

Two recent State-level strategies are grounds for hope

Two recent State-level strategies give hope that the government may start giving cycling the attention it deserves. Both the 20 Year State Infrastructure Strategy and Game-on, a strategy to “get South Australia moving” are positive developments.

The 20-Year State Infrastructure Strategy



[The 20-year State infrastructure strategy](#) delivers on a promise made by the Liberal Party before the last election. It is designed to promote a holistic, comprehensive and rational approach to decisions about how the State’s infrastructure should be delivered and managed. It was produced by Infrastructure SA, a new statutory authority that was also promised before the last election.

It’s just a pity that the strategy wasn’t produced before the election, given the rash of road widenings that the current government has enthusiastically jumped into. They would probably run foul of these “principles”:

- Optimise current assets before building new
- Made evidence-based planning decisions*
- Break down silos through integrated planning.

In relation to the first of these principles, the Infrastructure SA CEO recently pointed out to an on-line forum that easily the most effective way to deliver “shovel ready” projects to encourage activity during the current pandemic is to focus on maintenance and on small projects that don’t need a lot of planning.

While the importance of good freight links is stressed, so is the importance of an enviable lifestyle that will attract young migrants. The Strategy claims that active travel “will play an important role in supporting a liveable city”. And while good freight links between the South East Freeway and the North South Motorway are necessary “non-capital demand management solutions” (i.e. road pricing) should be explored before laying down more bitumen. Good luck on that one!

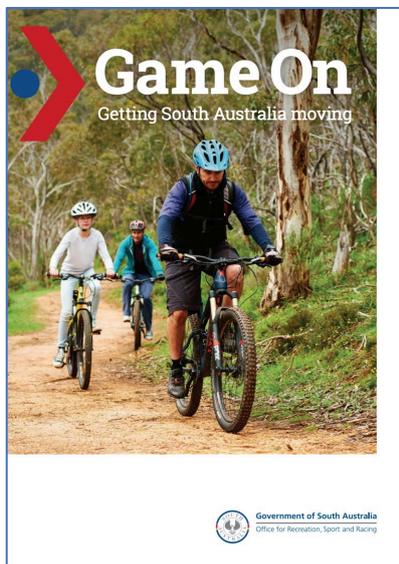
* The document notes: “Throughout the development of the Strategy, ISA has observed a lack of consistent rigour across government in the preparation of thorough business cases.”

The Infrastructure Strategy does not directly pay that much attention to cycling. Noting the contribution that active transport makes to a liveable city, it says that the State government, in consultation with stakeholders, should map a network for walking and cycling between residential and employment areas for the CBD and inner suburbs, as well as “key centres”, including rail interchanges. “This should be matched to a prioritised program of staged development on key active transport corridors, where feasible, parallel to rather than on arterial roads to minimise risks of conflicts.”

BISA will very happily work with the Government in planning such a network!

Game On

[Game On: Getting South Australia moving](#) is a state-level strategy document with the aim of getting 62% of South Australians to exercise at least 150 minutes a week within 5 years and 65% within 10 years. (The current figures is 58%.)



A great feature of *Game-On* is the way investment in active transport has been tied to health outcomes. ORSR commissioned Professor Simon Eckersley to [survey 3000 SA adults on their exercise activities and health status](#).

Dividing the responses into those who undertook more or less than 150 minutes exercise a week, he found that the more active had “had associated improved wellbeing, individual development, social connectedness and social capital.”

We all know that, of course. More valuable is the work undertaken to assess the savings to government of all those visits to the doctors, hospitals, etc. not taken by those who exercise more. Professor Eckersley found that, after controlling for age, engaging in more than 150 minutes of cycling a week would save the government over \$1,600 a year per person. If everybody exercised 150 minutes a week, the State government would save almost \$940 million a year. The hospital bill alone would be \$840m less.

Given that the strategy was prepared by the Office of Recreation, Sport and Racing, it is understandable that the focus is on sport and recreational activities. However there are a series of actions under a strategy called “Enabling places for active transport”

- Networks for walking and cycling that can be used by all ages and abilities [separated bikeways?]
- Improve the safety of pedestrians and cyclists involved in active transport. [Lower speeds?]
- Develop programs and make equipment available so more South Australians walk and cycle for commuting and active recreation. (Bike buddies, perhaps?)
- Increase the number of 'end of trip' facilities in workplaces and educational institutions such as bicycle parking, showers and lockers.

Fortunately it's not just DPTI and local councils that are put down as responsible for achieving this. ORSR also has its name against each of them, suggesting a new avenue of influence.