

## Bicycle NSW BikePlan Community Consultation Wagga Wagga workshop November 2008

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Strategic Plan for Ongoing Implementation of PAMP and Bike Plans  
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RTA Western Project History

### Notes from Wagga Wagga workshop

The Bicycle NSW South Western regional NSW BikePlan workshop was held on 17 November 2008, at the Wagga Wagga City Council chambers.

### In attendance were:

Wagga Wagga local bicycle users group (BUG)  
Members of Bicycle Wagga Wagga  
Gundagai BUG  
Narrandera BUG  
Wagga Wagga City Councillor Ray Goodlass, and council staff  
Wagga Mountain Bike Club  
Wagga Triathlon Club  
Local RTA staff

The workshop opened with a formal acknowledgement of the traditional owners of the land, and an introduction by Elizabeth Hole, Chief Operating Officer, Bicycle New South Wales.

This was followed by an overview of cycling history in New South Wales, and an outline of the *NSW BikePlan* by Mr. Matt Faber, from the PCAL NSW BikePlan team.

### The workshop discussions included the following:

The quality of current interactions between local Councils and local BUGs.

This presented a number of opportunities and highlighted the different level of interaction between different councils, with some having an ongoing dialogue, and other councils having little contact at all.

Involvement of Cyclists in Councils road traffic committees.

It was concluded that more needs to be done to encourage cyclists to be seen as a legitimate part of the road user's community, and to enable them to form part of road safety committees, if only in the capacity of observers.



Bike plans were found to vary greatly between councils, with some recently revised, and others many years out of date and/ or not used.

To help address this issue, it is hoped that the new BikePlan will include actions that encourage local councils to keep bike plans up to date. It was agreed council bike plans should include the whole of community needs, particularly, cycling safety initiatives, environmental issues, and health benefits etc rather than just focusing on cycling infrastructure, even if some of these activities fall outside of councils responsibilities.

#### Closer co-operation between Councils and local Cyclists

The need for cyclists to work more closely with local councils was identified as a simple step, that has the potential to benefit, both cyclists, and Councils, by "cycling knowledge" being assimilated into council's decision making process.

#### Safety and Education

The lack of mutual respect between cyclists, motorists, and pedestrians was seen as the single biggest challenge to address in relation to cycling safety.

The majority of attendees agreed that a comprehensive media campaign, that involved cycling organisations, motoring organisations, schools, the RTA and the Police, was needed, to bring about positive behavioural change, and to engender mutual respect between all road and path users.

It was noted that part of this campaign could include providing relevant cycling information enclosed with motor vehicle registration renewal notices. The workshop also noted that a series of questions on cycling on road could also be included as part of driver training schemes, with mandatory questions forming part of the driving test.

#### Encouraging Children to ride

Cycling needs to be promoted to children as a fun recreational activity.

Methods to promote cycling could include building awareness on children's television programmes, using role models, such as the Wiggles, to promote safety.

Web based computer games could also be used to teach cycling safety and appropriate cycling behaviour. To encourage children to adopt the use of wearing safety helmets when cycling, it was noted that creating trendy designs that are seen as "cool", would increase their use.

#### Signage

A lack of clear, consistent signage, to guide cyclists, was also seen as a safety concern, as cyclists often ride on streets unsuitable for cycling, unaware of the existence of more appropriate routes utilising safer roads and shared paths.

The RTA's cycle infrastructure route mapping information, when made available to the public, was seen as an invaluable tool for planning cycle routes. It would be of benefit for the signage system to also include both distances and suggested cycling travel times to places of interest.

It was noted that the reinstallation of school safety programmes by the RTA and police would assist in promulgating the safety message in schools. However, it was noted, that schools should not be seen as the principal educator of cycling skills, and that other programs, such as Austcycle, could also be employed to teach children cycling skills.

Roundabouts are seen as a significant safety hazard, and greater consideration for cyclists, needs to be employed when designing roundabouts.



## Health

Promoting the health benefits of cycling needs to be better publicised, with simple concise facts provided to support the health benefits. Medical centres and general practitioners (GPs) could also be involved in promoting cycling as a way to better health and fitness.

It was noted that obesity within the workplace could be tackled as an OH&S issue, with the onus on employers to encourage a more active lifestyle to reduce obesity and the onset of associated health problems. Providing active cycle to work programmes would encourage this.

## The Environment

Similar to promoting the physical health benefits of cycling, there was a need to better promote the environmental benefits.

It was noted that cycling helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, transport costs, and helps to provide more open space, by reducing the size and requirement for car parks, and assists in extending the life of existing road infrastructure by reducing the number of car trips, etc.

## Infrastructure

Providing a safe network of cycling routes between communities in country areas was seen as a significant opportunity to encourage more people to cycle. Providing a network of cycling shoulders was also seen as the most practical way of providing the necessary infrastructure, due to the distance between communities.

Providing a network to link trip generators, such as schools, sporting grounds, and shops, etc, with the community, was recognised as important to encourage regular short cycling trips.

Shared paths were also seen as often the best option, as these provide a safe environment for the young and less experienced in an otherwise hazardous cycling environment.

Suitable end of trip facilities are also needed at shopping centres and places of employment to encourage more people to cycle.

## Rail Trails

Rail trails are seen as an ideal way to link towns along disused rail lines, as they can provide not only a tourism attraction, but also a cycle link between towns, away from busy roads, and through more cycle friendly terrain.

It is proposed that a whole of Government holistic approach to cycling would encourage State Rail to permit disused rail corridors to be used as rail trails, with a clear understanding, that these corridors are to remain under State Rail control, to enable them to be reused for rail.

## Making it Happen

To achieve the goal of getting more people to ride more often, it is crucial that all government agencies work co-operatively to implement the BikePlan.

It is imperative that the Planning ministry implement a long-term cycling plan, to ensure that the corridors needed to provide a continuous cycling route, are included in all land management and development plans.

Attendees highlighted the need for the RTA to work with State Rail, Local Government Agencies, National Parks, and other land corridor controllers, to provide the best possible cycling opportunities, along roads, and building sections of cycle ways, that pass through other land use corridors.

This would provide a better option to building cycle lanes in breakdown lanes.



There is a need to provide a more suitable funding model to assist small country councils in funding cycling infrastructure to supplement the 50/50 RTA funding rule, as councils' existing rates income base was insufficient to provide the full funding required.

### Promoting Cycling

Cycling is seen as an important part of the wider opportunity to create a community that's a better place to live, work, and play. To this extent it is important to gain exposure and better promote the facilities we already have, by means of providing maps and signage, to encourage more people to utilise existing the cycling infrastructure.

Cycling tourism can be encouraged through better publicising existing cycling friendly routes, both for long distance cycling, and local cycle touring.

There is a need to increase provisions for carrying bicycles on country trains, to enable families and groups to travel by rail. The present situation of having only two boxed bikes on country trains discourages cycling activity.

Progressing further construction of rail trails between towns in a given area would also encourage cycling tourism, and provide for safer cycling between towns, resulting in more commuting by bicycle.

### Auditing and Updating Documents

Regular auditing of the progress of cycling projects and programmes would ensure these are implemented in accordance with the relevant standards and guidelines. This will ensure the needs of the cycling community are not overlooked.

State Government and Local Government Authorities need to maintain regularly updated bike plans and related documents, to ensure documentation remains relevant.

