



**BICYCLE
NETWORK®**

**TRANSPORT CLIMATE
CHANGE ADAPTATION
ACTION PLAN 2022-2026**

RESPONSE TO DRAFT

AUGUST 2021



Prepared by: Dr Nicholas Hunter

Position: Research and Policy Advisor

Date: 6 August 2021



Bicycle Network acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which we work and live and pay our respects to the first peoples of this country, their culture and elders, past, present and emerging.

Introduction

To build Victoria's resilience to climate change, the Victorian Government is preparing [Adaptation Action Plans](#) (AAP) that will provide a framework for adaptive approaches to the climate risks the state is likely to face, such as extreme temperatures, winds, flooding, drought, and sea level rise.

The AAPs will be divided across seven areas or **'systems'**: the Built Environment, Education and Training, Health and Human Services, Natural Environment, Primary Production, Transport, and Water Cycle systems. The preparation of these plans are a requirement of the *Climate Change Act 2017*, and are guided by the adaptation priorities outlined in [Victoria's Climate Change Strategy](#).

Bicycle Network's submission specifically addresses the Transport Adaptation Action Plan (TAAP) draft, which details how the Victorian Government will build the transport system's capacity to adapt to climate change. The draft provides 15 strategic actions for delivering climate change adaptation over the next five years.

Riding a bike is often framed as a sustainable travel option that can assist in curbing our transport-related greenhouse gas emissions and, in turn, reducing the effects of climate change. However, we must accept that some climate change effects are likely to affect Victoria into the the future.

In addition to preventative measures, we must carefully prepare an adaptation strategy to ensure that riding a bike remains a safe and rewarding transport option. This will involve strong collaboration between Victoria's transport planners and climate adaptation teams to identify risks and suggest appropriate options for ensuring resilience.

Bicycle Network's submission addresses four issues in the TAAP draft and offers recommendations for strengthening the document. We offer this feedback in support of the Victorian Government's objectives in responding to long-term climate risks across the state.

Four points of consideration

1. Strengthening the 'seven systems' approach

The seven systems that form the structure of the AAP framework is logical, and will allow tasks and resources to be systematically partitioned across various domains. However, an arising question is how tasks that are related to two or more systems will be handled. In other words, how can we be confident that climate change adaptations with reasonable crossover amongst the systems don't slip through the cracks?

Indeed, the draft acknowledges that there are interdependencies across the seven systems (Section 1.7, page 11). For example, urban greenery and shading for bike and pedestrian areas will be increasingly important for decreasing heat exposure during periods of high outdoor temperatures, and therefore is of relevance to both the Natural Environment and Transport AAPs. Drainage infrastructure to accommodate intense rainfall and flooding events will serve to clear road and path spaces, which is relevant to both the Transport and Built Environment AAPs.

While the draft acknowledges these types of cross-system scenarios, what is missing is how they will impact 'within-system' procedures such as asset prioritizing, resource allocation, cost-benefit estimations and so on.

Bicycle Network recommends that, to complement the existing information regarding interdependencies between systems, the draft should include some clearer statements about how they will be addressed, particularly with respect to budget and resource allocation.

While we understand that the TAAP should be viewed as a high-level strategic overview, we think it will be increasingly important to be clear on where priorities will reside across the framework. Some additional statements in Section 1.7 regarding the intended actions for handling interdependencies, particularly with respect to budget and resources, may be helpful.

2. Interdependencies with other Victorian Government transport strategies

It is stated in several areas of the document that the TAAP is guided by [Victoria's Climate Change Strategy](#) and is linked to Regional Adaptation Strategies. Following from the considerations outlined in Recommendation 1, it may be useful to also provide some further detail regarding if and how the proposed actions in the TAAP are informed by, or overlap with, other Victorian Government transport strategies and policies.

Section 5 (page 17) recognises the need to review and update existing policies and programs that are relevant to climate change adaptation. However, in some cases the TAAP may overlap with government plans, strategies and policies that are not related to climate change *senso stricto*.

For example, the Victorian Cycling Strategy set outs the state government's plan to increase bike riding for transport by investing in safer and better-connected bike networks. It will be of interest to people who ride bikes whether these plans will be affected by TAAP priorities and actions, or if bike policy reviews are to be expected.

It is useful to understand, in the broader sense, how AAPs align with existing strategies, whether there is any overlap, and if there are any gaps or risks of double-handling.

Bicycle Network recommends that the Victorian Government prepare some clear statements, in Section 5 or elsewhere, regarding any interdependencies between the TAAP and other transport-related plans and strategies. These will help ease any concerns that the TAAP will be compromising any existing policies. Plans and strategies of relevance here may include:

- the [Victorian Road Safety Strategy](#);
- [Growing Our Rail Network 2018-2025](#)
- [Victoria's Bus Plan](#)
- the [Victorian Infrastructure Plan](#); and
- the [Victorian Freight Plan](#).

3. Progress reporting and data availability

The TAAP draft acknowledges that “*consultation is critical to this plan's successful development and implementation*”. However, there is currently no statement of plans of reporting milestones and progress to the public, which is a necessary element of the consultation process.

The steps taken by the Victorian Government should be released in quarterly or annual progress reports that clearly outline how the actions taken conform with the priorities

defined in the TAAP. A statement in the draft could be included as a sub-item to Action 13 (page 23).

Climate risks affecting transport systems, from extreme temperature events to coastal and riverine flood hazards, are of public interest and these data would be a valuable asset for the public. Bicycle Network recommends that the Victorian Government considering making non-sensitive datasets publicly available. This may include, for example, the projection of climate change risks on Victoria's transport system (Action 7, page 21). As well as providing transparency regarding climate-based hazards in Victoria, open datasets may offer a stimulus for innovative research and planning strategies across our universities, councils, and non-government groups.

4. Collaboration with bike and walking advocacy groups and broader public consultation

Within the high-level actions outlined in the TAAP draft (Section 6), there are common themes of 'collaborating' with industry and 'empowering' communities (e.g. Action 1, page 18). This paints a picture that strategy and planning consultancy will be undertaken exclusively by government and industry.

Advocacy and lobby groups sit somewhere between industry and community, and should also be involved in the many forms of collaboration and consultation outlined in the TAAP. These groups can provide a community-based point of view, and in many cases can also contribute critical data and people-based expertise, which industry partners and agencies may lack.

Advocacy groups should be well-informed of all operations related to the AAPs so they can responsibly inform and educate their members, stakeholders and the general public. It would be remiss to leave these groups out of consultation.

Bicycle Network recommends that advocacy groups should also be acknowledged as potential consultants and collaborators where appropriate (e.g. Sections 1.1, 1.2, 3.6 and 5.2).

Who we are

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, successful 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 behaviour change programs such as Ride2School and Ride2Work;
- providing services and insurance that support bike riders through nationwide membership;
- running mass participation bike riding events such as the Great Vic Bike Ride; and
- being a key national spokesperson on issues related to cycling and physical activity



**BICYCLE
NETWORK[®]**

We've got your back.