

# PREMIER'S COUNCIL FOR ACTIVE LIVING BULLETIN

## Welcome to the Premier's Council for Active Living (PCAL) Bulletin

The purpose of the bulletin is to provide people interested in promoting active living choices within NSW with relevant up-to-date news and research. The monthly bulletins focus upon material applicable to the broad range of NSW agencies represented on PCAL and will be archived on the PCAL website at:

[http://www.pcal.nsw.gov.au/resources/monthly\\_bulletin.html](http://www.pcal.nsw.gov.au/resources/monthly_bulletin.html). If you wish to receive the PCAL Bulletin please write SUBSCRIBE in the subject area and email [pcal@heartfoundation.org.au](mailto:pcal@heartfoundation.org.au).

### 'Fit Towns' Plan to Tackle Child Obesity

The UK government is planning to tackle the growing obesity epidemic in Britain by broadening its plans for eco towns and turning them into healthy or fit towns. The Health Secretary, Alan Johnson, is convinced that two great challenges facing developed countries - climate change and obesity - are linked. He believes it makes sense that 10 eco towns already being planned by the government should now be built and designed to confront the UK's obesity crisis. Mr Johnson wants Britain to follow the example of 10 French towns which have focused on young children and seen substantial cuts in obesity. The initiatives in France led to the proportion of overweight boys aged seven to 12 falling from 19% to 10% and in the girls from 10% to 7%. He is convinced only a comprehensive rather than the current fragmented approach will work. Practical measures in new healthy towns being considered by ministers include: Increasing number of cycle lanes, designing safe walking routes to schools and from suburbs into the centre and larger parks, modern playgrounds and improved leisure centres. Details of the policy emerged as an authoritative five-year cancer report from the World Cancer Research Fund was recently released which warned that one third of cancers are linked to our diets and lack of exercise.

For further information see: [http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2007/nov/01/health\\_communities](http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2007/nov/01/health_communities).

### Downsize me! Cities take initiative to shrink the McMansion Diet

The McMansion phenomenon is likely to survive both the residential property slump in the US and the popularity of green design, but communities are increasingly opting to regulate house size. Among the more innovative attempts to curb McMansion building, Boulder County, Colorado, is introducing a plan that will require homeowners and developers seeking to exceed median house size limits to purchase credits either from the owners of properties that are under those caps, or from a county clearinghouse. Proponents contend that the plan creates a financial disincentive to build big and could also help increase the stock of affordable housing. Rather than adopt a single approach to house size, some experts recommend that planners combine caps with codes that emphasise sustainability, historic preservation, neighbourhood character and that encourage a mix of housing types and sizes along with greater density. For more information see:

<http://archrecord.construction.com/news/daily/archives/071010downsize.asp>

### City slickers are the new thickers

Large shopping centres, elevators and the dominance of the car are driving Australia's obesity epidemic, according to an Australian report released in November by Research Australia. The report says changes to our physical environment are resulting in obesity. Professor Anthony Capon, one of the 12 researchers who worked on the report, is quoted in a 28 October Sydney Morning Herald article stating that the shift of the population to cities, low-density neighbourhoods, poorly connected streets without paths, inadequate mass transport, driving patterns and the relocation of retail into large shopping centres had discouraged incidental exercise which is essential to wellbeing.

Further information is available at: [http://www.researchaustralia.com.au/aboutus.asp?id=379&parent\\_id=379&cid=1731#1731](http://www.researchaustralia.com.au/aboutus.asp?id=379&parent_id=379&cid=1731#1731).

### Built Environment and Physical Activity: An Annotated Resource Book

This October 2007 'book' compiles and introduces over 80 key US publications and references, presentations, databases, indicators, organizations and assessment/action tools that can help advance active living initiatives. Compiled by Active Living by Design from the US, the resource covers subjects including active living, collaboration, health disparities, policy, land use and transportation, parks and recreation, and youth and schools. The majority of resources and organizations are available on-line, linked directly from within the document. To download the resource book see:

<http://www.activelivingbydesign.org/index.php?id=550>.

*URLs represent primary source unless otherwise specified.  
Some links may expire due to archiving by original source organisation.*



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## Action for Air

The NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change is currently reviewing Action for Air, the Government's 25 year Air Quality Management Plan. The major event in the review process is the triennial Clean Air Forum, scheduled to be held in Sydney on 23 November 2007. More information on the Forum is available here: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/help/caccforum.htm>

## Walkers on Naked Streets

An 18 October Sydney Morning Herald article has described how Bendigo City Council, in Victoria, has unveiled a makeover of its city centre, coined 'naked streets' where all "visual signals" that streets are for cars first and walkers second will go. Footpaths will be expanded and kerbs will be eliminated, replaced with paving to mark where the cars can drive and park. By removing street signs and road markings a situation is created that feels "unsafe", causing people to be more alert and have fewer serious accidents. The council wants the street redesign to slow cars so much that even "human error" will not cause serious injury or death. Instead, minor accidents might become more common. The Victorian State Government Planning Minister, Justin Madden noted the Bendigo program was an outstanding example of building health into the planning process.

For further information see:

<http://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/Files/HargreavesMallBrochure.pdf>.

## Two thirds of Sydneysiders want good public transport before tax cuts

People would prefer the Federal Government spend the budget surplus on public transport than tax cuts. That's the message from nearly 70 per cent of the people surveyed by the Australian Research Group for a poll released by the Australian Conservation Society. Federal transport funding from 1974 to 2004 was 14 times more weighted to roads than rail capital works and urban public transport. In 2005 the Sustainable Cities report of the bi-partisan House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage recommended the Federal Government significantly boost its funding commitment for public transport, particularly light and heavy rail. Further information is available at:

[http://www.acfonline.org.au/articles/news.asp?news\\_id=1470&c=261129](http://www.acfonline.org.au/articles/news.asp?news_id=1470&c=261129)

## 900,000 Reasons to "get on your bike"

NSW Assistant Environment Minister and Ride to Work Ambassador, Verity Firth marked the inaugural National Ride to Work Day by announcing *On Your Bike*, a \$900,000 initiative developed in cooperation with Bicycle NSW to promote cycling. Ms Firth added that "Over the next three years, *On Your Bike* will fund a series of new programs designed to make NSW more bike friendly." The types of programs include: training on safe riding, bike maintenance and building cycling confidence; help for employers and schools to install appropriate facilities and ensure that riders know the safe way to travel to their sites; and safety equipment and bike maps for schools. Funding for *On Your Bike* has been provided from the NSW Environmental Trust with further details about the program to be finalised at the NSW Government's Clean Air Forum scheduled for 23 November 2007.

Further information is available at: <http://www.bicyclensw.org.au/> .

## Cycling a key part of Optus' Integrated Transport Strategy

Cycling is a key component of Optus' Integrated Transport Strategy developed to help manage the company's recent relocation to Macquarie Park. The strategy is designed to increase the travel choices for staff with an emphasis on improving access by sustainable modes of transport. Components of the strategy include an online journey planner for staff, onsite parking spaces reserved for car pooling employees, over 300 bicycle parking spaces accompanied by lockers and showers and a one-off travel reimbursement towards the cost of annual public transport travel.

Further details can be obtained from Optus Corporate Affairs: (02) 8082 7850



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