

Sustainable Transport Awards 2007

Nomination for an outstanding individual: Colin Ashton-Graham



Colin has made a significant contribution to the development and implementation of sustainable transport solutions for Perth. He has worked to develop and implement innovative world leading programs that have engaged a range of government and industry stakeholders to support sustainable transport solutions and the community in reducing their car dependence.

Colin arrived in Perth in 1996 initially to take up a position as Visiting Fellow at Bikewest, to work on the Perth Bicycle Network Plan (PBN) after playing a pivotal role in turning around the UK Government policy on cycling. As Campaigns Executive for the UK National Cycling Touring Club (CTC) Colin led a high profile public campaign over a period of four years that highlighted the abdication of Government policy on cycling, forcing a Parliamentary enquiry and resulting in a National Cycling Strategy with strong institutional support and investment in cycling.

Colin was subsequently appointed to the position of Perth Bicycle Network Coordinator where he remained until 1999. Some of his key achievements included:

- * Designing the data collection system for the PBN including the establishment of indicators, selection of survey sites, tools and data collection periods.
- * Negotiation of land access and maintenance agreements with project partners for Principal Shared Paths and Regional Recreation Paths, including the legal agreement to build principal shared paths in railway reserves
- * Developing the Bicycle User Group Program (BUGs)
- * Developing a signage system for local bicycle routes
- * Securing agreement from every Metropolitan Local Government to Network construction and signage
- * Cost benefit assessment of the PBN to strengthen bids for continued funding
- * Extensive stakeholder liaison and media publicity.

Colin's role in providing leadership for the PBN was acknowledged by the former Department of Transport by a Director General's Award in 2000.

In 1999 Colin moved to the TravelSmart Program Area in the former Department of Transport (now DPI). One of Colin's early achievements was the development of a grants scheme for the employment of TravelSmart Local Government Officers to influence organisational culture and build capacity in local government in favour of local sustainable transport solutions. After undertaking a consultation and scoping exercise he negotiated contributions from local governments and developed a business plan to secure Departmental seed funding contributions for the first three officers for a period of two years. The success of the TravelSmart Local Government Officers Program is demonstrated by its continued expansion with 12 Local Governments now employing TravelSmart Officers, many now fully funding their officers. Colin also played a key role in helping to secure Commonwealth funding that has allowed the program to be expanded. The program has now been extended to universities and major destinations such as UWA, ECU and QEII Medical Centre.

Since 2001 Colin has led the development and implementation of the world's largest travel behaviour change program the TravelSmart Household Program (TSHH), and

overseen delivery of the program to 383,000 people in Perth. The annual program outcomes to date are:

- * 20 million less car trips
- * 200 million fewer car kms
- * 60,000 tonnes less greenhouse gas
- * 5 million hours of extra physical activity from 4.6 million more walking trips and 1.9 million more cycling trips
- * Extra 3 million public transport boardings
- * Reduced fuel use by 20 million litres saving \$24 million (at \$1.20/litre) and participating households saving about \$550 on fuel.

Colin's unique blend of skills from his background in economics and advocacy has proved invaluable in developing business cases, undertaking cost benefit analyses and financial assessments and communicating the cross-sectoral benefits of the TSHH Program to a wide array of stakeholders. This has led to securing cross-sectoral support and funding for the program from the Australian Government including \$3 m Greenhouse Gas Abatement Program Grant (to triple the size of the program from 2005/06 to 2007/08), Local Governments, the Public Transport Authority and bus operators.

As the pioneer of the TSHH Program Perth has been the subject of much rigour and academic debate regarding the methods of evaluation to monitor behaviour change. Colin has played a key role in establishing internal and external evaluation procedures and the use of corroborative data (ie. Transperth boardings) to verify behaviour change. Colin's in-depth knowledge of the data collected from both travel surveys and Transperth boardings and his ability to analyse and interpret it has added rigor to the integrity of the program outcomes and allowed durability of behaviour changes to be proven over time. This has been essential to counter attacks on the program by various sceptics. As a result the program has not only endured but expanded over a period of 10 years from the first trial in South Perth in 1997.

Colin has continued to innovate, expand and extend the TSHH Program in a public sector institutional environment that does not have either budget frameworks or a culture that supports non-infrastructure focused travel behaviour change programs such as TravelSmart. Colin has embraced the challenge through his ability to find business opportunities and allies.

Colin's strategic and conceptual skills have been invaluable in integrating the program into cross-government policy as well as the development of a strategy to integrate the program with Network City.

Colin's interest in sustainable transport has progressed from his initial focus on cycling infrastructure to voluntary travel behaviour change across all sustainable forms of transport including walking, cycling and public transport. More recently Colin's interest has broadened further, going beyond transport to sustainable living.

Early in 2007, having enrolled a number of government corporations and agencies into its development, Colin sought and obtained support for the development of an integrated Household Audit and Education Program. This unique program uses the TravelSmart approach to engage the community at a household level and provides

targeted information and services on technologies and behaviours to help households reduce their consumption of water, energy, travel and waste disposal. Colin's hard work and persistence led to the allocation of \$1.5 million of State Government funding through the Premier's Climate Change Statement to run two demonstration projects during 2008. This will be the world's first integrated sustainable living behaviour change program.

At a personal level Colin leads by example and has embraced sustainable transport as an integral part of his own lifestyle. While owning a car he does not use it on a regular basis, having consciously chosen to live where there are good transport alternatives available.

Along his personal and professional journey, Colin has developed a unique understanding of the theory and practice of behaviour change and is widely regarded as one of the most knowledgeable people nationally and internationally in the area of voluntary behaviour change. Colin has been invited to speak as an expert at workshops, meetings and conferences locally, nationally and internationally. His passion and experience has changed many minds about what is possible.