Australian Greenways Declaration 2011

2 September 2011, Sydney Australia

The Sixth National Tracks and Trails Conference endorsed the Declaration of Greenways for Australia.

The Declaration provides a national statement about the value of greenways for Australia and Australians and seeks in-principle support from the Commonwealth Government to recognise the Declaration, setting direction to progress formal recognition of and access to greenways.

A greenway refers to land and water ways recognised as a public corridor for recreational activities, including tracks and trails.

These greenways should meet satisfactory standards and ensure that they are accessible and user-friendly for all, including for active travel.

In light of Australia's commitment to international agreements around environment and sustainability and to enhance Australia's first world desire to show leadership and improve our nation's prosperity through environmental reform, climate change, sustainable urban transport, sustainable tourism, sustainable human settlements, biodiversity and building communities, as reflected in the UN program and investment areas, the Declaration will serve both as a diplomatic tool and to recognise the significant potential that exists in our community to support and drive a national greenways movement.

The Conference acknowledges that the provision of greenways meets;

Recognition of the multiple benefits of such spaces for health, education, community amenity and liveability and the value of alternative modes of travel.

Increasing user demand for spaces for **outdoor recreation, education and leisure activities**, which are **accessible** to all and which have beneficial effects on **public health**, participation in recreation and fitness.

The Conference acknowledges that greenways;

Encourage **sustainable tourism**; conducive to the promotion of prosperity, development and maintenance of local social fabric, particularly in rural areas and areas of economic renewal.

Conservation and enhancement of local heritage and environment, support economic growth and give recognition to inter-generational equity through empowering local communities to advance their future.

Improve the quality of urban and regional life through information sharing, applying knowledge, planning and shaping our communities including the creation of areas for recreation and travel, rehabilitation of degraded sites and compliments rural land use.

Encouragement of an intermodal transport framework (active travel) and the complementary role a greenway network can play within an efficient public transport system.

Supports the **recognition, preservation, education and celebration** of our **social and cultural heritage resources.** Links communities, provides identity and celebrates associations, customs and values.

1. The National Tracks and Trails Conference Declaration seeks to gain in-principle support from the Commonwealth Government, in favour of the creation and promotion of Greenways in Australia, to be progressed through;

I. Establishment of Australian National Greenways Consultative Committee (NGCC)
II. Development of an Australian Greenways Discussion Paper,
III. Establishment of a platform for the promotion, sharing and coordination of greenways information nationally and internationally,
IV. Recognition of greeenways as assisting the Commonwealth to meet its commitments under ecologically sustainable development (ESD) guidelines and other relevant commitments.

2. The Commonwealth Government;

I. Will support national campaigns aimed at harmonising Commonwealth, state and local government authorities policies and priorities in relation to greenways
II. Will ensure that significant national greenways and greenways in general are eligible for funding under a range of Commonwealth Government funding initiatives, in particular where supported by state or local government contribution
III. Will facilitate the definition, construction, assessment and the promotion of a national network of greenway routes.
IV. Will facilitate the adoption of a common definition and the harmonisation of standards

V. Will facilitate the development of a common methodology for the study and identification of routes, which would favour the economic and social development of the areas traversed, while also taking into account the quality of the surrounding natural areas and cultural heritage values,

3. The parties will seek support and commitment from local and state government authorities to the development of greenways including;

I. integrating greenways as structural elements into their development plans for urban and rural areas and dedicating a percentage of their roads and transport budgets
II. integrating knowledge platforms into planning and operations to support current and future greenways including leveraging benefits for communities and end users
III. preserving disused transport lines including unmade roads, their engineering structures and service buildings as potential infrastructure for greenways and ancillary services
IV. facilitating the connections between greenways and bus, rail, ferry and inland water transport
V. enhance and maintain the natural, cultural and built heritage along the greenway or in the vicinity of greenways
VI. promoting greenways in their area as high quality, environmentally sustainable infrastructure
VII. promoting the establishment of services for greenways users,
VIII. working towards these objectives in consultation with all interested stakeholders.

4. Seek from the broader community;

I. participation in the development of greenways at local, regional and national level
II. monitoring of the quality of greenways in partnership with local authorities,
III. participation in the promotion and use of greenways.

On behalf of the Conference,

Signed:
CHRISTIAN HAAG
Conference Convenor
On behalf of the 6th National Tracks and Trails Conference 2011
(The National Tracks and Trails Conference is a program of Trails Australia)

Explanatory Notes

Definitions

The term “greenway” is formed by joining the word “greenbelt” and “parkway”.

A greenway refers to land and water ways set aside as a public corridor, able to be used as a trail for recreational activities.

These routes should meet satisfactory standards of width, gradient, and surface condition to ensure that they are user-friendly for all, including active travel.

Considerations

There is no direct cost to the Government for providing “in principle” support for such a Declaration.

Significant benefits are to be gained.

The Declaration will facilitate adaptation of appropriate policy across all of government, including climate change, biodiversity, public land use, urban and regional planning, public health, social and heritage. Adoption will reference existing relevant guidelines and policies, support the application of new and emerging technologies and provide measurable and meaningful outcomes.

Drivers for the establishment of greenways

Recognition of the multiple benefits of such spaces for health, community amenity and liveability and the value of alternative modes of travel.

Increasing user demand for outdoor recreation and leisure activities, which are accessible to all and which have beneficial effects on public health plus participation in recreation and fitness.

A greenway is a route developed in an integrated manner which enhances both the environment and quality of life of the surrounding area. These routes should meet satisfactory standards of width, gradient, and surface condition to ensure that they are both user-friendly and low-risk for users of all abilities.

Key benefits of greenways

- **Recognition of the multiple benefits** of such spaces for health, education, community amenity and liveability and the value of alternative modes of travel
- Increased user demand for spaces for **outdoor recreation, education and leisure activities**, which are **accessible** to all and which have beneficial effects on **public health** plus participation in recreation and fitness
- Encouragement of **sustainable tourism**; conducive to the promotion of prosperity, development and maintenance of local social fabric, particularly in rural areas and areas of economic renewal
- **Conservation and** enhancement of local heritage and environment, support economic growth and give recognition to inter-generational equity through empowering local communities to advance their future
- **Improvement of the quality of urban and regional life** through the sharing and application of knowledge leading to better planning and design of our communities including the creation of areas for recreation and travel, the rehabilitation of degraded sites and complimenting rural land use
- **Encouragement of existing intermodal transport frameworks (active travel)** and the complementary role a greenway network can play within an efficient public transport system
- Supports the **recognition, preservation, education and celebration** of our **social and cultural heritage resources.** Links communities, provides identity, celebrates associations, customs and values

International Scene

The development of greenways in the USA is described as "prolific" in response to runaway urbanisation (European Greenways Assoc. 2000). A series of influential papers on the subject of greenways and user demand led to amendments to federal transportation legislation during the early 1990s, which provided monetary resources for greenway projects. The result was a significant increase in the number of greenway projects that were undertaken.

The European Greenways Association has developed a comprehensive plan for greenways across Europe. The organisation and member groups raise the profile of greenways through initiatives such as the Declaration of Lille (Lille 2000) and the Declaration for a European Greenways (Madrid 2010). Individual countries are recognised for their achievements, including France, which has introduced greenways into their national highway code.

Australia is in its political and strategic greenways infancy. Increasing urbanisation is resulting in strong pressure for existing green space to be used for development with a corresponding risk of loss of community amenity, loss of attachment to "place" and loss of recreational and community open space areas.

The adoption of a high level greenways direction guiding the information sharing, planning and delivery of greenways across the country could assist the Commonwealth Government as it seeks to address a range of issues and challenges related to land use, environment, population and community sustainability issues.

References

Benefits of Greenways: A Pennsylvania Study
http://www.pagreenways.org/toolbox/Benefits.pdf

The Future of Greenways in Sydney
http://www.fbe.unsw.edu.au/schools_and_engagement/resources/_notes/5A2_41.pdf

Recreational Greenways Act 2000 South Australian Government
http://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/LZ/C/A/RECREATIONAL%20GREENWAYS%20ACT%202000/CURRENT/2000.61.UN.PDF

International Organisations (Examples)

European Greenways Association
http://www.aevv-egwa.org/

American Trails
http://www.americantrails.org/

European Network for Accessible Tourism
http://www.accessibletourism.org/?i=enat.en.news.937

Declarations

Declaration of Lille
http://www.aevv-egwa.org/site/hp_en.asp (search under Greenways)

Declaration for a "European Green Network"
European Greenways Conference Madrid 2011
http://www.aevv-egwa.org/conference2010/dmadrid/dm_eng.pdf

Australia – health prevention

http://www.health.gov.au/internet/preventativehealth/publishing.nsf/Content/6B7B17659424FBE5CA25772000095458/$File/tpa.pdf