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Dr Iris Bergmann
Candidate for the Macedon District

Animal Justice Party



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RESPONSE:

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

In the Macedon District of the Northern Victoria Region, where I am the lower house candidate for the Animal Justice Party, we are fortunate enough to have a very active Transport Action Group (TAG, an action group of the Macedon Ranges Sustainability Group) promoting active transport. They have developed a vision for active transport which I fully support (for more detail see their resource at <https://mrsq.org.au/sustainable-transport>). But importantly, our interest is also to enhance their vision and integrate the needs of animals, for companion animals and in particular wildlife, with infrastructure such as wildlife over- and underpasses, canopy connections, warning and visibility tools and methods, and more.

Overall, the Animal Justice Party recognises the immense negative impacts of our current transport system on human health, climate change and biodiversity crisis due to wildlife deaths and habitat fragmentation. We need a radical shift away from private vehicles and towards other modes including mass transport and active transport. In order to accomplish this, adequate investment must be made to support this shift across Victoria. With regards to active transport, we recognise that lack of dedicated infrastructure is one of the largest barriers to this mode shift and this needs to be addressed.

If elected, I will work to bring these visions to reality, for the health of animals, people and planet. We see active transport as an important dimension to address the climate and biodiversity crises.

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

I have already taken action together with concerned residents on the eastern side of the Macedon Ranges, battling the arduous bureaucratic path to install speed limits to protect wildlife, pedestrians, cyclists and other active road users. This is on dirt roads which currently allow a speed of 100 km/hr. Wildlife is regularly killed on these roads. This is a great tragedy in particular also because this is around farming areas which have been rewilded and which are connected with landcare and land for wildlife initiatives. These rewilded areas now have brought wildlife back, but the animals have nowhere to go without risking death when traversing roads while moving along their stretches and patches of habitat.

If elected, I will expand this collaboration with residents and TAG across the entire Macedon District with the aim to bring roadkill down to zero, in rural and build-up areas. I will work closely with the TAG to improve infrastructure, mindsets and healthy living for all, for nonhuman animals and humans alike.

Moreover, the Animal Justice Party will work with the successful government and advocate for this urgent shift away from car travel by investing in additional cycling and pedestrian infrastructure in the Northern Victoria Region and the Macedon District in particular, promoting the strategy outlined by the TAG, and bringing in speed limits across the district to protect wildlife.



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

A spending of 2 per cent is certainly not sufficient. The Animal Justice Party suggests that for active transport infrastructure, the dollar amount of the spend should be based on a targeted mode-shift as opposed to the current rate of bicycle and pedestrian transport. In order for active transport to be a viable option for a majority, it needs to reach parity for positive outcomes with other modes by making these options safer and more convenient. I would certainly like to see more investment by the Victorian Government in active transport methods to create a better system for people and our climate.