

“More people riding more often”

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 10th January 2008

Bicycle NSW Response to “Empty cycling lanes cost millions: NRMA” published front page *Sydney Morning Herald*, January 10, 2008.

The goal of Bicycle NSW, a member of the national Bicycle Coalition, is to get more people riding bikes more often, because riding bikes is good for the environment, good for people's health, and good for transport. We are committed to working with Federal, State and Local government, businesses, schools and any other organisation, including NRMA Motoring and Services, to achieve this goal.

Infrastructure such as the separated bike lanes on Epping Road, are an example of the far-sighted vision of the lemma State Government, who have recognised that people who are keen to ride bikes are unwilling when there is a lack of dedicated infrastructure. City of Sydney research shows that in fact 4 out of 5 people would like to ride to bikes but are reluctant because they feel it is too dangerous in Sydney's traffic. Since 1996, bike riding has increased 6 fold in Sydney and between 7-9 am more than 500 bike riders travel down Oxford St each morning.

Figures out this week revealed that 1.47 million bikes were sold last year, the eighth consecutive year that bikes have outsold cars, last year by a massive 40%.

The comments made by NRMA Motoring and Services reported in today's *Sydney Morning Herald* are understandable given their motoring membership and customer base. However, it is unfortunate that their vision for Sydney's transport future is short term and based around more cars on more roads to put them on. Local and international experience has shown that this approach does not work.

They should also note that substantial numbers of motorists including their members also own bicycles and many will also strongly support local cycling initiatives such as the Epping Road bike paths.

What Sydney needs is a sustainable road transport system, smart enough and flexible enough to meet the needs of many forms of transport including bicycles, pedestrians and public transport. The NRMA would serve its members and the broader community by working with the government, councils and state and community organisations to build such a long term vision.

Investments such as pedestrian and cycle ways ultimately represent a commitment to deliver more sustainable transport, healthier life-styles and liveable cities, helping us to cope with the 'inconvenient truths' of climate change, the obesity epidemic and the transport crisis. Pedestrian and bicycle paths are long-term investments which we need now, not at some time in the future when it is too little too late - and too costly.

Bicycle NSW is running a series of events to encourage riders to use existing bicycle paths and to promote emerging ones such as Epping Road. The effectiveness of engaging the community through this kind of event is evidenced by the huge success of our Ride 2 Work Day, where the numbers of bike riders participating in 2007 were up 500% on 2006 numbers. Based on this experience and the explosion of people using other more established bike paths, the Epping Road cycle way is going to be a success.

Cycling is a sustainable long term solution to that delivers benefits to the whole community: a simple way to reduce pollution and greenhouse emissions, a fun way to keep healthy, and an effective way to reduce traffic congestion.

“life's better on a bike!”

