**TRANSPORTATION 2020CONFERENCE**

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**Paper title** Compelled to Change (Why we’re not)

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**ABSTRACT**

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| Over the last 20 years Rachel Smith has developed and delivered travel, transport, cycling, tourism, financial, consumer, environmental, waste, health and lifestyle behaviour change programs, including:   * 300+ school travel behaviour change programs * 100+ workplaces and tourism sustainability behaviour change programs * 10,000+ Australian men and women participating in financial behaviour change programs * 800+ Australians participating in consumerism behaviour change workshops   From this, and other work, Rachel has been able to identify:   * What works and creates change in transport * What leads to, or results, in transport failure * How, when and why people change their car dependency attitudes, habits and behaviours   Two of the key issues – or barriers to change - are time and fear.  Rachel has used this understanding plus:   * 145 interviews with transport professionals on congestion perceptions, public transport attributes and travel behaviour change * 8 interviews with Australian Councils delivering active transport and waste behaviour change programs * 60 in-depth one-to-one insight interviews on what lead to significant lifestyle, health, wealth and waste behaviour change   From this work Rachel identified that 11 factors need to be present or met for someone to change their attitudes and behaviours. Three of the 11 factors are: a compelling reason, stability and time  Rachel’s new book (working title ‘Changed’) explains how, when and why people are compelled to change their behaviours. The book is set to be published in April 2020.  Rachel will share:   * Understanding – why people do what they do * Conclusions – what are people telling us that we often refuse to really hear * The 11 factor Behaviour Change framework * What to do and how to do it * How to monitor and evaluate success |

**Introduction**

Transport, road safety and cycling behaviour change programs aren’t working.

Gridlock, congestion, commuting, rising crash statistics,the cost of living, sedentary lifestyles, heart disease, obesity, mental illness and suicide are some of the biggest issues facing our Governments, Councils and public sector agencies.Across the world Councils and Governments are asking “What can we do to get people to change their behaviours?”

Politicians, policy-makers and urban planners are faced with unchartered and unprecedented challenges. Do they continue to let us mindlessly and unconsciously live car dependent lives, drive our private cars for short trips, travel where we want when we want, and exceed speed limits? Or, do they need to develop, deliver and perhaps enforce large scale behaviour change programs – raising awareness and giving us(the community) the skills, motives, support and means to do things differently?

**We’re all doing the same things at the same time - The Case for Change**

***“Normal is getting dressed in clothes that you buy for work, driving through traffic in a car that you are still paying for, in order to get to a job that you need so you can pay for the clothes, car and the house that you leave empty all day in order to afford to live in it”***

Ellen Goodman.

We are almost all overly dependent on cars for almost all trips. In Australia, more than 80% of all trips are made by car. New Zealanders are overly dependent on cars for even very short distances. 83% of trips less than 2km in New Zealand are made by car.A British Social Attitudes Survey found that 71% of adults never cycle. Only 3% of Brits cycle every day or nearly every day.

Many people rely on the car for everything. To get to work, to drop children at school, to get to the shops, to get to medical appointments, to participate in kids’ sports, to get to social events and to visit family and friends.

For many the car is the most convenient, comfortable, clean and controlled way to travel. The car is usually parked right outside the front door. Many car drivers drive around with three or four empty seats in their car. There are reports that there are as many as 38 million empty car seats on the UK’s roads every rush hour.

It’s not just transport behaviours that Councils and Governments want and need to change.

In Australia, as an example, our behaviours are out of control. 25% of all food is thrown in the bin, we buy a new phone every 25 months, the majority of fashion purchases are only worn 7 times and 6000kg of clothing and textiles are sent to landfill every 10 minutes. 30% of Australians admit to discarding more than 10 items of clothes in the last 12 months and the same number admit to having thrown out clothes that have been worn only once.

Research in the UK, USA and Australia has shown that time poor people are more likely to make poor environmental choices, particularly when it comes to consumption and waste.

A recent study in Perth, Australia, with people who self-identified as ‘aspiring or attempting to live a sustainable lifestyle’ found that people were frustrated by the systemic structures and ‘consumption based solutions’. For example, the push for people to buy an electric car or throw out plastic kitchen wares in favour of ‘eco-friendly products’. The Perth residents said that they were sceptical that small, individual changes would actually make a big difference. They wanted to see big structural changes and collective action such as community or street based recycling and composting schemes.

**What we’re doing isn’t working for all –traditional approaches**

Almost every Government and Council has a vision, or plan, to get more people walking, cycling and using public transport for commuter, utility and leisure trips.

The bicycle, as an example, is a popular mode of transport, but participation rates are somewhat stagnant. As an industry we’ve been told that if we want more people to ride, then it’s important to understand the process of change. Traditionally, and typically, this has focussed ona seven stage process:

1. **Defensive**- People in this stage are not thinking about change and defend their current travel behaviour. They enjoy travelling alone in their private car. The positives and benefits of their existing travel behaviour (the comfort of their own car) outweighs any costs or adverse consequences (traffic congestion, fuel costs, car parking fees) so they are happy to continue using their car.

* It’s suggested that the only thing practitioners can really do is to have a quick chat about any problems people face driving to work.

1. **Maybe** - This is when people are starting to think about a change. They are facing problems such as increased car parking charges, worsening traffic congestion, unreliable travel times or putting on extraunwanted kilos. People in this stage are open to change.

* It’s suggested that there’s an opportunity for practitioners to discuss how people’s behaviours are impacting others. For example, being stuck in traffic congestion means arriving at work angry or getting up extra early to beat the traffic whichcan disrupt family life.

1. **Apprehensive** –This is when most people will find that they can see equal reasons to change and stay the same. They are considering riding a bicycle, but they feel ambivalent about taking the next step. On the one hand they are experiencing some adverse consequences of driving (stress, frustration, tiredness, costs). On the other hand, they are feeling nervous about getting on their bike.

* Now is the time to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of changing or staying the same. What are the benefits for them of changing from the car to the bike?

1. **Ready** - They’ve decided to change and are getting ready to give their new mode of transport a ‘red hot go’!

* Practitioners are encouraged to have conversations about how change has happened in the past – whether it was dieting, exercising or healthy eating.

1. **On their bike** - They are now riding a bike for transport and for fun. They’re making great steps towards significant change. For example, cycling to work, riding to the café, talking about selling the 2nd car. There is of course a chance they’ll give up: running late, feeling tired or working late are great excuses to get back in the car.

* This is a time for practitioners to be supportive. Offer words of encouragement. Tell them about the positive changes seen. Perhaps new cyclists appear heaps happier.

1. **Cycling**- Changes have been made. The 2nd car has been sold and they are cycling to and from work. They’ve avoided the temptation to return to the car when it’s too hot, too cold, too wet, Monday or Friday.
2. **Advocating** - They’ve gone from being a car driver to a bicycle advocate. They’re spreading the word and enjoy telling others about the benefits they’ve experienced from riding their bicycle.

**Change starts with people’s personal beliefs and values**

“Australia needs to make ‘a complete shift’ in the way it plans cities” outgoing Infrastructure Australia chief executive Philip Davies told the Australian Finance Review. He recommended asking people what infrastructure they want rather than forcing road and rail projects on them and engaging with communities to identify problems rather than leading with an infrastructure solution.

He’s right because change starts with listening and understanding other people’s beliefs and values.

Whether it's reducing congestion, minimising waste, cycling, recycling, promoting public transport, increasing car parking charges, road safety campaigns, safer routes to school initiatives, supporting local businesses, consuming less or banning single-use plastic bags, change starts withcomprehending beliefs and values.

We can provide roads, tunnels, new rail lines, busways and bikeways. We can spend money buying new trains and buses. We can post information brochures into every resident’s letterbox. But, if we don’t listen to and understand people’s beliefs and values,our cities and peoples behaviours won’t change.

Our beliefs are the sense the something is real or true. The opinions or thinking we use to make assumptions about how things work. Our beliefs are what we assume to be true.

* What do people in our cities believe?
* Do people believe the car is the most convenient mode of travel?
* Do people believe that it’s too dangerous to ride a bicycle to work?

For example, two people travelling on the same bus, along the same route may have a very different perception of the trip because they are each taking external information and laying it on top of their own beliefs.Our beliefs are often not supported by facts and data and may be irrational at times. Many of our beliefs are developed in early childhood without theaccumulated knowledgethat comes with age and theystay with us throughout our lives.

**What do people value?**

Our values are the importance, worth and usefulness we place on things. We use our own rules or standards to evaluate things we encounter. Our values inform us about how the world should be.

* What do ratepayers value the most?
* What matters least to community groups?
* What rules do men use to evaluate the usefulness of open spaces and parks?
* What standards do women use to evaluate public transport?
* If residents had to make a list of the 3 things that they value the most in their city, what would be top of their list?

Getting answers to these questions are critical in order to build products and services that people want to use. With this in mind, what could or should we do?

* Undertake a public attitudes survey. Ask direct not leading questions. Ask everyone, not just a random sample.
* Use questions, developed by professional longitudinal survey specialists, to understand how people develop trust in different products and services.
* Listen intently to what infrastructure or services rate payers want to change.
* Produce an Awareness report.
* Repeat the survey every year and use the data to track changes in opinions and attitudes.

Philip Davies is right. We need a complete shift in the way we plans cities and transport systems and change starts with listening and understanding other people’s beliefs and values.

**When we are ‘Compelled to Change’…**

Change is complex but when people have a compelling reason to change, they change their behaviour and sustain the change. Caroline and Stephen (one transport and one non-transport example) show that we need a personal and compelling reason to change our behaviours.

**Caroline’s story -** [**“I’ve realised you need a big compelling reason to change your habits”**](http://www.cyclingrachelsmith.com/how-we-shop-spend-and-save-ive-realised-you-need-a-big-compelling-reason-to-change-your-spending-habits-caroline-2-minute-read/)

“When my sister paid off her mortgage I was genuinely pleased for her but disappointed for myself. I had habits in place but I had been spending on the credit card. I wasn’t paying off my home loan as quickly as I could have. I’ve realised you need a big compelling reason to change your spending habits – a strong motive.

The negative words around spending used to grateon me. Frugal was my picture of spending less. I didn’t want to be frugal. I like being generous.Now all purchases are planned. I changed my spending to ‘conscious’ or ‘thoughtful’ spending. I recognised that if I spend now I am taking from the future. We have a house budget. Previously we just bought what we needed. Now we have limits. We ask ourselves “How badly do we need this?” Our focus is repaying the home loan so now we fix things by finding the parts on e-Bay.

# When you share your financial goal with people, they get excited for you. When you tell people you have a budget, they share their story. People want to have conversations about money rather than feeling shame and guilt. I’ve realised that rather than thinking people will judge you or think you are ‘poor’ it’s how you feel about yourself”.

**Stephen’s story – “In 2010 I made the mental decision to ride to work”**

“I hadn’t really considered riding a bicycle to work until someone mentioned the great pathways connecting my house to the city.I had always thought of myself as ‘a car guy’ but in 2010 I made the mental decision to ride to work.Riding the 12 kilometres to work initially seemed insurmountable so I purchased an electric bike kit to help get started. To my great surprise the ride wasn’t so bad… it was actually pretty good!I wasn’t focused on the health benefits when I started riding. I became the fittest I had ever been in my adult life and lost 30 kilograms - “I know how rare it is to lose weight and keep it off.”

While I still drive a car occasionally, riding a bicycle is my main form of transport which has helped me realise that you don’t need a car to get around - It really is a game changer. My passion for riding has had a positive impact on my colleagues at work and on my family.My wife rides to work and our two children ride to school nearby - It’s really important to set an example for your children and I’m very proud of my daughter being one the few girls to arrive at school by bicycle.I often ride greater distances – such as across the Simpson Desert”

**…And why we’re not**

Change, such as getting out of the car is scary because there are many biases that affect us.

* We use the information that’s immediately recalled in our minds when we make a decision and we place more importance on recall than on information with factual weight.What this means in terms of travel behaviour change is that we travel and move around based on false knowledge and information. We believe that because we fell off our bicycle in 1983 that it’s dangerous to cycle, so we drive.
* We’re selective and forget, or chose to ignore, activities, events or things that cause us pain and discomfort. In terms of transport, we’ll happily ignore the two hours of anger, rage and frustration when we’re stuck in traffic congestion because we perceive that the car is the most convenient mode of travel.
* We’re emotional and believe things that have a positive emotional effect whilst typically rejecting, or ignoring, hard facts that are unpleasant. We drive the kids to school because we feel stressed about getting to school on time , when in reality it’s 10 minutes of arguments and the kids can’t play in the school playground before school because car exhaust pollution is so bad.

**A new approach to Behaviour Change**

Over the last 20 years I’ve developed and delivered travel, transport, cycling, tourism, financial, consumer, environmental, waste, health and lifestyle behaviour change programs.

From this, and other work, I have been able to identify:

* What works and creates change
* What leads to, or results in, failure
* How, when and why people change their attitudes, habits and behaviours

From this work I have identified that 11 factors need to be present or met for someone to change their attitudes and behaviours. The factors are distributed into four categories:

1. Triggers
2. Readiness to change
3. Barriers
4. Needs

**Triggers -** Triggers include circumstances, economics and shortages.

**Readiness to change -** The ‘readiness to change’ factors include having a compelling reason and a strong motive.

**Barriers -** The barriers include fear as well as individuals feeling overwhelmed about making changes to or in their life.

**Needs -** The needs include trust, stability and time.

My presentation ‘Compelled to Change’ will explain and summarise my research on how, when and why people are compelled to change their behaviours.

The oral presentation at the conference will summarise:

* Why people do what they do
* When, why and how people are compelled to change
* The framework testing with multiple industries and people from transport to waste, water, health and alcohol behaviour change
* The 11 factor Behaviour Change framework
* What to do and how to use it
* How to monitor and evaluate success

The 12 minute conference presentation will be structured as follows

* The challenge ahead. Short review of the unprecedented challenges our politicians, policy-makers and urban planners are faced with
* The rationale – The reasons for my undertaking behavioural insights research
* The methodology - Last year I undertook research to understand what factors could and would create change in transport behaviours. I interviewed people who had changed their behaviours and those people who resist/resisted change. I also interviewed organisations, families and individual’s about their sustainability, climate change and resilience behaviours to identify when people are compelled to change and when they aren’t.
* Conclusions - I’ve drawn two key conclusions about what drives lifestyle, consumer, mobility and transport behavioural change.
* The biggest challenge impacting transport, climate change and equity now and in the future
* The 11 factor Behaviour Change framework

**AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT**

All parts of this paper and the research has been prepared and written by Rachel Smith.

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