

Creating Transport Choices: A Call to Action

Transport
Action
Network



The Transport Action Network is calling on the:

- **State Government** to engage the South Australian community in the co-production of an integrated transport and land use plan that provides genuine transport choice for metropolitan and regional communities.
- **Federal Government** to fund South Australian transport projects based on the co-produced Transport Plan and independent assessment and approval of those projects.

Transport Choices: A Vision

All South Australians have genuine transport choices that are convenient, connected, affordable, safe and carbon-free now and into the future.

1. A Call for Change

South Australia does not have an overarching transport plan to guide transport services and infrastructure investments. Transport spending is ad hoc and focused on road building and road widening projects rather than efficient and convenient movement of people and goods. These road projects are not in keeping with good land use planning and operate to reinforce an unsustainable status quo. South Australia has no plan for decarbonising the transport sector and no plan to provide the full range of transport infrastructure and services required to meet the independent travel needs of a diverse and growing population.

South Australians have not been engaged in a deep, well-informed discussion about their transport future. Transport planning and decision making is opaque and lacks accountability with individual transport projects being presented to local communities once decisions have been taken and designs completed. No attempt is made to work with local communities to problem solve or garner their knowledge and local expertise at the outset of these projects. Projects are promoted to communities without sound supporting evidence or a broader long-term strategic transport context.

Over the past 70 years, transport and land use decision making has prioritised private motor vehicle travel and road freight transport. This emphasis has left South Australians with little choice but to use a car to access everyday destinations and share their frequently congested roads and neighbourhoods with heavy freight vehicles. This approach is exacting a high price not only for personal and state budgets but also in terms of individual and environmental health, social well-being, and the liveability of our towns and cities. It is time to go beyond the election cycle and bring the community into a conversation about a long-term sustainable transport future.

That discussion must include the full range of transport options and the pros and cons of different transport scenarios for all members of the community. South Australians have demonstrated they will use fast, efficient, convenient and frequent public transport services when these are available.



They have also demonstrated a keenness to walk, cycle, skate and scooter where there is safe, direct and comfortable infrastructure. City and near city South Australians have embraced ride share while vehicle share allows households to maintain high levels of access without having to buy a second or third car.

If all South Australians are to access employment and educational opportunities as well as social and cultural activities, we need a conversation about genuine independent travel and transport mode choice. If Adelaide is to maintain its reputation as a liveable city, we need to consider a sustainable transport network that integrates each mode to ensure seamless journeys that are timely, safe, reliable and affordable.

2. Guiding Principles

2.1 Access for Everyone

An inclusive transport network means making sure the needs of South Australians of all ages, abilities and life stages are well-served by our transport infrastructure and services.

Our transport network cannot be inclusive while we fail to acknowledge and count the journeys of a significant proportion of the population. South Australia does not have high quality, comprehensive transport data to rely on for decision making. The only data collected on a regular basis are motor vehicle traffic volumes on arterial roads, public transport boardings and, via the five yearly Census snapshot, journey-to-work. This means we don't know how many people walk, cycle, skate or scooter to education and employment, services and facilities, or social and cultural activities.

This failure means transport decision making is fundamentally biased. Decision makers continue to facilitate some trips while discounting or ignoring people who cannot or prefer not to drive. Entire segments of our population, (low-income earners, children and young adults, people with disabilities, the elderly) are denied independent mobility and must rely on friends, family members and community volunteers to meet their transport needs with a car.

By focusing on private motor vehicle transport, decision makers have long ignored the impacts of car journeys on the potential to use other modes and the cumulative impact this has on shifting people from active to sedentary modes of travel.

A first step in securing Access for Everyone is for transport planners to regularly collect and widely distribute data on all journeys.

2.2 Genuine transport choice

Transport choice means South Australians being able to access their destinations conveniently and safely by a range of travel modes.

There will be times when a car is the most convenient way to travel but car use should not be a requirement for everyday journeys and car ownership should not determine access or quality of life. Lack of transport choice often means multiple car ownership which places a significant financial burden on middle- and low-income households. This is especially the case for those living in outer-suburbs, the hills, peri-urban and regional areas where housing is often located away from public transport, employment and other services and facilities.

Further, the decisions of people to drive should not undermine convenience and safety for people who use other modes. High traffic volumes, whether on local connectors, metropolitan arterials or non-stop motorways, operate as significant 'mobile' and/or 'hard' barriers to people who walk, cycle, scoot, skate and access public transport. Genuine transport choice means destinations can be accessed conveniently, free from congestion, reliably, safely and affordably by a single mode or combination of modes.



2.2.1 Convenient

Land use and transport planning needs to ensure all households are in close proximity and have easy access by all modes to everyday services and facilities and high-quality public transport.

In new neighbourhoods, convenience requires locating housing within active travel distance of local centres and designing, constructing and regulating road infrastructure to ensure safety, directness and comfort to enable people to walk, cycle, scoot or skate. Public transport services must be provided as soon as new residents move in so they can quickly form sustainable travel habits rather than buying a second or third car.

In established neighbourhoods, convenience will require diversifying and intensifying housing in close proximity to existing centres, precincts and transport hubs. It will mean improving public transport, pedestrian and cycling access to and within major shopping centres. Importantly, convenience also means working with communities to create local road networks that safely include active travel access to and within activity centres and precincts to reduce the need for people to use cars.

High quality public transport means it must be frequent, reliable and comfortable. Transport planning must support, not undermine, the objectives of land use planning.

2.2.2 Connected

Connectivity requires establishing a network of routes for each mode of transport at the local, metropolitan, and regional scale that ensures efficient, safe movement by each mode and seamless transfer between modes.

A comprehensive, high quality regional passenger and freight rail network that connects emerging population centres and established townships to Adelaide will allow households and employers to locate outside the metropolitan area. A fast train to Mt Barker or even Murray Bridge as well as connecting the northern and southern passenger rail lines will enable fast, efficient movement across the metropolitan area and into the regions. Public transport services, whether light rail or buses, can only decongest our roads when they operate on their own right of way. Cycling becomes a medium distance mode (that is up to 15km) when safe, direct cycle routes are connected into a comprehensive network that links key destinations. Bicycle parking facilities at public transport stops and stations extend the journey ranges of both bikes and public transport services.

2.2.3 Affordable

Cost is not a barrier to accessing destinations.

In 2019, the cost of owning, maintaining and running a car was put at \$5,800/year for a micro vehicle and \$11,000/year for a large sedan. City apartment prices increase by \$40,000 to \$50,000 per installed car park. These are considerable burdens in a State with the second lowest median income of all Australian jurisdictions. The cost is exacerbated in regional centres and middle- and outer- suburbs where access to employment and education or social and cultural opportunities for all members of a household usually requires owning two or more cars. Car ownership should not determine quality of life or participation in social, economic and civic activities. On those occasions when people need to drive, vehicle share and ride share should be a convenient, easy option. South Australia's public transport system needs to be affordable.

2.2.4 Safe

South Australians should not have to choose between a safe journey and a convenient journey.

Infrastructure, regulation and education must be combined to ensure safety for everyone regardless of age, ability or travel mode choice. Safety encompasses feeling safe in traffic, being free from the threat of personal harm and enjoying a healthy, pollution free environment.



Photo: railtrails.org.au

2.3 Carbon-neutrality

Eliminate carbon emissions from the transport sector by reducing the need for private motor vehicle travel, and rapidly transitioning to low-emission vehicles and fuels.

The transport sector is responsible for approximately 20% of CO₂ emissions and this is increasing. Private motor vehicles account for about 60% of urban transport CO₂ emissions. Australia's vehicle emission standards are significantly worse than other developed countries. Emissions from light vehicles range from the newest and most fuel efficient at 180grams/km to the oldest and least efficient at 340grams/km. This translates to around 1 – 2 tonnes of CO₂ / 5000km travelled.

Electric and alternative energy vehicles will be an important part of our transport future but it is both unfair and physically impossible to expect all travel to be made by private automobiles. Maintaining and expanding road infrastructure to accommodate increasing freight and private vehicle traffic volumes comes at significant economic, social and environmental costs including bio-diversity loss. Over \$350m has been spent in the past three years on widening 10 intersections in metropolitan Adelaide while the final 11 kms of the South Road are estimated to cost \$10 billion or almost \$1billion a kilometre.

It will take a generation to transform the Australian freight and passenger fleet from fossil fuels to electric vehicles and we know Climate Change won't afford us that time. Aside from the emissions created in the production and operation of vehicles, the physical infrastructure has significant environmental impacts. Urban heat captured in road infrastructure undermines the liveability of our towns and cities while significant Scope 3 emissions are generated in the production, construction and maintenance of road infrastructure.

Guiding Principles

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Convenient

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Connected

A network of routes for each mode of transport at the local, metropolitan, and regional scale that ensures efficient, safe movement by each mode and seamless transfer between modes.

Affordable

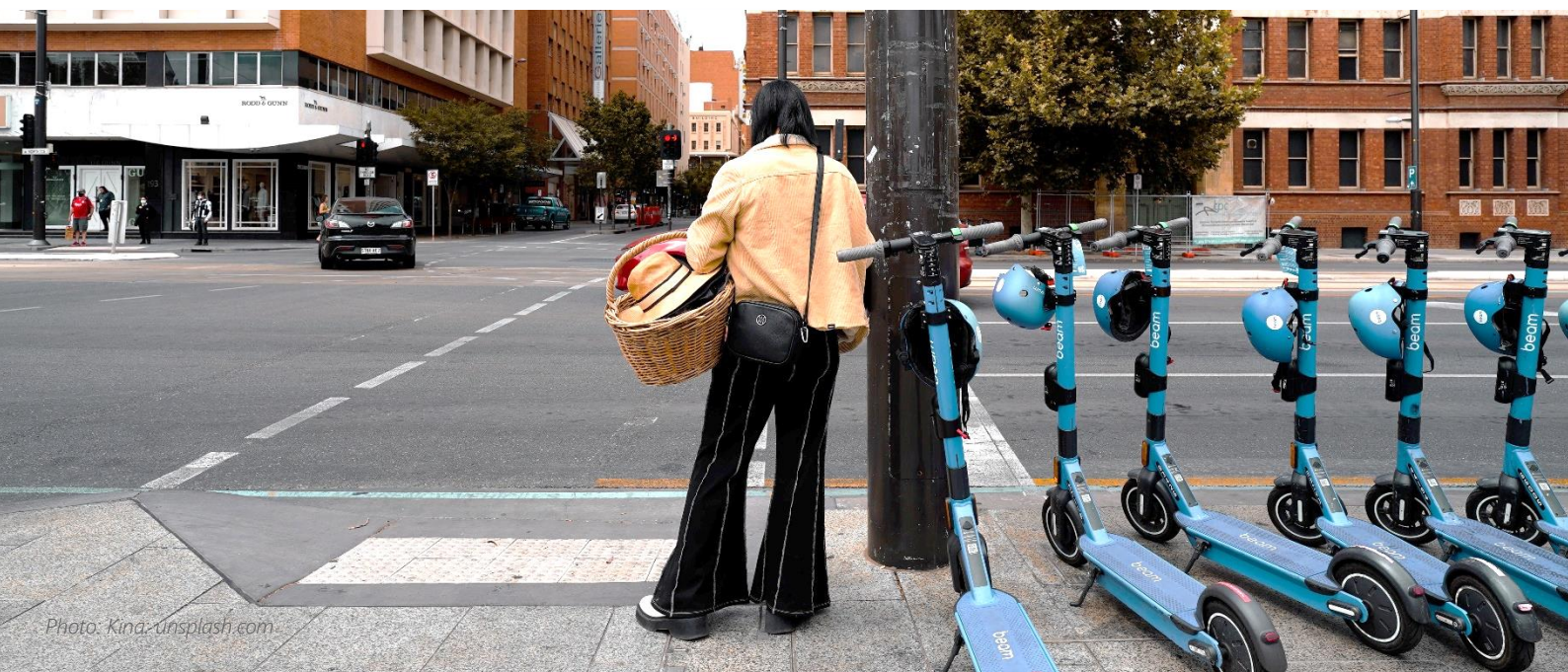
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Safe

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3. What will it take?

3.1 Creating the plan

Must be co-produced through a deep, properly informed, and responsive community engagement process.

3.2 Components of the plan

Three components of the plan should include the following.

- Overarching plan with headline targets and guiding principles to meet targets.
- Sub-plans for each mode with ambitious targets based on and explicitly linked to achieving the overarching plan.
- 4-year actions for each sub-plan with ranked priorities and timelines.

1.3. Governance

- Legislative reform and restructuring of the transport bureaucracy.
- Independent assessment of all new transport infrastructure to ensure they align with the Transport Plan.
- Alignment of the Transport Plan and associated funding across all three tiers of government.

Transport Action Network Members

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