



An evaluation of the

**Bike Plan program**

**from the Roads and Traffic Authority of NSW**

**as implemented by local councils**

**in the South West Region of New South Wales**

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## **Disclaimer**

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and are not necessarily supported by the RTA.

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## Executive Summary

Topic	Summary
<b>Introduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Bike Plan program was developed and is administered by the New South Wales (NSW) Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA). The aim of this program is to assist councils to integrate bicycle facilities into the community.</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tracey Parnell and Rod Pope, Charles Sturt University(CSU)</li> </ul>
<b>Aims and objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To evaluate the processes, impacts and outcomes of the development of Bike Plans by local councils of the South West Region of NSW.</li> </ul>
<b>Ethics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approval obtained from the Charles Sturt University, School of Community Health Ethics in Human Research Committee.</li> </ul>
<b>Participants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Included council staff of local councils, Road Safety Officers (RSOs), community representatives and senior RTA staff.</li> </ul>
<b>Method</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This evaluation involved predominantly qualitative methodology and included a call for submissions from all councils in the target region and semi-structured interviews with participants from purposefully sampled councils.</li> </ul>
<b>Response rates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately 60% of councils in the target region responded to the initial call for submissions; 15 councils were purposefully sampled for the semi-structured interviews.</li> </ul>
<b>Key findings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Councils trialed a range of strategies to involve communities in the Bike Plan planning process;</li> <li>Varying responses by communities regarding involvement in Bike Plan development were reported;</li> <li>Varying levels of knowledge about Bike Plans amongst community members was noted;</li> <li>There appeared to be a lack of formal community feedback regarding Bike Plans;</li> <li>Generally, positive informal community feedback to completed work was reported;</li> <li>Resistance of some communities to initial plans was noted during discussions;</li> <li>There was a variation in the amount of funding received by councils including funding from RTA and other sources;</li> </ul>

- **Some councils reported difficulties matching RTA funding;**
- **Other funding opportunities were explored and utilised by some of the councils to complement Bike Plan funding;**
- **The timing of notification of funding from RTA impacted on some councils' development and actioning of plans;**
- **A few participants were concerned that Bike Plan funding will cease;**
- **A number of councils reported difficulties related to the availability of staff to develop and action the Bike Plan;**
- **There were differences in the experiences of councils who used external consultants to develop the Bike Plan;**
- **Variations in the role of the RSO in Bike Plan development were noted;**
- **There was recognition of the importance of council support in Bike Plan development and follow up;**
- **There were variations in participants' knowledge of Bike Plan guidelines; issues related to usability of guidelines were outlined by some participants;**
- **General sense that Bike Plan guidelines were clearer than guidelines for the Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan program;**
- **Plans were generally responsive to RTA objectives although variations between plans were noted;**
- **The importance of effective communication with RTA and the perceived impact on Bike Plan development and actioning was discussed;**
- **There were issues related to the integration of various plans within councils (including the Bike Plan) and the effect this can have on a coordinated approach to service delivery to the community;**
- **The importance of reviewing plans was outlined by a number of respondents including RTA Staff;**
- **Suggestions to improve the format and process of submissions to make the process less labour intensive were made by some participants;**
- **Maintenance of bike paths not being funded by the Bike Plan program was raised as an issue by some councils;**
- **Indications from some participants that Bike Plan guidelines were not specifically relevant to rural/remote areas and were perhaps better suited to more metropolitan areas;**
- **Many bike paths are being used as shared pathways (ie shared between pedestrians and cyclists).**

<p><b>Benefits</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Anticipated benefits included: improving the safety of cyclists, increasing social interaction of the community, reduction in bicycle accidents, reduction of traffic conflict, and facilitating a healthy and active community;</b></li> <li>• <b>A range of other benefits were noted during the evaluation including: increased number of cyclists and pedestrians in the community, positive impact on tourism and attraction of new residents, passive community surveillance, potential environmental impact, and increased social and networking opportunities.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Concluding comments</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Bike Plan program has been of great benefit to a number of local government areas included in this study; the benefits of the outcomes of Bike Plans have been shown to be broad and far reaching.</b></li> <li>• <b>It would be beneficial to consider funding and promoting the multi-functional aspects of bike paths.</b></li> <li>• <b>There is evidence to suggest that the Bike Plan program is less accessible and useful to some of the communities in the target area for a range of reasons.</b></li> <li>• <b>Consideration regarding how to improve the equity of this program is required in order to ensure the intended benefits can be achieved by all communities.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Recommendations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>More succinct guidelines and proformas for plan development and submissions;</b></li> <li>• <b>Improve equity of access to the Bike Plan program;</b></li> <li>• <b>Provision of more education to councils by the RTA regarding the Bike Plan program;</b></li> <li>• <b>Consider ways to increase community involvement;</b></li> <li>• <b>Explore the possibility of combining the Bike plan program with the Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan program;</b></li> <li>• <b>Lighting is an important part of planning bike path infrastructure and thus consideration should be given to including this as part of the Bike Plan program;</b></li> <li>• <b>Improve promotion of the Bike Plan program and the completed works within communities;</b></li> <li>• <b>Councils need to consider other funding options to support RTA funding;</b></li> <li>• <b>Consider electronic submissions to RTA;</b></li> <li>• <b>RTA to spend more time in the “field’ working with councils to develop and action Bike Plans;</b></li> <li>• <b>RTA, councils and RSOs to work together to provide opportunities to share information and experiences relating to Bike Plan program;</b></li> <li>• <b>Councils to obtain further empirical data to support claims regarding the benefits of the Bike Plan program.</b></li> </ul>

## 1. Introduction

In its broadest context, the environment encompasses physical, social, cultural and institutional factors, and has the potential to impact, both positively and negatively, on the engagement of individuals in a community (Townsend & Polatajko, 2007). The physical environment includes both natural and built constituents. Well planned, thoughtful design of the built environment creates opportunities for people to engage in community life through the provision of safe and equitable access to, and participation in, a broad range of occupations. (*Occupation* is defined here as “...everything people do to occupy themselves including looking after themselves,...enjoying life,...and contributing to the social and economic fabric of their communities...,” Townsend & Polatajko, 2007, pg 369). The importance of planning and developing community environments that facilitate access, safety, health, environmental awareness and a sense of belonging within the community is recognised by many researchers and practitioners (Imrie & Hall, 2001; Letts, Rigby & Stewart, 2003).

The Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) of New South Wales (NSW), Australia has responsibility for a range of issues including the promotion of safety and access for cyclists in community contexts. Cycling is a “...healthy, low cost, environmentally friendly form of transport...” that is supported by the NSW Government (RTA, 2003, pg 5). To this end, the RTA has developed guidelines for use by local councils in the development of community Bike Plans.

The RTA is committed to ensuring safe, accessible bike facilities within communities and to this end initiated the Bike Plan program in 2002. The key reasons for developing a Bike Plan are outlined in Appendix 16.1. Through this program, the RTA supports councils on a dollar for dollar basis to develop and construct local cycleway networks. The development and implementation of Bike Plans assists councils to integrate bicycle facilities into the community, thus improving the “...equity, health and the environment ...” (RTA, 2002, pg 6) of that community. The ongoing commitment of the RTA to the development of a bike path infrastructure throughout NSW is evident in its Annual Report, 2007. This reports outlines that there is now “...3900 kilometres of cycleway...for the use of cyclists and pedestrians,” (RTA, 2007, pg 60) in NSW. As part of its commitment, during 2006-2007, the RTA “...provided \$3 million funding support to councils on a dollar for dollar basis...” (RTA, 2007, pg 60), as part of the Bike Plan program thus assisting councils to continue the development of bike paths.



In line with its commitment to contributing to the health, welfare and safety of Australian communities, Charles Sturt University (CSU) and its Centre for Inland Health and School of Community Health agreed to complete an evaluation of the Bike Plan program, as applied by local councils in the South-West region of NSW, for the RTA.

This evaluation was conducted concurrently with an evaluation of the RTA's Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP) program. Information was collected from respondents about both programs during both the call for submissions and the interviews. A number of issues were raised during the course of these evaluations which impact on the linkages between these programs and, where relevant, these are noted.

## **2. Evaluation Team**

The evaluation team was comprised of researchers from Charles Sturt University. The project was led by Tracey Parnell, Occupational Therapist within School of Community Health, with support from Rod Pope, Senior Research Fellow and Director of the Centre for Inland Health. The program was further supported by research assistants who assisted with interviews, data collection, and transcription.

## **3. Aims and objectives of evaluation**

### ***A. Aim:***

To evaluate the processes, impacts and outcomes of the development of Bike Plans by local councils of the South West Region of NSW.

### ***B. Objectives:***

1. To document the experiences of councils and other stakeholders in the various phases of the Bike Plan development process, the issues and costs they faced in the process, and how they addressed those issues or funded those costs, or why they did not;
2. To assess the extent to which the developed Bike Plans achieve the RTA-proposed reasons for Bike Plans;
3. To determine the level of satisfaction of key stakeholders with developed Bike Plans, and points of difference;
4. To determine the actions that have been taken by any party in response to the Bike Plans, actions that have not yet been taken, and reasons for which actions have and have not been taken;
5. To determine the level of satisfaction of key stakeholders with the actions resulting from the Bike Plans to date of interview, and points of difference;
6. To determine the extent to which the Bike Plans remain current and are being used, reviewed and update where required;

7. To determine the amount of funding for new works that has been secured by councils based on the Bike Plan, its source(s) and its application.

## 4. Ethics

The activities in this evaluation were deemed to be associated with minimal risk under the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) guidelines. Ethics approval was obtained for the project from the Charles Sturt University, School of Community Health Ethics in Human Research Committee.

## 5. Participants

The subjects approached for this evaluation included:

- Council staff of local councils in the designated region, particularly engineering or other staff who had been intimately involved in Bike Plan processes;
- Road Safety Officers (RSOs) in the target region;
- Consumer group representatives involved in the Bike Plan processes, as identified by Bike Plans, councils or RSOs;
- Senior RTA staff

## 6. Method

This project principally involved qualitative evaluation methods. Participant information sheets, consent forms, interview schedules, and key criteria for document analyses were designed by the evaluation team in consultation with the RTA Project Manager and in order to meet the evaluation objectives.

Information was initially generated from a call for submissions forwarded to all councils and Road Safety Officers (RSOs) in the identified region (that is, the South West Region of NSW). This call for submissions included details about the project and provided a number of guiding points for respondents to address. All the information obtained from the calls for submissions (both written and verbal) was thematically analysed by the evaluation team and key themes identified.

Semi-structured interviews, using the key themes identified in the responses to the calls for submissions, were conducted with council staff, RSOs and/or consumer representatives from a purposeful sample of 15 of the 32 councils in the target region. The evaluation team endeavoured

to sample a mix of councils in terms of geographical size, population and stage of development of Bike Plans; a number of councils declined involvement in this evaluation, potentially impacting on the range of views obtained. In four of the councils, the interviews were conducted face-to-face and were accompanied by observation of the bike infrastructure and facilities within the community. All other interviews were conducted by telephone. Detailed document analysis on a purposeful sample of six Bike Plans was also conducted.

To further enhance the depth of data collected telephone interviews were also conducted with two purposefully sampled senior RTA staff members, with responsibilities for the Bike Plan program. The perspectives reflected in interview responses, submissions, observations within communities and Bike Plan documents were triangulated in the analysis phase, during thematic analysis, to identify, clarify and validate key themes and issues.

## 7. Response rates

Following the call for submissions, 17 responses, representing 19 councils were received (Note: some RSOs cover more than one council and responded to the call for submissions for the different councils they work within, thus the discrepancy in figures). The South West region of NSW is comprised of 32 councils and thus the response rate was just under 60%. Approximately one third of the responses received were completed by RSOs and the remainder by council staff involved in the Bike Plans.

## 8. Key findings from the Bike Plan data

### 8.1 *Summary of key findings from the Bike Plan data*

Key theme	Sub findings
<b>Community consultation and feedback</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A range of strategies were trialled by councils to involve communities in planning process; these efforts resulted in varying responses from communities regarding their involvement in the development of the Bike Plan;</li><li>• There was varying levels of knowledge about the RTA Bike Plan program amongst community members;</li><li>• There was a lack of formal community feedback regarding Bike Plans however there was positive, informal community feedback to the work funded and completed under the Bike Plan program;</li><li>• Resistance of some communities to initial plans to</li></ul>

	<p>develop bike paths was reported by some participants.</p>
<b>Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was a variation in the amount of funding received by councils including funding from RTA and other sources with some councils outlining their difficulty in matching RTA funding;</li> <li>• Other funding opportunities were explored and utilised by some councils in order to complement Bike Plan funding;</li> <li>• Concerns were raised in relation to the timing of notification of funding from RTA and the impact this had on planning and completion of works;</li> <li>• There was some concern that RTA Bike Plan funding will cease.</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A number of councils reported difficulties related to the availability of staff to develop and action the Bike Plan;</li> <li>• There were differences in the experiences of councils who used external consultants to develop the Bike Plan, with some reported positive experiences and other less successful outcomes; Variations in the role of the RSO in Bike Plan development were noted;</li> <li>• There was recognition of the importance of council support in Bike Plan development and follow up.</li> </ul>
<b>RTA guidelines, support and feedback</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were variations in participants' knowledge of Bike Plan guidelines ;Plans generally responsive to RTA objectives although variations between plans noted;</li> <li>• The importance of effective communication with RTA and perceived impact on Bike Plan development and actioning was discussed.</li> </ul>
<b>Processes and planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were issues related to the integration of various plans within councils (including the Bike Plan) and the effect this can have on a coordinated approach to service delivery to the community;</li> <li>• The importance of reviewing plans was outlined by a number of respondents including RTA staff;</li> <li>• Suggestions to improve the format and process of submissions to make the process less labour intensive were made by some participants.</li> </ul>
<b>Rurality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were indications from some participants that Bike Plan program guidelines were not specifically relevant to rural/remote areas and were perhaps</li> </ul>

	<p><b>better suited to more metropolitan areas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The constraint of smaller budgets on the ability to fully utilise Bike Plan program funding was raised by some councils.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Pedestrians as users of bike paths</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A large number of bike paths being effectively used as shared pathways.</b></li> </ul>

## **8.2. Community consultation and feedback**

Most of the councils and RSOs who responded to the calls for submission or who were interviewed indicated that attempts at community consultation had been made prior to development of the Bike Plan. Various strategies were used by councils or their representatives to include local communities in the planning phase; these strategies included newspaper advertisements, public meetings and focus groups, observations within the community, surveys, direct approaches to relevant persons and groups, and making draft plans available for public comment. Some councils also used local Access Committees (a number of councils have an Access Committee that is comprised of a group of residents and other interested parties with an interest in access and safety issues within the community), Landcare Groups and Bicycle User Groups (BUGs) to obtain relevant community perspectives to aid the planning process.

Attempts at involving the community had varying degrees of success; some councils indicated that they felt they had adequate community involvement and others indicated that the response was limited and was at times frustrating: *“...you call a meeting and three people turn up. One’s there for the cup of tea, one thought it was a meeting about something else and the third one didn’t know what you were talking about anyway.”* Some of the councils indicated that although they had attempted to facilitate community consultation the amount of input had been minimal: *“...if I had a stab in the dark, I probably doubt we would have had much community involvement except maybe perhaps a couple of schools...or a couple of people.”* One council staff member outlined the community’s initial ambivalence to the development of the bike path and a general lack of understanding about how it might benefit the community, *“...there wasn’t too much feedback as far as what was needed as far as the bike track went.”* In another council the initial community response was particularly negative with community members outlining that the council money could be better spent elsewhere, *“...there’s a bit of resistance from when we go to do things until we put those things in place..”*; this experience was similar to varying degrees in some of the other councils who participated in the interviews. Feedback from some community members in relation to the planned bike path indicated that although they could see the benefits of a bike path, they did not want it constructed adjacent to where they lived due to concerns about activities it might attract (for example, underage drinking, theft).

Interviews with community representatives revealed varying levels of knowledge about the development phase of the Bike Plan, with much of the feedback from this group relating to satisfaction with the work completed as a result of the Bike Plan. In general, community representatives had a relatively good understanding of the goals for developing the Bike Plan, however they echoed some of the council staff and RSOs' views in that they felt that many community members could not initially grasp the benefits of the Bike Plan program and thus may have been resistant to the proposal. One participant indicated that the process of plan development and community involvement *"...needs to be more transparent and obvious."* Another community representative reflected that *"...community involvement needs to be ongoing and meaningful..."* and should be extended beyond just the initial planning stages. Two of the community representatives were involved in community based groups (for example Landcare) and outlined that through the consultation process, they had been able to effectively integrate their plans with the council's Bike Plan and that this had been a rewarding experience and had greatly benefited the community.

With regard to community feedback about the Bike Plan and actions taken as a result of it, most councils and RSOs were able to outline feedback, both positive and negative, that had been received. Most of this feedback was in response to works completed or future works that community members felt needed to be given a higher priority. Very few, if any, of the councils had sought formal feedback from the community in response to the Bike Plan or the works completed as a result of the plan, *"...a lot of it is just verbal run around and talking to people,"* although one respondent reported that she regularly received letters and emails from community members regarding the Bike Plan and the related developments.

Although much of the community feedback about the work completed as a result of the Bike Plans was positive, for example *"...I haven't heard an adverse comment on our bike plan from anyone..."*, as previously noted, there was also some evidence of resistance and negativity within communities particularly in response to the initial discussions and plans. Some councils and RSOs reported that until works were actually completed and being utilised, the community seemed to be reluctant to embrace the proposed changes. As previously noted, some community members felt that the money allocated to the Bike Plan program by both the RTA and the council could be better used for other purposes (for example road maintenance and upgrading).

### **8.3 Funding**

There was some discussion, predominantly positive, around the issue of funding in relation to Bike Plans. In general, councils were appreciative of the funding received through the RTA in order to enhance and extend bike infrastructure. Most considered that the 50/50 funding for the development and implementation of Bike Plans was of great benefit to their council and the community. Most of the community representatives interviewed were unaware that half of the funding for the Bike Plan program had been received from the RTA.

During 2007-2008, the RTA allocated more than \$3.8 million to the Bike Plan program in NSW; this represented 50/50 contributions to *"...93 local bicycle network projects,"* (RTA, no date, pg 1). The amount of funding secured, both from the RTA and other sources, to complement council funding

allocated to develop and action the Bike Plans, varied significantly between councils. The amount of detail provided by council staff and RSOs in response to this line of enquiry also varied greatly with some giving broad responses such as *“...all funding requested has been approved...”* and others providing detailed accounts of the money spent during the development and construction phases of the Bike Plan. Detailed responses to the call for submissions, indicated that the amount of funding secured by councils to date through the RTA for the Bike Plan program varied from around \$5,000 – \$500,000; it is expected that some councils will have received less than this (indeed, there are councils who have not accessed Bike Plan funding at all). Some responses also detailed funding received through other sources to complement PAMP funding for example, one council outlined having received \$35,500 through the RTA – Safety Around Schools program and another council, an unspecified amount from a successful grant through the state Department of Sport and Recreation.

Some of the councils, particularly the smaller and more rural/remote councils, stated they had difficulty in matching the funding from the RTA: *“...it’s not like we get it for nothing.....some councils don’t have the money to budget for the other half, so things still won’t get done.”* The amount of funding available within a council for the Bike Plan seemed to depend somewhat on the priority that was placed on this program by the council executive. Some councils had not pursued Bike Plan funding or had only done so in a restricted capacity due to limited funds available within the council to develop and/or action a plan. One respondent was disappointed that maintenance or upgrading of existing bike paths (constructed prior to the initiation of the RTA program) could not be funded under the Bike Plan program: *“...they’re just not going to make money available for an existing bike path...”* and at the potential impact this may have on the development of their bike path infrastructure.

A number of councils and RSOs discussed other funding opportunities they have accessed (with varying degrees of success) in order to supplement both the council and RTA funding. These included funding through the NSW Department of the Arts, Sport and Recreation and the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. Other council staff and RSOs indicated that although they were aware of the availability of other funding opportunities, they did not have the time and resources to research and access these opportunities, *“...with a group our size, we don’t have time to sit down and research them.”* RTA staff demonstrated an awareness of the funding difficulties faced by councils and actively promoted the use of other funding opportunities to supplement the RTA and council funding in order to achieve the goals of the councils in relation to improving and extending bike pathways.

A number of council staff and RSOs criticised the timing of notification of funding from the RTA. They reported that notification from the RTA was often received after council budgets have been established, meaning that *“...we don’t always know what funding we’re going to get until after our budgets have actually been put through council.”* Obviously this has the potential to have a major impact on the work that a council is, or is not, able to undertake within a financial year but also reinforces the importance of having a detailed and accurately-costed Bike Plan and associated schedule of works.

There was some concern expressed by a number of council staff and RSOs that the RTA funding for Bike Plans might cease, with some believing that the current evaluation project was oriented to that

end. Councils who have successfully accessed Bike Plan funding and who have a current working Bike Plan overwhelmingly indicated that they would like the program and associated funding to continue and if possible, to increase: *“...you can always use more funding!”*

## **8.4. Resources**

A range of resource issues were identified as having impacted on the development and/or implementation of the Bike Plans. These issues included staffing, the use of external consultants, the availability of an RSO, funding (as previously discussed), and levels of general council support.



The availability of staff to develop, review, and monitor the Bike Plan appeared to be problematic for a number of councils; this appeared to be more apparent in councils which did not have an RSO. Some of the councils highlighted the impact of staff turnover and ongoing difficulties with recruitment and retention of appropriate staff on the Bike Plan process. Some of the more remote councils indicated that they are continually under staffed and thus work has to be prioritised accordingly. Staffing difficulties were also raised in relation to the completion of Bike Plan work (that is construction work), with some councils not having the manual labour workforce required to complete the work and in some instances, being unable to secure suitable contract staff to complete the work for them.

A few councils employed external consultants to undertake the initial stages of the Bike Plan process (including community analysis and consultation, observation, and initial plan development); in these instances the funding for the consultant was split between the council and the RTA. Most indicated the reasons for using a consultant as being related to staffing and time: *“...because basically we were just under resourced so we just had to bite the bullet and get outside consultants to do it.”* There was mixed feedback regarding the success of using external consultants. Some of the councils and RSOs reported that this was an effective and efficient way of getting the Bike Plan process started and a detailed plan completed. Other councils and RSOs indicated that if they were to use an external consultant again, they would approach it differently and work more closely with the consultant: *“...councils have got to...have a good look at the draft recommendations that the consultants come up with.....rather than just accept what the consultant puts in front of your nose.”*

The views on using an external consultant from outside the council area also varied with some saying it was good to have a *“...fresh set of eyes...”* assessing the situation; however others indicated that the consultants lacked an awareness of the local issues and thus the recommendations were not always realistic and achievable. The issue of “ownership” of the completed plan was also raised in relation to the use of external consultants. Most councils that had secured an external consultant did not believe ownership of the plan was an issue although at least one council reflected that engaging an external consultant had probably impacted on the uptake and follow through of the Bike Plan by council staff.

As previously noted, a number of the councils that responded to the calls for submission or were involved in interviews had an RSO. The roles played by the RSO in the development, monitoring, reviewing, and actioning of the Bike Plan seemed to vary between councils. In some councils, the responsibility of the Bike Plan rested largely with the RSO: *“...I did all the work ...to formulate our plan.”* This is in stark contrast to an RSO in another council who stated *“...but I really haven’t had any involvement in it.”* Councils who had an RSO either on a full time or part time basis commented on the benefits of this and most of the councils without an RSO indicated they would find such a position valuable but were unable to afford it, had difficulty recruiting to the position and/or had difficulty negotiating a shared position with other nearby councils.

Some of the interviewees, including community representatives, felt that the support of the Bike Plan program by council had an impact on its success. A number of RSO and council staff talked about needing to continually justify the plan and associated expenditure despite receiving equal funding from the RTA: *“...the problem with our contribution is I need to convince our council to pour money into it.”* The competing priorities for some councils also seemed to be an issue in terms of allocating time and resources to Bike Plans: *“...roads are a very high priority for councils like ours, we have a large rural area.”* There were a number of councils that appeared to place a relatively high priority on the Bike Plan program and could see the benefits to the community as a result of undertaking the work.

## **8.5. RTA guidelines, support and feedback**

Given that the Bike Plan program was initiated and is jointly funded by the RTA, there was discussion both in the responses to the calls for submission and the interviews regarding the RTA. This included comments about the RTA in relation to the Bike Plan guidelines, support, communication, and processes in general.

Most of the council staff and RSOs recalled having read the RTA Bike Plan guidelines, and had clear thoughts on what these guidelines included. Most respondents felt that the plans developed in their councils addressed these guidelines and objectives. Although none of the community representatives had read the Bike Plan guidelines they had a general sense of the aims of the program. Some council staff and RSOs felt that the guidelines were *“...very city centred...”* and *“...not geared for rural and remote areas at all.”* Some respondents compared the clarity of the Bike Plan guidelines with the guidelines developed for the Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP) program and felt that the Bike Plan guidelines were easier to follow and were clearer in terms of what would and would not be funded under this program.

Review of Bike Plans developed by six councils revealed that in general, they addressed the “key reasons for a Bike Plan” outlined in the RTA Bike Plan guidelines (RTA, 2002, pg 6). A number of respondents reported that they found the Bike Plan program guidelines to be relatively straightforward to follow and this was reflected in the plans reviewed. A variation in the level of detail included was noted during review of the plans.

Most council staff and RSOs were positive about their interactions with the RTA in relation to the Bike Plan program, *“...the RTA weren’t too bad most of the time in terms of being on the ball.”* A few respondents commented on the importance of having a good relationship with the RTA including open communication channels and an awareness of the requirements in terms of documentation and timelines. There was also a sense that changes in staff at the RTA impacted on the effectiveness of councils’ interaction with the RTA and their ability to action their Bike Plans, *“...communication breakdown because of changes in personnel.”*

The time between submitting requests and receiving feedback regarding the allocation of funding from the RTA was felt by some respondents to be too lengthy and impacted on their ability to include works in councils’ annual budgets, *“...the RTA does take a long time to get back...I still don’t have a clue whether I’ve got the money or not.”* Some indicated that the amount of work required to obtain the funding was sometimes disproportionate to the funding received, *“...we do have to jump through hoops quite a bit.”* However, as previously mentioned in the “Funding” section, respondents were appreciative of the funding provided by the RTA to plan and implement Bike Plans.

## **8.6 Processes and planning**

The processes and planning involved in the Bike Plan program were addressed to some degree by all respondents, including community representatives but particularly by RTA staff. Feedback from community representatives in relation to planning and processes related largely to community consultation and how this was sought and whether or not it was ongoing. Some community representatives also commented on how the Bike Plan articulated with the plans of some of the community based groups (for example Community Access Groups) and the importance of ensuring council plans, Bike Plans, and other community plans complemented each other. There was also some discussion about the need to coordinate community priorities with council plans and funding opportunities.

The RTA staff interviewed frequently emphasised the importance of thorough and detailed Bike Plans and the need for these to be reviewed regularly in terms of priorities and costings. They also discussed the importance of considering Bike Plans in conjunction with the PAMP developed for the council.

As discussed in the “Funding” section the timing of the allocation of funding from the RTA seemed to impact on the planning process for some of the councils. Some councils did not feel this was a significant issue as they were able to plan their budget based on the schedule of works and costings they had developed in relation to the Bike Plan, *“...we basically just run to the plans.”* Despite being able to do this, there were still some issues with this strategy as the funding from the RTA was not confirmed until some time after the submission of applications: *“...we’ve got all this money sitting in the reserve waiting to do the work but we won’t know...that we’ve actually got the...funding. Very often the plans have to be changed or councils dip into their own account and do some of the work.”*

In councils where both council staff and RSO were interviewed it was evident that the integration of the various council department plans was not always completed in a seamless manner. Some respondents considered that the Bike Plan was not always taken into consideration when other works and developments within the council were being planned; however this was not the case in all councils. A number of respondents perceived the planning and development of the Bike Plan as an opportunity to review the bike path infrastructure, to record this in a formal way, and to begin to develop a vision for the future of it. It appeared to enable councils an opportunity to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their current bike path network or to develop a bike path network in Local Government Areas which had not previously initiated bike paths. Consideration of the make up of the Local Government Area's population, both now and in the future, was an important factor raised by some council staff and RSOs in relation to developing and reviewing Bike Plans.

Some of the council staff and RSOs felt that the success of their Bike Plan had been due to effective planning at the outset and regular reviews of the plan: *"...it's a lot of work initially to go through...but it's like...if you plan the work and work the plan, it seems to be a pretty good philosophy."* One of the respondents discussed the effectiveness of identifying clear stages within the plan and using these to guide works. Having adequate staff to undertake thorough reviews of the council's Bike Plan was an issue for some of the councils, *"...because of staffing issues...there isn't anybody in place that could...take that on board at the present time."* Allocating funding to a review of the Bike Plan was also an issue for some of the councils, *"...they [the council]can't afford to spend fifteen thousand dollars on...getting a consultant in to do it again.."* and for still others, the review of the Bike Plan was not seen as a priority task in terms of resource allocation. Despite this, most council staff and RSOs were aware of the importance of reviewing and updating plans.

A final issue in relation to planning and processes was to do with the format and process of submitting plans and applying for funding. A number of respondents felt that provision of a standard format in which to submit the plan would simplify the process of plan development for councils. Review of a number of the Bike Plan documents revealed notable differences in the way the documents were structured and the level of detail included both in the planning document and the schedule of works. Some council staff indicated that the amount of paperwork required was too labour intensive and that the RTA should consider electronic submission of documentation to further expedite the process.

## **8.7.      *Rurality***

As noted in some of the previous sections, issues of rurality were raised in a number of the submissions and interviews. These issues related to a range of factors including the RTA guidelines for Bike Plans, the integration of the program into council plans and infrastructure, funding, and factors specific to rural/remote areas that needed to be considered in Bike Plans. Issues regarding the Bike Plan guidelines in relation to rural/remote areas have been discussed in the preceding section and will not be repeated here. Funding issues have also previously been addressed but may be most aptly captured by a comment from one of the smaller, rural councils, *"...smaller towns haven't got the luxury of putting that much aside in a budget to do the work."*

Some of the issues raised in regard to rurality related to the distances that bike paths were required to cover in order to effectively link community facilities, services and developments. A number of the council areas visited during the course of the evaluation included two or three small townships; this raised some issues in relation to the allocation of funding for bike paths and the council being seen to be equitable in their approach. The presence of more than one town within a Local Government Area also raised the issue of



consideration of a bike path to link the townships and the amount of funding this would require; at least one council had addressed this in their Bike Plan, however others saw it as being unachievable.

Some respondents expressed that they felt rural people tended to rely more on cars due to the distances they may need to travel and thus may be more reluctant than their metropolitan counterparts to embrace a Bike Plan and to utilise the resource once developed. One RSO explained that the development of bike paths needed to be accompanied by effective promotion and a strategic education program, in order to change habits.

## **8.8. Pedestrians as users of bike paths**

This evaluation took place concurrently with an evaluation of the Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan program. It was evident in many of the interviews and responses to the call for submissions that a large number of bike paths are being used as shared pathways (that is, shared between pedestrians and cyclists). In some councils, it was reported that pedestrians are the biggest users of the bike paths: *“...to be quite honest about it, the use of bikes on the paths is minimal. Calling it a bike path gets the funding from the RTA but it is of most benefit to the walkers.”* As a result of this, there were a number of common threads and issues noted when discussing the problems and benefits of both programs being evaluated. Responses indicated that pedestrians used the bike paths for a variety of reasons including for exercise, as a place to socialise and, as a means of transport.



## 9. Benefits

Theme	Key outcomes
<b>Expected benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Improved safety of cyclists;</b></li> <li>• <b>Increased social interaction within the community;</b></li> <li>• <b>Reduced number of bicycle accidents;</b></li> <li>• <b>Reduced traffic congestion;</b></li> <li>• <b>Facilitation of a healthy and active community.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Unexpected benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Increased number of cyclists <u>and</u> pedestrians using the bike pathways;</b></li> <li>• <b>Positive impact on tourism and attraction of new residents;</b></li> <li>• <b>Passive community surveillance;</b></li> <li>• <b>Potential positive impact on the environment;</b></li> <li>• <b>Improved equity of access for community members including those with impaired mobility;</b></li> <li>• <b>Increased social and networking opportunities within the community.</b></li> </ul>

Discussion outlining the benefits of bike plans and associated works was overwhelmingly positive and formed a large component of interviews with people in relation to this program. A broad and far reaching range of benefits was outlined by all respondents in relation to the Bike Plan program. Some of these benefits were anticipated; however others have been a pleasant surprise to those involved. The RTA Bike Plan guidelines indicate the expected benefits of developing and actioning a Bike Plan include: improving the safety of cyclists, increasing social interaction, reduction in bicycle accidents, reduction of traffic congestion and, facilitating a healthy and active community. Interviews with RTA staff further supported the proposed benefits as outlined in the official guidelines.

A number of council staff and RSOs reported that, over time, they have noticed more people using the bike path network since improvements funded by the RTA Bike Plan program had been implemented. None were able to provide empirical evidence to support this but all were relatively confident in their views. Many respondents commented that in addition to bike users, large numbers of pedestrians, including people using mobility aids, were also using the bike paths or shared pathways for a variety of reasons including leisure, fitness, rehabilitation, and as a means of commuting. Three of the councils reported that the shared pathways were well used, with the number of people walking and riding in the towns increasing over time; again this evidence was anecdotal.

A frequently raised benefit of the Bike Plan program related to the safety of cyclists and in one council, a reduction in the number of “...*bicycle related crashes.*” At least three respondents discussed the significant benefits of relocating cyclists, particularly children, from the road onto bike paths, “...*getting them away from the road...it’s a safer environment for them...*” and “...*it’s great to see kids off the road...riding their little bikes.*” In addition to the safety of cyclists, it was felt that the provision of bike paths ensured increased safety for the users of electric scooters or gophers, “...*we’ve got increasing numbers of people on gophers around town...it would be safer if they were using the shared pathways.*” The width of the bike paths in comparison to standard footpaths facilitates use by people using mobility aids, “...*access is very important...they’ve got the little gophers which they know they can use on the bike paths.*”



The health benefits of developing bike path networks were also addressed by a number of respondents. Again, although there was no empirical evidence provided by participants, there were numerous stories provided about the use of the bike path or shared pathways within communities and how this might contribute to the health and wellbeing of the community, “...*I’m confident in saying since the bike paths have gone in, we’re a healthier town.*” One respondent went so far as to postulate that the pathway had resulted in improved mental health in the community. As previously noted, the bike paths were reported to be used by some community members for exercise to improve fitness, rehabilitation, pleasure and/or weight loss/maintenance, indeed two councils have been requested to “...*mark the distances on the cycle way...*” to aid in these pursuits. One respondent outlined how some health professionals within the town prescribed exercise, based on use of the bike path, to aid rehabilitation programs. Provision of a safe and accessible bike path network has the potential to increase the opportunities for more people within communities to be able to make choices regarding health sustaining and promoting activities.

Two of the councils represented in the evaluation discussed the positive impact the bike path network has had on tourism and attraction of new residents to the area. As previously noted, in some instances the development of the bike path network has been linked with other developments within towns including creek beautification programs and streetscape developments (which have attracted funding from other sources). Strategic development of the bike path network in these councils has provided residents (both new and existing) and visitors with a ‘looped’ pathway that includes sections alongside creeks/rivers and that connects popular tourist and community facilities together: “...*the motels that are along there say it’s a great thing for the tourists to walk into town.*” One respondent discussed how local real estate agents use the bike path as a selling point when attempting to attract new residents to the region: “...*one of the things we always do is take them around town and show them the bike tracks.*”

Another benefit of the Bike Plan program reported by a number of respondents was to do with the increased number of people (cyclists and pedestrians) using the bike path network and the “passive community surveillance” that happened as a result of this. One council reported that in response to

increased feedback from the community, the local Crime Prevention Committee had undertaken a review of the relevant lighting, further improving safety for bike path users.

A few respondents alluded to the potential environmental impact of safe and accessible bike path networks. Some felt that over time, some members of the community may choose to cycle and/or walk more frequently thus reducing the use of cars within and between the towns. One respondent indicated that although many bike path users at present appeared to be undertaking leisure activities, this may change in the future and *“...who knows petrol prices might help us get more people out there!”*

There were numerous comments about the opportunity to connect communities that a well planned bike path offers and indicating that pathways which effectively link relevant community resources, facilities and services enable people to *“...experience the community.”* There was also discussion about the social and networking opportunities that well planned pathways provide. Two respondents, a council staff member and a community representative in one council, talked in detail about the *“healing effect”* the bike path had had on the community and how it had assisted the community in overcoming a series of, what were perceived as negative, events and changes within that community: *“...here, the bike path is, I’d have to say, probably a big statement...it’s part of the culture, part of the healing of the wounds of the community.”*



The general consensus of respondents from councils who had successfully developed and implemented a Bike Plan was that well planned bike path networks had the potential to offer a range of benefits to communities including safety, equitable access, health, and the ability to experience and connect with the community.

## 10. Concluding comments

The findings discussed above, in relation to the engagement with the Bike Plan program of local councils, RSO and communities, suggest that the program is often perceived with some lack of interest by community members until benefits are realised, but that once this occurs, the Bike Plans and resulting infrastructure are very well received and appreciated. Of note is the fact that bike paths are often utilised by community members for walking or for mobility by those with a disability, as well as for cycling. In this sense, bike paths have multiple purposes, and benefit a wide range of community members. They are perceived as particularly valuable for providing a safe access-way for children on bicycles, away from traffic. They can also provide the stimulus for town and waterway beautification and restoration, which are perceived to have flow-on benefits for tourism and attraction of new residents.

It would appear that it may be beneficial for the RTA to promote the benefits of bike paths to communities, in support of the Bike Plan program, and also for the RTA to explicitly recognise and fund the paths as multi-functional. It would also appear that smaller, more dispersed, more remote and less wealthy or resourced communities have greater difficulty in accessing and benefiting from the Bike Plan program. It would be valuable for the RTA to consider how it might address this equity issue, in pursuit of the programs objectives for smaller rural and remote communities of NSW.

A range of recommendations arising from this evaluation of the RTA Bike Plan program are presented below, for consideration by the RTA.

## 11. Recommendations

A range of recommendations arising from the evaluation are presented below, for consideration by the RTA.

- A number of councils indicated that ***clearer, more succinct guidelines*** are required for the Bike Plans. It was also suggested by one council that a ***'proforma' for plans and schedules of works*** would be useful for councils.
- The ***RTA should consider electronic submissions of documentation*** to further expedite the process.
- The RTA should consider how it might enhance the ***equity of the Bike Plan program*** and ensure that small, dispersed and poorly-resourced communities have equal opportunity to access, receive, and achieve the intended benefits of the program.
- Feedback from some councils indicated that they would benefit from ***more education regarding development and management of Bike Plans*** – one council suggested that the RTA could conduct regular workshops specifically related to Bike Plans, particularly for new staff taking over the coordination/management of the plans. This view was supported by one of the senior representatives of the RTA, who felt that further education could also address issues of how to access the funding more effectively.
- It may be useful for the ***RTA to specifically address the issue of community involvement*** in the Bike Plan program in further developments and council education initiatives related to this program. Some of the community representatives interviewed felt that the process needs to be more “transparent and more obvious” at the local level. Although many knew about the pathways they did not know a lot about the plans that had preceded the building of the pathways and some were not sure about the level of community consultation leading up to the development of the plans.
- One council suggested that the ***Bike Plan and Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan programs should be combined and the funding from the RTA pooled to form the “Pedestrian and Bike Plans” program***. This would appear to be a useful consideration, given

the tendency for bike paths to be used by pedestrians and people with special needs, in addition to cyclists. Multi-purpose facilities and infrastructure may be more cost-effective than two separate types, particularly in rural and remote communities, where populations are more dispersed and resources often more scarce.

- Councils and the RTA indicated the need for the **plans, including completed works, to be better promoted within the community**; indeed during discussions with the RTA it was suggested that councils might be able to make maps of their bike paths available through the RTA website. The RTA may be able to work with councils to facilitate this outcome.
- To address shortfalls in funding, it was felt by a number of councils and the RTA that councils should consider **other funding options should be considered**. Some councils reported that applying for extra funding is often a time consuming task that does not always reap rewards. It may be valuable for the RTA and other relevant funding bodies to review the paperwork required by applicants and to ensure that the burden of information and paperwork is appropriate for the levels and chances of securing funding sought by local councils.
- At least two of the councils represented in the interview phase of the evaluation discussed the importance of lighting in ensuring that bike path networks are safe for all users. It was felt that **lighting should be included by councils in the planning phase of bike path networks** and that perhaps it might also be included as part of the Bike Plan program and thus funded as part of this program.
- **RTA staff should spend more time in the field** consulting with councils and RSOs to assist in plan development and review
- It would be beneficial for the **RTA, councils and RSOs to plan opportunities and forums through which they can share their experiences of Bike Plan development and actioning**, in order to inspire further action in this area, enable sharing of ideas and solutions to challenges, and facilitate RTA and inter-council support in this area.
- It would be beneficial for councils who have successfully developed and implemented a Bike Plan, to **obtain further empirical data** to support their claims regarding the benefits of this program.

## 12. Limitations of evaluation

There were a number of limitations on the current evaluation, and these may have impacted upon the findings of the evaluation:

- It was difficult to identify community representatives who were knowledgeable about the plans and who were willing to participate – this is consistent with some council suggestions that community consultation in relation to Bike Plans was, at times, limited.

- Some councils did not have an RSO, and so the RSO perspective could not be sought.
- Changes in staff meant that sometimes the researchers were speaking with a person who had just picked up the program and had varying levels of familiarity with it.
- In some instances, staff involved in the development of Bike Plans were sometimes on extended leave and so inaccessible.
- A number of councils declined involvement in this project, potentially impacting on the range of views obtained – in particular, views of those for whom the Bike Plan program was considered to be of limited benefit are likely to be missing, and so the findings are likely to be biased towards those communities who had positive interactions with the program.
- At the time of the evaluation, the end of the financial year was looming and some participants had limited time to engage in the evaluation.

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## **14. Acknowledgments**

- Council staff, RSOs, community representatives and RTA staff who gave up their time to participate in interviews or prepare and provide submissions.
- Leah Wiseman – Research assistant (Level 5); who provided assistance with collecting data during the interview phases.
- Donna Duncan – Research assistant (Level 4); who transcribed all interviews conducted during the course of this evaluation.

## **Appendices**

- A. Key reasons for a bike plan
- B. Information statement
- C. Consent form
- D. Initial call for submission guiding statements
- E. Summary of themes from call for submissions
- F. Map of current status of Bike Plans in South West Region of NSW

## ***A. Key reasons for a Bike Plan***

“Key reasons for a Bike Plan include:

- Cyclists are vulnerable, legitimate road users who should be able to use the bicycle for transport and leisure without risking their personal safety or health
- Bicycle facilities are important community assets that make a positive contribution to urban amenity and the use of public space
- Increase level of cycling add to the social interaction within communities
- A well develop approach to cycling demonstrates council’s commitment to Ecological Sustainable Development.”

(RTA, 2002, pg 6)

## ***B. Information statement***

### **Evaluation of Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plans and Cycle Plans in the South West Region of NSW**

The principal investigator in this project is:

Tracey Parnell – School of Community Health, CSU – Phone 02 6051 6954

The co-investigator for this project is:

Rod Pope – Centre for Inland Health, CSU – Phone 02 6933 2877

Two of the programs that the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) has include the promotion of safety and access for pedestrians and cyclists in community contexts. To this end, the RTA has developed guides for use by local councils in developing Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plans (PAMP) and Bike Plans. The aim of this evaluation project is to evaluate the PAMP and Bike Plan programs in the South West Region of NSW. In line with its commitment to contributing to the health, welfare and safety of Australian communities, Charles Sturt University (CSU) and its Centre for Inland Health and School of Community Health have agreed to undertake this evaluation for the RTA.

You are invited to participate in this evaluation project. The project will endeavour to document and explore your experiences and those of others in the initiation, development and/or actioning of PAMPs and/or Bike Plans. It will include discussion about your satisfaction and that of others with the development process, the resulting plan/s (if developed) and the actions taken as a result of the developed plan/s. The project team will also consider the degree to which developed plans meet the RTA guiding objectives and the broader outcomes of interest to stakeholders.

The information you may choose to provide will be collected by the researchers via a general call for written submissions and/or via one interview with you which may be conducted by telephone or face-to-face. Interviews, if conducted, are expected to take between 30 and 90 minutes to complete, depending on what you wish to discuss. The research team will contact you to invite your participation in one or both of these.

The information you provide will be handled in strict confidence by the research team. Detailed personal information and affiliations will not be required for the purposes of this evaluation and any personal details that are collected in the course of an interview or that are provided in a written submission will be kept confidential. No personal details will be published or provided to the RTA or any other party without your written permission, and so your comments and discussion points will not be linked to you or to your local community in reports to the RTA or other parties unless you provide written permission for this to occur. While no distress is anticipated to arise from your involvement, the investigators will have information about support and counselling services available to you, should you require it. You do not have to discuss issues that are sensitive or private and you can refuse to answer any of the questions that may cause you distress.

All interviews will be digitally audio-recorded if you give permission for this to occur. The recording of the discussion will be transcribed by the research team and your information will be collated with that from other discussions and sites in order to meet the project objectives. The research team will seek out common themes, and also different/unusual experiences, in order to provide recommendations and feedback to the RTA regarding the value of the PAMPs and Bike Plans processes and outcomes. In order to maintain confidentiality, your identity and location, and that of participating organisations will be disguised in any publication of the results.

You are under no obligation to participate in this project and can withdraw from the project at any time. You can also withdraw any information you have provided, at any time until the draft evaluation report is compiled and submitted to the RTA. There is no penalty associated with non-participation or withdrawal from this project.

If you agree to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form. Any questions you may have prior to participating in any aspect of this project can be discussed with the principal investigator, whose details are at the top of this page.

**NOTE:** The Charles Sturt University, School Of Community Health Ethics in Human Research Committee has approved this project. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this project, you may contact the Committee through the Secretary:

*Andree Pender  
Secretary  
School of Community Health Ethics in Human Research Committee  
Charles Sturt University  
PO Box 789  
Albury 2640  
Ph: 02 6051 6820  
Fax: 02 6051 6772  
Email: [apender@csu.edu.au](mailto:apender@csu.edu.au)*

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully and you will be informed of the outcome.

## ***C. Consent form***

### **Evaluation of Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plans and Cycle Plans in the South West Region of NSW**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this evaluation of the Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plans and Cycle Plans in the South West Region of NSW. It is being conducted by Tracey Parnell ([tparnell@csu.edu.au](mailto:tparnell@csu.edu.au), 02 6051 6954) and Dr Rod Pope ([rpope@csu.edu.au](mailto:rpope@csu.edu.au), 02 6933 2877), both of Charles Sturt University. The results of the evaluation will be written up in the form of a report to the Roads and Traffic Authority and may also be presented as journal articles and at conferences.

Please read the following statements and sign and return the form, if you agree to participate.

I give my informed consent to participate in this evaluation.

I understand that I am free to withdraw my participation in the evaluation at any time, and that if I do I will not be subjected to any penalty or discriminatory treatment.

The purpose of the evaluation has been explained to me, including the (potential) risks/discomforts associated with the evaluation and I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the evaluation and received satisfactory answers.

I understand that any information or personal details gathered in the course of this evaluation about me are confidential and that neither my name nor any other identifying information will be used or published without my written permission. I am happy for my words to be quoted as long as it is anonymous. I understand that any interviews I participate in will be recorded using a digital recording device.

I understand that Charles Sturt University's, School of Community Health Ethics in Human Research Committee has approved this study. I also understand that if I have any complaints or concerns about this research I can contact:

**Andree Pender**  
**Secretary**  
**School of Community Health Ethics in Human Research Committee**  
**Charles Sturt University**  
**PO Box 789**  
**Albury NSW 2640**  
Phone: (02) 6051 6820  
Fax:(02) 6051 6772  
Email: [apender@csu.edu.au](mailto:apender@csu.edu.au)

Signed: .....

Printed Name: .....

Date: .....

## ***D. Initial call for submission guiding statements***

### **Evaluation of Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plans and Bike Plans in the South West Region of NSW**

*Below are a number of guiding questions and comments to assist you in providing preliminary feedback regarding your involvement in the initiation, development, and actioning of Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plans and Bike Plans. Please feel free to add further comments of relevance that may not be covered by the points below. Your responses to the above areas (and any other relevant comments you may wish to make) do not need to be entered on this form; a separate document (numbered accordingly) would be appropriate. Submissions, including the signed consent form, should be returned in the postage paid envelope by **17th April 2008**.*

1. Describe your experience in the following stages of the Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan and/or Bike Plan processes; where possible include details about issues and/or costs faced during the processes.
  - Initiation of the process leading to the approval of funding to develop the plan/s.
  - The development process including consultation, the identification of attractors and generators, prioritised strategic routes and works to deliver the strategic plan.
2. For actions that have been undertaken in response to the developed plan/s, outline the work undertaken and discuss your level of satisfaction with the actions. (If not recommended actions have been undertaken, please outline the reason/s for this).
3. Please outline any funding you are aware of that has been secured for the community as a result of the plan/s and recommended actions (including works in these plans funded in association with other projects and from various stakeholders).
4. Discuss the ongoing use, review and updating of the developed plan/s to ensure the plan/s represent Council's current strategic priorities.
5. To what degree do you believe the developed plan/s meet the RTA Guiding Objectives (considering – reduced reliance on cars; accessibility; safety; links with other transport; strategic provision of appropriate facilities; integration with other planning instruments; ecological sustainable development; promote health through active transport)?
6. To what degree do the plans meet the objectives of other stakeholders?
7. Discuss your level of satisfaction with the developed plan/s. Note any areas where, upon reflection, you believe the plans/s or process could be enhanced.

## ***E. Summary of themes from call for submissions***

### **Evaluation of Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plans and Bike Plans in the South West Region of NSW**

#### **Summary of themes from calls for submissions**

- 1. Usability of RTA guidelines/information**
  - Design of programs/plans
  - Issues to do with rural/remote areas; large versus small councils (geographic and population)
  - Priority of this program, developed plans and works in comparison to other council obligations/priorities
  - Availability of training and support
- 2. Availability of resources to participate in PAMPs and Bike Plan programs.**
  - Staffing (including staff turnover)
  - Staff knowledge (eg of geographical area, community needs)
  - Availability and access to RTA funding
  - Council having funds to match RTA funding
  - Access to other funding opportunities
  - Use of external contractors
- 3. Response of community to these programs**
  - Involvement in process
  - To plan development
  - To works completed
- 4. RTA guiding objectives**
  - Responsiveness of developed plan and completed work to these
  - Problems/barriers to achieving these objectives
  - Congruence with the needs of the community
- 5. Unexpected/unanticipated benefits from the plans and associated works for council and/or community**
  - Environmental
  - Health
  - Particular groups
  - Financial
- 6. Other factors that complicated plan development or completion of works**
- 7. Suggestions/strategies to further improve these programs**
  - Funding
  - Improving responsiveness to rural/regional council needs
  - Information and training
  - Guidelines

**F. Map of current status of Bike Plans in South West Region of NSW**

