



Community Alliance
South Australia
Engaging for Reform

“Is Adelaide’s Transport on the Right Track?”

Report on the Public Forum
Held on Monday 8th September 2014
At the Burnside Council Ballroom

“There needs to be a shift in thinking towards planning for people rather than simply reproducing old transport engineering solutions in response to the whims of out-of-touch politicians” says Dr Wilmore, Secretary of the Community Alliance SA.

“The current debate on liveability and sustainability isn’t being translated into Adelaide’s transport planning – this forum is designed to provoke public debate and bring it directly to the politicians.”

(From the Community Alliance SA media release 25th August 2014)

Attendance

Around 120 people attended the forum and among them were a number of politicians and councillors including Vincent Tarzia MP, Adrian Pederick MP, Mayor Michael Picton, Cr Lynton Vonow, Cr Jane Davey and Cr Sophia MacRae. Other attendees included Melissa Ballantyne of the Environmental Defenders Office, Dr Michael de Percy, Senior Lecturer in Political Science at the University of Canberra, and Darian Hiles of the Australian Civic Trust.

Many representatives from Community Alliance SA member groups came along as well as other members of the public, and many were armed with the big transport questions they wanted to ask the keynote speakers and Q&A panel members.

Introduction to the forum and its purpose

Dr Helen Wilmore, Secretary of the Community Alliance SA introduced the Forum by saying:

The Community Alliance SA is hosting this forum to bring some meaningful debate on major transport planning issues. For instance, this would include aspects that the public never even gets to hear. For example, we are having a freeway foisted on us that goes through the heart

of Adelaide. This is in the absence of any real debate on whether freeways actually reduce congestion or, as many experts believe, they simply fill up and become congested again. Many people would also not realise that the government view that a rail freight bypass route around Adelaide is uneconomical has been seriously questioned by expert studies.

So often, the Government announces planning policies for political reasons, without any proper analysis or alternatives having been presented for expert and community feedback.

The current emphasis on road building, for example, is going to give us a freeway running through the city and flies in the face of trends overseas and the community's desire for more sustainable and people-oriented transport solutions.

Everywhere, people are talking about liveability and sustainability, but this isn't being translated into our transport planning. We are still seeing old engineering solutions to modern day problems. This is not planning for people with the people.

The Community Alliance SA hopes this forum will provoke the much-needed public debate and bring it directly to our political leaders so that they will take appropriate action. To that end, we have brought together transport planning experts and politicians to give us their views and answer questions on the critical issues facing Adelaide today.

Facilitator

Ian Henschke, ABC Radio and current affairs presenter. Ian did a magnificent job as facilitator, introducing the keynote speakers and facilitating the Q&A session.

Our favourite quotes from Ian: *"I have never seen such an assemblage of experts in their field"* and *"We need to see more of this kind of debate because the Adelaide of today will be very different in 15 years' time and we are about to see a very different place."*

Keynote speeches

The Powerpoint presentations from the keynote speeches are available on the Community Alliance SA website at www.communityalliancesa.org.au.

Transport futures – development of the north-south corridor



Honourable Mark Parnell MLC

Mark is Parliamentary Leader of the SA Greens and has qualifications in law, economics and planning. He campaigned in the 1990s as part of a Community

Transport Coalition against the "Third Arterial Road", later to be known as the Southern Expressway. He also wrote a short book entitled "Greening Adelaide with Public Transport", which made the case for a carbon price and a city car park tax amongst other things.

Mark talked about the Metropolitan Adelaide Transport Study ('MATS Plan') from 1968, which had recommended the extensive building of freeways through suburban Adelaide. Many of the valued areas of today would now be covered with freeways if the Plan had gone ahead.

Although the Plan was abandoned, the north-south corridor freeway is now being built piece by piece. Mark told us how building more roads won't make our lives better and that it simply leads to traffic expanding to fill the available space. Many cities around the world are removing their freeways and investing in alternative ways of moving people around.

Our favourite quotes: Holding up a copy of the MATS Plan, Mark said *"Transport planners went berserk drawing freeways all over the metropolitan area.....It was a freeway frenzy that was going to destroy neighbourhoods and suburbs"*, and *"Our roads are clogged with passenger vehicles and this is mostly in the peak hours. We don't have a traffic problem, we have a people moving problem."*

Development of the north-south corridor



Dr David Bray

David is a transport planner and economist with extensive experience in the development of transport in Adelaide, including as a consultant to the Department of Planning, Transport &

Infrastructure. He is now an Adjunct Associate Professor at the University of Queensland.

In talking of the failure of government to develop a considered strategy to increasing traffic levels when the MATS Plan wasn't taken up, David said that 'if people believe that building roads creates traffic, then not building roads doesn't stop traffic'.

The problems never went away and road development occurred by dribs and drabs. The north-south corridor is being developed as a set of 8 different projects rather than there being an actual strategy. There is no evidence that a full range of options has been

identified and properly examined, including potential solutions like elevated and underground roads, alternative corridors and free and tolled roads. David spoke about what should happen from this point:

- It is reasonable to expect government to publish all past work
- Indicate the extent to which they considered strategic options
- Report the results of benefit-cost analyses
- Restart the examination of the section from Regency Road to Darlington on an integrated basis and with a full review of strategic options and their respective merits

Our favourite quotes: *"If we don't learn from history, we're going to repeat it"; "The current approach has been piece-meal, incomplete and non-transparent.....Good transport planning is comprehensive, complete and transparent", and "The planned Torrens to Torrens section of a 13 lane road is a dislocation with not so many benefits. Could there have been a better solution to the current plan? It's hard to imagine that there is not."*

Rail freight through SA



Mark Ward

Mark is an elected member of Mitcham Council. He was the Chair of its Rail Freight Task Force and is now on its Rail and Transport Committee. He has been a strong advocate for the views of residents adversely

affected by freight trains travelling along the Adelaide Hills Line.

Mark spoke about the current rail freight route through the Hills and suburbs and how this has some of the tightest curves in the world for freight trains. In the last 10 years, the rail freight has increased in length, weight and frequency, leading to significant problems with noise, traffic delays at level crossings, health and safety issues and associated costs. 85% of these trains don't even need to go into Adelaide.

Mark spoke of the significant and wide-reaching financial benefits of building a northern bypass as proposed, which go above and beyond those considered by the federal government report that concluded a bypass would be too expensive. The current rail line is going to be at capacity 11 years from now. This is not far away and most people would see the urgency in starting to plan for an alternative freight train route now.

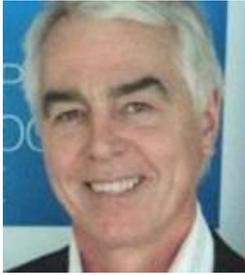
The community and local councillors have spent years researching and advocating the need for a bypass. Mark said that they now have a platform on which to take great steps forward:

- A bypass for rail and road needs to be built
- The rail & road committee will again begin to lobby on the community's behalf
- Your support and involvement is critical

Contact railfreightbypass@gmail.com.

Our favourite quote: *"The community is responsible for the Rail Freight Task Force study. We wouldn't have this if there wasn't a community group driving it"*.

Adelaide at the crossroads



Simon Molloy

Simon is Director of his economic consulting business Systems Knowledge Concepts. He is an economist with 20 years experience and has been involved for over 10 years in an advocacy role for the proposed rail freight bypass.

Simon questioned the narrow focus of the Adelaide Rail Freight Movements Study, which concluded that the proposed rail freight bypass was uneconomical. For example, the study only looked at a 30 year time frame and didn't extend to looking at the national benefits in the form of improvements to national transport infrastructure, or to overall transport efficiency in the Adelaide city

and metropolitan areas. He spoke about the complexities of cost benefit analyses and the need for these to come from a holistic approach to transport infrastructure planning. This should include the costs and benefits over the life of the project and framing the evaluation appropriately in terms of the region, the state, or the national perspective.

Freight levels are set to increase with truck traffic predicted to increase by 50% and rail freight expected to jump 90% between 2010 and 2030. Infrastructure Australia has called for a new national freight strategy to be developed, saying that rail and road freight infrastructure planning and investment can no longer be undertaken in isolation from each other. Simon said that Adelaide could become a national transport and logistics node, with the necessary infrastructure funded by commercial investment.

Our favourite quotes: *"We need to think about moving away from the Adelaide metropolitan area being a thoroughfare for major freight transport"* and *"We need to think holistically about transport infrastructure. If we think about the bigger picture, we will get more benefits"*.

Trams in the 2013 Plan



Professor Derek Scafton

Derek was the Director-General of Transport for South Australia for 25 years and is now Professor of Transport and Planning at the University of South Australia. He has extensive research interests including in the performance of public transport.

Derek spoke of the Government's plan to develop an inner metropolitan tram network as described in its Integrated Transport and Land Use Plan of 2013. He pointed out some of the positives of the proposed network including that it picks up the busiest corridors. However, the proposal needs to be treated as a long term vision and there are technical issues that need to be addressed such as whether

the corridors are capable of handling tram tracks as well as everything else that is planned for them, for example on-street parking, bicycle lanes and parking for increased density development. The tram network proposal needs to be considered as part of a strategic framework. In particular, the redesign of bus routes along with the tram routes will be a large and difficult task. Derek also raised the question of where the capital for the tram service is going to come from and said that the proposed north-west route deserves the highest priority.

Our favourite quotes: *"Many people thought it would be terrible to take cars out of Rundle Mall because it would no longer look busy"* and *"The plan for a tram network is conceptually interesting, financially challenging, but certainly visionary. The next step will be important"*.

Q and A Session

The keynote speakers were joined in the Q&A session by:

Andy Milazzo, Deputy CEO of the Dept of Planning, Transport & Infrastructure

Daniel Bennett, City Design and Transport Manager at Adelaide City Council

Corey Wingard M.P., Opposition Minister for Transport

Kevin O'Leary, Urban planner and commentator

Mark Borlace, the RAA's Senior Manager of Mobility and Automotive Policy



Ian Henschke posed questions to the panel that had been submitted by the public and also took questions from the audience as well as adding some of his own:

Q. When will policy makers embrace cycling as a fundamental aspect of public transport and hasten the implementation of a comfortable, safe network for all riders, including the implementation of a proper bike share system?

Ian Henschke added that a 'stop' sign has been moved in the Burnside area affecting the relationship between cyclists and cars.

A. **Andy Milazzo** replied that he doesn't like to see poorly implemented bike schemes and said that sometimes the implementation is not as good as the intent. The government has been gradually putting in place facilities for cyclists and this is part of its draft Integrated Transport and Land Use Plan.

Mark Parnell replied that the availability of bicycles is not the problem. The problem is that they're not being ridden because people don't feel safe riding on the roads.

Q. A question was asked about whether we should look overseas for good examples of transport planning and whether 10% of funds from transport projects should go towards non-car dependent transport projects.

A. **Kevin O'Leary** replied that it's a great idea to use some of the transport funding for projects that encourage cycling for example. He said we need to look at the sort of initiatives around the world where cities are aiming to be car free or less car-dependent.

Q. Does the RAA have a coherent car and cycling policy and does it ask its members what its policy should be?

A. **Mark Borlace** replied that the RAA surveys its members on cycling and has about 100,000 members who are cyclists. It is the discontinuous nature of the bike system here that is the major inhibitor to cycling. The RAA supports cycling because it solves some of the congestion issues. He said that we need to look at corridors and decide whether they are going to be cycling-dedicated corridors.

Q. Ian Henschke asked whether any great transport policy ideas from the forum tonight had grabbed the attention of anyone on the panel.

A. **Corey Wingard** replied that as Shadow Minister it has been fantastic for him to engage with transport stakeholders across the board and that he has also spoken with many groups. He said that balance is needed to be able to judge how much you can spend on projects.

- Q. Ian Henschke asked Corey what transport project he would undertake if he was in government.
- A. **Corey** replied that he is going to look at all the ideas and then decide which is the best one. As Opposition Spokesperson he can't pick a project.
- Q. Ian Henschke asked the audience for a show of hands for which of these 3 projects they would most support – safe cycling networks, the proposed tram network or a rail freight bypass.
- A. **The audience** supported a rail freight bypass with the vast majority of audience members preferring this option.
- Q. Adelaide's planning focuses on buildings and concrete etc. How do you change human behaviour when you haven't got money to spend on concrete? Do you need to change working hours so that people aren't all travelling at the same times of day?
- A. **Daniel Bennett** replied that travel behaviour and how we get to work are very important. 95% of people use cars to get into the city and so only 5% don't drive. We want to increase this 5%. Adelaide has 29 north-south oriented traffic lanes to get cars through. But 65% of people don't feel comfortable riding bicycles on the roads. The Council is looking at cross city connections. There is a plan for council to deliver more bikeways. These need to be connected and this takes time and money.
- Q. Would there be enough physical space to accommodate new tramlines on significant arterial roads such as The Parade and Unley Road, without the disruption of growing car traffic from suburbs further afield?
- A. **Derek Scrafton** replied that it would require councils working together with the state government to decide whether they want trams on a particular arterial road or not. They don't necessarily have to follow the arterials and this contingency was made in the (Integrated Transport and Land Use) Plan. Ultimately there has to be a decision about whether the community wants this or not, and whether we want cycle lanes or parking at the side of these roads. We need to look 30 or 40 years ahead.
- Q. Freight trains are now 1.8km long and can block 3 level crossings. Can you add this to the compelling reasons for a bypass for the freight trains?
- A. **Mark Ward** replied that there are many compelling reasons why the freight trains should be bypassed around Adelaide. If there was a bushfire and a freight train was blocking 3 level crossings in the night, what would people do?
- Q. What about trolley buses instead of trams?
- A. **Derek Scrafton** replied that trolley buses are a technology that still works. They came in because trams can be too rigid. There are handicaps to trolley buses including that the overheads have to be carefully designed because of extremes in temperature. The technology does still work and shouldn't be forgotten about.
- Q. People are worried about population growth, high-rise and the future of transport in Adelaide. Are people in the community going to be able to live, go to work and park? How can we reassure people about the future?
- A. **Andy Milazzo** replied that we are fortunate to live in a democratic society. There are good processes whereby we can express ourselves. The government has tried its hardest to engage on the Integrated Transport and Land Use Plan and has done this better than before. He said that we can still do better.
- Q. With speed limits for freight trains raised to 90kmh there is a greater concern about particulates in the air and whether trains are able to stop when a car is on the line. Taken as a comment.
- Q. Ian Henschke said that it's not always about transport policy and said he wanted to ask about the inability of humans to change. How do we change the behaviour of people?
- A. **David Bray** replied that as cars became more fuel efficient, people simply bought bigger cars. In reality, people do respond to advertising and promotion. You can modify behaviour if you focus on the right things.

Q. Alex Pey of the Aurecon Group based in Melbourne has said that in some countries such as the US, a strong rail freight market has kept truck traffic through cities at manageable levels. Elsewhere, in Europe and Australia, freight rail has lost most of its market share. This has led to higher levels of truck traffic and intensified traffic congestion. Is there any way we can turn this around?

A. **Simon Molloy** replied that we need to look at the situation holistically. If rail becomes more cost-effective then freight will shift from the roads. Using the Adelaide metropolitan area as a freight route raises the cost of moving freight. Lots of costs need to be brought in that haven't been considered yet.

Ian Henschke replied that there seems to be a consensus strongly in favour of a freight bypass being a big ticket item to spend the money on.

Q. 4,000 kilotonnes of freight are transported by rail and 19,000 by road into Adelaide. In 5 years, these figures will double. Does the panel support asking the government to look at a joint road and rail corridor via Mallala and Two Wells?

A. **Most panel members** indicated that they supported a rail freight bypass or a joint road and rail bypass.

[Unfortunately it wasn't possible to capture every question and answer in full. The Community Alliance SA has taken all reasonable care to ensure the accuracy of this information, but cannot guarantee that there are no errors.]

Concluding statements

Dr Helen Wilmore, Secretary of the Community Alliance SA, concluded the Forum by saying:

It's clear from what our expert speakers have said that the state government needs to move away from announcing major transport projects and simply consulting on the minor details.

It is still possible to investigate and implement more sustainable alternatives to building a multi-lane freeway through the heart of our city, and to move Adelaide away from being so dependent on cars and roads.

We have created a display at the back of the Ballroom on cities which have removed freeways or are aiming to be car-free and we hope to have this information available online in the near future. It shows that many urban freeway projects have been stopped worldwide due to realisation of the enormous damage they would do to the fabric of cities. San Francisco scrapped many of its plans for freeways in the 1950s and is now part of the growing movement to tear down the freeways it did build. The city of Hamburg in Germany is focussing on dedicated bicycle and pedestrian paths in a green network that will cover 40% of the city.

There are clearly better alternatives to the Government's current plans for the North South Corridor and it's not too late for these to be considered. The Community Alliance SA wants to see communities and experts given a genuine opportunity to review the pros and cons for alternative solutions and different options for dealing with traffic congestion.

In addition, we want the Government to carry out a thorough study into a rail and/or road freight bypass around Adelaide.

It is also essential that future major transport projects are developed through thorough research and debate, including into alternative solutions, with meaningful input from experts and the community.

I hope this forum has helped to bring about a change in Adelaide's transport planning.

Tom Matthews, President of the Community Alliance SA, thanked the keynote speakers and Q&A panel members, and presented each of the keynote speakers with a bottle of wine. Tom also thanked Ian Henschke and congratulated him on doing a magnificent and very professional job as facilitator.