



## Climate Council of Australia

Submission to: Call for ideas to help reduce transport emissions

Addressed to: Net Zero Unit,  
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development,  
Communications and the Arts

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# Goals matter: setting objectives for transformative and equitable passenger mode shift

Passenger transport emissions from cars and light commercial vehicles account for the majority of transport emissions (62 percent in pre-COVID times) (DCCEEW [2023](#)). Decarbonising passenger transport therefore, is a key part of reducing emissions from the sector. Fortunately, the solutions are readily available today and waiting to be implemented.

While accelerating the uptake of electric vehicles is important, simply electrifying every fossil-fuelled vehicle will not achieve the rapid emissions reduction in transport needed this decade. We need to transform how we get around, from a car dominated system to one oriented around shared and active transport. Countries around the world are making significant progress on sustainable mobility, with funding commitments and mode shift targets which should serve as inspiration as Australia develops our Transport Net Zero Roadmap and Action Plan.

## Structurally shifting public investment toward active and public transport

Future investment on shared and active transport and roads should reflect the changes we need to see across uptake of these modes. For this reason, the Climate Council recommends 50 percent of transport budgets be dedicated to public transport and 20 percent for active transport, in line with international best practice (Climate Council 2022; UNEP 2016). Funding for accessibility of transport and built infrastructure must also be embedded in this expenditure.

Increased expenditure on active transport and/or public transport has been committed to in countries including Ireland, France and Scotland. Wales is leading the way on a moratorium on future road spending, while California is making changes to planning processes to prioritise a reduction in vehicle miles travelled, and France is ceasing new and expansionary airport projects (for details see Table 1 below). The Australian

Government's Transport and Infrastructure Net Zero Roadmap should be focused at this scale of effort, driving significant structural shifts in transport planning and delivery.

Table 1: International examples of structurally shifting transport investment and prioritising the movement of people

Location	Policy intervention	(Planned) outcomes:
Ireland	<p><u>Increased percentage expenditure on active and public transport</u></p> <p>Between 2020-2025 - Ireland will spend 20 percent of the transport budget on active transport (€336 million), with a split of 10 percent on biking and 10 percent on walking (Programme for Government - Our Shared Future <a href="#">2020</a>).</p> <p>Between 2021-2030 - Ireland will spend 46 percent of the transport budget on public transport, 11 percent on active modes and 43 percent on roads for car use (National Development Plan <a href="#">2022</a>). Including: €11.6 billion allocated to new public transport infrastructure, €3.8 billion over 10 years allocated to public transport protection and renewal, and €3.6 billion for the delivery of nationwide walking and cycling infrastructure, including Greenways.</p>	<p>500,000 extra daily walking, cycling and public transport journeys will be delivered by 2030, 1,000 km of new and improved walking and cycling infrastructure by 2025 (National Development Plan <a href="#">2022</a>).</p> <p>Policy contributes to the goal of reducing transport emissions by 51 percent by 2030 (from 2018 levels) and full decarbonisation by 2050 (see the <a href="#">Climate Action Plan 2023</a>, pp.183-203 for more detail) and mode shift targets (see Table 2).</p>
	<p><u>Ratio for transport spending</u></p> <p>2:1 investment allocation ratio between public transport and road infrastructure (Climate Action Plan 2023 <a href="#">2022</a>).</p>	<p>As above.</p>
France	<p><u>Increased expenditure on active transport</u></p> <p>Between 2023-2027 - France will spend €2.2 billion on bike infrastructure and subsidies. This is six times the Government's previous €350 million commitment (World Economic Forum <a href="#">2018</a>).</p> <p>Including: €250 million each year on new</p>	<p>Increase the country's bike lane network from 50,000 km today to 80,000 km in 2027 and 100,000 km by 2030, with priority given to provincial cities and rural areas.</p>

	<p>bike lanes, €500 million allocated towards subsidies to buy bicycles, including for second-hand bicycles, spending on bike parking facilities in railway stations and in cities, boost spending on anti-theft bike marking and provide bike training for all primary schoolchildren (Reuters <a href="#">2023</a>).</p>	
Scotland	<p><u>Increased percentage expenditure on active transport</u></p> <p>By 2024-2025 - Scotland will spend 10 percent of their transport budget on active travel (Transport Scotland <a href="#">2021</a>). This is eight times the spend on active transport in 2017/2018.</p>	<p>The policy contributes to the goal of reducing transport emissions by 56 percent by 2030 and full decarbonisation by 2045 (Transport Scotland <a href="#">2021</a>), and mode shift targets (see Table 2).</p>
Wales	<p><u>Moratorium on new roads</u></p> <p>In 2021 Wales announced a freeze on new road building projects until a review was carried out informed by the goals in the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Welsh Government <a href="#">2021</a>). Roads need to meet the following conditions: not increase road capacity for cars, minimise carbon emissions in construction, not lead to higher vehicle speeds which increase emissions, and not adversely affect ecologically valuable sites.</p>	<p>Of the 48 road schemes reviewed, 17 schemes are consistent with the new policy direction and 31 are not (Sloman et al. <a href="#">2023</a>). The road schemes for which a preferred scheme has been costed could cause 500,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions from construction alone.</p>
California, United States	<p><u>Transport planning to incorporate reduction in car travel</u></p> <p>In 2018, planning laws were amended so that new projects must evaluate environmental impacts of added vehicle miles travelled and include measures to mitigate this. <a href="#">California's</a> Senate Bill 743 (passed in 2013, implemented in 2018) updated the way transportation impacts are measured for new projects. The bill eliminated metrics around easing road congestion, and now a project's environmental impacts must be evaluated by the amount and distance people drive to destinations (i.e. vehicle miles travelled).</p>	<p>As a result of SB 743, traditional measures for mitigating congestion (e.g., widening roads, adding turn lanes, and making similar investments in the transportation network) will be replaced with measures that mitigate additional driving, such as increasing transit options, facilitating biking and walking, changing development patterns and charging for parking (<a href="#">SB743 2020</a>).</p>

France	<p><u>No new or expansionary airport projects</u></p> <p>The 2021 climate change bill banned the construction of new airports or expanding the capacity of existing airports.</p>	<p>Specific projects have been halted, such as the major €9 billion expansion of Paris' Charles de Gaulle airport. The expansion would have increased capacity by 40 million passengers or 50 percent annually (Reuters <a href="#">2021</a>).</p>
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## Targets for mode shift

International analysis has highlighted that a high mode shift in urban passenger transport, alongside vehicle electrification, is needed if we are to stand any chance of limiting warming to 1.5°C in the long term (Fulton and Reich 2021). Setting targets at a national, state or territory, or city level can help jurisdictions track progress and align with emissions reductions targets. According to forthcoming (2024) Climate Council analysis, the share of passenger kilometres travelled by road needs to be 30 percent lower in 2030 (from 2020 levels) to see transport play its part in driving down harmful carbon pollution in Australia.

There are a number of countries overseas which have set mode shift targets for land based transport, as well as states and cities (see details in Table 2), with a smaller number setting targets or bans for domestic aviation (see Table 3). Australia has no national mode shift targets, and Victoria remains the only state with a mode shift target although this is limited to active transport.

Table 2: Passenger mode shift targets for land based transport

Location	Targets	Key and enabling policies
Nation-wide		
France	By 2024 target to triple cycling use (from 3% in 2018).	<p>Outlined in previous Prime Minister Phillippe's <a href="#">speech</a>.</p> <p>Other policies: Increased spend on active travel (as outlined in Table 1).</p>
Portugal	By 2030 target to increase pedestrian journeys by 35%,	Outlined in <a href="#">The National Strategy for Active Pedestrian Mobility 2030</a>

	expand accessible pedestrian space by 50% and reduce sedentary lifestyles by 15%.	(released 2023). Key measures include establishing coherent pedestrian networks in urban areas and ensuring continuous, safe and comfortable pathways.
Ireland	By 2030 target for a 20% reduction in total vehicle kilometres, 50% increase in daily active travel journeys, 130% increase in daily public transport journeys.  Mode share in 2030: 53% car, 19% public transport, 28% active transport	Outlined in the <a href="#">Climate Action Plan</a> (released 2022, updated 2023).  Other policies: Increased spend on active and public transport (as outlined in Table 1).
Scotland	By 2030 target for a 20% reduction in car kilometres travelled (from 2019 levels).	Outlined in the <a href="#">Route map</a> (released 2022) which includes 30 key interventions which range from low emissions zones to a Mobility as a Service investment fund.  Other policies: Increased spend on active travel (as outlined in Table 1); National Transport Strategy 2 (2020) which outlines climate action as one of four priorities; Active Travel Framework (2021); Cycling Framework for Active Travel - A Plan for Everyday Cycling (2023).
Sweden	By 2030 target for 40% of motorised journeys to be taken by public transport.	Outlined in <i>Målet: 2030 ska 4 av 10 motoriserade resor vara kollektiva</i> (released 2023), translation <a href="#">here</a> .  Other policies: reducing transport emissions by 70% by 2030 (from 2010 levels), see translated version <a href="#">here</a> .
Singapore	By 2030 target for 75% mass public transport (i.e. rail and bus) peak-period modal share.	Outlined in the <a href="#">Singapore Green Plan 2030</a> (released in 2021).

	By 2040 target for more than 80% mass public transport peak-period modal share - where public, active and shared transport account for 9 in 10 of all peak period journeys.	
Wales	<p>By 2030 target for a 10% reduction in car kilometres travelled per person (from 2019 levels).</p> <p>By 2040 target for 45% of all journeys made up of public transport and active transport.</p>	<p>Outlined in <a href="#">Llwybr Newydd: The Wales Transport Strategy 2021</a>.</p> <p>Other policies: freeze on new roads (as outlined in Table 1); target of 30% of the workforce to work remotely on a regular basis (Llwybr Newydd 2021).</p>
New Zealand	Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency developed a plan to deliver on social, environmental and economic outcomes via mode shift in 2019, "Keep Cities Moving" across six regions Auckland, Tauranga, Hamilton, Wellington, Christchurch and Queenstown. Plans to update this.	Outlined in <a href="#">Keep Cities Moving</a> which sets out 35 interventions for mode shift.
City-based targets		
Barcelona, Spain	By 2025 target for 65% of all motorised journeys by public transport.	Outlined in <a href="#">Transports Metropolitans de Barcelona Strategic Plan 2025</a> (released 2021).
Amsterdam, Netherlands	By 2025 target for 35% of all trips to be made by bike.	Outlined in the <a href="#">Long Term Bicycle plan 2017-2022</a> .
Dublin, Ireland	By 2028 target for 40% reduction in traffic.	Outlined in the <a href="#">Dublin City Development Plan 2022 -2028</a>
Jakarta, Indonesia	By 2029 target for 60% of all trips to be made by public transport and 40% private transport.	Outlined in <a href="#">Jakarta's Transport Master Plan</a> (released in 2018)
Minneapolis, United States	By 2030 target for 25% of all trips being made by public transport, 35% by walking and biking, and	Outlined in <a href="#">Minneapolis Transportation Action Plan</a> (released in 2020).

	40% by driving.	
San Francisco, United States	By 2030 target for 80% of trips being made by walking, biking, public transport, and shared electric vehicles.	Outlined in the <a href="#">San Francisco Climate Action Plan</a> (updated in 2023).
Seoul, South Korea	By 2030 target for 80% green transport mode share. With a 30% reduction in car trip use and 30% reduction in travel times by public transit.	Outlined in <a href="#">Vision 2030</a> (released in 2013, updated in 2021). Part of the 'Sustainable living' pillar, this sits among four other priority areas.
Shanghai, China	By 2035 target for 50% or more of all journeys by public transit.	Outlined in the <a href="#">Shanghai Master Plan 2017-2035</a> (released in 2018).
London, England	By 2041 target for 80% of all trips made up of public transport and active transport (from 65% in 2018)	Outlined in the <a href="#">Mayor's Transport Strategy</a> (released in 2018) which takes a healthy streets framework approach, putting human health and experience at the heart of planning the city.
Vancouver, Canada	By 2040 target for two thirds of all by public transport and active transport (from 40% in 2008).	Outlined in <a href="#">Transportation 2040</a> (released in 2013).



Table 3: Passenger mode shift targets for domestic air transport

Location	Policies
Germany Switzerland	These two countries have adapted their infrastructure and transport ticket sales to encourage connections between intercity rail service and airports. From 2021 the German airline Lufthansa coordinated with state owned rail operator Deutsche Bahn to facilitate connections between major cities and international airports ( <a href="#">Lufthansa n.d.</a> ); in 2022 Switzerland's Swiss International Air Lines and SBB jointly created the "Airtrain" between Basel, Lugano, Geneva and Zurich International Airport ( <a href="#">Airtrain n.d.</a> ).
<a href="#">France</a>	From 2022, there has been a ban on short haul domestic flights, for any journeys that are possible in less than two-and-a-half hours by train.
<a href="#">Sweden</a>	By 2030 all domestic flights fossil-fuel-free; by 2045 domestic and foreign flights (originating in Sweden) to be fossil free
<a href="#">Denmark</a>	By 2030 all domestic flights fossil-fuel-free
<a href="#">Scotland</a>	By 2040 fully decarbonise domestic flights
<a href="#">Norway</a>	By 2040 all short-haul flights to be electric

For Australia to make necessary cuts to harmful carbon pollution this decade, every sector of the economy, including transport, needs to pull its weight. Decarbonising passenger transport presents a great opportunity to transition to cleaner, healthier and more affordable ways of moving people around. Structurally shifting investment to shared and active transport and carefully considering future road and air infrastructure projects, coupled with setting explicit targets for land based mode shift will provide an excellent foundation for our future transport system.

Climate Council's team would welcome the opportunity to discuss how these priority objectives can be incorporated into the Transport and Infrastructure Net Zero Action Plan. Please feel free to contact Head of Advocacy Dr Jennifer Rayner for further information - [Jennifer.Rayner@climatecouncil.org.au](mailto:Jennifer.Rayner@climatecouncil.org.au).