



**The Sustainable Energy Forum Inc.**

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Getting there - on foot, by cycle

Strategy Submissions

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### **Submission on the Walking and Cycling Strategy**

Dear Sirs

This submission is made on behalf of the Sustainable Energy Forum Inc. (the Forum) and has been approved for issue by the Forum's management committee. The Forum has about 100 members. The Forum's main focus is on policy development for energy sustainability in New Zealand. The Forum therefore takes a strong interest in matters likely to improve the sustainability of energy use for transport.

The Forum sees 'Getting There' as an important contribution to this Government's transport policy development. Walking and cycling are both important short-distance transport modes in their own right. Walking in particular is an essential supportive mode for public transport, although cycling can also contribute. Both modes have important health benefits.

At an energy policy level, the Forum recognises cycling and walking as having important potential to reduce transport energy use and emissions, by offering multiple alternatives to car use. The Forum notes the opinion of Prof Peter Newman<sup>1</sup> that aggressively pursued transport and urban planning policies can halve urban car use in as little as 20 years.

The Forum notes that the business-as-usual reference scenario in the MED Energy Outlook to 2025 projects a 1.1% per annum increase in land transport energy, leading New Zealand to an unsustainable reliance on fossil fuels. That scenario is based primarily on analysis of economic drivers. If that trend could be reversed to a similar

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<sup>1</sup> Director of the Western Australian Sustainability Policy Unit



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annual decrease in land transport energy it would set New Zealand on a pathway towards sustainability. Furthermore, it would be compliant with the Government's Climate Change goal to be set towards a permanent downward path for total gross greenhouse gas emissions by 2012. The Forum sees the walking and cycling strategy as not only making a direct contribution to this outcome, but also evoking a radical change in attitudes to personal transport that is necessary to bring about reversal of the current trend in transport energy use.

Furthermore, the Forum considers it imperative that New Zealand has policies such as the walking and cycling strategy to help reduce New Zealand's dependence on imported oil in the light of the dire warnings of "Peak Oil". It is inevitable that some time, maybe sooner rather than later, an unconstrained supply of imported oil at affordable prices will no longer be available to New Zealand. To minimise the adverse impact of that prospect on the New Zealand economy and environmental and social well-being, early weaning off our dependence on personal motorised transport is vital.

The Forum applauds the wide ranging strategy document *Getting There*, which is carefully thought out and identifies a large number of non-economic drivers. It appears ready to go forward to the implementation stage and the definition of quantified objectives. When implementation is considered, the Forum suggests that it will be important to set ambitious targets if the greatest policy advantages are to be gained. A radical change of policy direction such as this will not simply happen. It will need funding, direction and some incentive to create a significant shift away from the currently established principle of 'predict and provide for cars'.

Yours sincerely

Steve Goldthorpe

On behalf of the Sustainable Energy Forum