

Active Travel Office
Transport Canberra
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24th August 2022

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To whom it may concern,

Re: ACT draft Active Travel Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the ACT draft Active Travel Plan.

Bicycle NSW has been the peak bicycle advocacy group in NSW for forty-seven years, and has over 30 affiliated local Bicycle User Groups. Our mission is to *'create a better environment for all bicycle riders'*, from 8 to 80 years of age, and we support improvements to facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. We advocate for new cycling routes that provide connections to jobs, schools and services for daily transport and recreation trips, and cultural and policy changes that allow more people to travel actively.

It has been a pleasure reviewing the details of the draft Active Travel Plan. We would like to congratulate ACT on its well-considered document which sets a new benchmark for future town planning, active travel and environmental sustainability.

Bicycle NSW strongly supports the priorities and actions set out in the plan.

The draft Active Travel Plan is framed by the guiding policy of [ACT Net Zero by 2045](#). This is a powerful acknowledgement of the critical threat of climate change and the 25% contribution by the transport sector to global carbon emissions. The call to action includes 40-45% less car journeys by 2045, a strong focus on public 'health, liveability, inclusivity' and 'active living' which logically gives rise to 'climate planning and (active) transport strategies.' This draft plan is grounded in the direct experience of the deadly bushfires that devastated the ACT and an analysis of the vulnerabilities of urban sprawl in a regional city.

The delivery of this plan is laid out in the priority areas of safe infrastructure, interconnected networks, strategic corridors, active travel types, convenience, behaviour change and partnerships.

Priority 1: Safe infrastructure for walking and cycling considers safe active transport infrastructure through a movement and place lens to create 'safe and accessible shared spaces'. Bicycle NSW agrees with the intention of redesigning streets through infill and retrofitting whilst avoiding blockages to transport permeability such as contiguous facades and superblocks. This is achievable as exemplified by the new Belconnen suburb of Ginninderry which is based on movement and place and prioritises walking and bicycle riding for transport.

Priority 2: A better connected and maintained path network explains how the cycling and walking paths will be extended and connected with a focus on completing missing links. We support the commitment to convert on-road cycle lanes on priority routes to safe separated cycleways to create strategic transport corridors that reflect fair road space allocation, and offer accessibility to all road users, thereby encouraging the mode shift needed for future-proofing the ACT. This is exemplified by the new Molonglo River Bridge on John Gorton

Drive that will connect the suburbs of the Molonglo Valley to the Belconnen Town Centre and the City. (Draft Active Travel Plan 2022, p. 25)

The third priority, *Supporting new and emerging types of active travel*, is an exciting and practical development that embraces future technologies and inclusivity. Mode shift to healthy, affordable, efficient, zero-carbon emitting alternatives such as e-bikes, cargo bikes and e-scooters will be encouraged by incorporating e-bikes into the corporate fleet, e-bike salary sacrificing to encourage purchase, the 'try-before-you-buy' e-bike library, a pedal powered cinema, shared micromobility schemes (e.g. for e-scooters). This will be underpinned by community and industry consultation to ensure safe, accessible micromobility offerings including geolocation, legislation and enforcement of safe travel. (Draft Active Travel Plan 2022, p. 26-28).

As NSW pilots its own e-scooter legislation and share scheme, we recommend that consideration be given to the UK which has through trial and error landed on a [working model](#). Integration of all modes with the public transport network including concessions for e-scooter riders is another great way to entice Canberrans out of their cars and into active travel.

The fourth priority of *Making active travel and bicycle parking easy* recognises the fact that public urban space is valuable and should not be the continued unchallenged storehouse of private vehicles. Ten bikes can easily fit into the space occupied by a single car. The actions reflect road users' needs for safety and security, convenience and comfort, network legibility and ease of navigation, cargo and passenger requirements, trip chaining and varying cultural and gender identity. This last point is particularly important if we are to make bicycle riding an effective transport option for everybody. Initiatives mentioned such as bike parking, culturally inclusive murals, safe lighting, water fountains and end of trip facilities are all excellent ways to get more people to walk and ride. (Draft Active Travel Plan 2022, p. 28-34) New legislation for end-of-trip facilities must include e-bike charging provisions and for larger bikes such as cargo bikes, bikes with trailers, or bikes accessible to people unable to ride standard bikes.

Priority 5: Supporting behaviour change and community partnerships (Draft Active Travel Plan 2022, p. 35-40) acknowledges the diversity of active travel needs among different communities and offers some great solutions. Examples include: the *Road Ready program* for learner drivers; the *Road Safety Calendar* of community campaigns; community bike libraries to help people explore possibilities and overcome hurdles; improved wayfinding; the *Ride or Walk to School* program for junior schools incorporating the whole school community and the *It's Your Move Safe Cycle* program for high schools. We applaud these initiatives, especially the last two which approach active transport culture at its foundation - future generations. *Ride to Work* will be greatly strengthened by the e-bike salary sacrifice program previously mentioned.

Recommendations

Additional considerations for the final Active Travel Plan would include:

- **Reduce speed limits to 30km/h on local streets and in town centres**

The draft Active Transport Plan commits to consulting with communities to reduce speed limits to 40km/h in suburban streets and CBD areas. This is not a low enough speed limit. It is time to fast-track change based on [well-proven evidence](#) that a 30km/h limits increases walking and cycling participation, improves neighbourhood amenity and saves lives. Bicycle NSW advocates for 30km/h limits on all non-arterial roads in NSW.

Residential streets form a critical part of any active travel network, connecting homes to the main cycling corridors. 30 km/h speed limits reduce the need for separate bicycle infrastructure on local roads. 30 km/h has been shown as an optimal speed limit to allow people driving and cycling to share the road safely¹ 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 areas².

The Western Australian Department of Transport has rolled out several 'bicycle boulevards' using residential streets as part of its Safe Active Streets programme³. In addition to a 30 km/h speed limit, a range of physical interventions support slower speeds and reduce traffic volumes and rat running.

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 education⁴.

- **Prioritise pedestrians and cyclists at all intersections**

Traffic light phasing and sensors must favour active modes to encourage more people to walk and cycle. Small delays to vehicle traffic should never prevent the delivery of safer, more efficient and more attractive active transport infrastructure. Raised crossings at unsignalised intersections will slow cars and improve safety. Bicycle paths must continue across the raised crossings so people riding bikes are not required to dismount.

- **Collaborate closely with neighbouring councils, Bicycle NSW and local Bicycle User Groups when planning the regional network**

It is important that routes into the ACT from Queanbeyan Palerang, Snowy Monaro and Yass Shire LGAs are carefully integrated with the future regional and local network to maximise connections for commuters, recreational cyclists and, of course, tourists. Cycle tourism has enormous potential to attract visitors to regional areas and provide business opportunities for local residents. For example, The Tumbarumba to Rosewood trail has brought a constant flow of visitors to small villages in the area since it opened in 2020, supporting 9 new businesses⁵. The Central West Trail near Dubbo provides a 400km waymarked loop that has revitalised several country towns since April 2020⁶, attracting thousands of cyclists to the area for a 5- or 6-day adventure.

¹ 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>

² 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>

³ Western Australia Department of Transport. Safe Active Streets Programme. <https://www.transport.wa.gov.au/activetransport/safe-active-streets-program.asp>

⁴ 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/>

⁵ 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>

⁶ Central West Cycle Trail. <https://centralwestcycletrail.com.au/>

Bicycle NSW has confidence that final Active Travel Plan will make an important contribution to delivering the ACT community's vision of a networked, inclusive city that prioritises its people and the environment.

It is commendable that ACT planners will draw on global best-practice to develop an active travel design guide as a critical element of the Active Travel Plan. As Transport Minister Chris Steel said at the Pedal Power ACT members' forum in July 2022, "learning from the work of other cities that have been taking the lead will see us become more reminiscent of a European city". Exciting times ahead for walking, cycling and low-carbon micro-mobility in Canberra!

Bicycle NSW looks forward to diving into the final Active Travel Plan and the new design guide in the near future. We will continue to work with fellow advocates at Pedal Power ACT to promote bicycle infrastructure and active travel throughout our state, territory and regions.

Yours sincerely,



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