



29 April 2021

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Comment on Climate Action Plan Opportunities Paper

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on what should be included in the next Tasmanian Climate Action Plan.

Bicycle Network is Australia's biggest bike riding organisation, with close to 50,000 members. We are dedicated to making it easier for everyone to ride a bike every day because it benefits their health and the health of the planet.

Bicycles are one of the most efficient low-carbon forms of transport around, and as the Opportunities Paper outlines, getting more people out of cars and onto bikes will help reduce our transport emissions.

And as Professor Christian Brand recently pointed out in a *The Conversation* article, electric car uptake will take decades to replace petrol engines, which is time we don't have.¹ We need people to get out of cars in the next five years, and electric bikes and electric cargo bikes are one of the most efficient ways of doing this.

The average weekday trip length in Hobart is 9.1 km and average work commute distance in Launceston is 9 km.

Most people of average fitness can ride up to 10 km and electric bicycles make those distances more achievable for more people, while reducing the barriers posed by our often hilly terrain and lack of end-of-trip facilities.

And when cities become more congested with traffic, bicycles end up being the fastest form of transport to get around the city centres.

Separated cycleways

One of the most effective ways governments can help people ride more often is to build separated cycleways that are suitable for all ages and abilities.

US research back in the 1990s broke the population into four types of bike riders:

- **Strong & Fearless:** Less than 1% of population – will ride anywhere

- **Enthusied & Confident:** 7% of population – Will ride on painted lanes and quieter traffic streets
- **Interested but Concerned:** 60% of population – open to the idea of riding but won't ride in traffic without separation.
- **No Way No How:** 33% of population – will not ride regardless of quality of infrastructure.

When cities are designing and building their cycling transport networks they should be targeting the Interested but Concerned riders, but historically much of our cycling infrastructure has been designed for the Enthusied & Confident riders.

If the Tasmanian Government invested in building networks of separated cycleways linking people to schools, workplaces, shops, services and recreational spots it would encourage many more people to ride and lower our transport emissions.

As a whole-of-government approach to reducing climate emissions we want to see an increase in cycleway infrastructure spending and the establishment of a standing active transport infrastructure fund to allow the state government and local governments to plan ahead to deliver cycleway networks.

While this is outside the scope of the Climate Action Plan, it should be factored in that that it is an essential base for further action.



Getting people on e-bikes

Electric bicycles knock out many of the barriers to riding for transport.

They flatten hills, slice through headwinds, allow riders to ride further and faster, reduce sweating so people don't worry about their clothes or hairstyles, and can carry more weight.

The drawback is their purchase cost, even though they cost very little to run especially when compared to the costs of running a second car.

Countries such as Austria, Belgium, Finland, Sweden, The Netherlands and Belgium have all offered direct subsidies or grants to people to buy electric bicycles.

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, including cargo bikes which allow loads of about 100 kg to be carried.

Salary sacrificing and leasing schemes that help people buy e-bikes are currently possible in Australia through a Tax Office approved supplier: E-stralian. The company has recently established in Tasmania through a contract with the University of Tasmania and is also talking to the City of Hobart but adding state government employees would help it offer a wide range of bicycles.



Helping people to ride for transport

If you ask most Tasmanians to think of someone riding a bicycle they will picture a fit looking man in lycra on a road bike: a cyclist.

We need to change this imagery so that many pictures pop into their heads when asked that question: children of all ages riding to school, older people out for a recreational ride, parents on cargo bikes ferrying children around and people of all ages wearing everyday clothes on city bikes complete with baskets or panniers loaded with all manner of goods.

Many of our bike shops only feature sport bikes so we need programs that expose people to transport bicycles so they can envisage how they'd fit into their lives.

These can include bicycles with step-through frames, electric assist motors and batteries, large baskets or panniers to carry shopping or work tools, child seats, cargo boxes to hold dogs, chain guards to protect pants, mudguards to protect clothing, and permanent lights.

A Ride2Work program can include a session advising on the type of features to look for in a transport bicycle and the sort of gear that can help make bike riding easier.

It can also provide basic bike riding training for people who haven't ridden in a number of years, and sessions on urban riding to help people understand road rules and safer riding techniques.

Riding to School



Every school holidays the traffic on Tasmanian roads noticeably decreases. The number of parents dropping off and picking up children from school in their cars could be reduced across the year if we built safer routes to schools and provided other support to help students ride, walk or scoot.

Bicycle Network's Ride2School program operates in primary schools across the state. As it is funded through the Road Safety Levy it is primarily focused on increasing children's knowledge of road rules and delivering bike skill training so children become more competent riders.

There is scope though to provide a more comprehensive program that works with primary and secondary schools to create "active maps", bike parking, open street trials and riding support programs such as riding buses.

Our Ride2School Coordinator recently worked with Corpus Christi school in Bellerive as part of the Climate Youth Leaders program and as well as delivering the standard workshops, helped them map the safer routes to school, print a map of the routes, install more bike parking and operate a riding bus so students can ride to school as a group. It has led to an increase in the number of children riding, walking or scooting to school instead of being dropped off by car.

Business grants for end-of-trip facilities

To encourage and support people to ride to work, employers must be in a position to provide adequate parking and facilities on site.



'End-of-trip' facilities refer to designated spaces and facilities that accommodate the needs of people commuting to work with a bike. Facilities may include showers, change rooms, lockers, repair stations and bike racks. The positive role that these facilities play in encouraging a bike-based commute has been known for over a decadeⁱⁱ. Similarly, secure indoor bike parking spaces have been demonstrated to increase uptake of bike-based commutes.ⁱⁱⁱ

A recent survey (n=448) conducted by Bicycle Network found that, among respondents who did not have an end-of-trip facility at work:

- 18.0 per cent of people rarely ride to work because there is no end-of-trip facility
- 63.9 per cent of people freshen up and get changed in a bathroom
- 24.6 per cent ride to work in their work clothes.

A business grants scheme that allows employers to provide appropriate parking and end-of-trip facilities for those riding a bike to work, whether they are new or improvements to existing set-ups could help more people swap their car commute for a bicycle.

Recommendations for next Climate Action Plan

1. Provide no-interest loan scheme to help people buy an e-bike for transport.
2. Provide direct subsidies for low-income Tasmanians to buy an e-bike for transport.
3. Establish salary sacrificing of e-bikes for state sector employees.
4. Establish e-bike fleets in state sector motor pools for staff travel.
5. Provide grants to businesses that invest in e-bikes for staff travel or deliveries – include cargo bikes.
6. Fund a Ride2Work program in the state sector to encourage more people to commute by bike.
7. Fund the Ride2School program to deliver Active Mapping, open street trials and riding buses.
8. Implement a business grants program to improve end-of-trip facilities.

ⁱ Brand, Christian "Cycling is ten times more important than electric cars for reaching net-zero cities" <https://theconversation.com/cycling-is-ten-times-more-important-than-electric-cars-for-reaching-net-zero-cities-157163> accessed on 22 April 2021.

ⁱⁱ Pucher, J., Dill, J. & Handy, S. Infrastructure, programs, and policies to increase bicycling: an international review. *Preventive Medicine* 50,S106-S125 (2010);

ⁱⁱⁱ Wardman, M., Tight, M. & Page, M. Factors influencing the propensity to cycle to work. *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice* 41, 339-350, doi:10.1016/j.tra.2006.09.011 (2007).