



Sustainable Fawkner
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16 May 2023

Legislative Assembly Economy and Infrastructure Committee
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Submission to Inquiry into the impact of road safety behaviours on vulnerable road users

This is a joint submission by local climate advocacy group Climate Action Merribek, and locality based Sustainable Fawkner. Both groups are active grassroots citizen NGOs in the Merri-bek inner city municipality with a strong focus on environmental and climate issues. Many of our members use active transport and public transport, as well as motorised vehicles for their mobility for work and recreation.

We appreciate this opportunity to make a submission to this Inquiry.

Addressing the safety of vulnerable road users needs to also examine the need to shift transport mobility behaviours to address transport emissions as we adapt our cities to be more resilient, consistent with The Paris Agreement targets and imperatives for action.

Summary:

- Issues with driving behaviours on Sydney Road in Fawkner
- Derby St Pascoe Vale Painted on-road bike lanes
- Improving cycling safety in crossing Sydney Road in Brunswick and Coburg
- Upfield Path from Box Forest Rd to Western Ring Road Trail
- Campbellfield
- Bell Street Bridge and Murray Road, Coburg
- TAC statistics on cyclist and pedestrian deaths over past 10 years
- Improving Sustainable Transport Options
- Reducing Transport Emissions and improving vulnerable road user safety
- Funding for active transport infrastructure needs boosting
- Recommendations

Issues with driving behaviours on Sydney Road in Fawkner

There have been numerous reports on local Facebook groups of vehicles speeding on Sydney Road, especially at night. Sydney Road speed limit changes from 60km/hr to 70km/hr just north of Boundary Road.

Local citizens have called for red light speed cameras, a lowering of the speed to 60 km/hr for Sydney Road in Fawkner on a number of occasions. To no avail.

Incidents of vehicles running the red lights along Sydney Road in Coburg North and Fawkner are common, and particularly at night.

Anyone who uses the pedestrian lights to cross Sydney Road in Fawkner usually watches the traffic to see if they will stop. Vehicles often run the lights when they are red which endangers people (pedestrians and cyclists) on these crossings.

Vehicles turning into Box Forest Road, or out of Box Forest Road into Sydney Road sometimes ignore pedestrians and pedestrian green lights.

Both the crossing of Sydney Road and Box Forest Road are important for cyclists from Fawkner accessing the Upfield Bike Path.

Vehicles turning left from Sydney Road into Box Forest Road often speed around the corner not looking for pedestrians crossing Box Forest Road.

Vehicles turning left out of Box Forest Road into Sydney Road sometimes do not give way to pedestrians when pedestrians get a green light to cross Sydney Road. Vehicles get their own left turn arrow, but sometimes fail to give way when pedestrians get their green light to cross Sydney Road.

Crossing Sydney Road by pedestrians and cyclists is often hindered by vehicles parking on the nature strip near or obstructing the ramp onto the footpath. This has been reported numerous times to Merribek Council, but vehicles continue to often park here obstructing the crossing ramp.

The timing on the lights to cross Sydney Road is problematic for pedestrians who have to run to make it across the whole road in one go. On one occasion an elderly woman with a walking frame had to cross but she had difficulty with crossing just half the road due to the fast timing of the pedestrian lights. The woman lived at Federation Village, a retirement village on Box Forest Road.

The pedestrian lights crossings of Sydney Road at Jukes Road, Box Forest Road, Major Road, Lorne Street and Boundary Road have too short a time for pedestrians to safely cross the full width of the road unless they run.

All the pedestrian light crossings of Sydney Road are too short for pedestrians to comfortably cross in one go. If you are slow due to a mobility disability you might have trouble crossing even halfway across to the centre medium strip.

The fast time of the pedestrian lights mean many people run to get fully across Sydney Road in time, which is unsafe behaviour that can result in tripping or falls.

Derby St Pascoe Vale Painted on-road bike lanes

The bikelanes which have long existed on Derby Street have recently been painted green. This makes them much clearer for drivers to see the distinction. However cyclists also need to watch for people leaving parked cars opening their doors either hitting the cyclist or making them swerve into the vehicle lane. Travelling vehicles will have a stronger expectation for cyclists to stay in the green lane and will not expect a cyclist suddenly swerving out to avoid being doored. This is a particular hazard for novice riders, including female cyclists and children. Painted green lanes do not improve the perception of safety or actual safety of cyclists.

The real test of whether green painted lanes improve cycling safety is: would you trust your 10-12 year old son or daughter to ride by them self to school on these painted lanes? I would not have trusted my daughter when she was 12 to cycle by herself on this infrastructure.

We note that a proposal for protected cycling lanes on Cumberland Road, long lobbied for by Merri-bek Council and cycling groups and initially by local MPs, was rejected by VicRoads. Subsequently Derby street on-road bike lanes were proposed and actually painted green to be seen to do something, even though research shows painted bike lanes do not improve vulnerable user safety outcomes.

It seems priority for motor vehicles has again trumped addressing the safety of vulnerable road users with the Cumberland Road/Derby street decision regarding safe cycling infrastructure. Research says that Protected bicycle lanes are 10 times more effective than painted bicycle lanes. (Nolan et al 2021)¹

Improving cycling safety in crossing Sydney Road in Brunswick and Coburg

Pedestrian safety has been improved recently at crossings on Sydney Road in Brunswick and Coburg, which is good to see. However, some of these intersections are also important east-west cycling routes. There was no addition to improve signage for safe vehicle behaviour with regard to cyclists, or improve cycling movements at these intersections with an early start. The recent pedestrian safety upgrade could have improved cycling safety. Upgrading pedestrian safety was a missed opportunity to upgrade cyclist safety at these intersections.

Harding St / Munro St – This has bike lanes providing an important east-west route through to Merri Creek and across the creek into Thornbury. Used by Coburg High school students. Yet signage was not improved to warn vehicles to watch for cyclists or give cyclists an early start. My daughter was almost hit at this intersection. A lost opportunity in improving signage for vehicle behaviour when signs erected warning of pedestrians crossing.

Reynard St / Edward St. This is used as an east-west cycling route to Reynard st Community House, Peter Khalil's electorate office, as a shimmy to access DeCarle street.

¹ Nolan et al (2021) *Are bicycle lanes effective? The relationship between passing distance and road characteristics*, Accident Analysis & Prevention, Volume 159, 2021, 106184, ISSN 0001-4575, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aap.2021.106184>. (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0001457521002153>)

Moreland Road, This is used as an east-west cycling route from Brunswick West to Thornbury. Pedestrian safety improved but nothing for cyclists.

Albert Street – This is used as an east-west route to access the Upfield Bike Path, the supermarket and connecting Brunswick to West Brunswick. While pedestrians are given an early start signal to cross Sydney Road, with warnings to motorists, the same facility should be afforded to cyclists through signage.

Albion Street – pedestrians are given an early start signal to cross Sydney Road. Given the narrowness of Albion street and cobblestones on Albion st on the east side of Sydney Road, an early start signage for cyclists wRecreation-specific enablers

The most commonly reported enabler for cycling for recreation was improving mental health, reported by 64% of participants

(Fig. 5). Having a physically separated bike lane or off-road bike path was reported by 60% of participants, of which 78% reported that

this would encourage them very much. The ride being scenic was reported as an enabler by 54% of participants.ould increase safety rather than jostling for space with vehicles at the green light. This should have been a change when pedestrian safety signs were upgraded.

Bell street Bridge and Murray Road, Coburg.

The Bell Street bridge over Merri Creek has a narrow footpath. The intersection of Bell Street, Nicholson Street and Elizabeth street has poor traffic separation making it extremely unfriendly to active transport users. There have been multiple collisions and near misses. Safety for vulnerable road users needs urgent improvement at this intersection. While there has been minor traffic calming with paintwork in the recent past, this has been insufficient to reduce the perceived and actual safety risk for vulnerable road users.

Murray Road also suffers from a narrow footpath for pedestrians with four lanes of traffic and no provision for safe cycling. There have been a number of accidents on Murray Road, including damage to the bluestone bridge.

Students at Coburg High school use both Bell Street and Murry Road to access the school.

Upfield Path from Box Forest Rd to Western Ring Road Trail

The Upfield Shared Use Bike Path goes from Park street in the south and currently ends at Box Forest Road in Fawkner. The link to the Western Ring Road Path was budgeted by the state government in 2018. We often get cyclists exploring this path and are then at a quandary about where to go at Box Forest Road.

VicRoads are proposing an extension along Sages Road as a shared route with traffic, with a 40 km/hr limit. Never mind that the factories on Sages Road have cranes and delivery trucks, with forklifts loading and unloading on street. Sages Road is also a bus route. Would you trust a 10-12 year old child to explore this “shared traffic” route by themselves? It was incredible that Vic Roads would even consider this “shared road proposal” for an iconic and arterial shared use path. Especially as Merribek Council had already done advanced design work on a dedicated shared use path in the easement beside the rail line all the way up Sages Road. We conjecture VicRoads proposal is to minimise cost rather than to consider the safety of vulnerable users.

This missing link provides an important recreational and commuter link with the Western Ring Road Trail. It has been long promised for over a decade, funded but not delivered for over five years.

Campbellfield: an example where VicRoads blackspot methodology fails

The VicRoads Strategic Cycling corridor map shows the Upfield shared Use path being a Strategic Cycling Corridor and extending up to Roxburgh Park and further. Yet the Upfield path presently stops at Box Forest Road in Fawkner.

There is no direct safe route north for cyclists after Box Forest Road. There is a major shopping complex on the corner of Mahoneys Rd and Sydney Rd, Campbellfield Plaza. Access to this shopping complex is difficult for cyclists, particularly from residents north of the shopping complex in Campbellfield and Dallas.

As Sydney Road is high volume and a 70km/hr zone, few, if any cyclists will cycle on the road or venture to this shopping complex. Those that do, use the service road beside Sydney Road, and narrow footpaths with numerous driveways either side of Sydney Road.

Sydney Road, Campbellfield is not considered a black spot for cycling accidents as it is so dangerous few undertake to cycle on this road. VicRoads blackspot methodology has biases and blindspots that can exclude consideration of really dangerous roads for vulnerable users. Sydney Road at Campbellfield is one such example.

When the Level Crossing Removal Project undertook to do the Camp Road Level Crossing Removal, plans were included for the Upfield Path connecting Camp Road with the Western Ring Road Trail. But the outcome of the project failed to deliver this short section of path, even though it could have been delivered with minimal work and cost.

Instead Victrack cabling was cemented onto the portion of the rail bridge over the M80 that would have been allocated to active transport, and a fence and locked gate placed at Camp Road. VicTrack also did major cable renewal work in the rail easement up to Upfield Station. There was an opportunity to put a path in after this work. But this opportunity was never taken up.

Doing this work by LGRP and VicTrack failed in the obligations of the Transport Integration Act 2010 to deliver walking/cycling infrastructure as part of major transport projects, in an area with very poor active transport infrastructure. where few people encouraged to take up cycling due to the high safety risks from other road users..

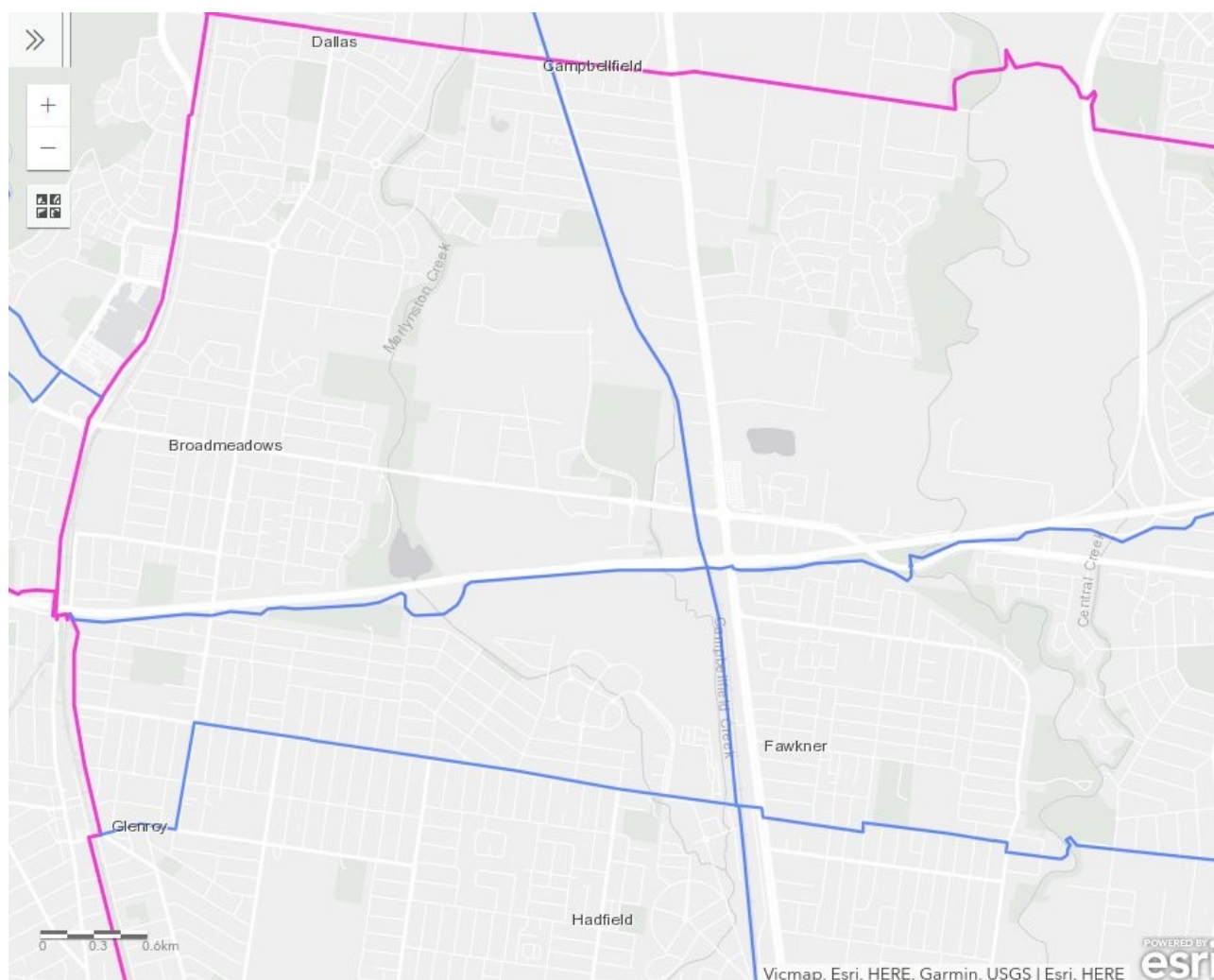
VicRoads has failed to provide any safe direct alternative cycling routes to access Campbellfield Plaza.

There has been no action at the State Government level in extending the Upfield Bike Path past the Western Ring Road trail to Upfield station, despite it being a strategic cycling corridor and the existence of a generous easement beside the railway line. Further extension to Somerton Road is indicated in the Strategic Cycling Corridor map and in the Northern Region Trails Strategy (2022 Refresh).

In the Northern Region Trails Network 2022 Refresh document² prepared by six Melbourne northern region Councils, building the Upfield trail from Western Ring Road to Somerton Road was listed as the 6th most important priority in the list of top ten priority projects for the Northern Region.

The improved safety of all road users as an economic benefit does not appear to have been factored in to The Cost Benefit Analysis for the Northern Trails Strategy, but even so “Under a seven per cent discount rate, the project results in a net present value (NPV) of around \$114 million and a benefit cost ratio (BCR) of 1.6. This means that for each \$1 invested, a welfare gain of \$1.6 is realised.”

We think the State Government in association with the Councils should prioritise spending over the next five years to complete the top ten priority trail improvement projects for the Northern Region which will enhance active transport and reduce some conflict with other road users improving road safety outcomes. Many of these projects will increase recreational cycling and walking.



Strategic Cycling Corridor Map showing Upfield Strategic Cycling Corridor from Box Forest Road to Barry Road Source: Department of Transport and Planning, Accessed 16 May 2023

2 Northern Region Trails Strategy (August 2022) https://hdp-au-prod-app-ban-shapingbanyule-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/5716/6051/7689/North_Trails_Strategy_2022_August_draft.pdf

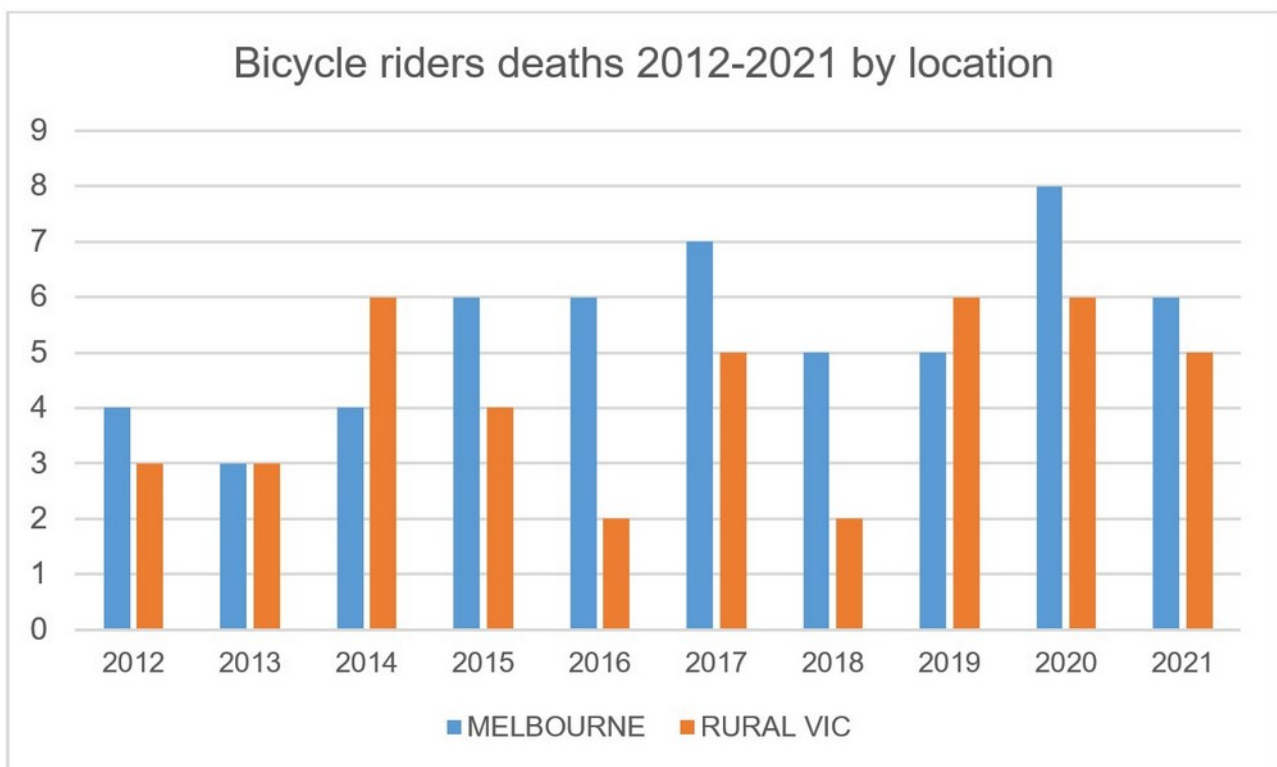
TAC Statistics on cycling and pedestrian deaths past 10 years

It is worth while being aware of the pedestrian and cycling deaths statistics collected by the TAC. Addressing road safety behaviours should aim to reduce deaths of vulnerable road users substantially.

Cycling Deaths

TAC reports that:³

96 bicycle riders have been killed on Victorian roads in the last ten years – an average of nine each year. In the last five years, 55 bicycle riders have been killed on Victorian roads – an average of 11 each year.



“In the last five years, bicycle riders killed on Victorian roads were:

- Male (82%)
- Aged 50+ (49%)
- On Metro roads (56%)
- Killed in same direction crashes (40%) or crashes at intersections (22%)
- Most same direction crashes are “rear enders”
 - Metro rear end crashes occur on 60km/h or less roads
 - Rural rear end crashes occur on 80+km/h roads

³ TAC Bicycle rider statistics, <https://www.tac.vic.gov.au/road-safety/statistics/summaries/bicycle-rider-statistics>

- 49% occur on roads with a speed limit of 60km/h or less
- 29% occur on roads with a speed limit of 100km/h or more”

Pedestrian deaths

TAC reports that:⁴

“In the last five years, 175 pedestrians have been killed - an average of 35 pedestrians killed each year on Victorian roads. Pedestrians make up around 15% of the total number of road deaths each year.

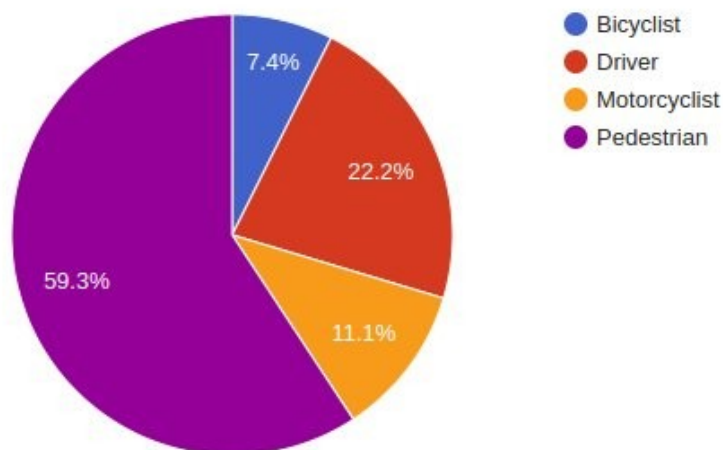
- Just over one third (36%) are aged 70+
- One in four (24%) are aged 80+
- Two thirds (67%) are male
- Almost four in ten (38%) are killed on 60km/h roads
- 70% are killed in Metro Melbourne”

Common types of crashes resulting in Pedestrian deaths:

- 33% - Crossing the road and being struck from the near side
- 28% - Crossing the road and being struck from the far side

Merri-bek LGA: Interrogation of the TAC statistics database for the 10 year period from 2013 to 2022 for Merri-bek LGA revealed 27 fatalities. Pedestrians were 59.3%, cyclists 7.4%, Drivers 22.2%, Motorcyclists 11.1%.

Road User of Fatalities



4 TAC Pedestrian Statistics, <https://www.tac.vic.gov.au/road-safety/statistics/summaries/pedestrian-statistics>

Improving Sustainable transport options

We note that active transport has seen an increase during the pandemic with people exploring their local neighbourhoods. There has been an increase in use of bicycles, e-bikes, and scooters, and even powered monocycles. At the same time the behaviour of vehicle drivers appears to have worsened since the pandemic recovery occurred. There has been very little improvement in the safety of pedestrians and cyclists through infrastructure improvement.

While the dedicated cycle path under skyrail in Coburg is a big improvement, the green painted cycle lanes on Derby Street offer little in terms of safety improvement when vehicle driver behaviour has worsened. This is literally and metaphorically a greenwash of improving cycling safety.

While there has been some dedicated protected cycling lanes built on Dawson Street and a part of Kent Road in Pascoe Vale, the extent of protected or dedicated cycle lanes in Merribek is still very poor. While local politicians extoll the virtues of the new dedicated bike lane under skyrail, they have done little to improve safety for general accessing of this bike path via safe protected east-west cycling routes.

Cycling Potential: between 60% and 80% of people are interested but concerned

A recent study by Pearson et al (March 2022), *The potential for bike riding across entire cities: Quantifying spatial variation in interest in bike riding*, provides justification for separated cycling infrastructure to encourage people interested in cycling to start doing so.

This is particularly important for women interested in starting to cycle, and for the cycling independence of children. The researchers conclude that “Our results show the potential for substantial increases in cycling participation, but only when high-quality cycling infrastructure is provided.”⁵

The research of Pearson and colleagues highlights the large numbers of people interested in cycling if safe infrastructure like protected cycling lanes were provided. The researchers provide a Geller typology breakdown by age which shows “‘Strong and Fearless’ (3%), ‘Enthusied and Confident’ (3%), ‘Interested but Concerned’ (78%), and ‘No Way No How’ (16%)” across all the data from both Greater Melbourne and Regional local government areas.

5 Pearson et al (March 2022), *The potential for bike riding across entire cities: Quantifying spatial variation in interest in bike riding*, Journal of Transport & Health, Volume 24, March 2022, 101290, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214140521003200>

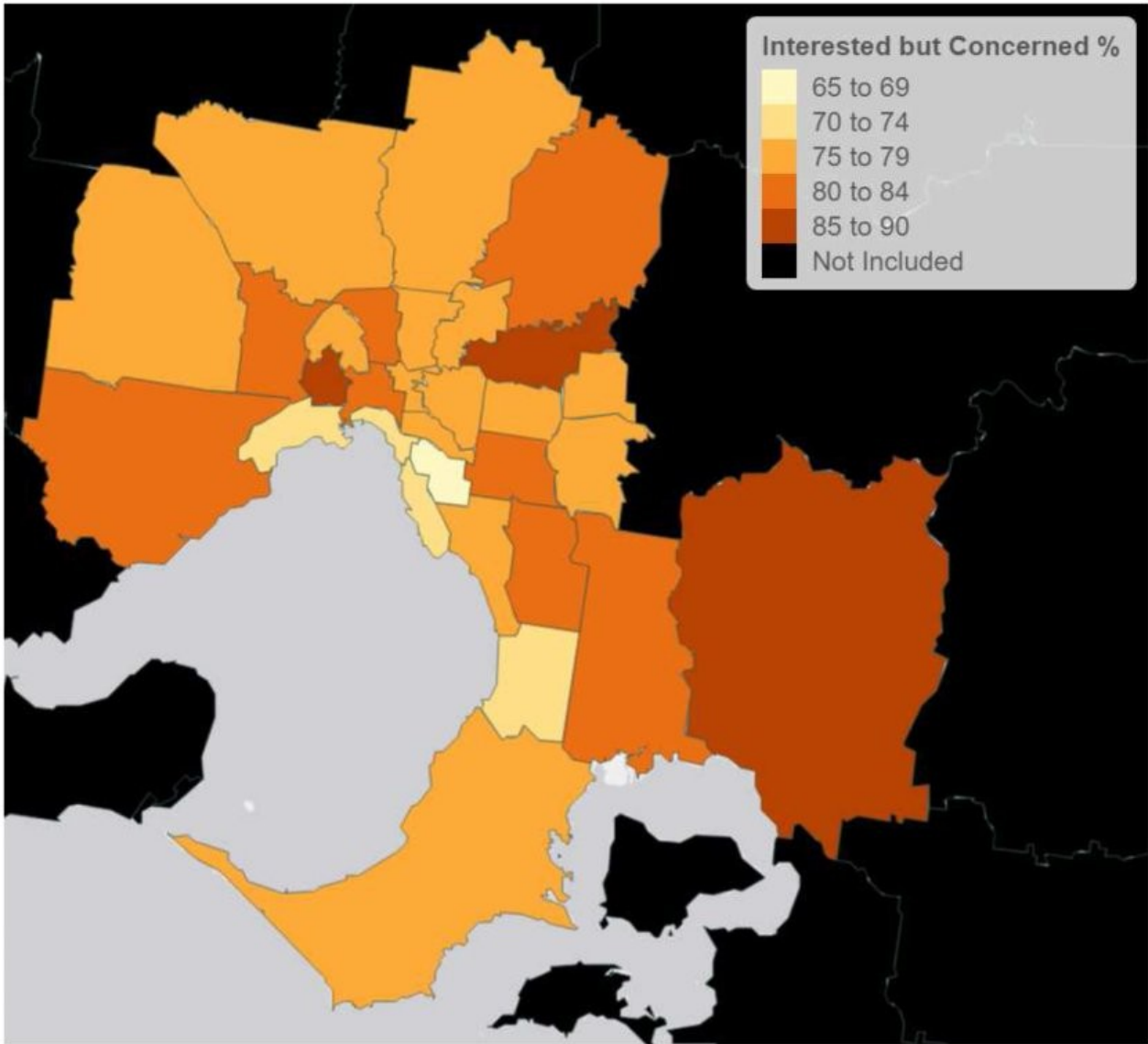


Fig. 5. Heat map of Greater Melbourne showing the proportion of participants categorised as Interested but Concerned.

Pearson et al (March 2022) heatmap showing Interested but Concerned geller group for cycling across Greater Melbourne. Merribee is rated at 80-84 percent for Interested but Concerned category.

Need for separated protected lanes, not green paint for on-road bike lanes

On the need for separated bicycling infrastructure to improve safety for vulnerable road users, and to encourage more people cycling, the researchers said:

“The provision of separated bicycling infrastructure is important for both the safety (Harris et al., 2013) and support of low risk bicycling environments to maintain and encourage participation. Most people in this study were interested in riding a bike if infrastructure were provided that physically separated them from motor vehicle traffic. While painted bike lanes are a lower cost alternative to providing bicycling infrastructure, these do not constitute physically separated bicycling infrastructure. Research conducted in Melbourne that measured passing distances between motor vehicles and bikes identified more close, and potentially unsafe, passes when a person riding a bike was travelling in a painted bike lane compared to on-road (Beck et al., 2019). Similarly, a previous study identified that 22% of all on-road bike riding crashes occurred while riding in a painted bike lane, highlighting their insufficiency in protecting vulnerable road-users (Beck et al., 2016). In addition to the risk of substantial injury that painted bike lanes pose for people on bikes, they are not supportive of new bike riders, or low-stress traffic environments, with concerns about safety on the road and interactions with motorists being a major barrier to participation in bike riding (Daley and Rissel, 2011; Heesch et al., 2012; Twaddle et al., 2010; Akar and Clifton, 2009; Dill, 2009). As indicated by the findings of this study, removing interactions with motor vehicles through a physically separated bicycle lane could substantially increase participation in bike riding in Melbourne, while maintaining the safety of vulnerable road-users.”

Even the Victorian Cycling Strategy 2018-28 (December 2017) acknowledges that “about 60 percent of Victorians are curious about cycling but are deterred by real or perceived safety concerns. Women, children and seniors cycle far less than the typical cyclist.”

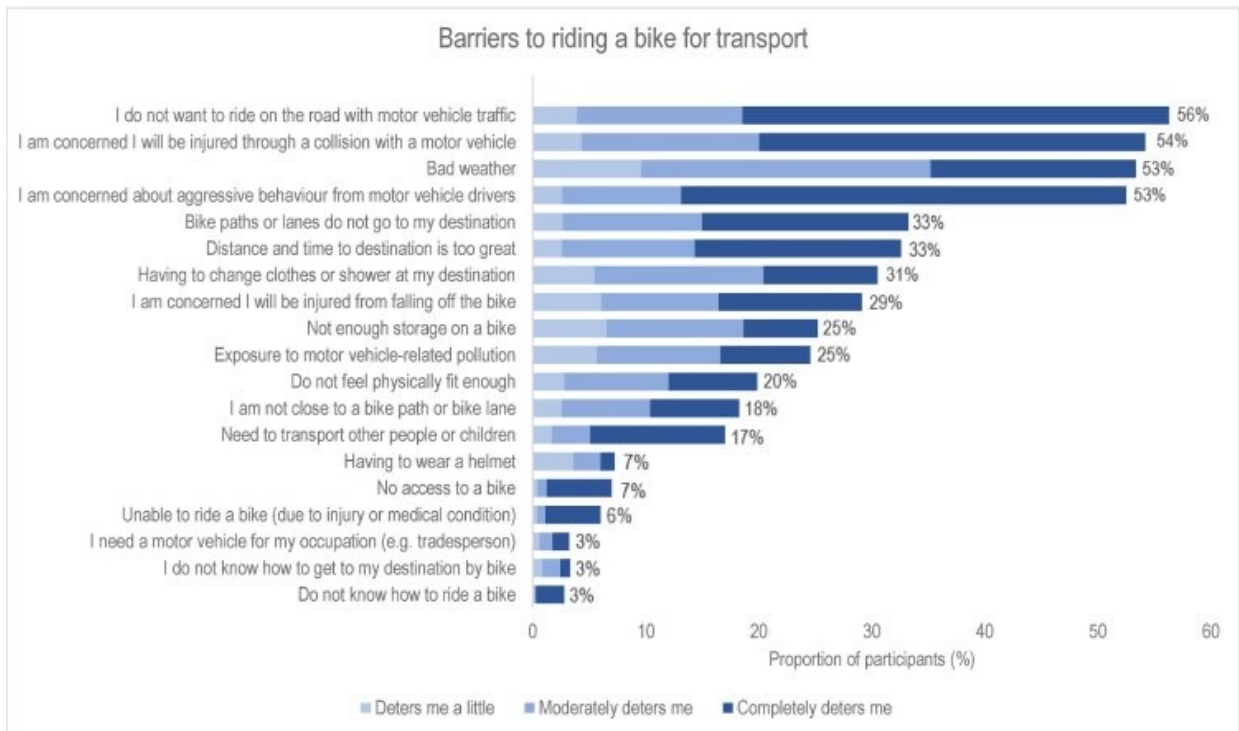
Barriers and Enablers of increased cycling

A subsequent study by Peason et al in 2023 reported on *Barriers and enablers of bike riding for transport and recreational purposes in Australia*.⁶

For transport specific barriers:

“Barriers to riding a bike for transport reported most frequently included not wanting to ride on the road with motor vehicle traffic (56%), concern about collision with a motor vehicle (54%), bad weather (53%) and motorist aggression (53%) (Fig. 2). Of those participants who reported these as barriers, a higher proportion reported concerns about traffic and collision as completely deterring them from riding relative to bad weather. Small proportions of participants reported factors including not knowing how to ride a bike, not knowing how to get to a destination, needing a motor vehicle for their occupation and being unable to ride due to an injury or medical condition.”

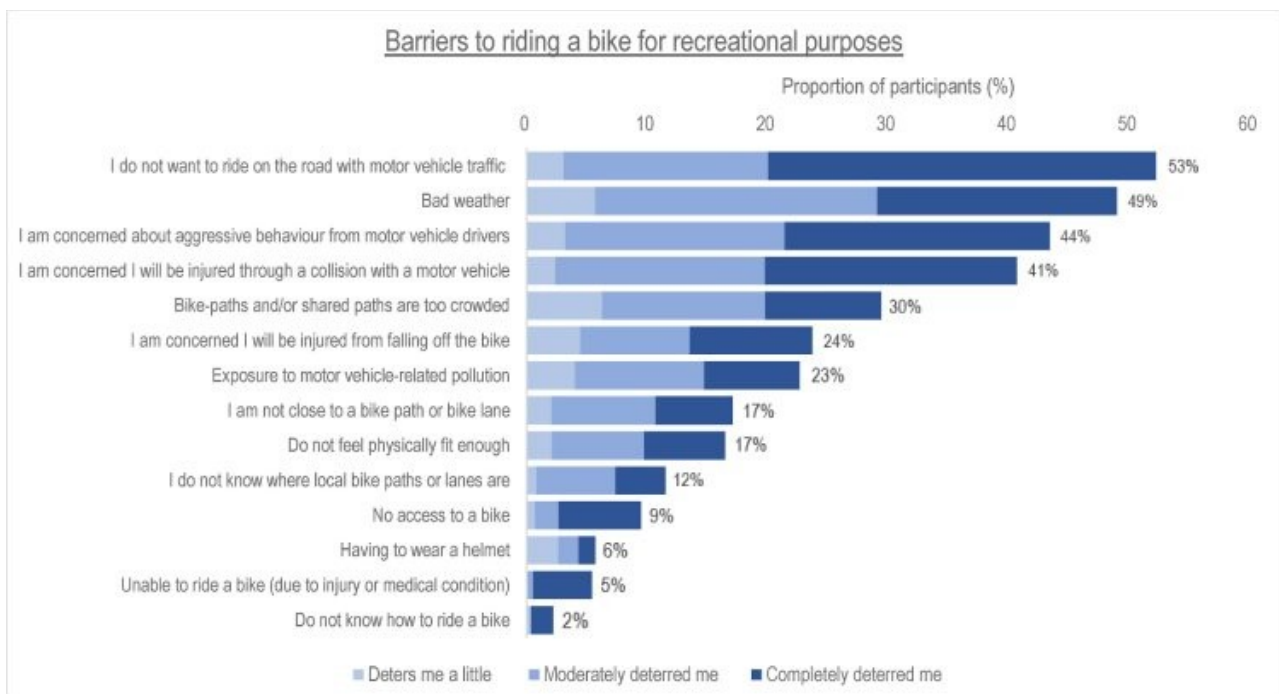
6 Peason et al (2023) Barriers and enablers of bike riding for transport and recreational purposes in Australia <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214140522002109>



Pearson et al (2023) Barriers to Riding a bike for Transport (Fig 2)

Recreational specific barriers also highlighted safety aspects of vulnerable road users:

“The most frequently reported barrier for cycling for recreational purposes was not wanting to ride on the road with motor vehicle traffic (53%), followed by bad weather (49%), concern about aggression from motor vehicle drivers (44%) and concern about collision with motor vehicles (41%)”



Pearson et al (2023) barriers to riding a bike for recreational purposes (Fig 3) also identified 3 of the top 4 barriers as being: people prefer not to ride on the road with traffic, a high concern with

being injured in a collision with a motor vehicle, and concern about aggressive behaviour from motor vehicle drivers.

The study also identified the top Transport-specific enablers to cycling as: “having a bike-lane physically separated from motor vehicle traffic or an off-road bike path (66%), to improve physical health (65%) and to reduce environmental impact (57%).” If I could easily get to a bike path was listed fourth (49%).

Recreation-specific cycling enablers included: “improving mental health, reported by 64% of participants . Having a physically separated bike lane or off-road bike path was reported by 60% of participants, of which 78% reported that this would encourage them very much. The ride being scenic was reported as an enabler by 54% of participants.”

Reducing Transport Emissions and improving vulnerable road user safety

Changing safety behaviours of drivers needs to be done alongside the need to also reduce transport emissions. This requires encouragement of more walking and cycling (active transport).

We note the State Government has set a target of Increasing active transport mode share from 18 per cent in 2021 to 25 per cent by 2030, according to The Transport Sector Emissions Reduction Pledge (2021)⁷

Victorian Cycling Strategy good rhetoric, poor implementation

A large part of the State government active transport has gone into shared use paths as part of major transport projects, not in protected, separated cycling paths separate from these road or rail upgrades. This is despite the Victorian Cycling Strategy 2018-28 (December 2017) saying “initiatives that will result in more direct, separated cycle paths to important destinations, like workplaces, schools and public transport stops, and make it easier for cyclists to park their bikes at stations or take them on a train or bus.”

The State Government should be aware that perceptions and actual safety prevent larger numbers engaging in active transport. The Victorian Cycling Strategy 2018-28 (December 2017) states:

“We know about 60 percent of Victorians are curious about cycling but are deterred by real or perceived safety concerns. Women, children and seniors cycle far less than the typical cyclist, who is male and under 45.”⁸

We note the Victorian Cycling Strategy 2018-28 emphasises improving safety through a safe system approach. The rhetoric is good, but the funding at State level largely does not live up to the rhetoric to drive the transformation needed:

“Safe roads: Safe roads help reduce crashes and minimise the severity of cyclists’ injuries in a crash. Separating cyclists and motorists by installing cycleways, cycle paths and protected intersections reduces the likelihood of a crash. Investment in traffic calming also helps reduce conflicts between cyclists and motorists, especially on local roads.

‘Dooring’ related to on-street parking is a major safety issue for cyclists. The interface between on-road parking and cyclists is being improved by better design and location of on-street parking and by relocating on-street parking where suitable alternative parking places are available nearby.”

There is limited expansion in protected cycling lanes and projects outside of major transport projects looking at modal shift and active transport safety.

7 Cutting Victoria’s emissions 2021–2025 Transport sector emissions reduction pledge, May 2021. <https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/victorian-government-action-on-climate-change/Transport-sector-pledge-accessible.pdf>

8 Victorian Cycling Strategy 2018-28 (December 2017) <https://dtp.vic.gov.au/-/media/tfv-documents/walking-and-cycling/victorian-cycling-strategy-2018-28.pdf>

The new protected cycling lanes along St Kilda Road and the work of Melbourne City Council in expanding protected cycling lanes are the exceptions. Melbourne City Council has already delivered 19km of protected bike lanes and in May 2023 voted to fast track further work for its target of achieving 44km of bike lanes around the city by 2030 in a bid to tackle the climate emergency. We wish the State Government had equal ambition as Melbourne City Council which would improve the safety of vulnerable road users.

Many of the Strategic cycling corridors have no, or poor cycling infrastructure, such as cycling lanes on busy roads which are not conducive for encouraging the large interested cohort to take up cycling due to perceptions of poor safety.

IPCC Sixth Assessment Report on need for Cycling modal shift

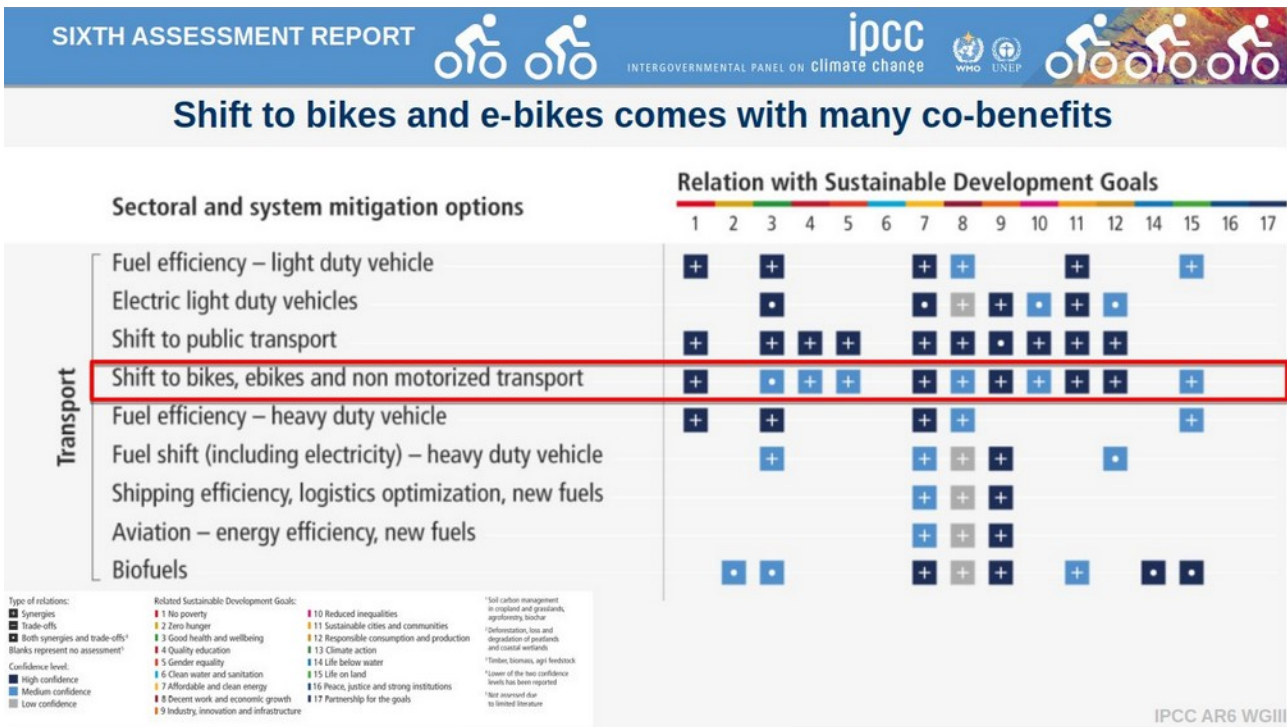
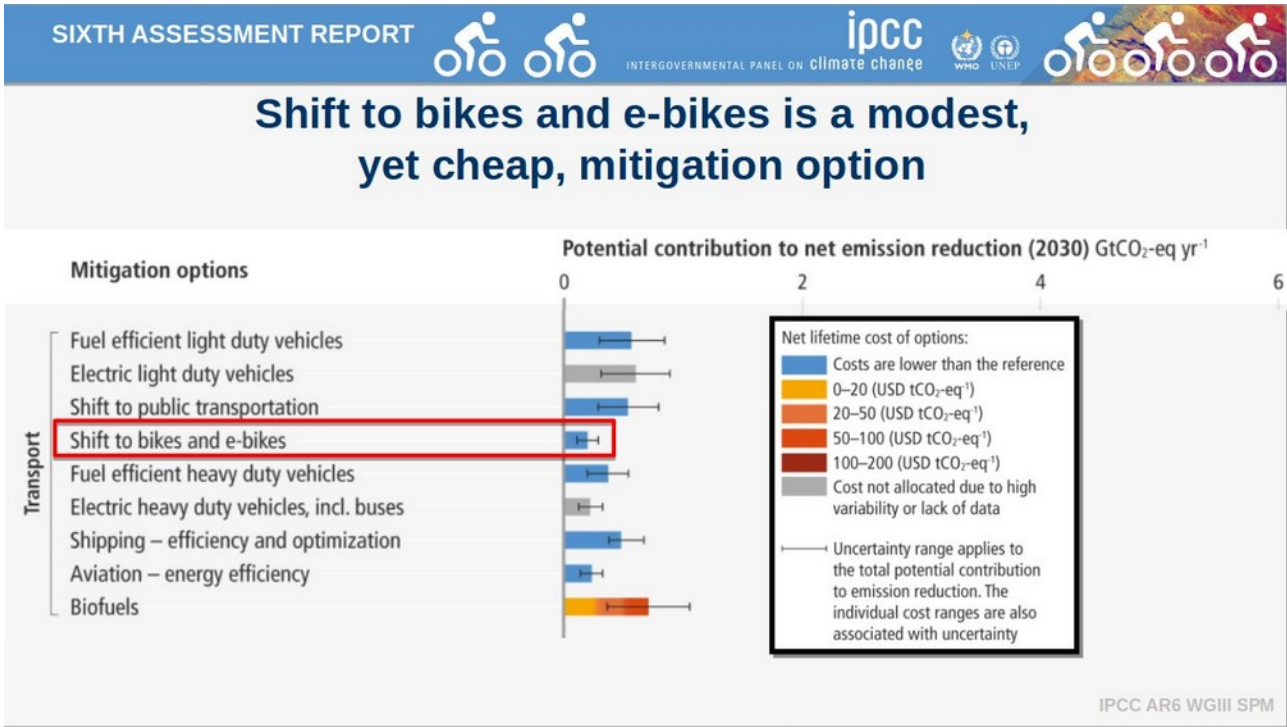
One of the IPCC sixth assessment authors, a co-chair of Working Group I, Dr Valérie Masson-Delmotte, collated all the information in the 3 working group reports (2021-2022) on the importance of transport mode shift and cycling as a solution to climate change.

Here are statements by Dr Valérie Masson-Delmotte on the importance of mode shift to cycling.⁹

- “Shifts to bikes and e-bikes is a modest, yet cheap, option to reduce greenhouse gas emissions #mitigation”
- “In fact, cycling is one of the lifestyle changes with the largest potential to reduce our individual carbon footprint.”
- “Each option to reduce greenhouse gas emissions can have other co-benefits or trade-offs with other dimensions of sustainability, related to sustainable development goals #SDGs, and shifts to bikes and e-bikes (and walking) comes with many co-benefits!”
- “Using bikes and e-bikes is affordable, and can support gender equality related to mobility”
- “Cycling and walking is good for health too.”
- “Active mobility with safe and convenient infrastructure provides direct physical health and well-being benefits, helps reducing air pollution, and coping with heat stress (an adaptation measure!).”
- “Cycling goes hand in hand with sustainable cities and communities, and urban forms designed to facilitate cycling.”
- “Climate resilient development is the process of implementing adaptation and mitigation measures to support sustainable development. Cycling is part of climate resilient development!”
- “Transport demand reductions and mode shift are feasible options in strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions”
- “Established cities have a potential for transformation by focusing on creating modal shift”
- “Improving green infrastructure connectivity for cycling is an urban nature-based solution : people are willing to cycle longer on safe tracks and with green surroundings.”
- “There are known barriers for cycling uptake, for instance related to habits, housing costs, and lobbying to privilege the status quo. In particular, urban development patterns designed for cars”
- “Multiple approaches can enable cycling uptake, such as investments in infrastructures, inclusion in local transport plans, or bike-to-work campaigns. This requires participation, discussion and debate.”

9 Dr Valérie Masson-Delmotte, as quoted by Extend the Upfield Bike Path Blog, (4 June, 2022) *What does the IPCC 6th assessment climate report say on cycling, and addressing local Melbourne transport mode shift*, <https://upfielddbikepath.wordpress.com/2022/06/04/what-does-the-ipcc-6th-assessment-climate-report-say-on-cycling-and-addressing-local-melbourne-transport-mode-shift/>

- “Behavioural change in a short time and at a massive scale is possible, with adequate enabling conditions.”



Funding for active transport infrastructure needs boosting to increase safety for vulnerable road users

Funding for active transport in Victoria, outside of major transport projects build and paths in the development of new suburban parklands, has been relatively minimal.

Bicycle Network estimated that in 2022/23 year roughly \$21.8 million was allocated for active transport, with the Department of Transport earmarking a number of bike projects across metropolitan and regional Victoria.¹⁰ Similar low levels of direct funding have occurred for several years.

In 2016 the United Nations Environment Program recommended increasing the funding for active transport to 20 per cent of transport budgets:

“UNEP calls on countries to invest at least 20 per cent of their transport budgets in walking and cycling infrastructure to save lives, reverse pollution and reduce carbon emissions, which are rising at more than 10 per cent a year.”¹¹

10 Bicycle Network, 5 May 2022, Victorian Budget 22/23: what’s in it for bikes?

<https://bicyclenetwork.com.au/newsroom/2022/05/05/victorian-budget-22-23-whats-in-it-for-bikes/>

11 UN News, 20 October 2016, Put ‘people, not cars’ first in transport systems, says UN environment chief

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2016/10/543292>

Recommendations:

Invest in Safer infrastructure for vulnerable road users. Increasing safety for vulnerable road users means investing in safer footpaths, crossings, separated bike paths and protected bike lanes, and where pedestrian and cycling traffic is low, more shared use bike paths.

More Safety signage. It also means that more safety signage at key intersections is used warning drivers of both pedestrian and cycling activity, including early start signage for cyclists.

Driver Education. In the past too much emphasis has been placed on changing behaviours of vulnerable road users for their own safety as part of education campaigns. This amounts to 'Blaming the Victim'. There needs to be a much greater focus on drivers sharing public roads, with an emphasis on safety, and also encouraging use of cycling and walking for local trips.

Addressing safety of vulnerable road users needs to also address the need to reduce transport emissions. The safety of vulnerable road users and the need to change mobility behaviour to reduce emissions should both drive more investment in active transport infrastructure. As dedicated infrastructure improves there is likely to be a compounding increase of active transport mode share reflecting the improved safety environment for vulnerable road users. This requires a boost to recurrent funding for active transport as a proportion of Transport funding in the Victorian budget

Build safe cycling infrastructure along the Strategic Cycling corridors. Sometime, like the extension of the Upfield bike path beyond the M80, this is entirely new infrastructure waiting to be built.

Increase funding to active transport to 20 percent of the state transport budget, as recommended by the United Nations.

Yours Sincerely

John Englart,

on behalf of Sustainable Fawkner <https://fawkner.org> ,

Climate Action Merribek <https://climateactionmoreland.org/>