

**BICYCLE
NETWORK®**

Tasmanian Budget Submission 2021–22

March 2021



About Bicycle Network

With nearly 50,000 members, Bicycle Network is one of the top five member-based bike riding organisations in the world.

With a proud history reaching back more than 40 years, 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 in Tasmania through:

- improving the bike riding environment by working with government at all levels to provide better infrastructure, data, policies, legislation and regulations
- delivering Ride2School and Ride2Uni programs to get more people riding
- providing services that support bike riders through membership
- encouraging more people to ride by providing free social rides, bicycle valet parking and tailored riding education.
- being a key spokesperson on issues related to cycling and physical activity.

Bicycle Network would like to thank the Tasmanian Government for the opportunity to provide a submission for the Tasmanian Budget 2021–22. We look forward to working with you to get more people riding bikes across the state.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alison Hetherington".

Alison Hetherington
Public Affairs Manager Tasmania
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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Craig Richards".

Craig Richards
Chief Executive Officer
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Executive summary: maximising COVID bike boom



Photo shows the temporary cycling lanes on Heidelberg Rd, Melbourne.

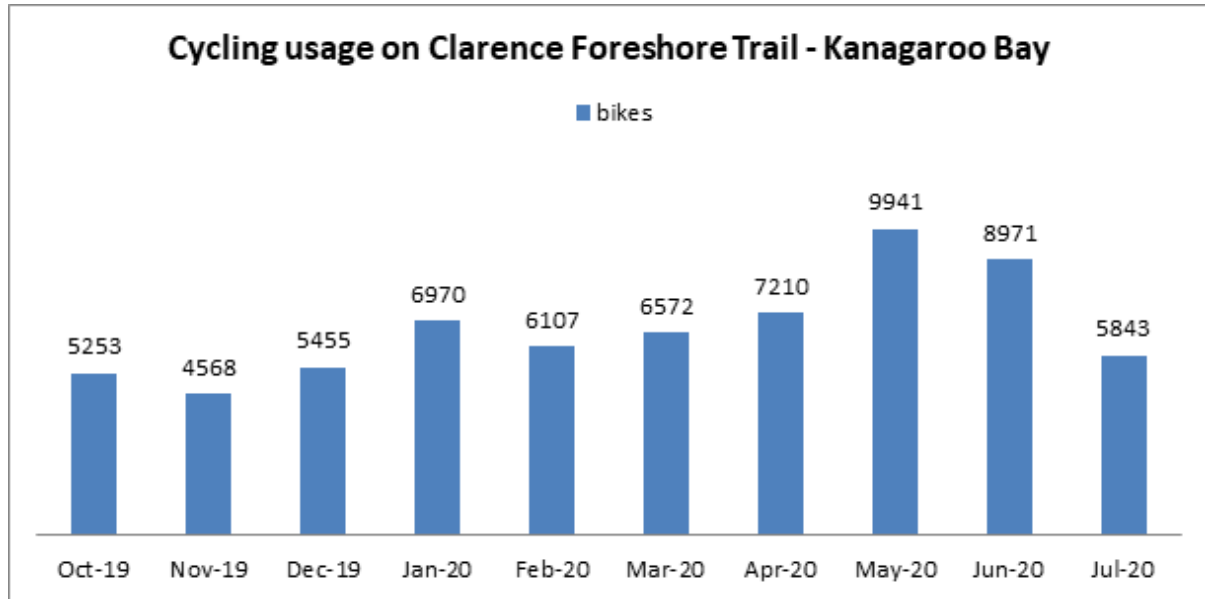
One bright side of the COVID-19 lockdowns last year was the boom in bike use.

Many people bought new bikes or dragged old bikes out of sheds for tune-ups. This means that one of the barriers to riding a bike: access, is no longer the case for much of Tasmania.

The pandemic lockdowns also showed us that more people are willing and capable of riding than was previously obvious. Clarence Council's Foreshore Trail counter showed a significant spike in bicycle use on the path in May and June, which are traditionally the lower use months because of colder weather and shorter days, outstripping Jan–Feb which is the normal peak use time.

Encouraging more people to ride means they can get the 30–60 minutes of exercise they need each day and have a flexible transport option other than a car.

Electric bicycles provide even more opportunity to get people out of cars as they are capable of being ridden further and faster and can carry shopping and young children. While electric cars will be a big part of our future, electric bicycles are cheaper to buy and run and offer genuine transport options for the majority of trips most people take each day. Providing incentives for people to buy or lease electric bicycles should be considered to get more people riding.



If we are going to target the majority of the population to consider riding we need more safe places for people to ride. Cycleways separated from motor vehicles need to be built that will get people to work, study, shops and services. Where there are not available land corridors, these can be retrofitted onto existing streets by removing on-street parking on key routes.

Current state and local government spending on bicycle infrastructure is not enough to build networks of separated cycleways in our urban centres. It is also not enough to implement the Safe Systems approach to road construction, which is to separate bicycles on roads of speeds above 30–40 km/h with high traffic volumes. Local councils receive funding from the federal government for roads but do not receive money for retrofitting cycleways; the state government should step in to provide this much needed funding.

Bicycle Network Tasmania wants to see \$10.8 million allocated to bicycle infrastructure in 2021–22, representing just \$20 per head of the population. The following table broadly outlines the investment for the key actions we think the government should take over the forward estimates to encourage bike riding:

Financial year	2021–22 \$m	2022–23 \$m	2023–24 \$m	2024–23 \$m	TOTAL \$m
Bicycle infrastructure fund	10.8	11	11.2	11.4	44.4
Ride2School program	0.18	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.84
Ride2Work program	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.80
E-bike fund	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1
Cycling tourism	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	6
Bikes on buses	0.05	0.2	0.05	0	0.30



The funding would enable the delivery of Bicycle Network Tasmania's key asks of the Gutwein Liberal government:

1. Establish a bicycle infrastructure fund to deliver more separated cycleways.
2. Embed funding for the Ride2School program into recurrent expenditure following the end of the current trial to expand its focus to secondary schools.
3. Establish a Ride2Work program, beginning in state government workplaces.
4. Improve the uptake of electric bicycles.
5. Broaden the Cycling Tourism funding to rail trails and statewide touring.
6. Implement planning policy changes to require end-of-trip facilities and bicycle parking.
7. Implement an integrated transport policy so bicycle riding can seamlessly fit in with bus, and proposed ferry and light rail/trackless tram travel.



Building protected cycleways

The COVID-19 lockdowns have resulted in a significant increase in the length of bike paths and protected cycleways in cities such as Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane but this has not been mirrored in Tasmania.

Other states have recognised that riding a bike for transport is one of the healthiest transport options and moves more people than private vehicles, so have allocated more road space to bikes. Some of these are temporary lanes that have been put in place to reduce congestion on public transport and on roads from private vehicles, but others are the accelerated installation of permanent lanes.

Tasmania has some great recreational riding paths but few separated, protected cycleways suitable for riding to work, school, shops, services and social activities. The Intercity Cycleway in Hobart and Tailrace path in Launceston for example get riders to the edge of the city centres, but then there's nothing safe to help riders get to their final destinations.

Cycleways that are physically separated from moving traffic are essential if we want to get more people on bikes and out of cars.

While there are several reasons why people don't consider riding for transport, the most common reason cited by far is safety. US research has segmented the population and their propensity to ride for transport into these four groups, which has been echoed by local surveys:

- **<1% Strong and Fearless:** will ride anywhere
- **7% Enthused and Confident:** will ride on painted bike lanes but would prefer protection
- **60% Interested but Concerned:** will not ride on roads without physical separation from vehicles
- **33% No Way, No How:** won't get on a bike, not matter how good the infrastructure

The 2019 National Cycling Participation Survey found that more than one-third of Tasmanians had ridden a bike in the previous year and it's likely this will be higher in the 2021 survey, post-COVID lockdown.

Of the people who said they'd ridden in the past month, only 23% did so for transport which was well under the national figure of 32%. The key to getting more people riding for transport is to provide separated cycleways as part of a network that takes them to work, shops, services, and schools.

Vancouver in Canada started building separated cycleways into its network in 2009 and the number of commuter trips has risen significantly to 6.6% in 2013 and 10.5% in 2016. Its network uses an All Abilities ratings system which means its infrastructure must be appropriate for all people aged eight to 80.

The City of Sydney has built several separated cycleways in the inner city which have all resulted in increases in rider numbers above 300% and the City of Melbourne is powering ahead with its transport strategy that aims to add 50 km of separated cycleways to its network.

Most Australian cities are building separated cycleways in road reservations, and while some departments and councils in Tasmania are talking about it, nothing has yet been delivered.



Photos show new cycleways created in Melbourne in the past year to improve safety for people riding.



Invest in an ongoing bicycle infrastructure fund

The United Nations Environment Program has called on governments at all levels around the world to invest at least 20% of transport budgets on walking and cycling infrastructure.

With years of underspending on transport bicycle infrastructure in Tasmania, a strong argument could be made for a big boost in spending just to catch up to other states.

Bicycle Network believes state and federal governments should establish cycling infrastructure funds at \$20 per head of the population per year. In Tasmania that means \$10.8 million in the first year. Any funding should be on top of the Tasman Bridge project as that is a one-off spend rectifying the mistakes of the past and mixed in with bridge strengthening work that has to happen regardless of the path build.

Budget impact:

Financial year	2020–21 \$m	2021–22 \$m	2022–23 \$m	2023–24 \$m	TOTAL \$m
Bicycle infrastructure fund	10.8	11	11.2	11.4	44.4

Most urban centres are made up of local roads and that's where the funding is needed to build the separated facilities that will get more people riding. Local governments alone can't afford the investment needed to bring Tasmania's riding environment up to a safer standard, and struggle to match funding on big ticket projects.

The state government could consider funding a core separated bicycle network throughout urban centres, just as it funds the state road network. These networks should be transport focused and would predominantly be on local roads, with cooperation from local governments. Both Hobart and Launceston are working on network operating plans, transport strategies and city visions and should be the first places such networks are implemented.

Local government can then build on these central networks with more paths and traffic-calmed 30km/h streets which will help connect people to workplaces, schools, university campuses and local shops and services.

The fund could also be drawn upon to improve safety on popular road cycling routes through shoulder widening and sealing, although those measures would preferably be funded through positive provisioning and road safety budgets.

Direction from the state government is essential and would help ensure consistency of standards across the state and adherence to Safe Systems road design. Other state road departments have produced design guidance for their own departments and local councils and Tasmania should do the same, see for example Transport for NSWⁱ, VicRoadsⁱⁱ and Department of Main Roads and Transport Queenslandⁱⁱⁱ.

Make it easier for more children to Ride2School

Bicycle Network's Ride2School program teaches students basic bike riding skills, educates them about road safety, provides guidance on establishing comfortable routes to walk and ride to school and advises on suitable bicycle parking.

Today, only about 20% of children walk or ride to school across Australia, with a sharp decline in bicycle riding between the ages of 10 and 17. Yet, more than 50% of children ride or walk to school at the 2,700 national schools registered in Bicycle Network's successful Ride2School program. This is at the same time the National Health Survey 2017–18 has found that 1 in 4 children aged 2–17 are overweight/obese.

Bicycle Network is receiving \$90,000 per year over four years from the Road Safety levy to fund a road-safety focused Ride2School program across Tasmania. The current program aims to deliver 50 workshops in primary schools statewide each year and finishes in June 2022.

Funding for an expanded program that would also visit secondary schools could come from the Road Safety levy or Department of Education budget. An expansion of funding would allow the program to employ a second instructor to visit secondary schools and a set of teenage-sized bikes and van to transport them.

An expanded program could also focus more on the development of active travel plans for Tasmanian schools and provision of adequate bicycle parking. Bicycle Network can help determine the best routes to schools with fun branding to encourage children to ride.





Budget impact:

Financial year	2020–21 \$m	2021–22 \$m	2022–23 \$m	2023–24 \$m	TOTAL \$m
Ride2School program	0.18	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.84

E-bikes for transport

Electric bicycle (e-bikes) sales are growing rapidly but for many people the purchase price can be off-putting.

Countries such as Austria, Belgium, Finland, Sweden, The Netherlands and Belgium have all offered direct subsidies or grants to people to buy electric bicycles. Cities, states and regions in Europe have also run subsidy schemes.

The Tasmanian government could offer a no-interest loan, similar to the Tasmanian Energy Efficiency Loans, or direct grants to help Tasmanians buy an e-bike for transport.

It could also offer a grant scheme to businesses to invest in e-bike fleets to replace cars/vans for staff travel or deliveries.

Cargo electric bikes are popular in some European cities but are virtually unheard of in Tasmania. Such bikes can replace cars as they allow riders to transport young children, groceries and other bulky purchases.

Salary sacrificing and leasing schemes that help people buy e-bikes are currently possible in Australia but we are aware of only one supplier in Australia: E-stralian. The company doesn't currently operate in Tasmania but would be willing to establish here if there were enough people using the service – something that could be facilitated by the Tasmanian Government establishing salary sacrificing of e-bikes.

Budget impact:

Financial year	2020–21 \$m	2021–22 \$m	2022–23 \$m	2023–24 \$m	TOTAL \$m
E-bike fund	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1





Establish a Ride2Work program

It's in employers' interests to encourage staff to ride because of the known productivity benefits of having physically active staff, including fewer sick days and more punctual arrivals.

The Tasmanian Government, through its departments, instrumentalities, and government business enterprises, is one of Tasmania's largest employers. It can make serious improvements in health outcomes through internal policies directly related to its own workforce.

A Ride2Work program delivered across government to support people riding bicycles to and from work, could then be expanded to the private sector. This could include:

- a pilot program in the first year in government workplaces that would include urban riding skills training, buddy rider systems, advice in choosing the right bike and commuting gear and bike repair and maintenance
- a commitment to installing secure bicycle parking and end-of-trip facilities in all state government workplaces by 2024
- establishment of bicycle fleets in state government workplaces.

Budget impact:

Financial year	2020–21 \$m	2021–22 \$m	2022–23 \$m	2023–24 \$m	TOTAL \$m
Ride2Work program	0.20	0.20	0.22	0.22	0.84





Expand opportunities for cycling tourism

The government’s ambition of Tasmania becoming known as the cycling state, as outlined in the Cycling Tourism Strategy, is one Bicycle Network wholeheartedly supports. Bicycle tourism helps contribute to local economies while also providing facilities that locals can use.

The government made a good first step towards its goal with its \$6 million investment in mostly mountain bike tracks and trails across the state, and pledges to complete sections of the north-west coastal pathway and legislative facilitation of the North East Rail Trail.

Mountain bike tourism has already shown its positive effects on the local economies of the towns of Derby and Maydena, other projects are set to improve tracks near George Town and Queenstown.

What is now needed is investment in cycle touring. Bicycle Network Tasmania is asking for an investment of \$6 million over the next four years to expand opportunities for rail trails and cycling tourism projects beyond mountain biking.

Budget impact:

Financial year		2020–21 \$m	2021–22 \$m	2022–23 \$m	2023–24 \$m	TOTAL \$m
Cycling tourism		1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	6

Rail trails cost very little to maintain, with most of the costs being in the marketing of the trail and annual path maintenance.

A rail trail along all or part of the disused Derwent Valley rail line needs a feasibility study, especially now Maydena has been so successful with its mountain bike park. Heritage rail enthusiasts have been trying for years to get a regular business up and running but there is still no timeline for when that could start, how much line they could maintain or estimate of costs to bring it to a safe standard for passenger rail.

From New Norfolk to Maydena there are beautiful views of river and forest and plenty of opportunities to sample farm-gate and craft produce. A path from Granton to New Norfolk along the river would further cement the trip as a must-do for cycling tourists. Longer rail trails or paths have the added benefit of some people staying overnight in towns along the way.

A feasibility study into connecting the North East Rail Trail to Derby is another future planning task to create a cycling experience that would draw people from around the country and overseas.

On top of specific tourism projects, becoming the cycling state will require investment in separated cycling infrastructure in our urban centres. Hobart, Devonport, Burnie and Launceston all attract tourists but it can be difficult to get to all the sites unless you are walking or driving.



Tourists should be able to jump on a hire or share bike and get around the cities to see sites and go shopping. This will be a bonus for local businesses as cycling tourists can stop whenever they want for as long as they want, as opposed to being on set bus tours.



Increasing bus passenger catchments

Tasmania has little to no integrated transport connections for bicycle riders. Buses and potentially ferries that could carry bicycles and ferry and park'and'ride stops with undercover, secure bicycle parking could encourage bicycle use for part of people's journeys.

We are looking forward to seeing secure bicycle parking being installed at Kingston and whether they could be replicated at other major bus hubs or the ferry terminals. One of the keys to getting more people to ride, however, will be good quality cycleways leading to these stops.

There is scope for an independently run trial of bikes on buses to assess passenger demand and preferences, and the logistics for bus companies. With low-floor buses, bikes can be wheeled on and strapped/fitted inside the bus or stored in racks on the outside of buses at the front or back of the bus. They are used in Canberra, many north American cities, the UK and are set to be rolled out in Victoria.

A trial run by independent consultants and/or the university should be in conjunction with Metro Tasmania and/or private bus operators to assess demand for bikes on buses and practicalities of delivering a system that suits passenger needs on urban and regional routes.

Budget impact:

Financial year	2020–21 \$m	2021–22 \$m	2022–23 \$m	2023–24 \$m	TOTAL \$m
Bikes on buses	0.05	0.25	0.05	0	0.35





ⁱ <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2021/Cycleway-Design-Toolbox-Web.pdf>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/-/media/files/technical-documents-new/traffic-engineering-manual-v3/tem-vol-3-part-218--vicroads-design-guidance-for-strategically-important-cycling-corridors.ashx>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/business-industry/Technical-standards-publications/Cycling-guidelines>