

**BICYCLE  
NETWORK®**

**Bicycle Network Tasmania submission**

**Legislative Council inquiry into Hobart's  
Traffic Congestion**

**September 2019**



## About Bicycle Network

With nearly 50,000 members, Bicycle Network is one of the biggest bike riding organisations in the world. With a proud history reaching back more than 40 years, we are committed to making it easier for people to ride a bike.

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, data, policies, legislation and regulations
- delivering successful behaviour change programs such as Ride2School and Ride2Work
- providing services that support bike riders through membership
- being a key spokesperson on issues related to cycling and physical activity.

In Tasmania, we also have an active volunteer committee who organise regular social rides, events such as the E-bike Expo, festival stalls and bicycle valet parking.

We promote bicycle riding for recreation and transport because it's a healthy, low-cost, convenient, non-polluting way to stay active and get around.

## Tasmania's health challenges

For Tasmanians to prevent diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and some cancers they should be getting 30–60 minutes of moderate exercise five times a week. About two-thirds of Tasmanian adults do not get this recommended level of exercise.<sup>i</sup>

It's the role of governments at all levels to help provide the infrastructure that makes it easier for people to be physically active. The relatively small cost of providing trails and paths saves the health budget many more dollars later on if physical and mental illnesses can be prevented.

Bicycle riding is an ideal way for people to get exercise because it's low impact, so suitable for a wide range of ages, and when used as transport can be incorporated into daily habits.

About one-third of Tasmanians ride a bicycle, whether it's every day or just once a year.<sup>ii</sup>

The majority of the population is open to the idea of riding for transport, but only if they can be separated from vehicles.<sup>iii</sup>

## Inquiry Terms of Reference:

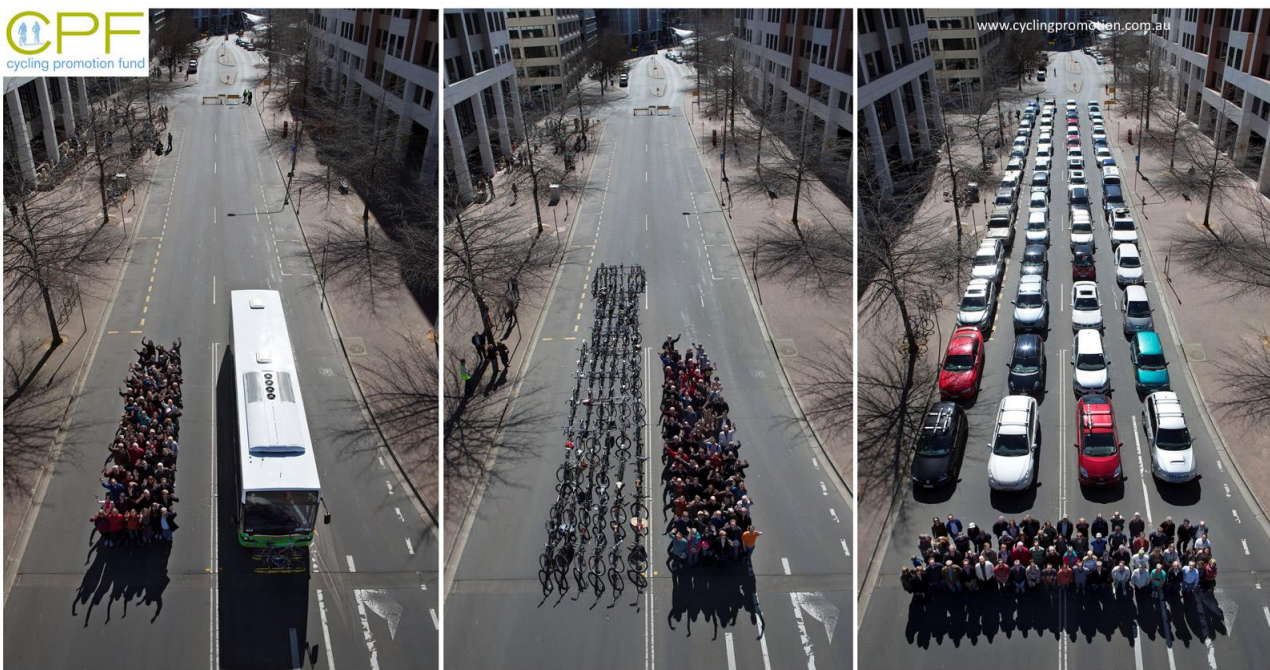
- (1) the scope of Greater Hobart's traffic congestion and its impact on the community and economy
- (2) causes of congestion, including physical and topographical barriers
- (3) strategic planning processes between Commonwealth, State and Local governments
- (4) future initiatives to address traffic congestion in the Greater Hobart area
- (5) any other matters incidental thereto.

Bicycle Network welcomes the Legislative Council's inquiry into Hobart traffic congestion and will address why bicycle riding infrastructure and support programs should be considered in any response, with ten recommendations to get more people riding and reduce traffic congestion.

## Why talk about bicycles?

Traffic congestion results when too many people want to travel in the space available. Private cars are the least space efficient form of transport and so high numbers of people driving instead of walking, riding or catching public transport will clog up available road space.

These three photos taken on a Canberra street show the road space take up by the same number of people, using bus, bicycles or private cars.





In Hobart there has been an increase in congestion for the peak hour journeys in and out of Hobart, but at other times traffic congestion is not a problem.

The number of people who drive or are driven to work in Hobart is higher than other capital cities in Australia. This is understandable as walking and cycling infrastructure doesn't cater to the broader population, parking is relatively cheap, and public transport is limited to buses. While three bus routes are high frequency services, others vary widely, and some don't cater to shift workers.

So, if governments are serious about tempting people out of their cars and onto other modes of transport during peak hour, improvements need to be made to the alternatives. Many city workers would be attracted to the low cost, personal flexibility and health benefits of riding a bike or an e-bike.

To increase the number of people riding bicycles to get to work, the big infrastructure ask is a network of separated cycleways into and through the city centre. By creating physically separated cycling corridors, government creates a transport option for about 60% of the population who live within riding distance of their work (up to 10 km, further if on e-bikes).

Cities around the world are turning to separated cycleway networks as a way of reducing traffic congestion. In Vancouver over 10% of trips to work are by bike<sup>iv</sup> following a concerted effort to improve bicycle infrastructure, and London now has more bikes than cars in its city centre in morning peak hour<sup>v</sup> after creating its cycle superhighways.

Seville in Spain built a highly connected, separated network of about 80km within just 18 months, mostly by replacing one side of on-road parking with bi-directional bike lanes. Rider numbers increased from about 3 million bicycle trips in 2006 to 16 million in 2013, and the number of bike and motor vehicle collisions per million bike trips declined from 15 to 6.<sup>vi</sup>

Melbourne<sup>vii</sup> and Sydney<sup>viii</sup> have both set themselves the goal of getting 10% of trips into their city centre by bicycle by 2030 and both cities recognise that the only way to get there is to provide a network of All Ages and Abilities cycleways. The rule of thumb is that the cycleways should feel so comfortable that you'd be happy for your 8-year-old child or your 80-year-old grandparent to ride in them.

Infrastructure Australia recently included a plan to build and connect 284km of cycleways in a 10km radius of the Sydney city centre in its annual priority list because of its potential to reduce traffic congestion.<sup>ix</sup>

The University of Tasmania's current and future city campuses and accommodation are a useful catalyst for justifying separated cycleways being built in Hobart as the staff and students won't have the parking options that exist at the Sandy Bay campus.

Rolling out a network of separated cycleways is relatively straight forward and inexpensive,



but because it involves the removal of on-street parking it needs political will from our decision-makers to make it happen.

## What's already happening

Several reports and background papers have come out in the past ten years about Hobart's transport situation and what could change to improve rates of walking, riding and public transport.

But as the Canadian urban planner Brent Toderian has so aptly put it: "The truth about a city's aspirations isn't found in its vision. It's found in its budget". While visions, strategies and plans have set the goal of increasing bicycle ridership, infrastructure budgets have not provided enough money to build AAA cycleways that would appeal to the broadest number of people.

- The City of Hobart has released four background papers and a draft transport strategy is still waiting final approval by the council, which aims to improve conditions for bike riding.
- The Gehl Report and the council's response, the Inner City Action Plan, both deal with active transport links through Hobart but none of the projects completed to date have included separated cycling facilities.
- The City of Hobart and Tasmanian Government are working on a central precinct plan that is due for completion at the end of 2020 and will reportedly map cycling routes.
- The Tasmanian Government released the Hobart Transport Vision just before the 2018 election which showed a car-free street that allowed easier bicycle use, however it does not own the street depicted.
- The Tasmanian Department of State Growth has embarked on planning studies for several transport corridors into the city, including the Tasman Highway, Channel Highway, Southern Outlet, and Domain and Brooker highways. Most have called for suggestions for improving cycling conditions along the roads.
- The Hobart City Deal is an agreement between federal, state and local government to work together to improve issues such as transport, and includes money for Hobart congestion solutions.
- The RACT went through an extensive public and expert consultation process this year to deliver its Greater Hobart Mobility Vision for the coming 30 years, which expressly recommends separated cycling corridors.

- The Tasmanian Bicycle Council released a plan in March this year for bi-directional separated cycleways in the Hobart city centre to make it easier to get around and complete the journey from one of the three main existing cycling corridors into the city.



## What could governments do to get more people riding?

- 1. Plan and build a network of AAA cycling corridors into and through the city.**

Much of our existing bike “infrastructure” is just painted lines on roads. But the majority of the population are concerned about riding on roads without physical separation from motor vehicles.

US research<sup>x</sup> has segmented the population and their propensity to ride for transport into these four groups, similar results have been found by Australian surveys:

- <1% **Strong and Fearless:** will ride anywhere
- 7% **Enthusied 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.

It's no wonder that Hobart is only getting 3% riding to work in the local government area and 2% across greater Hobart<sup>xi</sup>, considering the only separated cycleways we have (Intercity Cycleway and Hobart Rivulet path) finish at the edge of the city centre.

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, recreation and schools.

Vancouver has produced the following graphic to illustrate the types of infrastructure that do and don't fit under the AAA tag.



The Tasmanian Bicycle Council released a plan in March 2019 for a loop of bi-directional separated cycleways in Hobart's city centre in the absence of any other plans from state or local governments.<sup>xii</sup>

The loop is seen as the minimum possible infrastructure that could be provided that would provide useful connections and link to other routes. It also includes a link along Elizabeth Street that would include an uphill protected bike lane and low-speed traffic conditions on the downhill with bikes mixing with low-volume traffic.



Importantly, the bi-directional lanes counter Hobart's one-way street system so that bicycle trips could be just as direct and convenient as walking.

Separated cycleways leading into and through Hobart's city centre are also likely to be used by tourists, especially if the creation of a network attracts a bike share company to establish. This would be ideal for cruise ship days when thousands of people descend on the city.

Even though the National Road Safety Strategy recommends separation of cyclists at intersections and 30km/h speed limits in streets with high walking and riding rates, very few Tasmanian cities are doing so.<sup>xiii</sup> The Tasmanian Government should be encouraging and supporting the safe systems approach to road design to be adopted by councils across the state.

## **2. Create a standing cycling infrastructure fund for state and local roads.**

The United Nations sets a goal of 20% of road funding to be spent on active transport – a group of academics has estimated Tasmania's spend to be about 1.5% in 2015–16.<sup>xiv</sup>

In the 2016 implementation report of the National Cycling Strategy, the Tasmanian Government was listed as spending only \$3.64 per head of population. The top spenders were the ACT at \$40 per head and Northern Territory at \$14.80.<sup>xv</sup>

At the 2018 state election the Liberal Party promised to spend more than \$800 million on new and improved road infrastructure over five years, but only \$8 million over four years for road-based bicycle infrastructure. This represents just 1% of the roads infrastructure budget.

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.

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.





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

The cost of a Hobart network will depend on the extent of its design. A total streetscape redevelopment that includes raised cycleways, street plantings and traffic calming will be more expensive than just putting in separating barriers in existing roadways.

It is also cheaper to use existing space in the roadway, such as car parking on one side of the road, to create new cycleways rather than extensive engineering works which move or remove existing infrastructure to make space.

### **3. Fund research to build the case for separated cycleways.**

Businesses along routes where separated cycleways replace car parking can be understandably worried about impacts on their trade. But the experience in places like New York and Toronto where cycleways have replaced car parking has been positive for businesses.<sup>xvi</sup> Separated cycleways add to the attractiveness of streets and bring in more people than just bicycle riders.

Research has found that while bicycle riders spend less in businesses than people arriving by car, they shop more often so their long-term expenditure is greater.<sup>xvii</sup>

Most businesses over-estimate the importance of car travel by their customers. One Austrian study found retailers thought about 58% of customers arrived by car but the reality was 32%, with the majority (44%) walking. Similar results have been found in research carried out in Scotland and New Zealand.<sup>xviii</sup>

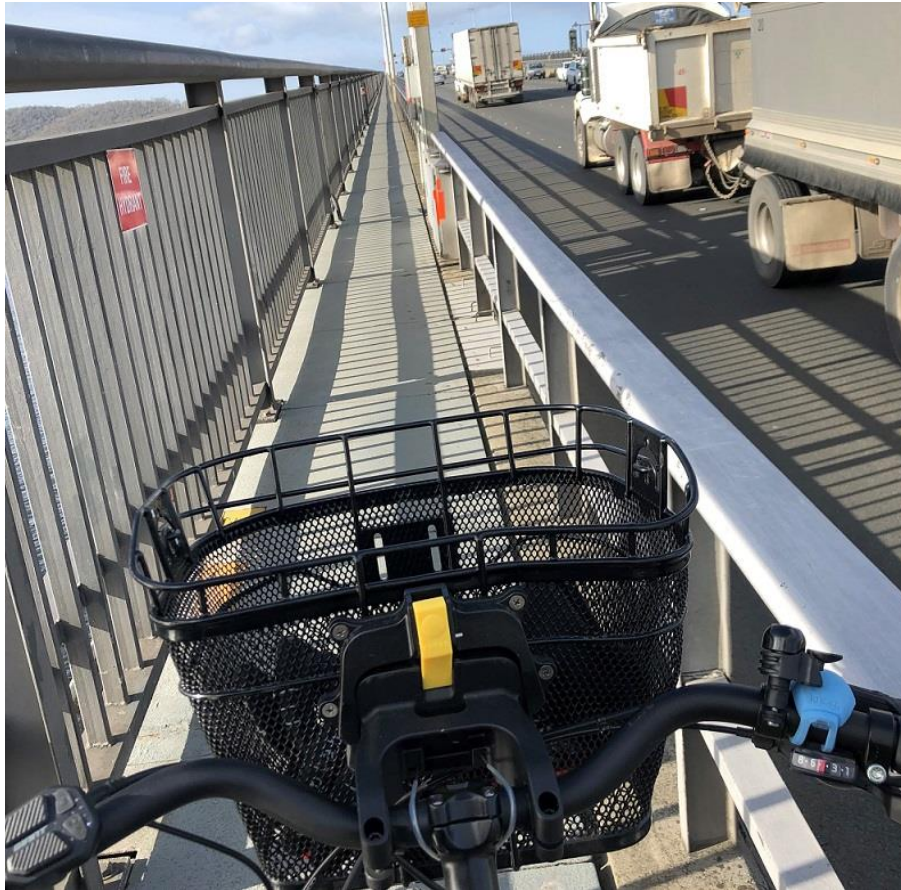
Any plan for separated cycleways that replace on-street parking should begin with pedestrian surveys of the area to document how people arrive and how far they walk to their destination. The availability of car parking spaces within a standard walking radius of the area should also be mapped so businesses can understand how removal of car parking may or may not affect them.

By removing car parking on only one side of a street and narrowing traffic lanes, there can still be enough road space to provide loading zones, disability access parks and short-stay pick-up and drop-off parks depending on the width of the road reservation.

### **4. Fix the Tasman Bridge to make it more comfortable for people riding and walking.**

The poor quality of the walking and cycling path across the Tasman Bridge is a major barrier to people crossing the River Derwent and linking the two halves of greater

Hobart. The path is too narrow, too wind exposed and is dangerous for riders who can be blown into the traffic lanes because of low fence dividers.



The Tasmanian Government has budgeted \$14 million to improve the pathway<sup>xix</sup> but no design plans have been released and it's not known when improvements will occur.

The bridge must be fixed to get more people walking and riding and if the best solution costs more than \$14 million, then more money should be budgeted.

A well-designed ferry that carries bicycles easily would be a useful alternative, but it's unfair to say that people riding must pay for the privilege when people driving get suitable infrastructure provided.

## **5. Integrate bike riding with public transport.**

Tasmania has little to no integrated public transport connections for bicycle riders.



Metro Tasmania should be funded to implement better integration of bicycles in its current and potential operations.

Buses, and potentially ferries, should be equipped to carry bicycles. Undercover, secure bicycle parking should be provided at transport hubs to encourage bicycle use for part of people's journeys.

Most North American cities operate buses with bicycle racks and in some places, such as Seattle in the US and Lisbon in Portugal, bicycles can be taken onto a bus and strapped in place in a designated area. And in Canberra's new light rail system, bikes can be taken on board and placed in dedicated wheel holds inside the tram.

A very short trial of bicycle racks on the front of 10 buses on a handful of Hobart routes was conducted between December 2012 and February 2013, but not continued for operational reasons. The trial was not well publicised and we've heard from people who tried to use it and found the bicycle rack buses were not used consistently on the selected routes.

The state government should fund a year-long trial on selected bus routes of the two options of external bike rack and internal bike holder, independently overseen by the University of Tasmania or recognised experts.

Metro has two "bike and ride" services at its "park and ride" locations but these are just bike hoops in the open air. Lockers or swipe card access cages provide a more visible, secure parking option and integrating them with the Green Card would make them easier to use.

The potential ferry service between Bellerive and Hobart has been floated to get more people riding and walking between the two shores. If bicycle riders are going to use a ferry, they need to know they will be able to easily get on and off it rather than the situation of some interstate ferries that give preference to foot passengers.

Ferries should be designed to make it easy to roll a bicycle on and off. Incat released documentation this year that estimated the ferry trip should take about 8 minutes. Ferry designs that allow a bike rider to walk on and hold their bike or strap it into place near where they are sitting/standing is preferable for short trips than having to lock it to a set of designated bike parking rails.

Likewise, secure undercover parking at a Bellerive ferry terminal may encourage people on the eastern shore to ride to the ferry, lock their bike and walk on, which would help ease car parking pressures in an already crowded locality. For bike riding to work to broaden the ferry catchment, new separated cycleways would need to be built to link eastern shore suburbs safely to the ferry terminal.



## **6. Sequence traffic signals on designated routes to give priority to people walking and riding and public transport.**

Most surveys of bike-riding nations like The Netherlands and Denmark find the main reason people ride is because it's the most convenient way to get somewhere. By giving traffic signal priority to people riding and walking on some routes, it makes for a more direct, stress-free journey.

Melbourne has recently finished a trial of “green wave” signals on its Albert Road cycling corridor that mean if riders maintain a speed between 20-25 km/h then they will get green lights the whole way into the city. The trial was successful, and the rider priority will remain.<sup>xx</sup>

Other improvements to corridors could include traffic giving way to cyclists rather than the other way around, including raising the bike path above road level to slow motorists down. This would be useful where side streets cross the Intercity Cycleway.

And “head start” sequencing means people walking and riding get a green light before cars so that they are more visible crossing an intersection before cars begin turning.



## **7. Provide secure public bike parking and end-of-trip facilities in the city centre and satellite shopping hubs.**

Hobart does not have public end-of-trip secure bike parking, lockers, e-bike chargers and shower/change room facilities in the city centre.

There are many small to medium businesses in Hobart that may not have these facilities and cannot afford to retrofit buildings to make it easier for employees to ride to work. And for people who want to ride into the city to undertake a variety of tasks, such a facility can mean they can ride in, get changed and leave their bike and bags in a secure location.

The [Cycle2City facility in Brisbane](#) is one such example of a public end-of-trip facility or the [Mobility Hub in Victoria](#) which is open to RACV Club members. A swipe card can be used for access and charging, and businesses can be encouraged to set up shop to offer services such as bicycle repairs, bicycle courier warehousing and laundries.

These facilities can be housed in existing car parks or other buildings which have easy access for bicycles and are within the city centre, close to many employers and other attractors like the hospital or university. This is something that could easily be trialled in an existing off-street car park and such an idea is part of the City of Hobart's *Connected Hobart Smart Cities Action Plan*.<sup>xxi</sup>

A lesser version of this is secure, swipe card accessed pods/shelters throughout the city that have bike parking and lockers available. A version of these have started up in New York and fit into the size of existing car bays: [www.ooneepod.com](http://www.ooneepod.com).

The state government and city council could also consider offering incentives to building owners who retrofit spaces for bike parking and lockers, such as a rates holiday or direct active transport grants.

## **8. Change planning laws so end-of-trip facilities and secure bike parking are included in all new buildings.**

During the election campaign the Liberal Party promised it would review planning and development laws with a view to requiring developers to include bike parking and associated facilities in major cities across the state.

Those facilities include undercover, secure bike parking with electricity charging, showers, lockers and change rooms.

This is a long overdue change and should be extended to retrofitting buildings owned by the state government, which will require a budget allocation. State government

departments and agencies should also only enter lease arrangements for buildings that have appropriate end-of-trip facilities.

State-wide planning policies should integrate the provision of All Ages and Abilities cycling infrastructure into broader transport and land-use planning. This should include the extension of the positive provisioning policy to new roads in local government areas and subdivisions.

Such planning should be informed by a review of the Principal Urban Bicycle Network as well as the establishment of a state-wide cycle network database/mapping and long-term urban transport strategies developed as part of the promised review of the Tasmanian Walking and Cycling for Active Transport Strategy 2010.



## **9. Provide incentives and support to workplaces to get more staff riding.**

Electric bicycles have the potential to get more people riding and reduce the number of motor vehicles on the road because e-bikes:

- allow for longer distances to be cycled. German research found that in urban areas e-bikes are faster than cars for distances up to 10 km
- make it easier to overcome natural obstacles to cycling, like hills or headwinds.



- and electric cargo bikes make it possible to carry heavier goods, allowing people to use them for shopping and businesses for deliveries.
- help older people to cycle
- are good for people who want to wear regular clothes and not sweat
- offer great potential of getting people out of cars for short trips.
- take up less road space so more people can be moved at peak times.

In Europe, many cities and governments have paid subsidies to people buying e-bikes and e-cargo bikes as they are seen to get people out of cars, including France, Sweden, Austria, Italy, Belgium and The Netherlands.

The Tasmanian Government should review such schemes with a view to implementing a trial scheme in Hobart.

Paying people to ride to work is another way of getting them out of cars and was proposed by Bicycle Network in our [federal election priorities paper](#) and the City of Hobart in its *Connected Hobart Smart Cities Action Plan*. Countries and cities that have tried this include Belgium, The Netherlands, France and the Italian city of Bari.

Technology can make the administration of schemes easier with GPS units attached to bikes measuring distances travelled and times and then sending directly to the bank for reimbursement. Another method is to provide tax deductions for riders or their employers, technology again can confirm the commutes happened and store that information for the tax office.

Businesses and governments can also make it easier for staff to use e-bikes through provision of company fleets, leased bikes and salary sacrificing.

The ACT government has bought eight electric bikes for a fleet to encourage staff to ride to meetings rather than driving. It's also investigating incentives to encourage the use of e-bikes and amending tax arrangements to allow ACT Government staff to salary sacrifice an electric bike, through providers such as E-Stralian.

## **10. Fund behaviour change programs.**

There is scope for the government to fund a behaviour change program with employers that would provide more support and encouragement for people to make the switch to bike commuting.

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.

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.

This could include:

- a pilot program in government workplaces that would include urban riding skills training, buddy rider system, advice in choosing the right bike and commuting gear
- a commitment to installing secure bicycle parking and end-of-trip facilities in all state government workplaces by 2022
- establishment of bicycle fleets in state government workplaces.

Riding to work would also be helped by the government developing a policy on electric cars and bikes that includes public charging facilities.

It is much discussed in Hobart that when school holidays are on, traffic congestion disappears.



In the 1970s some 80% of children walked or rode to school, now the average is more like 20%. There are several reasons for this change, including parental concerns about safety and convenience.

Programs like Bicycle Network's Ride2School program have increased active travel rates in schools it works in. Coupled with infrastructure improvements to surrounding streets, such programs can help to reduce the traffic congestion around schools in Hobart.





The program is currently funded through the Road Safety Levy for four years, but funding only pays for one FTE staff member it doesn't include money for infrastructure improvements.

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