

BERNADETTE THOMAS - WESTERN METRO

What is your view regarding the current active transport infrastructure in your electorate?

The western suburbs of Melbourne lacks safe, separated bike infrastructure. As someone who relies on their bike for most of my transport needs, it's incredibly frustrating not to have the level of safe infrastructure that is provided to other types of transport.

Because I am a cyclist, I'm acutely aware of the gaps in the network, and issues of safety for vulnerable road users, and the inevitability of conflict where incompatible road users are forced to occupy the same space.

The west has many dangerous streets, high-volume roads, truck routes, and long distances between residential areas and employment, shopping, and education precincts. Many streetscapes and neighbourhoods are not conducive to walking and cycling, and people are being forced into private vehicle use, even when it is not their first preference.

A quick glance at a cycling map shows the density of cycling lanes across the west is significantly lower when compared to other parts of the city. Even where lanes do exist, they are not safe, separated, and suitable. Chronic historical underfunding for active transport and an integrated transport and infrastructure approach, that helps get people to public transport and key local amenities, is leaving the west at the mercy of fuel and time poverty.

Recent research¹ by Lauren Pearson shows there is incredibly high demand for cycling in the inner west in particular. Increasing numbers of people are walking or riding around our local communities and many more would do so if they feel safe. Safe, separated, suitable bike infrastructure will help make riding a bike safe for everyone.

What actions will you take to improve active transport in your electorate?

I will work collaboratively with local cycling, active transport, and community groups who advocate for liveable neighbourhoods and streetscapes. The Victorian Greens have committed \$2.5 billion dollars over the next four years to implement a 'Big Bike Build'. I will advocate for significant investment in areas of the west where there are significant and strategic opportunities to improve bike riding infrastructure. I'm a member of BikeWest and Bicycle Network Victoria and would closely with these groups to promote safe bike riding in the west.

¹https://www.researchgate.net/publication/356419588_The_potential_for_bike_riding_across_entire_cities_Quantifying_spatial_variation_in_interest_in_bike_riding

I want to ensure active transport is valued and understood by the community and decision-makers. I will support our communities to work together to ensure all forms of transport have equally safe infrastructure provided by government. Those whose work, family, or other commitments stops them from using a bike as a means of transport, can participate by promoting integrated transport solutions that allows all our citizens to choose safe and effective active ways to travel across the west.

Active transport spending at the state level is less than 2 per cent. In your view, what is a 'fair spend' for active transport?

The Victorian Greens have committed \$2.5 billion dollars over the next four years to implement a 'Big Bike Build' with hundreds of kilometres of safe and separated bike superhighways and more safe pedestrian crossings, upgraded footpaths and walkable neighbourhoods across the state.

With transport as Victoria's biggest growing source of emissions, governments must do more to support people to make the switch to climate-friendly transport like bike riding and walking.

The Greens' plan would move Victoria towards the goal of active transport funding being 10 - 20 per cent of transport capital funding as recommended by the United Nations.

As part of the power sharing government in Ireland, the Greens have increased active transport funding to 20 per cent, while in Scotland they have increased it to 10 per cent and here in Victoria we should be aiming for the same.

Find out more:

<https://greens.org.au/vic/platform/transport>

<https://greens.org.au/vic/platform/transport#safer-bike-lanes>

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