

Get NSW Back in Front



SUPPORTING CYCLING

MAKING CYCLING A
VIABLE TRANSPORT OPTION



THE NATIONALS

SUPPORTING CYCLING

MAKING CYCLING A VIABLE TRANSPORT OPTION

A NSW Liberal / Nationals Coalition Government will strongly promote cycling as a viable, active transport option for NSW. We will provide new and innovative infrastructure, incentives and institutions to increase cycling in NSW.

Cycling should be recognised as a viable active transport option for NSW that delivers a wide range of benefits to our society, including:

- More sustainable infrastructure usage and less overall traffic congestion;
- Improved urban amenity – more “liveable” communities;
- Improved personal and community fitness and health through active lifestyle;
- Reduced impacts on the environment, including negligible air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, and;
- Improved regional economic development through tourism.

According to the Australian Sports Commission, cycling is the fourth most popular physical activity for people 15 years or older.¹ On a national basis for the last four years, there have been more than one million bikes sold every year; car sales have never reached one million per year.²

Transport economists have calculated that investments in cycling infrastructure yield a benefit of over three times the cost. It is estimated that the cost savings to society of substituting bicycle trips for short car trips can be of the order of 60 cents per kilometre. Social cost savings are realized in a variety of other areas, including reductions in the cost of providing parking, environmental pollution, traffic accidents and road congestion.³

There is clearly a correlation between the provision of good quality and safe cycle infrastructure and cyclist usage. For example, RTA bicycle count data shows a 45 per cent increase in bicycle traffic volume between 2002 and 2005 on the key commuter routes into the Sydney CBD where there have been significant improvements in infrastructure.⁴

¹ Australian Sports Commission, Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS), 2005.

² Cycling Promotion Fund, “Bicycle Sales in Australia” Briefing Note, September 2006.

³ GHD for Australian Bicycling Council, Draft National Cycling Strategy, April 2005, page 4.

⁴ Australian Cyclist, September/October 2006 issue, page 9.

Cycling has the potential to increase public transport use by increasing the “patronage catchment” of bus, train, ferry and light rail services. This is because up to 10 times more households are within cycling distance of public transport than are within walking distance.⁵

Cyclists are legitimate road users who should be able to use their bicycles for recreation and commuting without needless risks to their personal safety, nor should they create needless risks for other road users.

There are many different types of cyclists including: inexperienced or young cyclists; cyclist commuters; sports cyclists; recreational cyclists, and; people using bicycles to do local errands.⁶ The differing needs of these types of cyclist must be considered. The major opportunity, however, for capturing cycling’s social benefits is to increase the number of people in NSW who are cyclist commuters.

There are key drivers and barriers to the general greater use of cycling:

Drivers	Barriers
Appreciation of the fitness and health benefits of cycling	Concerns about cyclist safety, such as “black spots” ⁷
Independence, convenience and affordability of cycling compared to some other transport options in some parts of NSW ⁸	Lack of dedicated infrastructure, such as a genuine network of quality and safe cycleways and bike lanes ⁹
Appreciation of the lifestyle, recreational and environmental benefits of cycling	Lack of “cyclist-friendly” practices in workplaces, shopping areas, and public transport ¹⁰

To improve cycling conditions in NSW, it is important to use innovation to harness the drivers and minimise the barriers through:

- Better management arrangements and championing of cycling by the NSW Government;
- Building of a genuine cycling network through dedicated infrastructure for cycling and fixing “black spots”, especially along cyclist commuter routes, and;
- Incentives for more people to regularly ride bicycles, particularly for commuting.

⁵ City of Sydney Council, **Draft Cycle Strategy and Master Plan**, July 2006, page 9, and; GHD for Australian Bicycling Council, **Draft National Cycling Strategy**, April 2005, page 4.

⁶ Roads and Traffic Authority, “**How To Prepare a Bike Plan**”, 2002, page 11.

⁷ **NSW Coalition on-line cyclist survey and on-bike cyclist surveys**, September to November 2006.

⁸ Robert Hamilton, President Bicycle NSW, **Bicycle NSW Annual Report 2005**, page 2.

⁹ **NSW Coalition surveys**, as above.

¹⁰ As above.

THE NSW LIBERAL/NATIONALS COALITION PLAN TO SUPPORT CYCLING

The NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition has developed a comprehensive plan to support and promote cycling in NSW.

CYCLING TARGETS

- An increase in cycling usage up by 100 per cent by 2011, particularly by growing the number of regular cyclist commuters.
- A 10 per cent reduction in cycle-related accidents by 2011, particularly through the provision of improved infrastructure.

CYCLING INSTITUTIONS

- Establish the Cycling Unit in the Transport portfolio to promote the interests and benefits of cycling on a “whole of government” basis across agencies, and including local government. The NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition proposal to re-shape government into nine departments will achieve real and practical integration of policy and management. The NSW Coalition will also abolish the RTA and transfer it’s necessary functions to other departments and agencies to ensure greater accountability and community focus.
- Review and revitalize the Bicycle Advisory Council – linked to the Cycling Unit - as a key advisory and strategic group consisting of external experts and stakeholders.
- Require a public annual report by the Cycling Unit covering actions taken by all government agencies to promote cycling, including provision of new infrastructure.
- Track expenditure on cycling as a line item in the NSW Budget Papers.
- Encourage and facilitate Local Government Area Bicycling Plans by all Councils in NSW and particularly foster regional linkages between Councils.
- Support key cycling events, such as Ride to Work Day, the Big Ride, and Sydney Spring Cycle.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

- Deliver a cycling network for NSW and Sydney that is coherent, direct, safe, attractive and comfortable ¹¹.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of Bike Plan 2010 – together with Bicycle NSW and local Bicycle User Groups (BUGs) - to identify what uncompleted on-road and off-road cycleways and other infrastructure should be prioritised to improve cycling network coverage and density, particularly for cycle commuting.
- Require transport authorities to provide cycleways wherever possible in new road developments.
- Promote understanding and skills in government infrastructure and planning agencies to ensure greater consideration of cycling in the design and maintenance of roads, footpaths, parks and developments.
- Audit the current status of “rail trails” and develop strategy for their further construction in order to leverage their regional economic and tourism potential.
- Support to the City of Sydney’s proposal to develop a major “bike hub” within the CBD including bicycle parking, change room facilities, bicycle hire / bank, and bicycle repairs.
- Review current design and construction standards and professional training for bike lanes, cycle crossings, and cycleways to achieve improved cyclist safety and better shared usage of roads.
- Fund an expert review of cycling-related accident data since 2000 – including RTA and NSW Health - to better understand causes and to recommend safety improvements.
- Establish a “black spot / black length” on-line registration system through the Cycling Unit for the use of BUGs, individual cyclists and others and conduct an annual safety audit.

CYCLING INCENTIVES

- Examine, trial, and where appropriate implement, initiatives that provide greater incentive to regularly cycle, including:
 - Installation of “bike banks” in major CBD areas of NSW (as per the initiative in Lyon, France where a commercial provider of street furniture is required to do so as part of a contractual arrangement).

¹¹ Roads and Traffic Authority, Five key principles for the provision of an efficient and useable bicycle network, **NSW Bicycle Guidelines**, 2003.

- Removal of charges to bicycles taken onto the public transport system during off-peak and weekend periods.
 - Increasing bicycle storage / areas at public transport nodes and on public transport vehicles, (such as bike racks on some buses or designated areas on some trains).
 - Incentives, sponsorship and partnership projects for business on:
 - provision of “end of trip” / change room facilities;
 - provision of bicycle parking / storage;
 - salary packaging for purchase of commuter bicycles;
 - reimbursement for staff using bicycles for business meetings, and;
 - provision of shared bike fleets.
 - Making Government offices more “cyclist commuter friendly”.
 - An accreditation scheme that enables businesses to qualify for government incentives by adopting “cyclist commuter friendly” practice.
- Promote “bike-buses” of cyclist commuters from key suburbs in Sydney, Newcastle, and Wollongong as a commuter alternative.
 - Conduct an awareness and education campaign on the benefits of cycling commuting with a particular emphasis on reaching out to women as new riders.
 - Promote regional cycling tourism in coordination with Councils and tourism stakeholders, using the ‘Big Ride’ as a model.
 - Investigate increased mountain biking opportunities in the State estate (excluding National Parks where it is currently banned).
 - Conduct a holistic cost/benefit analysis of cycling in NSW, including its social, environmental, health and other benefits.
 - Based on improved social research, better target road safety educational initiatives to promote shared and tolerant road usage between cyclists, motorists, and pedestrians, with a particular emphasis on young male riders who tend to be most likely to be involved in accidents.
 - Enforce the law in terms of road sharing. Enforce the law in terms of illegal protests using bicycles.
 - Better integrate cycling promotion with educational activities by NSW Health, schools, and other fitness/health stakeholders.

AFTER TWELVE YEARS LABOR HAS FAILED

Despite many promises over the last twelve years, the NSW Labor Government has failed to take cycling seriously as a viable transport option for NSW.

As stated by the CEO of Bicycle NSW in his organisation's submission to the draft NSW State Plan: "*Ten years ago, Labor had it right on cycling, but now it seems your Government is completely lost.*"¹²

The Cycling Promotion Fund has pointed out that NSW is the poorest performing State when it comes to making communities more bicycle friendly.¹³

Indeed, the lowest level of cycling participation in Australia is in NSW where 9.1 per cent of the population cycle (compared to Northern Territory at 17.8 per cent, ACT at 16.2 per cent, WA at 13.8 per cent).¹⁴

Thirty per cent more adult bicycles are sold in Victoria than in NSW.¹⁵

Bicycle use in NSW is basically static with fewer than one per cent of Sydney's residents cycling each day,¹⁶ and there has been no significant improvement in cyclist safety¹⁷.

This poor situation reflects the lack of investment and encouragement for cycling by Labor over the last twelve years, including:

- Failing to construct the promised 200km of cycleways each year;¹⁸
- Abolishing the Bicycle Unit at the RTA;
- Mothballing the *Bicyclist Safety Action Plan*;
- Failing to cut cycle accidents by 5 per cent, as promised in 1999¹⁹, and;
- Making no progress on increasing bicycle use three-fold statewide, also promised in 1999²⁰.

¹² Alex Unwin, CEO Bicycle NSW, **Submission to Draft NSW State Plan**, September 7, 2006.

¹³ Cycling Promotion Fund, "Cycling Moves Ahead: NSW Fails to Follow", **Australian Cyclist**, January/February 2007.

¹⁴ Cycling Promotion Fund, "**Bicycle Sales in Australia**" **Briefing Note**, September 2006.

¹⁵ As above.

¹⁶ Transport NSW & RTA, "**Cycling in Sydney: Bicycle Ownership and Use**", March 2003, page 1.

¹⁷ RTA accident statistics.

¹⁸ Roads and Traffic Authority, **Action for Bikes – Bike Plan 2010 NSW**, 1999.

¹⁹ Environment Protection Authority NSW, **Action for Air**, 1999.

²⁰ As above.