

Young Leader

Stephen Yarwood

Imagining a Future

OF CYCLING CITIES



At 43, **Stephen Yarwood** is an urban futurist with nearly two decades of experience in state and local government. Recently completing a term as Lord Mayor, he was the youngest person to have ever led the City of Adelaide. In an interview with CLC's Lim Swee Keng at the WORLD CITIES SUMMIT held in June 2014, he discusses the importance of integrated transport for cities, and how he believes the introduction of separate bicycle paths would address a host of urban problems and generate income for local businesses.

Stephen Yarwood on...

● **Adelaide's Urban Mobility Challenges**

We are tackling an obesity epidemic in the Western world, and we have all become used to driving everywhere. That's creating congestion on our roads, reducing the productivity of our cities, and making our cities less attractive.

Adelaide, like many cities, is in the car-dependency paradigm, and we should try to generate conversations around integrated transport. We are seeing cities becoming increasingly dependent on the vehicle, which in itself is an economic cost in terms of congestion and the price of fuel. It also means that we are facing obesity. In fact, obesity has now overtaken smoking as the biggest killer of Australians. One in four Australians is obese, and one in three Australians is overweight. We must start to talk about creating walkable environments, encouraging people to use public transport, to walk more often and also

to use a bicycle. Instead, we are building more roads. We're not investing enough in public transport. We really need to change the whole conversation about how people move through cities to increase liveability, productivity and sustainability.

● **Cycling in Cities**

I've discovered this wonderful technology that can help you lose weight, save money and get through a city more quickly. It makes you happier, makes you live longer, and makes the city a much more attractive, cosmopolitan place. Evidence also suggests that people will even spend more money in local shops.

It's called cycling.

The evidence is clear, and I – just like every city leader in the world – am promoting integrated transport, where you can choose between driving a car, using public transport, walking or cycling. I believe that the electric engine, including electric-assisted bicycles, will change mobility in cities. You may be old, you may be unfit or you may even have an injury, but you can use an electric bicycle to extend your range and get from A to B. And of course, when you get to your destination, you can park right outside the front door.

● **Challenging the Status Quo**

Well, everyone wants progress, but change is challenging. We need to make cycling safer in our cities. In Australia, we sell more bicycle than cars each year. 80% of Australians have a bicycle; only most don't ride it because it's not safe. So we need to put in separate bicycle lanes. That change has been a challenge for small businesses. So we must engage them in a conversation. Cars driving fast past their shops don't spend money, but cyclists, who live locally, can see the displays in their windows, can stop at any time, and will stop more regularly and purchase goods. The evidence is clear from cities around the world that cycling environments generate more income for businesses. Heavy traffic – with its related congestion, pollution and noise – doesn't make for a great retail strip.



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Watch the full interview with Stephen Yarwood at the WORLD CITIES SUMMIT 2014:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4Lmoe3LgI>

**ABOUT THE
WORLD CITIES SUMMIT
YOUNG LEADERS**

The WORLD CITIES SUMMIT YOUNG LEADERS is a select group of change-makers from diverse sectors who shape the global urban agenda at the annual WORLD CITIES SUMMIT YOUNG LEADERS SYMPOSIUM.