

NSW Bike Plan Submission

INTRODUCTION:

The following pages cover six main areas which is a summary of the outcomes from our community engagement workshops held across NSW. Participants involved were Bicycle User Groups, local council representatives, Dept of Health, Dept of Education and Training, Tourism, DECC and Mountain bike clubs:

1. Safety
2. Health
3. Environment
4. Infrastructure
5. Rail Trails
6. Coastline cycleway

1. SAFETY:

Issues around cycling safety may be viewed in three sections; behavioural, proficiency, and the environment. Each subject whilst inter-connected can be considered separately.

Behavioural: *Operating within the road rules and respecting the rights of others;*

A lack of mutual respect for each other's rights and responsibilities on the roads and pathways is seen as a major impediment to encouraging more people to cycle. Consequently, it is the source of much dissention between cyclists, pedestrians and drivers. To maximise the enjoyment and safety of all users; pedestrians, cyclists and drivers, a positive change in behaviour needs to occur, that ensures all road users consider their obligations to each other, and abide by the rules.

To achieve positive behavioural change and encourage more cycling, the BikePlan needs to include a framework of initiatives that will foster mutual respect by all road and path users, and ensure adherence to the rules.

Initiatives should include:

- Increasing driver awareness of their obligations to cyclists, as part of driver training, plus the introduction of mandatory cycling questions to be included in license examinations
- Wide ranging media campaign to promote cycling safety, focusing on all road users, cyclists, motorists and pedestrians
- A review of current road markings for existing cycle paths, to help remove ambiguities and confusion for cyclists, and to ensure they are provided with clear signage and directions
- An increase in the presence of police cyclist patrols to help raise driver awareness of cyclists in traffic, and assist in enforcement of road rules

Proficiency: *The cycling skills required for safe interaction with the cycling environment/ including other users.*

Cycling proficiency training networks to be included in the BikePlan, to encourage people to acquire the skills and competencies required to interact with the wider road and footpath community.

These networks to include:

- Ride to School campaigns
- Cycling proficiency training through the RTA, and/ or council promotions at schools
- Ride to work promotions
- Promoting and subsidising commercial training schemes such as AustCycle



- Expanding cycling programs within organisations such as PCYC
- Encouraging cyclist proficiency training through cycling organisations

Environment: *Providing an environment that encourages safe cycling*

Providing a safe environment where people can cycle to their desired destination along well-defined roads and paths should be seen as a primary objective of the BikePlan.

To successfully promote cycling as an enjoyable safe experience, we need to take a holistic approach. The cycling environment should not be seen as simply to provide cycle lanes and pathways, but rather encompass a wider approach that connects and includes cyclists to existing transport hubs and networks.

These include:

- Maintenance of existing cycling infrastructure, including clearing debris from cycle lanes and paths, regular sweeping, and replacing worn-out and missing signs, lighting and logos
- Connecting to other forms of transport, such as trains, buses and ferries to maximise transport options for cyclist commuters
- Providing bicycle carrying capacity on trains, buses and ferries
- Providing end of journey facilities
- Providing information that will enable people to plan the safest cycling route (maps and cycling guides)
- Improving the continuity of cycling routes by providing better signage and road-path stencilling. Signage needs to be consistent and unambiguous
- Reviewing on-road markings to improve cycling safety by eliminating the so-called car door death lanes, ensuring that cycle lanes markings are unambiguous for all road users.
- Making traffic lights more pedestrian and cycle friendly by changing the timing sequence to encourage more people to cross at traffic lights and enable better flow
- Providing bicycle storage boxes at intersections is a good initiative to improve cycling safety. The implementation of these boxes needs to be hastened.

2. HEALTH:

The Cost of Inactivity

In 2006/07 the Federal Government's health budget included a staggering \$1.49 billion in funding for the treatment of health related problems caused indirectly by obesity and our largely sedentary life styles. (Econtech, 2007)

In addition to this cost, we need to consider the additional burden and associated costs on industry through loss of productivity, on families, through loss of earnings and the community as a whole.

Regular cycling activities incorporated into our daily routine help create a healthier life style and reduce the increasing problem of obesity in our community

A key objective of the Bike Plan should be to promote the important contribution regular cycling can make to a communities health, and to encourage a more active partnership with the public health system and health industry to increase awareness of cycling to promote better health.

The projected cost savings on health related expenditure could be used to fund infrastructure and encourage more people to cycle.

The World Health Organizations Ottawa Charter advocates:

- Building healthy public policy.
- Creating supportive environments
- Strengthening community action
- Reorienting health services

- Developing personal skills

Cycling supports all five objectives of the Ottawa Charter.

The following initiatives are proposed to help promote the health benefits of cycling:

- Medical practitioners and the wider health industry to promote the benefits of cycling as a low impact way to improve fitness and reduce weight
- Provide cycling health benefit information to local general practitioners (GP's) to display cycling posters in surgeries
- Include health related problems of obesity into OH&S protocols to provide employers with relevant information and incentives to encourage employees to cycle to and from work
- Provide information on the clean air benefits of cycling and dispel the myth that you breathe in more vehicle fumes when cycling than sitting in traffic
- Promote cycling as part of ***Live well at School***

3. ENVIRONMENT:

The bicycle is without peer as an energy efficient mode of transportation.

The environmental benefits of cycling are often overshadowed by the cost of providing cycling infrastructure. The BikePlan should aim to emphasise the long-term benefits to the environment and community.

The BikePlan should aim to illuminate the many cost savings and long-term benefits to the environment of all the different ways cycling impacts favourably on the environment.

Environmental benefits of cycling:

- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions. *With the average car producing 0.32 Kg of greenhouse gas per kilometre travelled (Australian Greenhouse Office, 2006), by just replacing one 5 kilometre trip per day, yes only 2.5 Km each way, we can save a staggering ½ tonne of greenhouse gas per year.*
- Reduced traffic congestion. *Reducing volume of morning peak hour cars on the road by 10% and replacing this with more people cycling, would help solve Sydney's current traffic congestion problems.*
- Reduced air pollution. *Cars are a significant generator of smog in our cities. A reduction in motor vehicle movements, will dramatically improve air quality in our cities.*
- Reduced noise pollution
- Reduced visual pollution
- Reduced dependence on fossil fuels. *The average car consumes in excess of 10 litres per 100 kilometres travelled in city traffic. We can save equivalent of 10 litres of fossil fuel per 100 kilometres cycled, or one tonne for every 1,000 kilometres.*
- Generation of more open space. *As bicycles require less parking space than cars more open space can be provided. Additionally as bicycles do little damage to lawns, bicycle parking could also be provided on grassed areas and under trees further improving our environment.*
- Assist in making businesses carbon neutral. *Include provision for cyclists in developments, to reduce the overall carbon footprint of a development, irrespective of its size.*
- Extending the life of our cars and infrastructure. *Reducing distances travelled by motor vehicle extends not only the life of our cars but also the infrastructure we drive on. Whilst this is generally seen as a cost saving, we need to also consider the wider implications of conserving our natural resources.*

To achieve the significant community and environmental benefits that cycling provides we must provide properly funded infrastructure and community education programs. By

achieving this, we reap the long term benefits, both in terms of cost and in the positive social impact of providing a better environment.

4. INFRASTRUCTURE:

Building the infrastructure that will provide a safe cycling environment, for people at all levels of cycling proficiency, is the most important component in encouraging more people to cycle more often.

To understand what infrastructure is needed, it is important to first understand the needs of cyclists. Cyclists are not all the same and require different infrastructure to suite there riding styles, they can be categorised into seven basic groups with differing needs as seen below.

Primary School Children: The cognitive skills of primary school children are not yet fully developed and they have little knowledge of road rules. We therefore need to provide a safe cycling environment away from busy roads that will provide them with the skills required to safely enjoy cycling.

Secondary School Children: The cycling proficiency skills of secondary school students varies greatly. For older students (over 14), the majority of cycling takes place on-road, on shared path and recreational areas. We need to educate this age group to instil better cycling safety habits

Recreational Cyclists: Recreational cyclists are the most varied group. Reasons for cycling differ widely, from short family excursions, to groups cycling long distances. Cyclists in this category generally prefer off-road path and quiet streets, avoiding congested fast moving traffic.

Austrroads Part 14 has divided commuting cyclists into two groups Commuting and Utility

Commuting Cyclists: *Generally cycling longer distances and arrive at work hot and sweaty* Commuting cyclists need safe efficient routes to connect between home and work. They generally need to cycle during peak traffic periods, and will require end of trip facilities, to enable them to shower, store clothing and park bicycles.

Utility Cyclists: *Used to capture the needs of people commuting at a more leisurely pace.* Utility cyclists commute for a variety of purposes, such as shopping; travel to community facilities, or to visit friends. Their needs include the provision of a comprehensive network of well defined 'low stress' routes, and appropriate end of trip facilities, that encompasses safe and secure bicycle parking, storage lockers and change rooms.

Touring Cyclists: Touring cyclists vary greatly, with some cycling over 100 kilometres a day, along major arterial routes between cities, while others cycle short distances, to enjoy tranquil country roads and tracks, avoiding major roads where possible. While the 100k a day group benefit from roads with good quality riding surfaces, the other groups needs accurate information to plan their trips, including road information that will allow them to avoid major roads, and highlight facilities available in minor towns and road topography.

Sports and Competitive Cyclists: Sports and training competitive cyclists need roads with good riding surfaces and safe riding shoulders or cycling lanes. Due to their high speed using shared paths and cycle ways is generally impractical. Competitive or road racing on public roads needs special consideration, as mixing cycle racing with other road users is generally unacceptable.

To enable the extent of infrastructure required, where we will get the biggest bang for buck and attract the most cyclists, we need to produce a map that shows the complete cycle network, both existing and future. This will identify where cycling corridors need to be reserved, allow provision for cycling to be included in future developments, and include cycling needs in land use plans etc.

The ArcGIS mapping of the cycling facility network, underway by the RTA, is a good start on mapping the existing cycle path network. The project needs to be prioritised, as while the project can never be fully finalised, due to the need to continually monitor and update the mapping, never the less, a completed first plan is urgently sought, to enable future planning of cycling infrastructure.

The BikePlan needs to be promoted and seen as an integral part of any land use plans. Developments need to be compelled to include a cycle management plan with every development application as a minimum, and to provide the land required to build the appropriate cycling infrastructure to connect to the bicycle plan as seen on the NSW state BikePlan.

A comprehensive cycling focused audit and checking process needs to form part of any project involving cycling infrastructure. This will ensure the relevant standards and guidelines are included and adhered to, including a final inspection, which should also be used to capture any improvement opportunities for future projects.

The need for such a checking process is clearly shown by the disappointment witnessed by cyclists, when the final project does not deliver the anticipated cycling benefits.

Actions to improve cycling infrastructure:

- Ensuring all industrial developments include a cycle management plan to provide safe access, secure bicycle parking and end of trip facilities for employees and customers.
- Providing fully separated cycle ways along highways and major roads rather than shared shoulder/breakdown lanes
- Placing more emphasis on providing safe cycle crossing points at on and off ramps on major roads, where the breakdown lanes are utilised as cycle lanes or shoulders. Over or under passes should be provided, where possible, so cyclists need not cross fast moving traffic at on and off ramps, alternatively, cyclists should be diverted away from crossing points to safer locations.
- Providing cycle crossings at all signalised intersections, with shared path crossings to enable cyclists to ride across intersections. In most cases this should only require an additional set of lights, alternatively, one could simply change the lens in the existing pedestrian crossing lights to one that includes cyclists
- Ensuring cycle lane markings are consistent and unambiguous throughout the state
- Extending cycle lanes and shoulder lanes throughout intersections, including painting cycle lane crossings green as per the RTA guidelines
- Ensuring all roundabouts with cycle lanes or cycle shoulders have appropriate cycle crossings as per AustRoads part14
- Ensuring shared path width caters for the expected traffic, and are not just built to minimum width
- Providing linkages between existing sections of cycling infrastructure by building the missing links
- Providing signage to guide people along the preferred route, including riding time and distances to destinations
- Clear and consistent stencilling on shared paths to indicate it's a shared path. Encouraging people to keep left, and promote correct on path cycling behaviour. There is also a need to review the shared path marking guidelines and standards, to simplify the requirements and remove ambiguities. Any review should include representatives from the cycling fraternity

5. RAIL TRAILS:

Rail Trails are seen as an opportunity to link towns and villages without the need to ride along country roads, which often pass through terrain not considered to be "cycle friendly." In addition to providing a well graded route for cycle commuting. Rail trails would also provide tourism opportunities, which would benefit struggling country communities as cycling is an important niche tourism market in NSW. 520,000 cyclists toured NSW in 2007, up 18.5% over 2006. NSW received 52% of all international cycle tourists to Australia and 33% of all domestic cycle tourists in 2007. Cycle tourists stay on average 5.1 nights, compared with all other types of tourists whose average length of stay is 3.5 nights.

Visiting one of the Victorian rail trails one can see an example of the benefits of rail trails to the community.

With a whole of government approach to cycling it is hoped that the present impediments to providing access to rail corridors can be overcome with state rail allowing cycling in rail corridors without a need to relinquish control or ownership of the land.

Rail trails should also be seen as a way of preserving our rail history, by providing access to the many interesting structures that form part of our rail history.

Needless to say it is not practical to resurrect all the rail bridges and tunnels to a cycle safe state; these areas will need to be bypassed.

6. COASTLINE CYCLEWAY:

While the Coastal Cycleway is progressing slowly, there is a need to map the proposed corridor, reserve the land, and ensure any developments or land use plans, do include the Coastal Cycleway.

The mapping of the Coastal Cycleway needs to include roads and other paths, such as fire trails, that can be utilised to line the existing sections of the cycleway. Ferry crossings should also be seen as part of the Coastal Cycleway as they provide a valuable transport link and add to the recreational enjoyment of the ride

INFORMAL PATHS:

The existing BikePlan focuses primarily on road based infrastructure. However opportunities exist to utilise current informal paths, fire trails, power line access roads, and other similar pathways, as a simple and effective way to join up some of our existing cycling infrastructure.

Paper roads generally comprise small strips of Crown land that were created in the original subdivision of the State stretching back to the colonial days. To assist the inland settlement of New South Wales, every minor portion in the State had a paper road going to it. There are around 33,000 of these enclosed roads crisscrossing the State, and many of them will never be roads. They might go through a dam, up a cliff or right through the middle of a field. Even where actual road construction took place often they did not follow the actual route of the paper road.

The land within these paper roads has been excluded from the title of the adjoining freehold land and remains public land.

The Minister for Lands announced on the 12th Nov 08 "that through the mini-budget process the Department of Lands has secured additional resources over the next two years to fast track the program to convert as many of these roads as possible to freehold".

When selling off the paper roads thought MUST be given to continued access to the coast and also to be utilised to provide access between the formal cycling infrastructure in place and the wider community.