FUTURE OPTION

National Coordination for Cycling and Walking in Australia and New Zealand

4 December 2017

Purpose
Outlines the findings of a review of the National Cycling Strategy 2011-2016 (NCS) and the operations of the Australian Bicycle Council (ABC) and the new arrangements for the coordination of action on cycling and walking in Australia and New Zealand.

Background
The ABC was established in 1999 with members drawn from federal, state and local governments, New Zealand and the cycling industry and users. Since 2010 the secretariat for the ABC has been federally funded and housed within Austroads.

The ABC’s role has been to oversee and coordinate the implementation of the NCS, provide a forum for information sharing, develop an information repository, and ensure Austroads guidelines adequately addressed design requirements for cycling.

The role, form and need for the ABC was reviewed through discussions in the second half of 2016 led by a Reform Working Group. A review of the NCS and the ABC was undertaken by the Australian Government in early 2017.

The reviews found that:

• The ABC had been beneficial for information sharing and achieving positive outcomes for cycling through inclusions within the Austroads guides;
• These outcomes were highly valued by stakeholders;
• The work of the ABC was operationally focused, resulting in limited time available for the consideration of more strategic objectives; and
• The NCS did not achieve the aspirational objective to double cycling over five years.

In March 2017, the members of the ABC held a strategic planning day to consider the Australian Government review of the NCS and consider a range of options developed by the Reform Working Group for a replacement group/committee.

All parties agreed that the ABC should not continue in its current form. This paper outlines the way forward for a new group to collaborate on and coordinate cycling action at a national level.
Key points of agreement

1. It’s time for a fresh approach to national cycling and walking coordination

The Australian States and Territories, and New Zealand (“the jurisdictions”):
- Acknowledge the successes achieved and challenges faced by the former Australian Bicycle Council (ABC) in implementing the National Cycling Strategy;
- Agree that it is time for a fresh approach to national coordination on cycling matters; and
- Agree that walking is also an important active travel mode that needs further attention nationally and from individual jurisdictions.

2. More walking and cycling is in the national interest

The jurisdictions:
- Agree that providing for and encouraging walking and cycling is essential to the liveability and economic prosperity of cities, towns and regions throughout Australia and New Zealand, and for the health of its citizens;
- Commit to working within their own jurisdictions and collaboratively in the national interest of both countries to implement strategies and actions that will rapidly improve the conditions for and uptake of walking and cycling on transport networks and for recreation; and
- The Australian jurisdictions will continue to seek the engagement and support of the Australian Government for walking and cycling initiatives and programs so that the nationally significant economic, health and other benefits that a vibrant walking and cycling culture can bring to Australia are realised.

Title

The working title for the group is: Cycling and Walking Australia/New Zealand (CWANZ).

Initial focus on cycling, expand to include walking

The initial area of focus will be national coordination of action on cycling. Given the strong synergies with walking, which does not have national coordination, expansion of the scope to include walking will be undertaken in two years time.

Strategic vs operational focus

The group will focus on a small number of strategic actions which deliver outcomes that are in the national interest and that cannot be delivered effectively by jurisdictions working alone.

Operational matters, such as input to the development of technical design guidance through Austroads, will occur through existing jurisdictional and Austroads arrangements. It will be part of CWANZ’s role to ensure this occurs.

Purpose/mission statement

The purpose is:

To collaborate in the national interest to implement strategies and actions that will rapidly improve the conditions for and uptake of walking and cycling on Australia and New Zealand transport and recreation networks.
Objectives

The objectives of the group need to cover topics that meet the needs of members across Australia and New Zealand. The following high level key objectives and accompanying explanations are a starting point for discussion. A final work program will need to be discussed and agreed to by the new group once established.

It is critical that only a small number of high value and well defined projects are chosen to be actioned – perhaps one action item per objective. This will ensure the highest impact and deliverability given the limited resources available.

1. **Cycling and Walking as an integral element of liveable, healthy and productive communities**

Make the case for cycling and walking as integral to the design, function and future of our cities, towns and major centres.

Some key considerations: the role of cycling and walking in ‘place-making’ and ‘new urbanism’ approaches, and its integration with broader land use and regional planning; as well as multi-modal transport options. The potential for cycling and walking to reduce traffic congestion and pollution making cities quieter, cleaner, healthier and more liveable.

2. **Increased investment in cycling and walking from all levels of government**

Clearly demonstrate the business case for increased levels of investment in cycling and walking.

Some key considerations: strategies for identifying, monetising and realising the economic benefits at local, regional, state and national levels and presenting the business case to decision makers in a way that is persuasive and influential and gets results. We also need to maximise investment in cycling and walking infrastructure through positive provision policies, the most cost-effective way to rapidly expand networks.

3. **Applied innovation and learning**

Learning from each other through information sharing and collaboration just makes sense. It’s cost effective and saves duplication of effort. Learnings from trials of innovative approaches and demonstration projects in one jurisdiction reduce development and implementation time for similar approaches in other jurisdictions.

We can also learn from the best international experts through study tours, facilitated workshops and international collaborations.

As new technologies emerge, we need to understand their implications and be prepared to respond and leverage their potential.

4. **National consistency and harmonisation**

Consistent approaches are essential to ensure that a truly national approach is taken, while also enabling innovation (as per objective 3). The Group will enable high level coordination of design standards and guidance via relevant agencies, participation and usage data that is comparable across jurisdictions, input into Regulations relevant to cycling and walking and input into related national agendas and strategies such as the Australian Government’s Smart Cities initiative.
**Membership**

A key learning from the ABC review has been the impact of limited membership from outside government transport agencies. This resulted in the ABC being largely unknown outside of government and restricting opportunities for stakeholders and advocacy groups to contribute. A greater diversity of ideas and discussion can be achieved by expansion of the group, for example:

- One Director, General Manager or equivalent level member from each state Transport Planning Agency (NT, WA, SA, VIC, TAS, ACT, NSW and QLD). For the smaller jurisdictions the level of representation may vary;

- One Director or General Manager level member from New Zealand;

- Three Director, General Manager or equivalent level members from Local Government;

- Three to five Director, General Manager or equivalent level members from advocacy groups (e.g. the Cycling Promotion Fund and other cycling advocacy organisations, Australian Automobile Association, New Zealand Automobile Association and Heart Foundation); and

- One Director, General Manager or equivalent level member from the Australian Government as an observer.

In total the group would have a membership total of between sixteen and eighteen, which is a manageable number that will enable robust and purpose driven discussions and actions. All members will have a clear role to form a two way communication chain between the Group and their respective organisations.

Each State, Territory and New Zealand will select their relevant member from their own agency. The Local Government and Advocacy membership will be selected via an Expression of Interest process that is open and transparent and overseen by the Chair with a selection of representatives from the States and Territories.

**Governance**

The Group will be chaired by a State or Territory member via an internal election process. The chair would have tenure of two years before a new chair is elected. The chair will be supported by an executive group of up to five other committee members to drive action in key areas.

A full time Secretariat will be provided with two year tenure and will be based in the same state and office as the Chair. A clear Job Role Statement will be developed to provide functions and objectives for the role and the person appointed will work solely on CWANZ activities.

The meetings will be held once a quarter resulting in three to four meetings per year. These meetings will rotate around the capital cities in Australia and New Zealand and video facilities will be provided for those who cannot travel to the meetings. Between the face to face meetings tele/video conference will be utilised to progress discussion on particular initiatives.

For particular topics, Working Groups can be established with membership from outside of the main Group, but the Chair of the Working Group will be a member of the main Group.
Funding
A relatively small amount of funding will be required to fund the Secretariat position and associated travel ($200,000 per year). The cost can be covered via a pro rata cost sharing arrangement between the States and Territories.

Each member will fund their own travel costs to attend face to face meetings and tele/video conferences can be funded by a host agency.

There will be a limited need for relatively low budget research projects which can be funded by donor agencies/organisations (singularly or in collaboration) who will then project manage the project with input from all members.

The existing ABC website will remain as a static site without updates while the new Group reviews operations over the first 12 months. Wording will be added to the front page of the website to articulate that the site is under review and is not being updated. No funding will be required for this change as the necessary work will be undertaken while the existing Secretariat service is in place.

National Strategy
There is no immediate need for a new national cycling or walking strategy. In fact the development of a new strategy in the short term would detract the group from delivery of the key objectives. The immediate aim is to reset the group and achieve tangible outcomes. The need for a new national strategy will be reviewed after the initial two years of the new group’s operation.

Timeframes
The selection of State, Territory and New Zealand members can take place during January 2018 and the Expression of Interest process for the remaining members will start in February 2018 and conclude in April 2018. The new Group would then formally commence in May 2018.
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