

Our sprawling cities are predicated on a false but unstated, and therefore unexplored, belief that oil is inexhaustible. Yet, even the most conservative of commentators recognise that the world's proven and unproven resources of oil are at the halfway point of exploitation. What oil remains will be increasingly difficult and more costly to extract, which means that as demand increases and supply declines, prices will rise, a phenomenon known as 'peak oil'. Estimates vary but there is widespread agreement that oil production has been in decline since 2008.

Our economy is totally dependent on transport, yet governments have failed to recognise the impacts and have no plans in place for the impending crisis. As if blindfolded, they continue to spend billions on freeways, overpasses and underpasses. Plans are in place for fighting bushfires, which impact a small percentage of the population, yet for peak oil - which will impact us all - there are no plans.

The impacts of peak oil will be felt well beyond simple increases in petrol prices and will include:

- transport fuel poverty for those living on the margins of our cities, more so for those in regional and remote areas;
- potential food shortages, given that 50% of the energy used in primary production is oil-based including petrochemical fertilisers
- large increases in costs of transporting imported and exported products, reducing the viability of these industries

..... responding to **Peak Oil**

- fishing fleets, which are already dealing with overfishing, travelling further for their catch
- increasing demands on public transport as people find they cannot afford to run their cars, a demand for which all state governments are ill-prepared;
- impacts on Australia's car manufacturing industry as a consequence of a failure in long term planning for more fuel efficient cars.

As peak oil impacts, taxation revenue will decrease, so investment should be happening now. The longer the time taken to develop our responses, the more costly and less effective such planning will be.

Our Plan

- An urgent **National summit** of all levels of government to reach agreement on program of action to both conserve oil and find alternatives that should include:
 - Greater investment by governments in **long haul rail freight** infrastructure and less for road freight
 - Greater investment in **public transport**, pedestrian pathways and dedicated bicycle lanes and less on roads
 - A moratorium on urban development on the fringes of cities and greater efforts to increase density around public transport nodes
 - More **localised food production** to avoid transport over long distances
 - An **emergency fuel storage plan** including fuel storage terminals located in regional areas, considering the need for fuel for primary production
 - More research funding for alternatives to oil-based **fertilisers**
 - In the short term, greater incentives for **CNG** fuel alternatives and ethanol-based fuels provided the environment and food production are not compromised
 - Incentives to switch to **electric vehicles** and networks of public recharging posts powered by renewable energy