



**BICYCLE
NETWORK®**

Funding a nation of bike riders

Pre-budget submission

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1. Executive summary: funding a nation bike riders

World renowned urbanist and city planner, Brent Toderian once said,

“The truth about a city’s aspirations isn’t found in its vision, it’s found in its budget.”

Sadly, this is certainly true of Australia’s federal budget: there’s not a single dollar committed to bike riding. Given the depth of our health and congestion crises—this is astounding.

Our sedentary lifestyle is killing us. Australians of all ages and backgrounds aren’t getting enough physical activity each day to maintain their health. At the same time, our population is booming while traffic congestion continues to choke our cities, pollute our air and stifle our economy.

Bicycle Network believes that the solution is clear—we need to get Australians moving again. Organised sport and gyms aren’t going to solve our problems. Nor are more roads for driverless, electric cars. We need to build physical activity into people’s everyday lives through transport.

Currently, just under four million Australians ride bike for transport or recreation each week [1]. However, more than eight million people only ride a bike once a year [1]. These people want to ride more but don’t because they’re concerned. This is a golden opportunity that needs federal leadership.

To make it easier for more people to ride and ultimately transform our cities into happy, healthy and liveable communities, it’s going to take a progressive approach that coordinates health and transport policy across all levels of government.

A federal commitment to funding bike infrastructure which separates riders from vehicles is crucial. Just as important is funding programs, like [Ride2School](#), that make bike riding a social norm and build a lifetime of healthy habits for young Australians.

Only when we make it easier for more people to ride can we truly reap the rewards of moving and connecting more happy and healthy people, at less public cost.

[Bicycle Network](#) is one of the world’s biggest bike riding organisations with nearly 50,000 members. We’re calling on the federal government to view the future of our nation’s transport infrastructure as a primary preventative health mechanism. We’re asking for:

1. **A budget to build for bikes** – Set up a \$480 million annual fund for cycling infrastructure that makes it easier for more people to ride more often
2. **Protection for our most vulnerable road users** – invest in a centralised crash data base
3. **Get more Australians active** – Fund a national preventative health program that targets physical inactivity for young people and stop financially incentivising single use vehicles.



2. Bikes will solve our health and congestion problems

2.1 Physical inactivity is killing Australians

Australians are falling behind the rest of the world when it comes to exercise and healthy lifestyles. Nationally, inactivity kills more than 14,000 Australians each year [2]. Many more people are suffering preventable diseases such as type-2 diabetes and heart disease.

Currently, more than 60 per cent of adults don't get the recommended 30 minutes of exercise each day. When it comes to Australia's young people, 80 per cent fail to reach their daily physical activity targets [3].

While the Australian government has acknowledged the cruel economic and personal burden that chronic disease poses, the current approach is not working. We need to come at the problem from a new angle if we're to successfully future proof the health and happiness of our country.

Our best shot at making Australians healthy again is to get them active on a bike as they go about their daily lives. We simply need to give people of all ages, genders and backgrounds the opportunity to swap out inefficient, inactive travel time and get pedalling instead.

Overall, the net health benefit (adjusted for injury) for each kilometre cycled is 75 cents [4]. Bikes are the cost-effective and transformative preventative health tool that the federal government has been looking for.

2.2 Congestion is costing us billions

Our booming population and expanding urban sprawl is putting unprecedented pressure on our transport and road networks.

Traffic congestion is now costing capital cities more than \$16.5 billion each year [5]. This total includes avoidable social costs such as individual/business time, vehicle operations and air pollution. And economic modelling shows that it's only going to get worse as demand for roads exceeds supply with congestion expected to cost more than \$50 billion in lost productivity by 2031 [6].

Smart design and building for bikes is the way of the future. It not only serves more people and achieves more public goals, it saves time and costs less. The benefit is that with most short trips (less than seven kilometres) the average person will get where they want to go quicker by bike than by car.

2.3 We're building for cars and getting more cars

The most recent Census data on commuting habits revealed that two in three Australians still prefer to drive to work. What's more concerning is that of the six and a half million people who drive to work on average, at least six million cars were transporting only one person. [1]

It's an incredibly inefficient use of road space and is the outcome of a continued and costly transport investment program that prioritises roads and the movement of vehicles over people.

The federal government has committed more than \$75 billion to transport infrastructure. Most of this funding will go towards road projects and it's a huge missed opportunity. We must stop fuelling the demand by supplying more roads for single-use vehicles.

In the meantime, despite the rhetoric about bike riding booming, the actual number of people riding bikes is declining.

2.4 Governments haven't delivered their bike promises

The National Cycling Strategy 2011-2016 saw all levels of government commit to doubling the number of people riding over five years. It acknowledged the benefits that increasing bike rider numbers offer.

Currently, 3.74 million Australians ride a bike for recreation or transport in an average week. Sadly, this figure represents a statistical decline in cycling participation from 2011 [7].

Without transformative investment from the federal government and accountability at all levels of government, the number of people riding declined from 19.4% in 2011 to 15.5% in 2017 [7]. The federal government target for cycling participation was set at 36%.

2.5 Australians want to ride but are concerned

When it comes to Australians riding bikes, the numbers tell the story. Bike riding is a massively popular recreational activity.



- 3.74 million people ride a bike for recreation and transport every week
- 8.23 million people ride a bike once a year
- Less than 5% of Australia's bike riders meet their physical activity requirements [8]

There's an opportunity to convert the eight million occasional riders into regular riders and at the same time, reduce the pressure on our health and transport systems. The demand is probably even greater: more than 10 million Australians want to ride a bike, but are concerned due to road conditions, traffic volumes, speed, safety and confidence [9].



3. Budget to build for bikes

3.1 Establish a \$480 million annual bike fund

Cycling infrastructure is underfunded. For Australia to become a nation of happy and healthy people riding bikes, the federal government will need to show leadership instead of shunting the issue down to state governments who handball it to local governments.

The UN has called on countries to invest at least 20 per cent of their transport budget in walking and cycling infrastructure to save lives, reverse pollution and reduce carbon emissions [10]. On this basis, the Australian federal government should be committing well over a billion dollars to bikes each year.

However, we understand that from a zero budget, a billion dollars is a significant step forward. Therefore, Bicycle Network is asking the federal government for a commitment of \$480 million a year to an ongoing cycling infrastructure fund.

The \$480 million fund is based on \$20 per head for the Australian population. This level of funding broadly matches what is spend in Denmark and the Netherlands. It will also work towards making up for the shortfall in cycling infrastructure investment.

The funds must be available on an ongoing basis so that bicycle networks are upgraded strategically. The outcome will be a completed network of high quality bike routes that will greatly reduce use of single occupant vehicles and the demand for roads.

Budget impact:

Financial year	2018-19 \$m	2019-20 \$m	2020-21 \$m	2021-22 \$m	TOTAL \$m
Budget impact	480	480	480	480	1,920

3.2 Provide bike infrastructure with all federally funded transport projects

Billions of dollars in federal funds flow into new transport projects each year, but there's no policy in place to ensure that these projects also cater for people who ride bikes.

Bicycle Network is asking for legislation that requires bike infrastructure to be part of all federally funded projects. This concept is known as mainstreaming or positive provisioning.

By developing stringent criteria on mainstreaming to inform decision-making in relation to cycling infrastructure investment (including bike storage and end-of-trip facilities), Australia would take an important step towards the integrated transport networks our cities desperately need if they are to be liveable spaces in the future.

3.3 Amend the Building Code of Australia to include the provision of end-of-trip facilities

Bicycle Network is asking the federal government to amend the Building Code of Australia to include the provision of end-of-trip facilities such as bike parking to make riding for transport an easy and accessible option.

3.4 Continue and expand the Building Better Regions Fund (BBRF)

Bicycle Network is asking the federal government to ensure that the criteria of the Building Better Regions Fund make explicit mention of rail trail proposals that will draw tourism dollars and provide benefits to local and regional communities from a transport, recreation and connectivity perspective.



4. Protect vulnerable road users

4.1 Invest and establish a centralised crash data database for vulnerable road users

Authorities are currently limited by the lack of insight into bicycle crashes. While we know that the majority of bike rider casualties occur when a rider is hit by a vehicle driven by a person, there's no centralised and detailed data around the nature of why and how crashes occur nationally.

Data does exist in various sources such as police reports, hospitalisations, coroners' reports and Bicycle Network's membership crash data, but these sources are limited, unconnected and not thoroughly analysed.

While the federal government's extended Black Spot Project invests more than \$684.5 million to help make roads safer for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians, it needs reliable crash data to make effective changes.

Bicycle Network is calling on the federal government to establish a national bicycle crash database that centralises data on the nature and causes of bicycle crashes. The data will provide meaningful insight and influence bicycle infrastructure programs and improvements.

This ask is also consistent with actions from the *National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020*:

- a. Action 55. Work towards the adoption of a nationally consistent road crash classification definitions and the development of an improved national serious injury database



5. Get us moving again

5.1 Fund a national Ride2School program

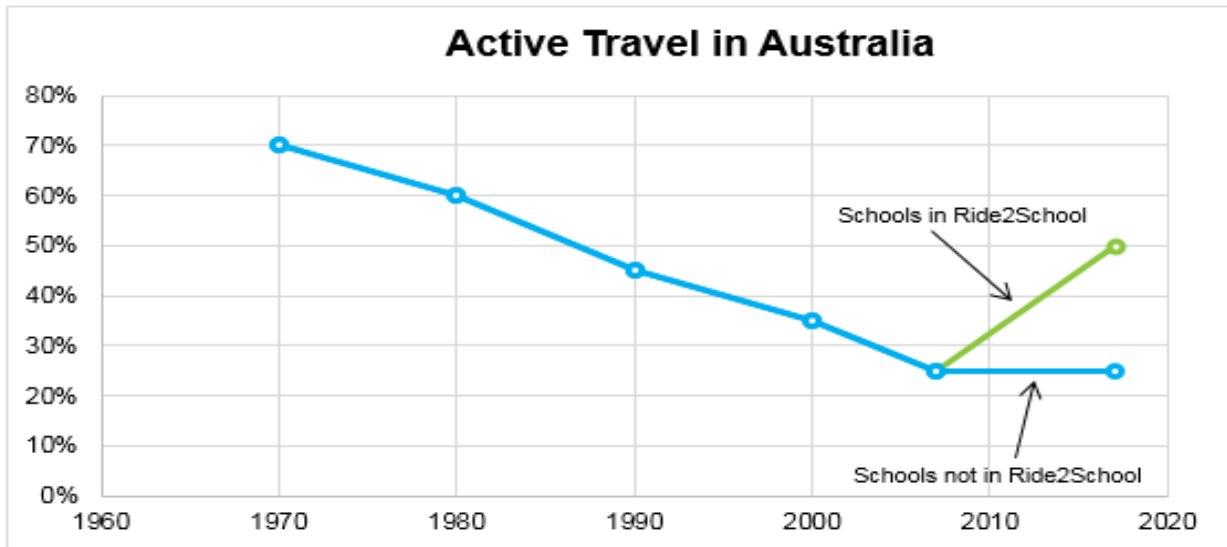


The health statistics facing Australia's young people are particularly damning. 80 per cent of young people don't get enough exercise [3]. Without drastic action, they are headed for a life troubled by chronic, preventable diseases and an early death.

Despite one in four young Australians being classed as overweight or obese [3], most Australian states don't have the resources or inclination to fund a youth-focused behaviour change program.

This is why Bicycle Network is asking the federal government to invest \$3.9 million per year in a nationally coordinated Ride2School program.

Since its inception in 2007 and thanks to ongoing funding from the Victorian Government, Bicycle Network's Ride2School program has successfully increased active travel rates in participating schools. The program is a world leader, with schools who participate in the program recording active travel rates of 50 per cent, double the national active travel average of 25 per cent [11] [4].



Investing in a national Ride2School program run by Bicycle Network is also consistent with the federal government’s long term national health plan, where mental and preventative health is prioritised and the benefits of healthy lifestyles are realised.

It’s time for federal leadership to build bike riding into an everyday activity for Australia’s young people and in the process, build healthy habits that ward off preventable disease.

Budget impact:

Financial year	2018-19 \$m	2019-20 \$m	2020-21 \$m	2021-22 \$m	TOTAL \$m
Budget impact	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	15.6



6. Stop incentivizing single use vehicles

6.1 Abolish the fringe benefit tax exemption for private vehicles and small business car parking

To motivate more people to swap their cars and prioritise bikes, walking or even public transport, we must remove incentives for single use vehicles and car parking.

Bicycle Network is calling on the federal government to abolish the fringe benefit tax exemption for private motor vehicle use and small business car parking.

6.2 Extend fringe benefit tax exemption to bikes

On the other hand, to fast-track the uptake and growth of cycling participation as a means of transport, Bicycle Network is calling on the federal government to extend the fringe benefit tax exemption to private bicycle or e-bike use.

The tax scheme for people who ride could mirror what's done in Belgium and the Netherlands. These European schemes provide tax-free bikes to employees. They also provide generous payments to employees for the amount of riding they do (up to a limit).





Bicycle Network

With nearly 50,000 members, Bicycle Network is one of the top five member-based bike riding organisations in the world. We are committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all Australians by making it easier for people to ride a bike.

Operating nationally, we have a measurable and large-scale impact in community participation and the promotion of healthy lifestyles through bike riding.

We achieve this through:

- Improving the bike riding environment by working with government at all levels to provide better infrastructure, legislation, data, policies and regulations
- Delivering successful, large-scale and measurable behaviour change programs such as [Ride2School](#) and [Ride2Work](#)
- Providing services that support bike riders through membership
- Running mass participation bike riding events such as [Around the Bay](#)
- Being a key spokesperson on issues related to cycling and physical activity

If you need our help to turn Australia into a nation of bike riders, please contact us.

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