

NSW Bike Plan Workshop Submission –

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[www.hvmtbr.com](http://www.hvmtbr.com)

Dear Werner,

My partner, Ali Bigg, and I have produced a table listing a selection of actions addressing the questions (listed below) as posed in your workshop discussion paper.

- *Consider how we pass on and teach cycling skills.*
- *When do we start learning our behavioural skills and how should we teach them?*
- *What are the basics that will encourage safe cycling?*
- *How do we capture what needs to be done and how to do it?*
- *Setting realistic targets, getting government departments to work together and making it happen*
- *Learning from our experiences and capturing improvement opportunities*
- *What incentives, infrastructure and promotions will encourage more people to cycle more often in your community?*
- *What will make more people cycle in your community? List 3 short-term low cost actions in your area*
- *Take the time to read the RTA Bike Plan 2010 and comment on it in relation to your community...*

Many of these actions address multiple of the discussion points posed and I am happy to elaborate during the workshop.

In specific response to the RTA Bike Plan 2010 and its relation to my community, I present the following information:

Relation of the RTA Bike Plan 2010 to our community

The plan presents minimal information in regard to considerations for our region and appears Sydney-centric.

We reside in Port Macquarie on the Mid North Coast of NSW.

Port Macquarie has a high proportion of elite cyclists by choice. This phenomenon is related to the hosting of the Australian Ironman Titles in April annually. Australia's top 24hr mountain bike endurance athlete, Jason English, is also a local resident and school teacher. Federal Member for Lyne, Robert Oakeshott - Independent, is a keen cyclist, participates in triathlons and provides vocal support. Local sport cycling clubs are strong but no political advocacy group exists. Within the elite demographic are a variety of backgrounds from life-long cyclists to newcomers. Many cyclists are audacious in their habits and are capable of travelling extraordinary distances. Three bicycle retailers exist and are visibly thriving. **Multiple regular morning road bunch rides occur. A regular Thursday summer evening mountain bike ride occurs on mixed trails throughout town. One skate park and two dirt bmx tracks exist in Port Macquarie. A cafe culture exists through the "Pelaton**

Cafe". Minor infrastructure works are underway including development of a short section of shared path north of Flynn's Beach and shoulder widening along Ocean Dve. On-road paths are in existence in some areas.

Coastal towns in this area have high aged populations and are also attractive to tourists. This affects the cycling and other transport mode user demographics increasing levels of recreational cyclists including family groups. South West Rocks hosts a local triathlon sponsored by Nestle (local major employer) and has a section of coastal shared pathway under development. Laurieton/North Haven has significant lengths of off-road shared pathway in existence along the Camden Haven River.

Neighbouring major towns of Kempsey and Taree have high Aboriginal populations and are also subject to greater social and economic disadvantage. Many cyclists in these towns are cyclists by necessity being unable to afford cars or other transport or for reasons such as disability or driver disqualification. Fewer levels of female cyclists are observable. Kempsey has a recreational cyclists club. Taree has a local road cyclists club and a recreational cyclists club. Mountain bike riders in Taree often join the Hastings club and their activities. Two bike shops exist in both Taree and in Kempsey. Skate parks exist in many major villages.

Public transport options within and between towns are minimal in our area.

School children utilise cycling to commute but are often commuting long distances by bus or car.

School mountain biking programs are increasing. Known programs exist at Wauchope High School, Heritage Christian School (PMq) and St Columbus Secondary College (PMq). Wauchope HS utilises trails in neighbouring state forests.

Social disadvantage and low exposure to historic levels of cycling throughout the region underlies tension between road users. Attitudes to cycling in our area are affected by class and race considerations. Higher levels of trail-bike use and the "boy racer" syndrome present a unique set of challenges amongst the youth demographic and interrupt development of life-long cycling habits. Polarisation prevails in attitudes towards personal health and environmental concerns.

Geographic considerations include:

Arterial roads between towns are often confined by floodplains bounded by private lands posing limited options for inter-village cycling. Multiple paths to a destination can be found through public lands, eg. state forests, in some areas, but it is generally the floodplains that are problematic as they are privately owned or the lands in public ownership are low relief and inundated regularly. Examples include: Hastings River Drive, Crescent Head Rd, Old Bar Rd and more. Access to the wide-shouldered Pacific Hwy could be improved if local governments better understood potential cycling increases.

Night time cycling is limited by being in a regional area. For example, commuting on country roads increases in difficulty at night compared with cities due to absence of lighting. Travel on the Pacific Highway is almost non-existent at night due to truck traffic.

Climatic factors include humid summer days and mild dry winters. Shorter winter day lengths coincide with best cycling conditions further compounding complications of night time riding.

Many “paper roads” exist and are potential areas for expansion of trail networks. Lands NSW is currently reviewing ownership of these areas. The Travelling Stock Route (TSR) network is also another network of public land for potential development. Rural Lands Protection Boards that have been responsible for the maintenance of these routes are currently being dissolved and this could be a critical period.

Conclusions are derived from:

- 1) personal discussion including issues raised in community services sector workplaces , tertiary and other educational settings, and elsewhere; and
- 2) through direct observation of indicative factors such as low levels of helmet wearing, cheaper quality of bikes, location of use, appearance, etc.

#### Ability of Local Government to implement

Greater Taree City Council has an effective bike plan (although dated, 1995, and only one display-only hard copy is known to exist). Some bike trail maps have been developed by GTCC with the assistance of local cyclists for urban routes. GTCC has an emphasis on implementing the Coastal Cycleway. A Bikeway and Active Community Advisory Committee has existed for many years and will soon be chaired by the incoming Mayor Paul Hogan. Greater Taree City Council has a low rates based and was recently declined proposed rate rises thus the ability to fund works at 50-50 is limited.

Port Macquarie Hastings Council **has bicycle plans for Port Macquarie, Wauchope and Lake Cathie/Bonny Hills**. Council has developed significant debt in recent years and has been affected greatly by the recent financial crisis. An administrator is currently in place. Council has recently supported National Ride to Work Day and has provided grants including \$3,690 to HVMTBR Inc. and previously to the Port Macquarie Cycling (road) club for local programs. Local cyclists are developing rudimentary trail maps including those available through the Hastings Valley Mountain Bike Riders Inc. at [www.hvmtbr.com](http://www.hvmtbr.com)

Kempsey Shire Council has no effective bike plan. Limited mapping of routes has been conducted on GIS, but is limited and currently outweighed by other priorities.

Political “inertia” is affecting local government and other spheres of politics. Increased awareness amongst senior management and staff is already observable and expected to increase.

Listed below are some possible strategies for discussion (rather than 3 short term low cost strategies)...

<p>Infrastructure and facilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Off road paths linked to networks</li> <li>• Wide shoulders for inter-town routes in regional areas and improve links across geographic barriers for cyclists to access state forest and national park estate.</li> <li>• Pacification of urban traffic</li> <li>• Signage and green paint marking</li> <li>• Established tourist routes, eg. rail trails</li> <li>• Retrofitting of all government offices with bike racks, change rooms, etc.</li> <li>• Velodromes</li> <li>• Mountain Bike Parks</li> <li>• BMX and Skate Parks (hard surface and dirt)</li> <li>• Complementing infrastructure, eg. laying of pipes, power line easements</li> <li>• Bike recycling centres</li> <li>• Bike education centres</li> <li>• Racks and facilities complementing public transport</li> <li>• Research trail networks across “paper roads” and “TSR’s” (travelling stock routes) with Lands NSW to increase cyclist access across landscapes.</li> </ul>
<p>Education and Programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share the Road type campaigns</li> <li>• Bike mechanics workshops</li> <li>• Bike skills workshops – particularly in schools with high levels of trail bike use amongst students and/or adjacent to state forest</li> <li>• Aust-cycle program and standardised competencies</li> <li>• Bike education centre programming</li> <li>• Bike education for disqualified drivers</li> <li>• Seminars and certification for traffic engineers, eg. via engineering professional associations</li> <li>• Ongoing safe driving campaigns, eg. the “Little Finger” campaign</li> <li>• Cycling for the disabled, eg. vision impaired on tandems</li> <li>• Implement bike skills requirement to gain drivers licence (exemptions for health reasons)</li> <li>• Safety education</li> <li>• Cross-sectoral approach with sport, health, education, transport</li> </ul>
<p>Promotions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events, eg. Pedalfest, Car-free days in cities and large towns</li> <li>• Development of cycling route maps</li> <li>• Supporting sports events, eg. Triathlons, races</li> <li>• Sports sponsorships</li> <li>• National Ride to Work and Ride to School Days</li> <li>• Local club events</li> <li>• Tourism promotions, eg. NPWS brochures</li> <li>• Bike friendly retailer promotions, eg . window stickers</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Award schemes, eg. bike friendly local government award, Tidy Towns</li> <li>• Target at-risk groups: women, boy racers, etc.</li> <li>• Local bike bus</li> <li>• Engage cycling manufacturers and retailers in community activities</li> </ul>
Regulatory changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Car parking time and other restrictions</li> <li>• Police reporting line and enforcement against offenders</li> <li>• Traffic pacification, eg. 20kph speed limit</li> <li>• Reduce impediments to cycling tourism, eg. streamlined licensing of rickshaw taxis</li> <li>• Clarify E-bike laws</li> <li>• Bike clearways – illegal to park in bike lanes (not car door lanes)</li> <li>• Bike competency requirements for drivers licence test</li> <li>• Review legislated helmet requirements to reduce impediments</li> <li>• Active transport scores/considerations in BASIX and other DA conditions</li> <li>• Exclusion of vehicles from certain roads, eg. Plomer Rd through Limeburners Creek Nature Reserve Wilderness Area</li> </ul>
Financial mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing cost of car parking</li> <li>• Congestion tax in major centres</li> <li>• Grant funding for community projects especially where innovative and collaborative</li> <li>• Income and company tax deductions for cycling and active transport</li> <li>• Carbon credits</li> <li>• Subsidised health insurance</li> <li>• Bike business fund</li> <li>• Alternative transport levy in local government</li> <li>• Funding of local government cycling support officers, eg. similar to road safety officers</li> <li>• Free travel on trains and buses</li> <li>• Funding of bike plan development</li> <li>• Continuation of free ferry transport for cyclists (eg. Hastings River at Settlement Pt and Hibbard)</li> </ul>

I look forward to the workshop next Wednesday,

Jai Cooper

HVMTBR Inc. – Junior Development

19/11/08

