

Secretary to the Committee  
Select Committee on Public and Active Transport  
Parliament House  
North Terrace Adelaide SA 5000

Dear Secretary,

I enclose a submission from Unley Voices for Climate Action (UVCA).

UVCA is a group of Unley residents that was initially formed to encourage Unley Council to take stronger measures to act on climate change. We successfully put the case to Council to adopt a carbon neutral target for its operations by December 2023. We congratulate the Council for its leadership to the rest of our community.

However, Council operations make up only 1% of greenhouse gas emissions from the Unley community. So it is imperative we consider how our community can reduce its emissions.

Transport is the largest single source of greenhouse emissions from our community at 45% of all emissions. Once we were aware of the select committee we decided to hold a community forum and invite Unley residents and interested others to consider how we could reduce our dependence on private cars to meet our mobility needs.

Also cars inhibit the uptake of active transport through fear of injury, lack of space for pedestrians and restrictions on children's independent mobility. If we reduce the dominance of cars in our neighbourhoods we not only reduce emissions but also improve our health, wellbeing and community vibrancy through increased social connections, physical activity, child independent mobility, and families walking/cycling together.

The forum attracted 40 participants including the Mayor of Unley and three Ward Councillors. Our submission is a report from the community forum covering what we learned from speakers as well as written responses to questions put to all participants during small group discussion. A draft report was circulated to all attendees for comment before finalising and forwarding to you. The report is a summary of views of participants. We did not ask the elected officials in attendance to endorse the report, nor does it purport to represent their views or the views of Council.

During the forum we viewed an excerpt from a 30-minute documentary called Fixing Urban Planning: What Streets do you want? It is available [here](#). We recommend it to the Committee as an excellent insight into how a number of European cities constrained car use and promoted cycling and walking.

I have attached a copy of our meeting agenda and questions considered by participants.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Boorman  
On behalf of Unley Voices for Climate Action

“Reclaim our Streets: Imagining Alternative Transport Choices”

**Impacts from our car dominated transport system**

*Numbers of cars*

The private car population in SA is growing faster than the human population (ABS Motor Vehicle Census). 53% of households in Greater Adelaide had access to two or more motor vehicles, compared to 51% in Greater Capital Cities ([2021 ABS data](#)).

*Emissions*

Emissions in Australia from private cars contribute almost 50% of all transport emissions and these make up 18% of all greenhouse gas emissions. ([Climate Change Authority](#))

*Other Climate impacts*

Road surfaces are carbon intensive, non-porous and heat absorbing, magnifying adverse effects from extreme heat and rain events. Many road-widening projects entail the removal of mature trees. Electric cars are better but are sources of toxic pollution from vehicle braking systems and the wear and tear of tyres and roads.

*Public Space*

Private cars take up 4-8 times more space on our roads than active and public transport options. We give over large areas of public space in our residential streets to the almost exclusive use of the private car leaving inadequate space in many streets for pedestrians, mobility devices and trees.

*Loss of access*

Residential suburbs are being ring fenced by wider and busier roads.

*Schools*

Rates of active travel to school among primary school age children in Australia and South Australia are among the lowest in OECD countries with about 22% of students walking to school. ([Garrad, J 2016](#))

*Financial costs*

Very large amounts of public money are spent on “congestion busting” infrastructure that gives yet more space to the private car.

*Our future*

What will our environment and residential communities be like in the long term if we continue to give priority to private cars over alternative mobility options?

## Why is the private car used over other transport options?

*“Build it, and they will come!”*

We invest far more in car-based infrastructure than active transport. The state budget papers identify \$7.83billion to be spent on roads over four years (or \$1.96billion/year) compared to public transport projects totaling some \$34.5million/year. The total spending on bicycle infrastructure is difficult to accurately identify in budget papers.

*Unfettered access*

People can drive their private car down almost any street in Adelaide without restriction. This means public spaces for walking, socialising and other activities are lost.

*Road conditions are not safe enough to encourage most commuters to cycle*

Over 60% of people say they would ride a bicycle more frequently if they perceived it to be a safe option. (City of Unley: Walking and Cycling Plan 2022-2027). Their biggest concern is the speed and proximity of cars. The rate of pedestrian and bicycle fatalities hit by cars are 80% at 50km/hour 40% at 40kms/hour and 10% at 30km/hour. (Based on World Health Organisation ‘Speed Management Manual’ cited in City of Unley: Walking and Cycling Plan 2022-2027). Reducing car speed is essential.

*Lack of Continuity*

Excellent bikeways exist (Marino Greenway, Mike Turtur and Outer Harbour) but apart from Frome Road, there are no separated bikeways in the CBD. Unley has a well-networked series of bikeways and offers a calmer riding experience yet rider numbers are only increasing incrementally over the years. The lack of bikeways separated from cars into and out of Unley is likely to be a significant disincentive.

*Lack of connectivity*

There is insufficient connectivity between different transport modes. Rail lines from the South West, South East, West and North are not interconnected. Only a limited number of bicycles can be taken on each train (with payment of a fee in peak periods when demand is greatest, adding to the already high cost of travel) and there is no such facility on buses or trams.

*Neighbourhood trips*

People drive their car for even very short trips. Local supermarket car parks have large areas given to car parking and minimal facilities for bicycles and other mobility devices.

*Car sharing*

Car sharing is a relatively new and under-utilised mobility service. Most Councils are not yet providing the car parks necessary for these services to operate in their community.

*Which mobility options to choose?*

Mobility options that are safe, convenient, reliable and cost effective. Most people choose private cars most of the time because they perceive them to best meet these criteria.

## **Ideas from participants on how we can improve access to other modes of transport and reduce dependency on private cars**

### **Ease congestion by making alternative modes of transport more attractive to users**

We do not have to convince every driver to change to another transport mode to ease congestion. Consider how less congested our roads are at peak commuting times during school holidays. For change to come about, the alternatives to using a car need to be perceived as a better choice based on a combination of cost, convenience, safety, reliability and enjoyment.

### **Improving public transport**

The day before the forum a resident from the Northern suburbs who wanted to attend the forum contacted the organisers. She did not own a car and her only means of getting to the forum was by bus. She told us it was very difficult for her to reach events on the other side of the city as it involves more than one bus connection, which is even more problematic at nighttime.

However, a participant who did attend stated “the current bus system is well designed and only needs increased frequency. Routes that go through the city are excellent but need a numbering system to make this obvious”. These responses indicate that there are differing views about how fair the current bus system is with some suburbs seemingly better serviced by public transport than others.

Another participant stated that public transport fares have increased twice in 2019, and there is no daily fare cap in Adelaide (unlike in other Australian cities). “A full fare for 2 hours is now \$4.05 and with slow connection times those who rely on public transport are disadvantaged financially. For example, if I take the train to and from work, then go out in the evening in the city I pay  $\$4.05 \times 4 = \$16.20$ . The daily fare cap in Melbourne is \$9.20 and of course has much more frequent and better-connected public transport. They are investing millions in their train upgrades at the moment.”

Ideas to improve public transport so that it is used more widely included:

- More dedicated priority bus lanes to reduce travel times;
- More high frequency bus services at peak times;
- Reduce or eliminate fares to make public transport a better financial choice compared with using a private car;
- Improve connectivity and continuity across different modes of public transport so that travel across all parts of the city and suburbs is efficient and reliable at all times of the day;
- Train and tram stations, trains, buses and bus shelters must be safer, weather protected, convenient and accessible for all public transport users. Pedestrian crossings should be located close to each service and ramps always available for wheeled mobility devices such as wheelchairs and prams;

- Poverty and distance reduce choices and need to be countered by ensuring all residents can travel across greater Adelaide using affordable and reliable transport options; and
- Restore public transport to public ownership acknowledging that it is a public service essential for the smooth and equitable functioning of our society and economy.

**Significantly increasing the number of bike commuters by building bike ways physically separated from cars that allow rapid movement across the CBD and metropolitan area up to 15kms from the city centre**

Adelaide's weather and terrain is well suited to cycling all year round. Our city has great potential to increase the numbers of commuting and recreational riders. However, this will only happen if safety issues are addressed and bikeways are physically separated from cars. Bikeways must enter and leave the city from all points of the compass and connect with similarly constructed bikeways along secondary suburban roads or dedicated bicycle paths.

Space for separated bikeways could be created on some roads by reducing lane widths for cars. Research has shown that reducing lane width sharpens drivers' attention leading to lower crash rates. ([Bigger Isn't Always Better: Narrow Traffic Lanes Make Cities Safer](#) Subha Ranjan Banerjee and Ben Welle 2016)

Other ideas to improve the uptake of cycling, particularly for commuters, included:

- Address end of trip needs for bicycle commuters with safe parking and storage – sufficient dedicated spaces within office buildings, undercover facilities, apartment buildings and multi storey car parks;
- More bike racks in public areas and in local shopping precincts; and
- More bike racks for bikes and other mobility devices on trains, trams and buses

**Give priority to pedestrians, cyclists and other active transport in our residential streets**

Whilst this is not the case at law, cars are top of the hierarchy of road users on almost all roads. Pedestrians are last. In most residential streets, we could flip this hierarchy to give pedestrians and other road users first priority. Cars will be permitted but only on the basis that they give way to all other users as is the case in most European cities.

If this happened, we can reconsider how our street space is designed and used. Environmental, social and health benefits could flow from streets that are greener, more accessible and offer space for activities other than solely as thoroughfares for cars. Clearly car speeds would need to be reduced to 20-30kms/hour discouraging drivers from using these streets as a short cut between main roads.

This change would address a principal concern of the 60% of people who say they would ride their bike more often if car speed was reduced and the distance between cars and other users is increased. (City of Unley: Walking and Cycling Plan 2022-2027) Parents would also be encouraged to allow their children to cycle or walk to their local school.

Reduced car speeds, increased tree canopy and access to streets for walking will provide an added incentive for residents to walk to local shops and community services rather than use the car.

Another way to make residential streets safer for walkers and cyclists is to allow cars to enter or leave a designated residential zone but not drive directly from one residential zone to another using residential streets. Cars would have to use a main or secondary road to cross residential zones.

Such a move would lead to the return of local shops and cafes within residential communities. This could potentially build more engaged and socially connected local communities.

### **Schools**

A [longitudinal study](#) of Australian children's active travel patterns found that between 1971 and 2013, the percentage of children who were driven to and from school every day grew from 25 per cent to between 50 and 63 per cent. Among primary school children, the figure is more than 70 per cent. It would be surprising if these findings were not still relevant today.

At the forum we heard from two students from St Thomas Primary School, Goodwood. The students told the forum how their school significantly increased the numbers of students riding their bikes to school by surveying students and parents about transport to and from school, conducting safe cycling education for students and providing covered areas and sufficient racks for storing bikes at school.

In the UK, the School Streets Initiative entails the closure of streets around the school at school drop off and pick up times. [Brunswick East Primary School](#) in Victoria took up this idea and piloted the closure of part of a busy street for ninety minutes during school pick up and drop off times.

Other ideas from participants to promote non-car school commuting included:

- clearly designating school walking and cycling routes and reducing car speeds during school arrival and departure times along these routes;
- “walking and cycling buses” along designated routes with students led and supported along their journey by two or more adults; and
- volunteer monitors at intersections along school routes to assist students to safely cross roads.

### **Car sharing**

The forum heard from Alice about her experience using car-sharing services in Adelaide. Alice does not own a car and mostly rides her bicycle and uses public transport. Occasionally, she needs to use a car for longer trips or for moving larger items. Currently, Alice must cycle several kilometres to reach a share car. Although she has spoken with her local council, there are currently no dedicated spaces for share cars to be parked closer to her home.

Car sharing offers cost effective and timely access to a car for people who do not own a car or who may own a car but only occasionally need to use a second.

There is one car-sharing operator in Adelaide. A previous operator closed its Adelaide operations because it could not establish satisfactory arrangements with local councils for parking its share cars.

Car share cars can also be hybrids and EVs (further reducing carbon emissions), especially good if they are coupled with EV charging stations as they are in Adelaide CBD. As Alice said “Car sharing is great for the environment because as someone who lives car free, I exhaust all other modes of transport before booking a car. Can I walk? Can I ride? Can I catch public transport? The car-sharing model is successful when there are enough share cars for the users. Currently cars in the CBD book out on Saturdays, giving me limited flexibility and spontaneity (as well as a decent commute to pick one up).”

If share cars are more widely available they can reduce the need for people to own one or more cars and start reducing our car population. This would be of particular benefit in inner and near city suburbs, freeing up public space used by parked cars. Car sharing might also be a suitable transport option for businesses and local councils who need access to cars less frequently. These cars could be parked on business or Council premises and available for staff as well as the public. Such a model could also work at supermarkets where there is plenty of car parking space and share cars can be used to transport shopping back home.

### **Other mobility options**

Aaron uses a mobility scooter and who was not able to attend our forum, as he does not travel at night due to the distance and personal safety concerns. He made the following suggestions to us by email:

- make train and tram crossings wide enough for mobility aids to cross without having to use the road;
- road, train, and tram crossings need updating to cater for the aged and people with a disability.
- sheltered rest stops to get cover from the rain to increase travel in winter
- power point stations to get a recharge, would be best suited near public toilets/ refreshment areas
- footpaths are getting narrower, and becoming more of an obstacle course - shop signs, trees, bins, bus stops, rideshare scooters (moving and not)
- less barriers blocking access to bikeways, it prevents mobility aids accessing them; and
- action is needed to stop cars parking on footpaths and/or across footpaths.

E-scooters, mobility scooters, skate boards, roller blades and other mobility devices are all potentially suitable for use on our residential streets if cars must give way to all other road users. Small electric vehicles such as e-tuk-tuks or the new e-postie van could also be used for journeys in the neighbourhood. These might be privately owned or operated on a share basis

as is presently done with e-scooters. Infrastructure for these mobility devices needs to be designed and developed so that they can be collected and stored in appropriate locations.

### **Walking**

In addition to the changes proposed above to encourage walking in our local neighbourhoods, forum participants suggested that pedestrian lights are activated at each traffic light cycle to minimize waiting times for pedestrians. In other words give pedestrians equal priority to cars at traffic lights.

### **Education**

To change people's behaviour around using their car will require comprehensive community consultation and engagement programs along with education and marketing campaigns. For example, consider the effort that has been required to change people's attitudes to smoking. Similar efforts are now required on this issue. There will be a need to clearly explain what we all gain, not just what some people may lose.

In the video we watched at the forum, the planners asked people "What kind of street do you want?" This is a good starting point for a positive discussion about changes to car use in residential streets.

### **Advocating for and incentivising change**

Appoint a Minister for Active and Public Transport to provide leadership and steer the government's actions to increase the uptake of public and active transport options.

Residents have had recent experience of poor community consultation practices on road widening proposals from the Department for Infrastructure and Transport. This leads us to believe that the current department will find it difficult to balance the requirements of cyclists and pedestrians with those of cars. A clear mandate for change must be made by government to ensure all government departments support and enact it.

The government should consider laws that put primary responsibility for collisions on drivers when sharing the road with users of alternative private mobility options that are slower and more vulnerable than cars. This will send a clear message to car drivers they must make appropriate adjustments to their driving behaviour.

In the lead up to the 2022 Federal election, The Asia Pacific Society for Physical Activity in partnership with WeRide! Australia published [Three Transport Priorities](#) and presented these to the two major parties. The priorities are; lower default speed limits, 1500m school zones and e-bicycle subsidies. Why? Because "business as usual transport costs Australia \$57billion/year from road traffic crashes, congestion and inactivity.



## **How we all benefit if we reduce the dominance of the car in our streets and cities**

1. Improved mobility for all residents irrespective of whether or not they own a car or where they live.
2. Reduced greenhouse gas emissions released into the environment.
3. Reduced traffic congestion on our roads and more efficient traffic flows as a result.
4. Reduced noise pollution and cleaner air.
5. Improved health outcomes from higher levels of participation in cycling and walking.
6. Positive impacts on livability and social connections in our local communities and cities.
7. More choice in determining whether it is necessary to purchase a car to meet mobility needs.
8. Potentially reduced total household transport costs.

# **Reclaim the streets!**

## **Imagining alternative transport choices**

6.45 for 7pm - 9pm Tuesday 23 August  
Goodwood Community Centre

### **FORUM PURPOSE**

- a. To inform Unley residents of current actions to develop a more community driven integrated transport and land use plan for Adelaide
- b. To provide an opportunity for Unley residents to share their ideas on how greater transport choices can be realised in our community and in Adelaide more widely.
- c. To assist UVCA develop a submission to the Legislative Council Select Committee on Public and Active Transport

### **AGENDA**

1. Welcome and acknowledgement of country
2. Why we need to Reclaim our Streets! – Andrew Boorman UVCA (5 mins)
3. Cities for people – Lessons from two European Cities (Film excerpt) (12mins)
4. Creating Transport Choices: A Call to Action – Donna Feretti (10 mins)
5. Three local stories about transport choices (20 mins)
  - Student Bicycle Commuters – Christian O’Dwyer & students St Thomas Primary School
  - Share Car experiences from Melbourne & Adelaide - Alice Clanachan
  - My New Electric bike - Jessie Macgillivray -
6. Group discussions at tables. (45 mins)
7. Report back on top three issues per table (10 mins)
8. Thank you and close (9pm)

## Questions for discussion and response

Do we need to improve access to alternatives to the private car for mobility within and across our communities?

Yes/No

What are your main reasons/concerns?

Air and carbon pollution from cars	Public space taken by private cars
Not everyone has a car or can drive	Healthier lifestyle with active transport
Safety issues	Other

What specific actions will increase participation by making public and active transport safe, accessible, convenient and reliable?

Walking eg to shops and within the neighbourhood?
Cycling to work and for longer trips
E scooters, Gofers and other mobility devices
Car sharing schemes
Buses and trains

Do you support the following actions to make active and public transport more safe, accessible, convenient and reliable?

Action	Yes/No	Comment
Reduce speed limits in residential streets to 30km/hour or less.		
Reduce speed limits for designated school cycling and walking routes.		
A network of separated bikeways that allow safe and efficient journeys into and out of the city for at least 10kms		
Reduce the lane width for cars on residential streets and increase space for walking, trees, and vegetation		
Pedestrian priority precincts through which cars can travel at only 10kms/hour		
Dedicated bus lanes with high frequency services		

Any other ideas or comments?

*That a select committee of the Legislative Council be established to inquire into and report on public and active transport with particular reference to—*

- (a) the availability and quality of public transport, including:
 
  - (i) infrastructure and services in metropolitan and regional areas;*
  - (ii) the impact of fares and frequency; and*
  - (iii) the efficacy and impacts of on-demand public transport.**
- (b) the role of government in enabling and encouraging active transport, including:
 
  - (i) measures to enable more participation;*
  - (ii) the effect on community health and wellbeing;*
  - (iii) the effect on climate change mitigation; and*
  - (iv) measures to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists.**
- (c) the use of e-scooters and potential opportunities for expansion or further regulation;*
- (d) any other related matters.*