

## Warringah and Wakehurst Traffic and Transport Forum

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024

### Response for question from Federal Member for Wakehurst, Zali Steggall MP:

**“What ideas does Bicycle NSW have to address the challenges and opportunities posed by e-bikes?”**

Good evening everyone.

Bicycle NSW is a grassroots membership organisation, representing everyday riders who want to get around safely. We have over 400 members in Warringah, and I am one of them.

We understand the concerns about e-bikes and the safety of both riders and pedestrians. We've worked closely with Northern Beaches Council, supporting the launch of the E-bike Code and developing educational materials. In addition, Bicycle NSW has drafted a position, statement outlining important steps that all levels of government should take to improve e-bike regulation.

However, e-bikes are amazing and can play a big role in efforts to decarbonise transport and unclog the roads.

It is fantastic to see so many people getting around on two wheels in this area, avoiding the hassles of finding parking, and reducing congestion and pollution. We are particularly excited by how quickly teenagers have taken to e-bikes.

I was at Mackellar Girls' today and counted 93 bikes. 3 years ago, there were 4 or 5 in the rack and my daughter was embarrassed to ride. There are 1100 students so 8.5% are riding to school. Most of the bikes take a passenger so we can assume the percentage is actually somewhat higher.

This is such an important life stage for forming travel habits. The current surge in bike riding offers an incredible opportunity for all governments to embed that #bikeisbest in young minds and shape mode choice for the future - with benefits for health, air quality and urban liveability.

Key to this is better infrastructure. 70% of people say they would ride more if they felt safe. Of course, part of the reason that Mackellar is a stellar bike school is the decent network of bike paths around the campus - thank you Northern Beaches Council. But we need to commit to creating safe conditions everywhere.

Separated bicycle paths are finally coming to the area, and these are important on busier roads. We also advocate for low speed limits, ideally 30km/h as recommended by the UN, on residential streets, in town centres and around schools. This allows most bike riders to share the road with cars, and makes 'every street a cycle street'. Walking is much more comfortable too. The 30km/h zone in Manly has been successful and should be expanded without delay.

None of this costs very much. But more investment is critical.

The 2023 NSW Government budget allocated less than 0.2% of the transport budget for walking and cycling across the whole state. This is less than a cup of coffee each, and 100 times below the 20% recommended by the UN.

The federal government has announced a new active transport infrastructure fund which is great news. But \$100m over 4 years is just \$1 per person a year.

It's a start but please, Zali and Michael, can you help advocate for much more?

Two more ideas for the mix tonight: Subsidies for EVs should extend to EV that have 2-wheels.

And Bicycle NSW advocates for a Northern Beaches trial of bike racks on the front on buses. These racks are standard in Canberra, and common in Victoria. In an area without trains, bike racks could really help both residents and visitors get around the suburbs and across the city without driving. We welcome the opportunity to discuss this with Keolis Downer tonight.

Thank you.

