



19 July 2021

The Hon Robert Simms MLC
Legislative Council
Parliament House
Adelaide SA 5000

Dear Rob

RE: Walking and Cycling Commissioner Bill 2021

Thank you for the opportunity to meet recently and to consider the proposed *Walking and Cycling Commissioner Bill*.

In principle, we support the proposal for a Walking and Cycling Commissioner for South Australia.

We know that politicians and the public agree that walking and cycling are popular activities that provide an opportunity to increase physical activity levels as well as provide alternative forms of transport.

A number of Ministers and their departments are currently supporting the development of a state-wide walking strategy led by Wellbeing SA and the Minister for Health and Wellbeing.

A Heart Foundation survey found that two out of three South Australians¹ support more investment into walking and cycling infrastructure. Valuable research² undertaken by the SA Government affirms that exercising for 150 minutes per week improves wellbeing and drastically reduces direct health costs. More cycling and walking also serves to achieve low emissions transport³.

¹ What Australia Wants, Heart Foundation, 2020. Accessed at https://www.healthyactivebydesign.com.au/images/uploads/Publications/201210_What_Australia_Wants_SA_Summary.pdf

² Active Lives Survey, Why Investment in Physical Activity Makes Sense, Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing, Government of South Australia 2020

³ environment.sa.gov.au/topics/climate-change/climate-change-action-plan-2021-2025

We see that the role of a Commissioner would provide an independent State voice that would facilitate the creation, development and implementation of opportunities for walking and cycling that meet the strategic objectives defined in the strategies. A Commissioner would give voice to advocate to the State the benefits, share research, and provide advice in the preparation of supporting policies, and in infrastructure decisions. A Commissioner would operate across government, fostering connections and enable collaboration between the multiple state agencies who have a role in active travel.

Our comments on the proposed functions are:

Function	Comment
(a) encourage walking and cycling as modes of travel	'Encouraging' is part of giving voice.
(b) promote the health, environmental, social and economic benefits of walking and cycling	These benefits have been supported by research. This role would promote this research and its application in policies and projects under consideration.
(c) to prepare and promote strategies to make walking and cycling accessible and inclusive for all people in the State, including by promoting the installation of walking and cycling infrastructure designed to facilitate safe and efficient walking and cycling	This function recognises infrastructure for more walking and cycling needs to be for South Australians of all abilities.
(d) to provide advice and assistance to Ministers, State authorities and other bodies (including non-Government bodies) on matters related to walking and cycling, including implementing the strategies referred to in paragraph (c).	Is explicit about who the Commissioner is to work with.
(e) to undertake or commission research into topics related to walking and cycling	Recognises the value of research specific to South Australia.
(f) to prepare and publish reports on matters related to walking and cycling	Sharing information enables better decisions. It will also facilitate the independent and continuous review and evaluation of any State wide walking or cycling strategies.
(g) any other functions conferred on the Commissioner by or under this or any other Act.	Supported.

Our organisations are bipartisan and support the establishment of this role with the government of the day.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any queries in relation to this matter.

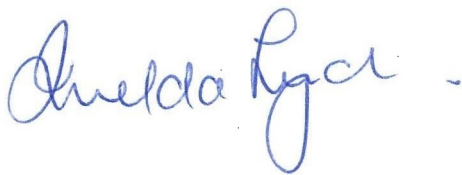
Yours sincerely



Helen Donovan
Executive Officer, Walking SA
E: helen.donovan@walkingsa.org.au



Katie Gilfillan
Chair, Bike Adelaide
E: chair@bikeadelaide.org.au



Imelda Lynch
CEO, SAINT Heart Foundation
E: C/- tuesday.udell@heartfoundation.org.au



Heath Edwards MPIA FAILA
Chair of the South Australian Active Living Coalition
E: heathed@hotmail.com