

General Manager
Bega Valley Shire Council
PO Box 492
Bega NSW 2550

18th August 2021

Dear Bega Valley Shire Council,

RE: Kalaru to Bega shared path

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed shared path between Kalaru and Bega. Bicycle NSW has been the peak bicycle advocacy group now in NSW for over forty-five years, and has over 30 affiliated local Bicycle User Groups.

Our mission is to make cycling better for everyone in NSW, and we support improvements to facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. We advocate for new cycling routes that incorporate dedicated paths within green corridors and the road environment, providing connections to jobs, schools and services for daily transport and recreation trips.

The recently-completed path from Tathra to Kalaru has been hugely popular, enabling useful daily trips and creating recreation opportunities for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities. Bicycle NSW is **very supportive** of Bega Valley Shire Council's plans to extend the path into the centre of Bega.

The benefits of cycling to health, sustainability and liveability are well-documented but we are particularly excited about the potential for the visitor economy. The beautiful Bega region could develop into a mecca for cyclists with the Bega to Tathra off-road path as a centrepiece that links into longer scenic rides across the region. As has been shown with the Central West Trailⁱ, the Victorian Rail Trails and the Rosewood to Tumbarumba Trailⁱⁱ, cycle tourism has enormous potential to attract visitors to regional areas and provide business opportunities for local residents.

We have discussed the route with members of two local advocacy groups - Bega Tathra Safe Ride and Eurobodalla Bicycle User Group. The optimum route alignment could involve elements of all four options with the final details depending on the location of services infrastructure, ease of construction and negotiations with landowners. The main concern is to deliver the path as quickly as possible. However, it was agreed that **Option 1 is preferred** overall.

Further comments were received from local cyclists which are supported by Bicycle NSW:

- A connection with the popular paths along the Bega River to the north of the town should be incorporated into the project
- It makes sense to stay on the east side of Tathra Road leaving Bega as there is already a shared path here.
- A detour through the hospital is not desirable.
- It will be safest to negotiate the difficult junction with Kerrison Road on the east side as shown in Option 1.

- A new path via Ike Game Road that bypasses the Tathra Road at the Jellat Bends (Option 4) is not considered necessary or desirable as it will be too steep and indirect for most recreational cyclists.

Please refer to our recent submission to the CSP review (attached) which highlights important considerations when planning and constructing new cycling infrastructure. In summary:

1. Bicycle NSW supports cycling infrastructure that is completely separated from vehicles and caters for riders of all ages and abilities. According to the best practice 'cycling segmentation' model, developed in Portland USA to identify the type and needs of existing and potential bike ridersⁱⁱⁱ, such cycle paths will allow 70% of local residents to consider journeys by bike. The Bicycle NSW *Build it for Everyone* policy pillar^{iv} sets a standard that cycling infrastructure should be fit for eight-year-old children or elders to ride on. Door zone bike lanes, bike stencils on the road and dangerous intersections will continue to deter the 48%^v of people who are 'interested but concerned', from making the switch to cycling. The area has some steep inclines but the increasing use of e-bikes and other micromobility devices will ensure that active transport options are accessible to all residents.
2. Where separated paths cannot be provided, reduce speed limits to 30km/h on local streets with on-road cycle routes. 30 km/h has been shown as an optimal speed limit to allow people driving and cycling to share the road safely^{vi} and is becoming a standard speed limit in many parts of the world. All single lane roads in Spain have been under a 30km/h limit since May 2021 and 30% of UK residents live in 20mph areas^{vii}. Lower speed limits are an important building block for Vision Zero, an approach to road safety that was launched in Sweden in 1994 with the simple premise that no loss of life is acceptable. The Vision Zero approach has been highly successful and has spread to many other countries. The key policies include prioritizing low urban speed limits, pedestrian zones, physical separation between bicycle and car traffic, data-based traffic enforcement and behaviour-change education^{viii}.
3. Develop facilities for cycle tourism by establishing a series of waymarked routes on shared paths and scenic back roads and providing bike rental hubs in tourist centres to ensure access to the trails for all visitors.
4. Focus on the detailed design of cycle routes, end of trip facilities and wayfinding to encourage the uptake of cycling and reduce dependence on private vehicles.
 - It is essential to ensure that popular daily destinations such as town centres, schools and stations are easy to reach by bicycle for all residents of all ages and abilities. In particular, safe connections with all education facilities along the routes must be incorporated. Cycling infrastructure needs to be safe and continuous to increase the mode share of cycling and reduce congestion associated with school journeys.
 - Integration of the routes with bus stops is essential to ensure easy access by bike and foot. All public transport journeys start and finish with a walk or cycle. Providing high-quality, safe conditions for active travel to bus routes will break down the first/last mile barrier which can inhibit take-up of public transport
 - Cycle parking and other end of trip facilities should be provided at journey end locations to further support riders and encourage participation.
 - Wayfinding supports visitors to vibrant centres by clearly articulating and communicating the most efficient and safest route. Signage style for wayfinding should be consistent throughout the LGA.

Conclusion:

The expansion of cycling facilities must be a focus of Bega Valley's short-term transport planning. Safe cycling provision gives people travel choices that decongest roads, public transport and parking. People who ride bikes can easily stop at local shops en-route, benefitting local businesses^{ix}. Infrastructure to support walking and cycling will benefit everyone in the community, reducing traffic and pollution while improving public health, providing more equitable access to employment, services and public transport and attracting tourism.

Bicycle NSW is delighted that Bega Valley Shire Council is working hard to deliver the Bega-Kalaru shared path. Please let us know if we can assist you with the project as it progresses. We look forward to cycling along the completed path soon!

Yours faithfully,

Sarah Bickford

Bike Planner
Bicycle NSW

ⁱ Central West Cycle Trail. <https://centralwestcycletrail.com.au/>

ⁱⁱ Railtrails Australia. 2021, April 18. Local economy thrives since the opening of the Tumbarumba to Rosewood Rail Trail <https://www.railtrails.org.au/2021/897-local-economy-thrives-since-the-opening-of-the-tumbarumba-to-rosewood-rail-trail>

^{xvi} Roger Geller. (2009). Four types of cyclists. Portland Bureau of Transportation. <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/article/264746>

^{iv} Bicycle NSW (2018) Our Policy, [online as at 24/2/2021] <https://bicyclensw.org.au/our-policy/>

^v 70% of people when surveyed said they would ride more if they felt safe

NSW Government, Sydney's Cycling Future (2013) [Online as at 24/2/2021]

<https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/media/documents/2017/sydneys-cycling-future-web.pdf>

^{vi} City of Yarra - 30km/h speed limit: pre-trial final report, 2017. <https://thanksfor30.com.au/sites/default/files/2018-08/City-of-Yarra-Pre-Trial-Report-Aug-2017-FINAL%5B1%5D.pdf>

^{vii} O'Sullivan, F. (2020, November). Why Europe is slowing down. Bloomberg CityLab.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-11-18/speed-limits-are-dropping-in-europe-and-the-u-k>

^{viii} Vision Zero Network. (2015, April 13). European Cities Lead the Way Toward Vision Zero.

<https://visionzeronetwork.org/european-cities-lead-the-way-toward-vision-zero/>

^{ix} Jerome N Rachele. Do the sums: bicycle-friendly changes are good for business, The Conversation [Online as at 24/2/2021] [Do the sums: bicycle-friendly changes are good business \(theconversation.com\)](https://theconversation.com/do-the-sums-bicycle-friendly-changes-are-good-business)