



**BICYCLE  
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*We've got your back.*

# BACKING THE BIKE

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2022 FEDERAL ELECTION POLICY PAPER



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**Position:** Research and Policy Advisor

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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

Bicycle Network is one of the leading 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
- being a key national spokesperson on issues related to cycling and physical activity

Bicycle Network is ready to assist the Commonwealth Government in scoping and targeting achievable outcomes for bike riding and other forms of active travel. If you need our help to build bike rider patronage in Australia, please contact us.

## Dr Nicholas Hunter

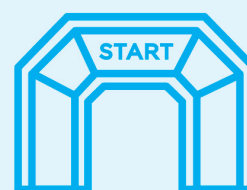
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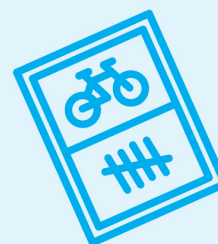
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**Nearly 50,000 members**



**150,000 event participants since 2012**



**Providing bike services to 125 councils and shires**



**Providing parking for over 2250 bike riders each day**



**Promoting active travel at over 1800 schools since 2007**

# Why is it time to back the bike?

Over **10.3 million** Australians ride a bike during the year<sup>1</sup>. Recently, however, bike enthusiasm has soared to new heights, with up to **270 per cent growth** on shared paths in our capital cities<sup>2</sup>. The next step for Australia is turning these recreational riders to regular riders who use their bike for commuting and accessing services. But to do this, we have three hurdles to jump.

Firstly, we need to **re-frame bikes**. We must stop thinking of a bike as simply another transport option. A bike is the only vehicle that can simultaneously increase physical and mental wellbeing, reduce injuries and fatalities associated with high-impact road collisions, reduce carbon emissions and air pollution, decongest roads, 'calm' traffic and increase 'liveability', and reduce the cost of living for Australians. Increasing our national investment in active transport has a run-off effect that will positively influence many of the challenges that are likely to be addressed in this coming election (Fig. 1)

Secondly, we need to **action community concerns** about riding. A stigma remains regarding bike use, which in many cases is due to rider's fears of interacting with motor traffic<sup>3</sup>. Around 60 per cent of people in our capital cities are concerned about their safety on a bike, and this is recognised as a key barrier to uptake amongst women<sup>4,5</sup>.

We need to show that national efforts are being made to protect riders through a combination of legislation and infrastructure. There should be no discrimination in our provisions, our efforts should equally target children, women, older people, competitive riders, and the delivery riders in our growing gig economy.

Thirdly, we need to **make stronger investments**. These should be focused and concordant with our goals of increasing active travel, they should not be delivered supplementary to existing road projects. Not only is bike infrastructure cheap compared to road and rail upgrades, the associated health and cost benefits are often overlooked<sup>6,7</sup>. In Australia, investments that promote shifts to active travel may incur health and costs benefits between \$0.62-1.46 per km for the individual<sup>6,8</sup>.



To boost active travel, our spend should start at a minimum \$20 per head of the population, an amount that is not going to break the transport budget. **For the cost of a single Uber trip, we can provide facilities for bike riders to make as many trips as they choose.**

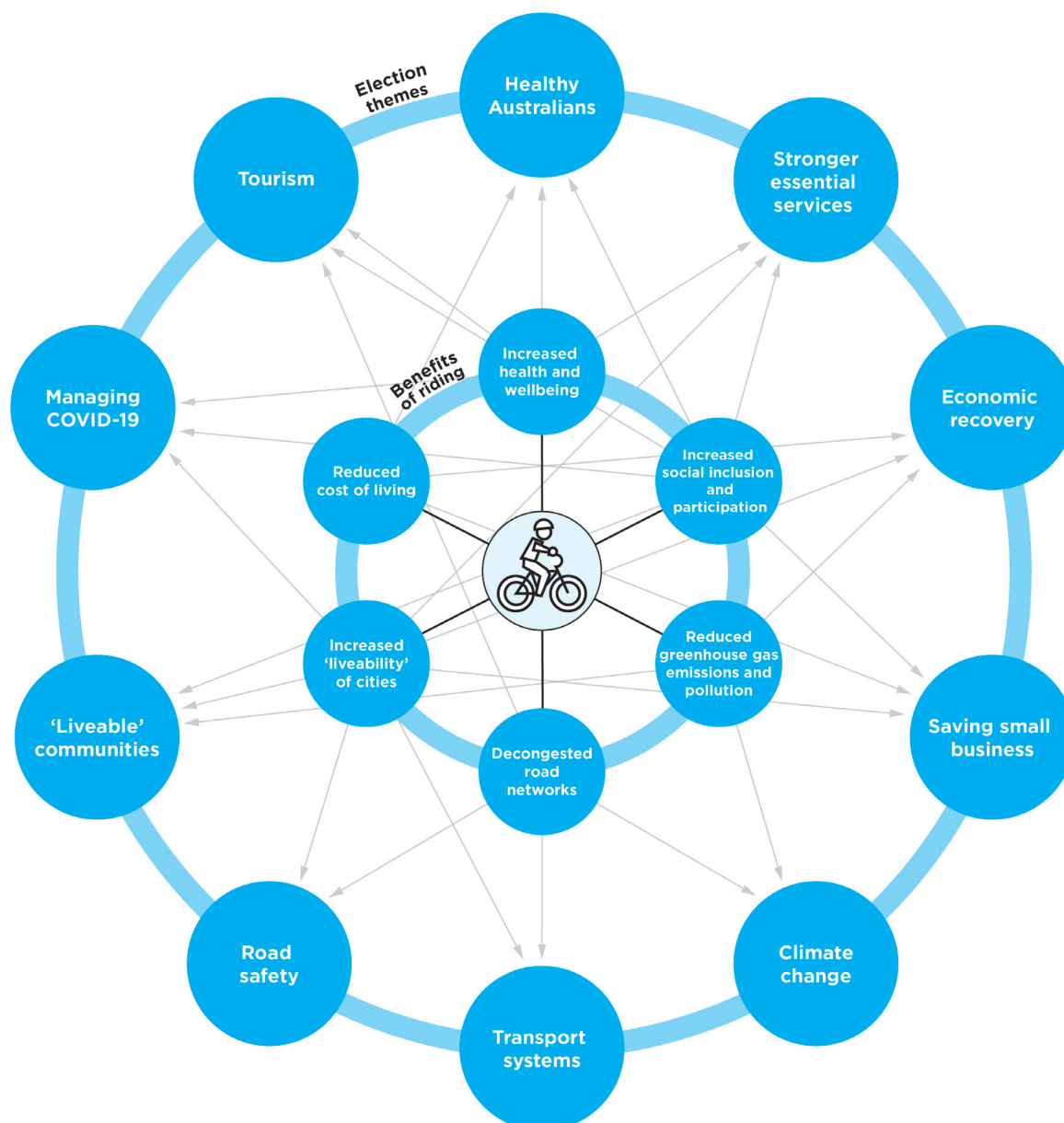
This would bring us within reasonable proximity to the recommended £20 (\$AU35) per head in the United Kingdom<sup>9</sup>, and the average spend of £24 (\$AU43) per head in the Netherlands<sup>9</sup>.

We understand that a bike does not suit every individual's way of life. However, a

substantial push towards better active travel options will have a profound impact across a range of health, economic, and environmental challenges we face (Fig. 1).

The five policies Bicycle Network has outlined in this document represent the key commitments that will not only support Australia's existing bike riding population but will ensure that we can achieve a strong balance of societal benefits and investment returns into the future.

### HOW BIKES CAN INFLUENCE OUR UPCOMING ELECTION



**Figure 1** - The benefits of riding a bike (inner circle), and their connections with the key political challenges facing Australia (outer circle).

# Five commitments to support a bike future

**An active transport budget**

**Positive provisioning for active travel**

**Behaviour change programs for young people**

**A national bike incentive scheme**

**Safer road vehicles**

Bicycle Network has shortlisted five policies that we believe all election candidates should commit to. These recommendations are the critical step forward for advancing Australia's active transport future, providing support for people of all levels of bike experience, and encouraging those who are not yet participating.

Our five commitment recommendations are a means of leveraging the increased enthusiasm for bike riding that is prevalent across Australia, and stimulating long term health, economic and environmental benefits.

These are simple, focussed and achievable. Bicycle Network is calling on candidates to show their commitment to these policies if they are to secure the vote of active travellers.



# 1. An active transport budget

## The key ask

**Allocate 5 per cent of the 2022/23 federal transport budget to active travel projects, followed by increases of 2.5 per cent for subsequent fiscal years**

## Why?

To better connect our cities with healthy and sustainable transport options, we need a clear monetary commitment from the Federal Government. Up to 40 per cent of Australians already use a bike, be it for leisure or getting around. Our population already has the skills and motivation to ride a bike. Now is the time to get serious about laying down the path for them.

A 5 per cent budget allocation for active travel is not unreasonable. The United Nations recommends a 20 per cent budget allocation to fund walking and bike riding projects<sup>10</sup>. In 2020, the UK announced a six-fold increase in allocated funding for walking and bike projects<sup>11</sup>. It is time for Australia to match international efforts.

## The finer detail

- 1.1** Allocate 5 per cent of the federal transport budget to fund key bike projects, followed by incremental increases of 2.5 per cent in subsequent fiscal years
- 1.2** Work with state governments to develop a national bike strategy to increase the uptake of people riding bikes backed by a fully funded action plan and achievable growth targets. The strategy should:
  - Identify demographics where bike riding uptake is low (e.g. females, older adults) and develop appropriate strategies for growth
- 1.4** Introduce a grants program for local/state governments to build suburban bike networks that allow safe, short-distance trips within and between suburbs
- 1.5** Instruct the Productivity Commission to conduct inquiries into social cost benefit analyses and investment risks for active travel infrastructure, which considers both mortality and morbidity changes resulting from long term active travel lifestyle
- 1.6** Commit to clearer and more consistent reporting of active travel budget allocations and spending



## 2. Positive provisioning for active travel

### The key ask

**Introduce mandatory requirements that all federally funded transport projects must provide infrastructure and facilities for active travel**

### Why?

It is becoming increasingly important to recognise that people who ride bikes are legitimate road users. For this reason, the inclusion of active travel options in future transport investments must be a condition rather than a consideration.

‘Positive provisioning’ is the commonly used term for framing active travel modes as mandatory components in current and future road projects, as opposed to separate or subsidiary projects.

When building for bikes, it’s also not about the number of kilometres of bike lane we lay down. To encourage new riders and promote gender and age equity, emphasis should be placed on the **type** of bike facilities (e.g. protected lanes separated from traffic), and the **location** thereof (e.g. connecting with goods and services).

These are simple but extremely important steps that ensures active travel is prioritised across our growing cities.

### The finer detail

- 2.1** Commit to placing active travel infrastructure as an integral component of current and future road projects
- 2.2** Prioritise purpose-built infrastructure (e.g. separated bike lanes) that protects riders and other vulnerable road users from parked vehicles and moving motor traffic
- 2.3** Amend the Building Code of Australia to include provision and specifications for end-of-trip facilities
- 2.4** Work with independent authorities, such as Infrastructure Australia and Cycling and Walking Australia and New Zealand (CWANZ), to develop active travel-inclusive protocols for establishing new road projects





## 3. Behaviour change for young people

### The key ask

**Allocate \$20m per fiscal year for behaviour change programs that provide young people with bike education, safety training, and skill development**

### Why?

Behaviour change programs are integral to a well-rounded national bike strategy. They motivate participants by increasing their skills, easing their concerns, and highlighting the advantages of participating.

Many young people currently use bikes for recreation, but do not ride for transport purposes, such as school travel. Moreover, they do not learn important road safety behaviours in a controlled environment.

By providing bike education at a young age, we can foster a generation of Australians that are familiarised with the diverse benefits of active travel, and are motivated to enjoy an active travel lifestyle as they approach adulthood.

### The finer detail

- 3.1** Allocate \$20m per fiscal year for behaviour change programs that provide young people with bike education, safety training, and skill development. These may include:
  - Ride2School, a long-term active school travel program
  - Road.Ready, a road safety education program
  - Mind.Body.Pedal, a bike education program that empowers young females
- 3.2** Allocate a nominal percentage of the national sport and recreation budget per fiscal year to fund pilot programs that aim to increase bike riding participation. These may include:
  - 'Open Streets', where road spaces are temporarily prioritised for active travel and recreation
  - 'Ride2Uni', 'Back On Your Bike' and other confidence-building bike courses



## 4. A national bike incentive scheme

### The key ask

**Introduce a national bike subsidy scheme, offering a 30 per cent rebate for bikes, e-bikes or cargo bikes that are purchased for work transport purposes.**

### Why?

If we are serious about getting people riding, let's put down an incentive. Many state governments are already announcing subsidies, stamp duty waivers, zero-interest loans, and other financial incentives for the purchase of electric vehicles. While this is a positive step towards more sustainable transport options, it does not solve the road congestion issues affecting our cities. There is where a co-existing bike subsidy scheme is important. To become a bike riding nation, and to reap the maximum economic and sustainability benefits, we need to build a bike fleet. For many Australians the barrier to riding a bike is, quite simply, the price.

A small spend could offer a great impact. A \$75 million package with rebates capped at \$1500 will provide 50,000 Australians with a bike, and potentially double the number of bike-based work commutes every two years.

An Australian bike subsidy scheme can be easily developed from successful incentive program models in Sweden, Germany, Austria, and the UK, which have demonstrated increased rates of active travel, reduced rates of transport-related emissions, and increased participation from new female riders.

### The finer detail

- 4.1 Introduce a national bike subsidy scheme, offering a 30 per cent rebate (capped by household income and purchase price) for bikes, e-bikes or cargo bikes that are purchased for work transport purposes
- 4.2 Introduce a tax deduction incentive for trips to and from work that are made by bike
- 4.3 Instruct the Productivity Commission to conduct an inquiry into social cost benefit analyses and investment risks associated with increased active travel
- 4.4 Offer fringe tax benefit exemptions for employers that offer salary sacrifice packages for bikes
- 4.5 Remove tariffs on imported e-bikes



## 5. Safer road vehicles

### The key ask

**Match the European Union's General Safety Regulation (GSR) for vehicle safety requirements**

### Why?

Each year, 36 Australians on average die whilst riding a bike, a figure that has not changed in 20 years. Approximately 23 per cent of the fatalities in an average year involve a heavy vehicle. The message is clear: we are yet to achieve a best practice for bike safety.

This is where advancing our vehicle safety standards can play a big role. The European Union's recently revised General Safety Regulation (GSR) includes up-to-date legislation on safety measures for new cars, including autonomous emergency braking, driver monitoring, lane keep assist, cyclist enlarged head impact zone. For trucks, this includes blind spot detection systems, and direct vision standard-compliant windows.

Bicycle Network are calling for the incoming government to match the GSR to ensure that road users in Australia will get home safely.

### The finer detail

- 5.1** Match the European Union's General Safety Regulation (GSR) for vehicle safety requirements
- 5.2** Work with the Australasian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP) to improve assessment protocols for vulnerable road user (VRU) protection
- 5.3** Amend Australian Design Rules (ADR) to expedite the adoption of exit warning technology in new vehicles
- 5.4** Harmonise Australian Design Rules for freight vehicles with those of the United Nations, specifically by advancing the compulsory fitting of blind spot information systems and side underrun protection for new goods vehicles and trailers over 4.5 tonnes GVM.
- 5.5** Set a benchmark Used Car Safety Ratings (USCR) score that determines which used models may be re-sold in Australia
- 5.6** Continue and increase funding allocations to the Heavy Vehicle Safety Initiative (HVSII) program
- 5.7** Instruct the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE) to expand the Australian Road Deaths Database (ARDD) by making detailed fatal crash characteristics available as open data

# References

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