable transport (continued)**

stations suggest that in the outer urban areas of cities rail systems should aim to provide in the order of one bicycle locker for every four car parking spaces.

Another useful benchmark is the ratio of car parking spaces to bicycle lockers on the entire rail system. While Brisbane stations provide car parking for 15,600 cars, and a ratio of car parking spaces to bike lock-ups of only 9 to 1, the Melbourne ratio is in the region of 46 to 1.

The provision of secure bicycle parking should be integrated into the long-term station upgrading and vehicle parking program, and into the development of all modal interchanges. The Brisbane experience demonstrates too that a successful strategy needs a committed engineer within the transport bureaucracy with a specific responsibility for inter-modal passenger infrastructure and operations.

There is a need for inter-state co-operation between all the rail agencies, both public and private, to provide cost-effective secure bicycle storage products that can be used Australia-wide. In Melbourne there is an urgent need for non-pickable locks on new bicycle lockers and the introduction of free bicycle lockers as in Brisbane today. However, the Brisbane design of the basic locker may be too costly if copied, because it is a Queensland prison workshop product that is clearly very labour intensive to produce. Australian rail agencies may be advised to look at the knock-down type modular locker built on a similar principle to lockers used on the Dutch rail system.

## **Melbourne Metropolitan Strategy**

The latest Metropolitan Strategy bulletin (Issue 3, November 2001) has confirmed that the draft strategy will not be released until the New Year. And the bulletin provides no evidence of the emergence of an integrated plan with any defined objectives. All we have so far are brief summaries of participants' inputs in relation to the nine topics selected for the Round 2 forums and of the series of consultants' technical reports.

It is, however, encouraging to find in the report on Emerging Principles and Directions workshops that a recurring theme was the need for "clear, measurable targets to be included in the final Metropolitan Strategy"

TCPA members should check the DOI website ([www.do.vic.gov/metroplan](http://www.do.vic.gov/metroplan)) for a summary of the Key Findings to Date which include community input and research data. The "emerging directions" include reduced car dependency, improved overall layout of Melbourne to enhance accessibility, and diversity of housing types and densities. The devil will be in the final strategy.

Proponents of sustainable transport and planning can only

hope that the final strategy reflects the research findings on transport and residential planning. In particular the TCPA is encouraged by the recognition of the social, economic and environmental costs of car dependency, the importance of well-planned and resourced activity centres, the inevitable role of medium and high-density housing, the need for high-density housing to be integrated with transport nodes, and that the average densities on the fringe of Melbourne are too low to be sustainable.

The latest bulletin includes a summary of five new technical reports. TCPA members are directed in particular to Technical Report 8 on Activity Centres. This is a key contribution to the strategy process and can be expected to have a major impact on the final draft. Full summaries can be down-loaded from the DOI website or obtained free from DOI bookshop. All reports can be read at municipal libraries or purchased from Information Victoria or the DOI bookshop.

## **The Victorian Walking Forum**

The TCPA was invited to attend the Victorian Walking Forum on 20 and 21 November where the keynote speaker was Rodney Tolley, Director of the Centre for Alternative and Sustainable Transport in the UK.

The Forum provided an opportunity for key stakeholders to learn more about existing international best practice in encouraging people to walk more.

Data presented showed how long people had to walk for the average door-to-door trip to work:-

1. Car trips resulted in 2 minutes walking.
2. Public transport trips resulted in 13 minutes walking.
2. Walking directly to work took 15 minutes

As the minimum amount of brisk walking needed to be healthy is 20 minutes a day, the health benefits of walking and cycling to work and walking to and from public transport are self-evident. Several speakers stressed the serious health consequences resulting from the decline in walking over the past 30 years.

Justin Madden, Minister for Sport and Recreation, announced that Cabinet had decided that his department would be producing the "Walking Action Plan". The TCPA will take any opportunity to contribute to this.

## **Melbourne's Open Space Strategy**

The TCPA has made a submission to Parks Victoria's Linking People and Spaces (see the September 2001 Bulletin).

A copy of the submission, which addresses the issues of open space and pedestrian/bicycle links, has been placed on the TCPA website.

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