

Submission to: Gosford Hospital Redevelopment Project

Re: Active Transport End of Trip Facilities

To: Troy Harvey, Senior Project Director

Hello Troy.

It was nice to meet you at the Gosford Hospital Redevelopment Public Forum on Monday 9th March. And it was good to hear that end-of-trip facilities to support active transport are being included into the hospital redevelopment plans. The hospital is a major trip generator and hence can be a major contributor to gaining the many benefits of active transport.

Why?

66% of Central Coast adults are considered **overweight or obese**, with 35% considered obese (ref 1a), with one reported study suggesting that health workers themselves are “less healthy” than the general workforce (ref 1b). In Australia, **physical inactivity is the second most preventable cause of ill health and death** (ref 2), and a major contributing factor to being overweight or obese.

Active transport can have a major part to play in helping to improve these statistics and the ensuing cost to society in ongoing medical expenses and early deaths. But only if active transport is well supported and promoted by employers by providing appropriate facilities, information and encouragement. NSW Health should be, and can be, a shining example of an employer that supports and promotes active transport.

Regular physical activity, such as that provided through active transport, can help control body weight, blood pressure & cholesterol; increase energy and stamina; improve strength, flexibility, balance, coordination and reaction times; improve mental and cognitive function; improve capacity to cope with stress and anxiety; increase quality of sleep; reduce the risk of injury and falls; etc. (ref 2).

Although current active transport to work at Gosford Hospital may be a very small percentage of trips (actual % unknown), by providing secure, comfortable, reliable facilities more staff will be encouraged to take up this good practise.

It is noted that the hospital is located in a hilly area thereby deterring some from riding a bicycle. However, there are now many electrically assisted bicycles (e-bikes) being purchased and ridden on the Central Coast. These bicycles make the journey to the hospital much more achievable, even for less fit or “hill averse” cyclists, by providing motorised assistance to the rider. Although these bicycles do not provide the same level of exercise as un-motorised bicycles, they are still adding to a person’s daily exercise. It is expected that e-bike sales will continue to increase (ref 3) as prices become more affordable and motor vehicle total cost of ownership continues to rise.

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Also, concerns over the **lack of car parking and local area traffic** can be at least partially alleviated through encouraging active transport for staff and visitors. At least 6 bicycles can be securely stored in the space of 1 motor car, and the cost of providing bicycle parking facilities is generally a small percentage of that required for motor cars.

How?

In order to promote active transport we need to make the experience “better” than that of other forms of transport. For example, a visitor to the hospital could drive their motor car there, spend time looking for parking, have to pay for the parking, petrol and car maintenance costs, and probably have to walk a few hundred metres to the hospital entry or information point. Alternatively, they could ride their bicycle there at virtually no cost and park right out front of the entry for free! 😊

We therefore provide the following recommendations on behalf of people who do and who should ride bicycles on the Central Coast - current and future staff and current and future visitors to Gosford Hospital.

Recommendations

In any new development we need to cater for the requirements of various types of people who ride bicycles, both staff and visitors, each having their own end of trip requirements.

Staff End of Trip Facilities

- 1) Change and shower facilities
- 2) **Parking:** secure, undercover bicycle storage such as that provided through bicycle cages (ref 4)
 - a) Provision of a bicycle cage versus just bicycle racks, enables users to quickly park their bicycle without the need to remove items which may be easily stolen, such as lights, computers and video cameras.
 - b) Even within the secure area, individual bicycles to be lockable (with a user provided lock) to an immovable object, such as a D-rail or wall bicycle rack (ref 4 & 5)
 - c) Closely located near change & shower facilities
 - d) Either in a well trafficked area or monitored by security staff/systems.
- 3) **Lockers:** secure, ventilated lockers
 - a) A set of permanently allocated lockers, as regular cycle commuters will need to leave work clothes at work when off site, and some bicycle clothing and change manchester at work during working hours.
 - i) Consideration to be given to a locker or key deposit/bond to help ensure efficient allocation and minimise “locker hogging”; this amount should not be too large as to discourage takeup, eg, \$100
 - ii) Locker hire to be added in to staff’s HR records to facilitate key recovery and deposit reimbursement upon staff leaving the hospital, and trigger re-hire to the next staff member.
 - b) A set of casual use lockers, for less regular cycle commuters or those just getting started. These will also cater for any “lunch time sports” users.
 - i) These should be “free to use”
 - c) Well ventilated lockers are very important for hygienic storage of clothing and towels which may be damp (ref 6)

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- d) Full or half height lockers to allow hanging of work clothing (ref 6)
- e) Co-located with, or closely located near, change & shower facilities
- 4) **Capacity of the above facilities:**
 - a) As experienced at the Optus campus at North Ryde, the initial allocation of 5% of planned staff numbers for bicycle parking (as mandated through Ryde Council development approval) was quickly outgrown. Today they provide around 10% of bicycle parking spaces – that’s over 600 bicycle parking spaces with further growing demand.
 - b) We understand that the shift work requirements of many hospital staff may lead to less demand than the Optus campus, however we recommend that the facility be initially designed to accommodate 5% of staff riding bicycles, with expansion capacity up to 10% over time as demand increases (ref 2c). This relates to the amount of secure bicycle parking and lockers available.
 - c) Wrt shower facilities we recommend the number of showers to be a minimum of 5 female and 5 male, again with potential growth over time as demand increases (ref 2c).
 - d) Due to the campus nature of Gosford Hospital, consideration should be given to providing multiple end-of-trip facility locations in key hospital buildings. That is, it may make sense to divide up the overall capacity into 2 or even 3 separate locations. If this is implemented, the minimum number of showers in each location should be 3 female and 3 male.
- 5) **Access:** separate access to motor vehicles
 - a) If the above facilities are provided within a car parking area, separate access should be provided for people riding bicycles (and pedestrians). This may be in parallel with the motor vehicle access point, but definitely separate.
 - b) Again, experience at the Optus campus has shown that providing a separate access point for bicycles enhances the experience by providing a “safer” entry point without the need to dodge vehicles and access control gates.

Visitor End of Trip Facilities

- 1) **Parking:** secure, undercover bicycle storage:
 - a) For visitors, easy access to main hospital entry points is key. Hence, provision of bicycle racks near the main entry doors should be provided. We can assume that visitors will provide their own locks.
 - b) Redeployment of the existing bicycle racks to appropriate locations may be suitable.
 - c) Consideration should also be given to providing coin-operated bicycle lockers for visitors (ref 5d & e).
 - d) As these bicycle racks/lockers will be highly visible to hospital visitors, over time more people will realise the option of cycling and take it up as a healthy, convenient, environmentally sustainable form of transport.
 - e) Initially a set of 6 racks (ref 5) accommodating 12 bicycles at each key hospital entry point should be provided, with space allocated for future growth.
- 2) **Access:** separate access to motor vehicles
 - a) Provision of cycle lanes or separated paths from Showground Road and Racecourse Rd to be provided. These will link up over time with proposed bicycle infrastructure noted in the Gosford Bike Strategy.

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Conclusion

We hope you find our recommendations useful, and look forward to your positive response shortly. We would like to meet face-to-face to further discuss the end of trip facilities planned for Gosford Hospital. Please advise a suitable time and place for this meeting.

Regards,

Alan Corven

President, Central Coast Bicycle User Group

CC: Chris Holstein, Member for Gosford; Jillian Skinner, Minister for Health; Walter Secord, Shadow Minister for Health

References:

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 - a) [http://www.nhpa.gov.au/internet/nhpa/publishing.nsf/Content/Report-Download-HC-Overweight-and-obesity-rates-across-Australia-2011-12/\\$FILE/NHPA_HC_Report_Overweight_and_Obesity_Report_October_2013.pdf](http://www.nhpa.gov.au/internet/nhpa/publishing.nsf/Content/Report-Download-HC-Overweight-and-obesity-rates-across-Australia-2011-12/$FILE/NHPA_HC_Report_Overweight_and_Obesity_Report_October_2013.pdf)
 - b) Health employees least healthy - <http://healthland.time.com/2012/10/16/least-healthy-employees-hospital-workers/>
- 2) Active transport:
 - a) <http://www.gethealthyatwork.com.au/en/About-GHaW/Health-focus-area-resources/Active-travel-resources.aspx>
 - b) http://www.pcal.nsw.gov.au/active_workplaces
 - c) http://www.gethealthyatwork.com.au/~/_media/Files/Useful%20Resources/7%20Health%20focus%20area/Active%20travel/Fact%20sheet%20-%20Workplace%20cycling%20facilities.ashx - summary table page 4
- 3) E-bikes:
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 - b) <http://www.greencarcongress.com/2014/11/20141105-navigant.html>
- 4) Secure bicycle cage examples:
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 - b) <http://www.bikestorage.com.au/ground-mounted-850/product/view/16/183>
 - c) http://www.gethealthyatwork.com.au/~/_media/Files/Useful%20Resources/7%20Health%20focus%20area/Active%20travel/Fact%20sheet%20-%20Workplace%20cycling%20facilities.ashx - Bicycle enclosures page 2
- 5) Bicycle rack/locker examples:
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 - b) <http://www.securabike.com.au/shop/bikes/bike-racks>
 - c) <http://www.securabike.com.au/shop/bikes/bike-racks/lincoln-8-bike-rack-fixed> 😊
 - d) <http://www.ozlockers.com.au/coin-operated-bike-lockers/> - coin operated
 - e) http://www.securabike.com.au/securabike_blog/coin-operated-bicycle-lockers - coin operated
- 6) Ventilated locker examples:

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- a) <http://www.globalindustrial.com/g/storage/lockers/ventilated/infinity-ventilated-steel-lockers>
- b) http://www.hallowell-list.com/lockers_qs_hdventilated.php

Community Transport Vehicle Access

As I have just completed a contract at Transport for NSW - Community Transport section, I would also like to take this opportunity to request that suitable access and temporary parking facilities be made available for community transport vehicles, including buses. With the ageing population and many frail aged people not being able to use public transport, community transport provides a vital service to hospitals, medical centres and shopping centres for many living on the Central Coast.

One of the issues faced by community transport drivers and their passengers is easy access to destination facilities such as hospitals. Drop-off / pick-up zones located close to main hospital entry points, as well as free short term parking should be provided for public and community transport vehicles.