

Local road budget to include Warringah's cyclists

For immediate release

A fresh, green wind is blowing through Warringah Council, which recently voted to adopt a 'sustainable transport strategy'. Part of this strategy involves allocating 10 per cent of the council's road budget to the construction or upgrading of bike paths.

Cr Christina Kirsch, the instigator of both motions, is delighted, "this is a wonderful step forward towards creating the infrastructure we will need under a low-emission, post-carbon economy", she explained.

"Federal and state governments are too hampered by industry lobby groups to implement the policies or strategies required to deal with climate change and peak oil. At the local level, however, Warringah Council is planning for the future by providing infrastructure to promote sustainable, low-emission communities."

Cllr Kirsch emphasised the importance of cycling as a central component of a viable sustainable community.

"We have an integrated road network in our council area, yet what little cycling infrastructure exists is fragmented, incomplete and poorly maintained. In some places it is outright dangerous. Cyclists, who are trying to do the right thing, risk their lives if they dare to compete for space with trucks, cars and buses on our congested roads," said Cllr Kirsch.

"Warringah's infrastructure is already at breaking point, but the government's metropolitan strategy is forcing us to accept population increases. The economic and environmentally sound solution is to reduce the amount of private motor vehicle travel by providing better public and active transport options. For commuting to work and for local trips, cycling is a sensible choice, already embraced by many residents. Warringah Council has taken the first step to support these residents and to ensure that active, healthy transport is an available and attractive option to many more in the future."

"Active transport not only reduces carbon emissions and our ecological footprint, it is a great way to reduce the bulging waists of the many Australians who are grappling with increasing obesity. A recent study found a link between active transport use and reduced obesity in 17 industrialised countries across Europe, North America and Australia. Countries with the highest levels of active transport generally had the lowest obesity rates. Unfortunately, Australia is in the 'low active transport' bracket, despite having one of the best year-round climates for outdoor activity. It is the availability of suitable infrastructure, such as multiple, integrated and safe networks of bike paths, that encourages the lifestyle choices needed for a healthier and leaner community. Warringah has chosen to follow that path and pave a way to a more sustainable future", said Cllr Kirsch.

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Background

12.1 Notice of Motion No 37/2009 Sustainable Transport Warringah

Submitted by: Clr Dr Christina Kirsch at Warringah Council meeting on 25th June

Motion

That in order to facilitate a shift from private motor vehicle use towards the use of public transport and alternate transport (cycling, walking) council undertake to

- develop a 'Sustainable Transport Strategy' with the aim to reduce the use of private vehicle transport and encourage a shift to public transport and alternative transport (walking and cycling) for travel in Warringah by community and council

- develop a 'Travel to Work Strategy' for council and an incentive program for council employees and councillors who walk, cycle or use public transport for work and business trips

- include in the Community Strategic Plan under 'Living Spaces' the target to develop a network of safe, linked pedestrian and bicycle paths integrated with green spaces throughout Warringah

- give greater priority to cycle and pedestrian movements and amenity in Warringah
- promote green travel for council, community and major workplaces and venues in Warringah

- advocate state and federal government for a reform to the current federal tax system and options for salary packaging in order to encourage walking and cycling and the use of public transport over private motor vehicles

An amendment removed the related performance objectives and a reduction in council's fuel consumption, but let the rest of the motion pass as above.

12.4 Notice of Motion No 46/2009 Integrated Network of Cycleways

Submitted by: Clr Dr Christina Kirsch at Warringah Council meeting on 28th July

Motion

That Council:-

- allocate 10% of the road budget to the construction of cycle lanes, shared paths and bike paths in order to expedite the creation of an integrated network of safe cycleways for 2009-2010 and 2010-2011

- write to the four Northern Beaches State MPs raising the issue of the lack of an integrated and safe network of bike paths and commuter cyclist routes on the Northern Beaches and request their support and funding for the construction of a commuter cycleway linking Pittwater, Warringah, and Manly from the \$300 000 grant provided to them by the State Government.

Motion passed without amendment