

Adelaide is falling woefully short of realising its potential to be Australia's cycling capital, argues **SAM POWRIE**.

Our cycles of neglect

THE State Government's vocal support for the Tour Down Under stands in sharp relief to its virtually ignoring bicycle use for the rest of the year.

The state's poor record in developing Adelaide as a cycling-friendly city is ably summarised in Tim Lloyd's article "Cycological Warfare" in *The Advertiser* last Saturday.

Fostering much greater use of bicycles for everyday, "active transport" would provide this city's transport system with enormous resiliency and extra capacity at very little public cost.

We will need both resiliency and extra capacity over the coming years as the profound impacts of oil depletion take hold on every aspect of our lives.

Fuel is relatively cheap at present, but it is clear we are at the bottom of a cycle that will again swing upwards over coming months.

In November, the International Energy Agency's new World Energy Outlook report made it clear that Peak Oil is a reality, stating that production of conventional oil will decline at a rate of 6.7 per cent a year over the coming decade.

To maintain current levels of production, let alone meet increasing demand from the developing world, would require production equivalent to another six new Saudi Arabias by about 2020.

This simply is not going to happen and with no new production, supplies of conventional oil could halve in about 11 years, taking us back to the 1970s and driving fuel prices through the roof.

Although increasing price volatility is likely, we could easily see peak pump prices of \$2 or \$3 a litre. Think about what this might mean for the residents of Adelaide, indeed for all South Australians.

We live in an almost entirely car-dependent city that is now about half the size of Los Angeles, the fifth largest urban area in the U.S.

We have only one train route to the north and south, and conditions for travellers on both are poor by any standard. We have no train or tram services at all to our eastern suburbs and are only just starting to talk about renovating services to our western and Hills residents and about new transit-oriented housing and industrial developments.

Our bus services travel at less than half the frequency they need to if they are to be useful to the population at large and we still - after two terms of Labor government - have no secure, city-wide cycling network.



BUMPED: Funding for cycling paths and bicycle parking is a fraction of that spent interstate. **Picture:** JESSIE HERTZ

Indeed, the principal framework of our cycling strategy, the Green Travel Corridors proposed for Adelaide's existing rail and tram routes, have received no funding support at all in the current Budget

and cycling funding appears to be ratcheting down year after year.

While the Government wastes no opportunity in talking up its enthusiasm for the economic, health and social benefits of "active trans-

port", it is found sorely lacking at Budget time.

South Australia's spending on cycling paths and bicycle parking is a small fraction of what is spent interstate, despite increased bicycle

use promising positive outcomes for several areas of ministerial responsibility, including health, social inclusion, transport and sustainability, our Premier's own portfolio. The message is clear, but it seems no one is listening.

In terms of investment in essential cycling infrastructure, SA is now at least a decade behind most other capital cities in Australia.

This is particularly so when it comes to establishing the secure cycling routes needed by many residents who want to use their bikes but are simply unwilling to compete with the cars and trucks crowding our main roads.

SA desperately needs some real leadership when it comes to more sustainable approaches to key transport issues yet it is very clear that all our Government is interested in is pandering to the car and truck lobby.

Unfortunately Peak Oil is likely to be a significant concern for many of us in 2010, particularly for families on the urban fringe struggling with daily transport and living costs.

I can't help thinking that real leaders would understand that in the face of an oil production decline of 6.7 per cent, a car-dependent "business as usual" view of the future will not be a viable option.

WE NEED to reduce the extreme oil dependency of Adelaide's transport system and the best and cheapest way to do this is to provide credible funding for development of cycling infrastructure in the next Budget.

We need \$3 million a year for the next decade to establish Adelaide's Green Travel Corridor Network. We need at least \$1 million a year just to establish secure and up-to-date bicycle parking facilities at all our railway stations and major service centres. And we need at least \$2 million each year just to maintain existing bike lanes and fill in all of the "gaps" at intersections and the awkward bits on our road network.

This all adds up to about three times SA's current cycling budget and is still less than expenditure in Western Australia every year for the past decade.

Adelaide has the potential to be Australia's cycling capital but, despite the annual TDU hoopla, this will remain a fantasy while our Government is fixated only on the Tour and neglects the needs of residents the rest of the year.

□ Sam Powrie is chairman of the Bicycle Institute of SA

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CYCLING SPENDING BY THE STATES

SOURCE: CYCLING PROMOTION FUND JANUARY 2007

STATE	POPULATION 2004 (MILLIONS)	PARTICIPATION IN CYCLING 2005	INFRASTRUCTURE SPENDING FOR CYCLING FACILITIES P.A.	PER CAPITA SPENDING	TARGETS
NSW	6.721	8.9%	\$8.66 million	\$1.29	200km cycleways a year from 2000 to 2010.
VIC	4.963	11.5%	\$19.3 million	\$3.89	Promoting Smarter, Healthier Travel Choices, speeding up completion of the Principle Bicycle Network (2500km).
QLD	3.888	9.9%	\$16.7 million	\$4.30	Increasing the proportion of all trips made by bicycle by an additional 50 per cent by 2011 and by 100 per cent by 2021 (from 2003).
WA	1.978	10.7%	\$9.75 million	\$4.93	Completing the Perth Bicycle Network (750km completed in the metropolitan area), increase cycling to 8 per cent of all trips in Perth by 2010 and 11.5 per cent by 2029.
SA	1.533	10.4%	\$3.1 million	\$2.02	Safety in Numbers - a cycling strategy for South Australia 2006 to 2010, doubling cycling trips by 2015 (from 2006).

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