



**BICYCLE
NETWORK®**

TASMANIA PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION 2022/23

DECEMBER 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.

Who we are

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, 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

Bicycle Network would like to thank the Tasmanian Government for the opportunity to provide a submission for the Tasmanian Budget 2022-23. We look forward to working with you to get more people riding bikes across the state. .

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Executive summary

Encouraging more people to ride means they can get the 30–60 minutes of exercise they need each day and have a flexible low-carbon transport option other than a car, which could help our larger centres deal with traffic congestion.

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 in our urban centres.

Swapping electric cars for petrol cars helps reduce our carbon dioxide emissions but does nothing to address the problems of traffic congestion and physical inactivity.

Recent research has found that even when people buy e-bikes to get more exercise, the convenience of the bikes means they are also used for trips that would have previously been taken by car.¹

Providing incentives for people to buy or lease electric bicycles should be considered to get more people riding.

And if we are going to encourage the majority of the population to consider riding we need more safe places for them 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 or traffic lanes on key routes. This is what other Australian cities are doing to provide the infrastructure we need to encourage people to switch from cars to bikes.

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 2022–23, 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:

Recommendation	2021-22 (\$m)	2022-23 (\$m)	2023-24 (\$m)	2024-25 (\$m)	TOTAL (\$m)
1. E-bike fund	0.25	0.25	0.5	0.5	1.5
2. Bike infrastructure fund	10.5	11	11.2	11.4	44.4
3. Ride2School program	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1
4. Ride2Work and Back on your Bike programs	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1
5. Cycling tourism	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	6
6. Bikes on buses	0.05	0.2	0.05	0	0.3

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 in urban centres.
2. Improve the uptake of electric bicycles.
3. Embed funding for the Ride2School program into recurrent expenditure and expand its focus to secondary schools.
4. Establish an ongoing Ride2Work program and continue the Back on your Bike program, beginning in state government workplaces.
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.



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. These can be direct payments or provided when people hand in a car registration plate.

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. Helping people delay payment of the purchase price gives them time to save money they would have spent on petrol and parking and see the worth of an e-bike over a second car.

Such a loan scheme could have two categories – standard e-bikes (up to \$6000) and cargo e-bikes (up to \$10,000). There could also be a stream for individuals and stream for businesses to buy staff e-bike fleets and cargo bikes for 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, tools and bulky goods.

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 has recently started operating in Tasmania through an arrangement with the University of Tasmania – if the Tasmanian Government started offering salary sacrificing of e-bikes it could help build this offering.

Financial year	2021-22 (\$m)	2022-23 (\$m)	2023-24 (\$m)	2024-25 (\$m)	TOTAL (\$m)
Budget impact	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1.0

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, least polluting 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 them 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.

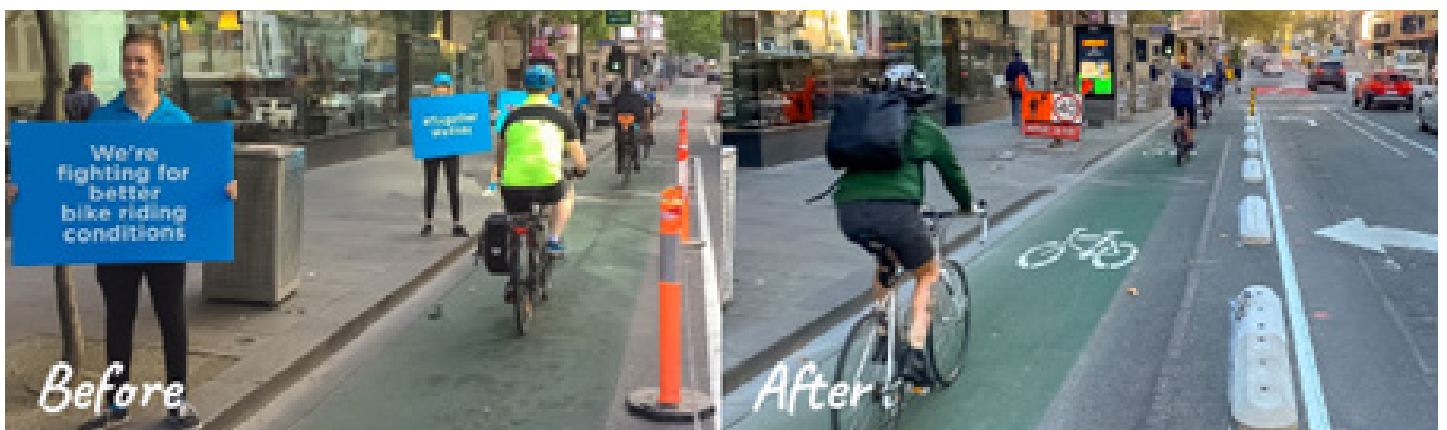
While there are several reasons why people don't consider riding for transport, the most common reason cited by far is safety. The recent 2021 National Cycling Survey² asked Tasmanians about their interest in riding and infrastructure.

- Not interested in riding: 43%
- Interested in riding, but not with traffic: 40%
- Currently ride but are cautious to avoid traffic: 15%
- Ride and are not worried about traffic: 2%

The same survey found that 43.8% of Tasmanians had ridden a bike in the previous year which is a big increase on the roughly one-third of people who had ridden in the 2019 survey. Between the two surveys, the COVID-19 pandemic hit and one of the benefits of lockdowns and restrictions was that it saw more people buy or fix existing bikes.

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 strategy that aims to add 40 km of separated cycleways to its network over two years.³

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.





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.

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. Launceston has developed a network operating plan and needs to now determine where its separated cycleways will go, while Hobart is working on a central precincts plan and Metro Plan for greater Hobart which should determine which roads are suitable to build separated cycleways.

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.

Direction and funding from the state government would be useful to 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 NSW⁴, VicRoads⁵ and Department of Main Roads and Transport Queensland⁶.

Financial year	2021-22 (\$m)	2022-23 (\$m)	2023-24 (\$m)	2024-25 (\$m)	TOTAL (\$m)
Budget impact	10.8	11	12	11.4	44.4



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.

Financial year	2021-22 (\$m)	2022-23 (\$m)	2023-24 (\$m)	2024-25 (\$m)	TOTAL (\$m)
Budget impact	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1.0

Establish Ride2Work & Back on your Bike programs

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 2025
- establishment of bicycle fleets in state government workplaces.

Bicycle Network received a Healthy Tasmania grant in the recent funding round to deliver the Back on your Bike program. The program is aimed at adults who may not have ridden since they were children and so need tuition in riding skills and route selection to gain the confidence to ride more often.

The program is due to end in early 2023 and by then we aim to have a proven product in place that could be funded by the Department of Health or Sport and Recreation as an ongoing support for Tasmanians wanting to be more physically active and mentally healthy. If it does prove to be successful it would be a very low cost intervention to help currently inactive people be more active.

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Expand opportunities for cycling tourism

The government's ambition of Tasmania becoming known as the cycling state, as outlined in its 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.

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 publicly known 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.

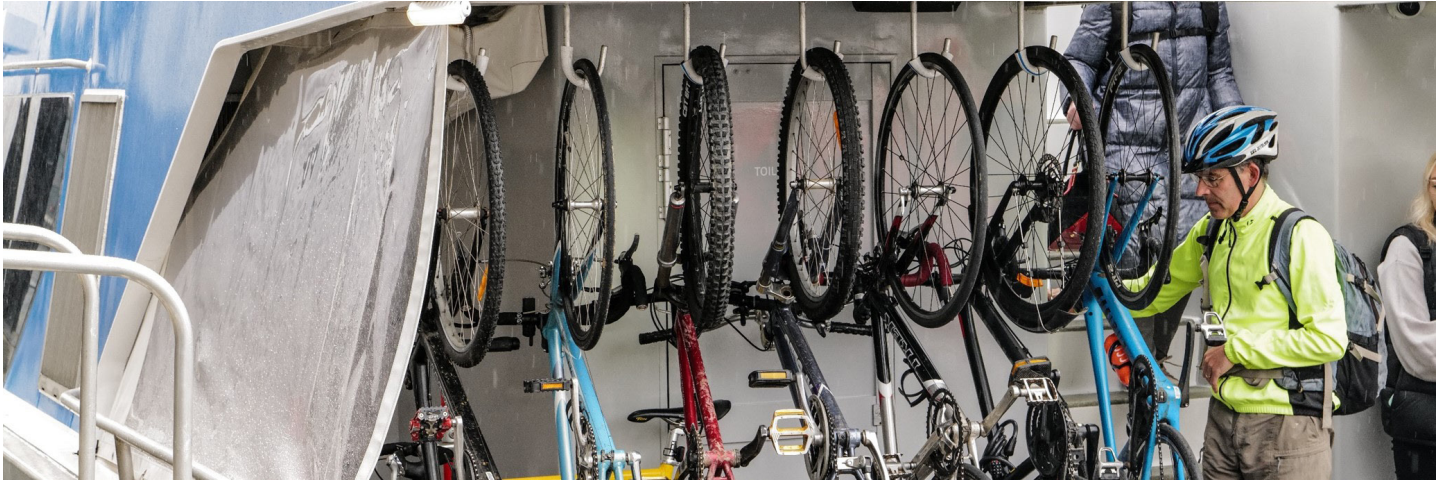
From New Norfolk to Maydena there are beautiful views of river and forest and plenty of opportunities to sample farm-gate and craft produce. A path from Granton to New Norfolk along the river would further cement the trip as a must-do for cycling tourists. Longer rail trails or paths have the added benefit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

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 tourism 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. It also fits in with the type of experiential tourism that Tourism Tasmania and Brand Tasmania have been pursuing.

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Increasing bus and ferry passenger catchments

Tasmania has little to no integrated transport connections for bicycle riders other than the trial ferry between Bellerive and Hobart. Buses that could carry bicycles 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.

By providing this integration, the government would open the possibility of public transport to a wider catchment of potential travellers.

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Budget impact	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1.0

References

- ¹ Washington, Heesch and Ng, E-bike Experience: Survey Study of Australian E-bike Users, Queensland University of Technology for the Queensland Government, 3 March 2020 and Marilyn Johnson and Geoff Rose, “Extending Life on the Bike: Electric Bike Use by Older Australians”, Journal of Transport and Health, Volume 2, Issue 2, June 2015, pp 276-283.
- ² C. Munro. National Walking and Cycling Participation Survey 2021, Cycling and Walking Australia and New Zealand, 2021.
- ³ <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/building-and-development/shaping-the-city/city-projects/Pages/new-bike-lanes.aspx>
- ⁴ <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2021/Cycleway-Design-Toolbox-Web.pdf>
- ⁵ <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>
- ⁶ <https://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/business-industry/Technical-standards-publications/Cycling-guidelines>



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