



Victorian Greenhouse Strategy

The strategy is little more than general goals and a 'blueprint for action', and unfortunately provides little confidence that it can deliver on the government's commitment to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 7% by 2010.

The \$100 million package of '59 initiatives' announced in June 2002 consists largely of promotion, assistance, research and education measures, and lacks specific policies to cut emissions.

The biggest challenge facing the government is its continued commitment to brown coal energy generation. At the moment electricity generation contributes 55% of total net Victorian emissions.

The TCPA will be watching with interest developments affecting land use and transport. The association welcomes the commitment to introduce a minimum 5 star energy efficiency for all dwellings, something we called for under ResCode. However, only \$2.7 million has been allocated to initiatives for transport, which currently contributes to 16.1% of the State's total emissions. The strategy has promises alone, largely in the form of an 'Integrated Transport Investment Framework' and a series of Train, tram and Bus Plans (no Bicycle Plan) which, while having a target to increase travel on public transport by 20%, have yet to be developed.

The Committee will be reviewing the strategy more closely over the next few months and would welcome any comments or input from members.

Free copies of the strategy document are available from the Department of Conservation and Environment office, Level 23, Nauru House, 80 Collins Street.

National Transport Plan - AusLink

The TCPA welcomes the announcement by the Federal Minister for Transport of a 5-10 year transport infrastructure development plan, which will replace the 1991 Roads Agreement with one to cover road, rail and intermodal funding. Under the AusLink strategy, Federal land transport funding will be amalgamated and allocated to projects yielding the greatest benefit, regardless of transport mode. The announcement notes that 'Under the current approach, there are no effective arrangements that enable road and rail investments to be prioritised, planned and funded by governments in a cross-modal context.'

The TCPA would suggest that the new criteria be applied

to present freeway projects that have yet to be started.

A Green Paper is due to be released in August 2002. The Department of Transport and Regional Services website (www.dotars.gov.au/transinfra/Auslink.htm) has more information.

Inquiry into Local Government

The TCPA was invited to make a submission to the inquiry by the Standing Committee on Economics, Finance and Public Administration. Although the focus of the terms of reference is cost shifting on to local government by state governments and the financial position of local government, the association took the opportunity to comment on local governments's current roles and responsibilities (TOR no. 1) in respect to public transport planning and management of green wedges/belts.

Firstly, we have suggested that while the broad parameters of public transport planning should be set by State government, the detailed planning of services, particularly of local bus services, would be better handled by local government, which has closer knowledge of local conditions and needs.

Urban planners have described Melbourne as consisting of five separate cities: the inner city, the western suburbs, the northern suburbs, the eastern suburbs and the southern suburbs. Melbourne's public transport planning, and to some extent its operations, should be organised along regional lines to reflect this structure.

The suburban railway network and, to a lesser extent, the tram network provide the backbone of Melbourne's public transport. The bus network should provide complementary services, filling the gaps in the rail networks and providing circumferential, feeder and local services.

It was proposed that regional consortia of local governments would plan the bus services operating in their regions.

Secondly, we drew attention to the need for a more regional and strategic planning approach to the green belts and green wedges in and around Melbourne, and to the financial problems their management posed for individual shires and municipalities.

Green Games - Environment Framework

The State Government has at last released a

Commonwealth Games Environment Framework and appointed the Environment Advisory Committee. This should have happened over a year ago. It is now a rushed job; the Committee, which is charged with providing advice across eight 'key environmental performance areas' by 30 August, is requiring community submissions by 5 August 2002. There are no public hearings. The TCPA has accepted an invitation to participate in one of the 'key stakeholders' workshops, but has joined other groups in seeking more time for submissions.

The Framework is little more than a series of good intentions so far. Its outcome would seem to be compromised significantly by its following rather than preceding the selection of the Games' sites and the development of tenders for the facilities. This drawback is most evident in regard to sustainable transport and standards for the projects. Indeed the essential weakness of the process and its timing is best reflected in the Committee's third broad task to provide advice on 'Assessment criteria for environmental measures for infrastructure projects' when projects are in advanced stages of negotiations and both tender documents and bids for the Village remain commercial- in-confidence.

Members can register an interest and receive information via email cg.environment@dtscg.vic.gov.au or by calling 03 9666 4223. The Framework and Terms of Reference are on the website www.dtscg.vic.gov.au/cg_environment.

State Government Parklands Code

The Association has attempted unsuccessfully to obtain information on the latest timetable for the release of the promised Parklands Code. A draft was first mooted to be ready for official release as far back as Spring 2000.

Smogbusters and TravelSMART

Now that the Federal funding of the Smogbusters program has ended, The State-funded TravelSMART program becomes a key strategy to reduce the environmental impact of work-related travel. This program is designed to work with local governments to form a network of participating businesses.

The July 2002 Melbourne City Council report on its partnership with Environment Victoria's Smogbuster program 2000-2002 demonstrates the benefits of these local strategies. Its Green Transport Plan for MCC staff, two large businesses and a major public school, involving 2400 individuals, is estimated to have yielded significant reduction in vehicle-kilometres travelled, as much as 40% for one company's employees.

The full report can be found on the city's website (www.melbourne.gov.au) under the meeting schedule for the Environment, Community and Cultural Development

Address for Correspondence

The Secretary, Town and Country Planning Association, Box 312, Collins Street West PO, Melbourne 8007.

Committee for 9 July 2002.

Disappointingly, under the Victorian Greenhouse Strategy, the TravelSMART- Better Ways to Work program will receive funding of only \$150,00 p.a. in the next two years, and is initially limited to the City of Darebin.

Australian Transport Research Forum

Alan Parker is presenting two papers - on Brisbane's Cityrail bicycle strategy and power-assisted bicycles - at the forthcoming ATRF conference in Canberra. The November 2001 issue of the Bulletin carried a report on bicycle parking policy in Brisbane.

The second paper deals with potential for power-assisted bicycles to further sustainable transport in cities. The power-assisted bicycle (PAB) weighs only a few kilograms more than a bicycle and, as its name suggests, gives power assistance only. The most advanced electric PABs have electronically controlled power-assistance via sensors in the cranks linked to a computer chip, with automatic speed control to enable them to be safely used on shared footways. Future models can be mass-produced to run on renewable energy.

Most of the over 125 models of PABs sold throughout the world today are legally classified as bicycles. However, their sale and use in Australia is constrained by poor legislation. The paper describes the use and development of the PAB as a practical substitute for most urban car trips less than 10 km. Power assistance is estimated to reduce physical effort by 50%, making it easier to cycle in hilly cities, to carry loads and to enable the elderly to continue cycling.

The papers examines also (i) the potential market for power-assisted bicycles and (ii) a specific engineering opportunity to use Australian expertise in the design of clean two stroke engines to manufacture and export PABs.

Alan Parker argues that that once "state of art" PABs are classified as bicycles in Australia, a start can be made on realising their potential for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution, petrol consumption and congestion in cities.

Email Tree

The TCPA is keen to keep members informed by email of forthcoming events and opportunities for submissions. If you have not already provided us with your email address, please consider doing so.

Bulletin Contributions

Members are invited to use the Bulletin to report or comment on planning issues and initiatives relevant to the objectives of the association.