

Declaration of the 5th International Conference on Transport and Health

Melbourne, 4-8 November 2019 [The Melbourne Statement]

Transport infrastructure and policies have a wide range of positive and negative impacts on health and social inequalities [disparities]. Positive impacts include:

- access to education;
- employment;
- housing;
- goods and services;
- family and social networks;
- recreation and leisure activities;
- and increased physical activity associated with certain mode choices.

Negative impacts include the health effects of:

- air, noise and water pollution;
- injuries as a result of travelling;
- community severance (the barrier effect of heavy motor traffic and/or infrastructure);
- sedentary lifestyle behaviours; and
- greenhouse gas emissions.

Each negative impact contributes to a range of chronic physical and mental ill health outcomes. In car-focused societies; disadvantaged groups tend to live in neighbourhoods that have much poorer access to destinations and transit. The adverse impacts of transportation affect these populations at a higher rate.

Transport policies to increase the positive effects, decrease the negative effects, and decrease inequities require walking, cycling and public transport use to be prioritised, and substantial reductions in private car use. Integrated multi-modal infrastructure and land use planning and practice is vital and leadership at all levels of government and across all sectors is essential.

These are the same strategies needed for 'green' or sustainable transport policies. However, such policies are not feasible without land use policies that favour compact, mixed land use developments instead of residential suburban developments that result in isolation from potential destinations. The problem of low-density suburbs with limited land use mix are exacerbated by a lack of public transport services combined with the lack of infrastructure for active travel, thus requiring residents to rely on a motor vehicle as their only travel option.

Delegates at the 5th International Conference on Transport and Health, in Melbourne, Australia called on national, regional, and local governments to prioritise integrated transport, land use, and infrastructure planning. The Transport and Health Science Group (THSG), and the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) endorse this call.