



Bicycle NSW Policy Recommendations in lead up to 2007 State Election and beyond

This document outlines the policy expectations Bicycle NSW has of government in relation to cycling, in the lead up to the NSW State Election on 24 March 2007 and beyond.

Cycling is one of the most healthy, affordable and ecologically sustainable forms of transport available. It has the potential to significantly improve the quality of life in our towns & cities, community health, the environment and generate sustainable economic benefit. However, this potential remains largely unrealised in the state of New South Wales, where shortfalls in management and coordination between arms of government has held up progress.

Delivery of the broad based community benefits of cycling requires a coordinated and planned approach to infrastructure development (invariably across land owned by a wide range of stakeholders) and programs encouraging behaviour change.

Cycling requires a 'whole of government' approach and Bicycle NSW has been advocating for some time that to be effective, the NSW Government needs to adopt this thinking.

Executive Summary

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1. Whole of Government: Encourage 'joined up' thinking with government to address the cross cutting opportunities related to cycling

Cycling is an activity that relates to and encompasses many areas of government interest. This requires strong inter-government links between government agencies and departments at a local, state and federal level, and effective integration into the *NSW State Plan* and *Sydney Metropolitan strategies* – including the *City Centre Plans*. The government needs to effectively manage and leverage 'cross cutting' issues through the practice of 'joined up' thinking.

Bicycle NSW recommends strong leadership from the NSW government in the form of public endorsement of cycling, coupled with the appropriate SES (Senior Executive Service) position in each agency to have specified cycling responsibilities added to their duty statement and section corporate plan. The relevant agencies include the RTA, Transport, Health, Environment, Local Government, Planning, NSW Police, Sport and Recreation, Education, Tourism, National Parks and Regional Development.

Bicycle NSW applauds the Premier's endorsement of the whole of government approach as outlined in our response to the *Draft NSW State Plan*, and also strongly endorses the *City of Sydney Cycle Strategy & Master Plan 2006-2016*, in particular the focus on liveability and sustainability.

Bicycle NSW recommends a strengthening and expansion of the role of the Bicycle Advisory Council (BAC), including representation from a broader range of relevant government agencies and departments. In this respect, we recommend the formation of stronger links between the BAC and the Premiers Council for Active Living NSW (PCAL). This will provide broad based support and coordination to program planning and implementation, and effectively steward any changes required in the legislative framework.

To support this, Bicycle NSW will continue to maintain dialogue across federal, state and local government agencies, foster strong relationships in NSW communities, and build relationships with the business sector.

2. Climate Change: Support community interest in sustainable transport options

Climate change is very real. Any rational government is morally and ethically bound, to do all that it reasonably can, to reduce green house gas emissions and reach its targets for air quality. Riding a bicycle is an important action that individuals can take to contribute to a reduction in greenhouse gases.

Australian Greenhouse Office (AGO) data for every 1km cycled that normally would be travelled by private vehicle there is a saving of 0.00033 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions. It therefore follows that shifting people from cars to bicycle transport will have a material impact on greenhouse gas emissions. Providing infrastructure and encouragement to ride to work (as detailed in Transport point) is one of the most important examples of this shift, ride to school is another.

3. Transport: Implement a co-ordinated approach to infrastructure provision and behaviour change

The government has a responsibility to help make cycling a more viable travel solution, by improving facilities for cyclists and making it safer to cycle. There are more bicycles sold each year (approx. 1.2 million) than motor vehicles (less than 1 million), with half of Sydney households owning a bike. The RTA Bicycle Count data shows a 45% increase in bicycle traffic between 2002 and 2005 into Sydney CBD.

Strong leadership by the State government is needed, along with continued investment for infrastructure, in working with local & federal governments and other partners to create links to existing cycleways and to build cycleways in areas of emerging demand, especially in the State's major centres of employment and along key transport corridors.

An example of a key corridor is the Parramatta CBD to Sydney CBD, where there is a prime opportunity to leverage assets and join missing links between residential development plans and employment centres detailed in the Metro Strategy, and existing infrastructure, such as Sydney Olympic Park (where the Portfolio Partners Spring Cycle event finishes each year).

The improvement of cycling infrastructure also needs to be linked with behaviour change programs in the community such as Ride To Work and other cycling programs, where industry, government and the community come together to encourage commuting by bicycle.

Delivering a shift to bicycle transport provides benefits to all road users by reducing transport congestion, particularly during peak hour commuting times when capacity management of the transport network is at its most critical.

Government policy for all transport infrastructure (road, rail or public transport) should properly reflect the opportunities presented by cycling infrastructure, which is relatively inexpensive to build and maintain. This should apply to all new transport projects or upgrades, regardless of mode.

In addition, there should be provision for carriage of bicycles on public transport with appropriate consultation of relevant groups, for example, State Rail should ensure that adequate provision for the transportation of bicycles takes place in the design on the new CityRail carriages.

As an example, Bicycle NSW recommends that the Sutherland Cronulla Rail Duplication Project should be classified as a Regional Transport Route and that the upgrade work should include the construction of suitable cycling facilities, when the cost impact will be minimised.

4. Health: Delivery of material reductions in future government spending on the health system

Sound financial management is a critical task of government, and for the NSW Government management of the health budget plays an important part in this. Chronic disease prevention is a key issue facing governments across the developed world, as the rates of obesity, heart disease, depression, diabetes and other conditions attest.

Regular physical activity, such as cycling, has been proven to play a central role in the prevention and management of these and other conditions. Cycling has a real potential to help reverse the childhood obesity epidemic. It is essential to provide infrastructure and social programs that encourage children to be more active by riding to school.

It follows that a financially responsible government should invest in infrastructure and social programs to encouraging cycling, as many other governments around the World and throughout Australia already do.

5. Education: Encourage cycling from an early age

Bicycle NSW would like to see the establishment, of schools and tertiary education cycling programs, encouraging students to cycle to the place of learning. A behaviour change program, in conjunction with targeted infrastructure projects and road user education can measurably increase the number and proportion of trips to school on foot and by bicycle. We applaud the activities in Victoria around the Ride2School program initiative.

In addition, education and training of those involved in the planning and implementation of infrastructure, including RTA Traffic engineers, local council engineers and the police, will ensure a better understanding across the state.

6. Tourism & Regional Economic Development: Accelerate the funding and implementation of infrastructure projects that will benefit regional development in terms of economy and tourism

Cycle-tourism is a growing industry globally with potential for significant economic benefit, and infrastructure is key to realising these opportunities.

Rail Trails have been very successful and popular in Victoria, which could be emulated in NSW. Recent research has found that rail trail riders spend on average \$258 per day when they visit trails. The study also confirms that Rail Trails bring jobs to local communities, for example, the Bright-Wangaratta trail over the Easter weekend of 2006, brought \$2.3M to the local economy and created the equivalent of 21 full time jobs.

The land needs to be released and Rail Trail projects funded and implemented. The Riverina Highlands Rail Trails project and the international award winning Fernleigh Track in the Lower Hunter region, encompassing Lake Macquarie and Newcastle, are good examples of such developments and have the full support of Bicycle NSW.

Continued and increased support of the NSW Coastline Cycleway program, currently administered by the Department of Planning, is needed. This program aims to achieve a continuous cycleway from Queensland to the Victorian border by 2012, linking all coastal cities, towns and important resorts in order to provide for commuting, local recreation and international tourism. Significant opportunities exist to coordinate with regional development strategies, and a stand out opportunity exists in respect of the far north coast region.

The NSW Big Ride is an annual regional cycle touring event, which has the potential for considerable growth and subsequent possible creation of additional events to give greater level of frequency and reach in regional coverage.

The government should continue and expand support for bicycle related events.

7. Community: Fund and initiate a research driven approach to improving attitudes and behaviour of all road users

The road is there to share and a greater level understanding of attitudes among all road users is needed to guide the development of effective community education programs and appropriate changes to the legislative framework.

Bicycle NSW and the RTA's Bicycle Advisory Council (BAC) support in principal the Community Roadwatch Scheme as an opportunity to help curb anti-social behaviour on public roads.

Bicycle NSW supports the NSW Police Service Cycling Program. Police riding bicycles assists crime prevention, strengthens community relations and promotes cycling within the broader community.

8. Sport & Recreation: Introduce effective planning and coordination of land use to provide increased infrastructure for sport, leisure and recreation

Bicycle NSW applauds the statement in the *NSW State Plan* of 'More people using parks, sporting and recreational facilities and participating in the arts and cultural activity', which details the goal for access to parks for recreational purposes.

9. Treasury & the Economy: Support the key health and environment policies of the National Reform Agenda

The bicycle business is big business with more bikes than cars sold in Australia each year.

For its part, the Federal government has already recognised the importance of cycling in its *Sustainable Cities* report of 2005. Cycling has a key role to play in the liveability and sustainability of our cities and communities which are critical to maintaining Australia's economic performance. The latest round in the *National Reform Agenda* brings focus to the human capital and environmental outcomes as requirements for the future competitiveness of the Australian economy in a global context. At a time when the NSW economy lags behind the rest of the country, cycling is all the more relevant.

Corporate Social Responsibility is increasingly important for corporations, with greater focus on the triple-bottom-line of economic, social and environmental considerations. By introducing cycling programs, employers can encourage more staff to cycle to the place of employment and reap the benefits with healthier, happier employees. However, to facilitate an increase in the number of people cycling to their places of employment, along with the improvement of cycling infrastructure, the community needs some form of education (e.g. bicycle maintenance, cycling basics).

Bicycle NSW supports the findings of a Senate Committee Report '*Australia's future oil supply and alternative transport fuels*', calling on changes to the tax system to remove the distortions that favour car use over public transport or cycling.

10. Planning: Implement the NSW Bike Plan 2010 with a focus on allocation of resource to areas of emerging and 'latent' demand

Published in September 1999, *NSW Bike Plan 2010* outlines the NSW Government's plan of providing a series of regional cycle routes throughout the state over a 10 year period. However with only 3 years remaining, these plans need to be implemented.

Work should begin on the Bike Plan for the next 10 years to meet future needs, including appraisal of rapidly emerging demand. A more dynamic plan should be employed, bearing in mind the increased population coverage and density of the regional network and the significant changes in planning policies and approach as outlined in the *State Plan*, the *Metropolitan Strategies* and the *City Centre Plans*. Reference also needs to be made to the *Australian National Cycling Strategy 2005-2010*.

Demographic, economic and environmental factors of change and shifts in community attitudes towards active transport, point to the need for rapid completion of the 'missing links' in infrastructure, particularly in areas close to centres of employment. Specific planning and development requirements need to be included in sub-regional, city centre and local plans with funds allocated to better reflect emerging realities and serve this 'latent' demand.

To achieve this, a comprehensive approach to integrated land use, transport and road planning for all road users should be adopted. In addition, for any new developments or large redevelopment sites, regulations should be enforced with regards to improvement of existing transport and road infrastructure, for example, to incorporate cycling pathways / routes, enhance roads to encourage cycling, and to provide high quality end-of-trip facilities for cyclists.

In addition, commitment is needed for each piece (or grouping) of infrastructure to have a target, with a base level associated with the target. To achieve and attract cyclists to new routes, infrastructure will need to be safe and coupled with social initiatives to encourage people to ride.

11. Government Accountability: Planning and management of progress to ensure the whole community shares in the benefits of cycling

The NSW Government needs to clearly articulate concrete plans, priorities and milestones together with the necessary commitment of resources to bring significant initiatives in infrastructure and behaviour change to support growth in cycling. Importantly this will ensure a high degree of government accountability. To that end, Bicycle NSW is committed to doing what it can to contribute to the development and oversight of these plans.

What specific actions is the Board of Bicycle NSW asking for?

The above policy recommendations are focused largely on providing input to the government on key elements critical in planning for cycling infrastructure. As an immediate indication of commitment to support these longer term capacity building measures, the Board of Bicycle NSW asks that the incoming NSW Government, following the March 24th State Election, also commit to the following two key actions:

- The reversal of the decision to scrap Bicycle Lanes in William Street
- The reversal of the decision to close sections of the M2 westbound cycleway between Lane Cove Road and Beecroft Road



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Bicycle New South Wales is a member-funded and -owned, not-for-profit peak community organisation established in 1976 as the Bicycle Institute of NSW, changing to its present name in 1994.

Bicycle NSW Mission

To promote, advocate, and support cycling in all its forms as an environmentally sustainable and healthy form of transport, recreation and tourism through the engagement of government, industry and the community at all levels.
