

**BICYCLE
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SET AN ACTIVE TRANSPORT TARGET

FEEDBACK ON VICTORIA'S EMISSIONS
REDUCTION TARGETS 2035

MAY 2022



Introduction

[Victoria's Climate Science Report 2019](#) has laid out dire environmental warnings for the state's future. Under existing climate projections, Victoria can expect declines in snowfall, intense downpours, rising sea levels, increased average annual temperatures, and 60 per cent more days classified as 'very high fire danger'.

We urgently need to change our societal view of climate change from an inconvenience to an existential threat. As the Victorian Government's [Emissions Target Issues](#) paper highlights, there is a near 1:1 relationship between CO₂ emissions and the global warming these emissions cause. Any and all forms of decarbonisation are a benefit to society.

In their [Climate Change Strategy 2021-2030](#), the Victorian Government hinted at a commitment to make **25 per cent** of all trips either by foot or bike by 2025 (page 39). The commitment was echoed in the state's [Climate Change Strategy Economic Analysis](#). Whether or not this commitment was intended to be a formal target is never made clear in those documents.

Upon reviewing the Victorian Government's recent [Emissions Target Issues](#) paper, however, we noted that this commitment is now absent. What is the fate of the Victorian Government's active transport pledge, and can we still expect it to be acted upon?

Our feedback

We note that no Australian States or Territories have hitherto set an emissions reduction target for 2035, and Victoria can be praised for being proactive in their frameworks and acknowledging the urgency of climate action.

We also acknowledge Victoria's ambitious aim to reduce the state's emissions from 2005 levels by 45-50 per cent by the year 2030, which is on par with targets set by the United States and the European Union, and almost double the national 2030 target of 28 per cent. We acknowledge and support Victoria's equally ambitious target of net-zero emissions by 2035.

However, a lack of clear commitment to setting active travel targets would be a massive oversight in the current plan. In the emission reduction pledges outlined in the framework, there is no mention of Victoria's pledge to boost active transport, hinted at in the Climate Change Strategy 2021-2030.

Our key feedback is, quite simply, **set the active transport target**.

There exists a wealth of literature that demonstrates the decarbonisation impacts that are likely to come with increased bike use (as an alternative to vehicle use). When people opt for bike trips instead of vehicle trips there is no expenditure from the carbon budget. Less motor vehicles on the road has an effect on not only the state's carbon footprint but also traffic density, noise pollution, road safety, and community health and wellbeing.

The economic opportunities for active transport must also be acknowledged, which we note the Independent Expert Panel are required to consider. In Australia, investments that promote shifts to active travel may incur health and cost benefits between \$0.62-1.46 per km for the individual^{1,2}. Why ignore a clear environmental and economic benefit?

If the Victorian Government wants to get serious about reducing transport-related emissions, **set the active transport target**. Formally commit that 25 per cent of **transport-related** trips will be made by foot, bike or other active transport modes by 2025. Build a strategy and action plan that outlines how this will be achieved and how, like the state's emissions targets, this trip percentage target will be increased into the future.

No targets, no investment, no change

The Victorian Government can, quite rightly, acknowledge its commitment to building 250 kilometres of walking and riding paths. But in reality this is not enough action, and it is nowhere near commensurate with the funding allocated for other forms of transport.

In the next fiscal year, the Victorian Government will invest a mere \$21 million for active transport projects across the state. This is just **1 per cent** of what was invested in the Mickelham Road upgrade, a single piece of road.

¹ Mulley, C., Tyson, R., McCue, P., Rissel, C. & Munro, C. Valuing active travel: Including the health benefits of sustainable transport in transportation appraisal frameworks. *Research in Transportation Business & Management* 7, 27-34, doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rtbm.2013.01.001> (2013).

² Zapata-Diomedes, B., Gunn, L., Giles-Corti, B., Shiell, A. & Veerman, J. L. A method for the inclusion of physical activity-related health benefits in cost-benefit analysis of built environment initiatives. *Preventive medicine* 106, 224-230 (2018).

The paucity of funding suggests that Victoria still lacks the political will to properly invest in a bike network, let alone commit to support existing infrastructure. Melbourne is facing a heated debate around its city bike lanes. This debate focusses almost entirely on the inconvenience faced by vehicle users. While many of the oppositional arguments have been shown to be baseless, an important discussion point that is seldom acknowledged is that these bike lanes are massive decarbonisation prospects that are ready to be fully leveraged by the Victorian community, but unfortunately face rebuke and derision by a misinformed but vocal minority.

We need to make active transport a salient part of the Victorian climate strategy. We need our Victorian leaders to stand up, show support and promote the value of bike lanes as much as we do for electric vehicles. To encourage Victorians to swap motor vehicles for bikes whenever and wherever they can. The Victorian Government can play a promising role in steering this paradigm shift.

An active transport target, strategy, and action plan will mean that the state is making a concerted effort to not only build a well-connected bike network but also motivate new riders, encourage them to change their riding purpose from occasional recreation to regular commuter travel.

If the Victorian Government wants to get serious about making the transport sector sustainable, **set the active transport target**. This target will set the standard for more responsible active transport funding, and for sustainable transport to be a staple of future planning.

Bicycle Network recommends

Commit to a target that 25 per cent of transport-related trips be made by foot or bicycle by 2025

Increase this target by a nominal percentage between 2026-2035.

Who we are

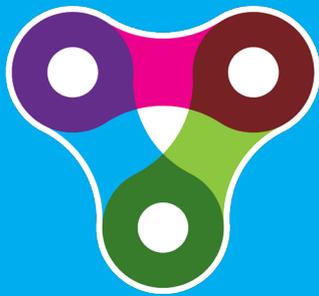
With nearly 50,000 members, [Bicycle Network](#) is one of the top five member-based bike riding organisations in the world. We are committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all Australians by making it easier for people to ride a bike.

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 is committed to improving the safety of heavy vehicles in Australia. Our 'Swapping Seats' campaign, commissioned by Rail Projects Victoria and supported by the Metro Tunnel Project, offers free public activations for people riding bikes to increase their safety knowledge about riding with heavy vehicles.



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We've got your back.