

## **Responses from Infrastructure Minister David O'Byrne to Bicycle Tasmania's questions in the lead up to the March 15 state election**

### **1. How have you supported and promoted bicycling for transport in the past?**

The Labor Party takes road safety very seriously and is committed to protecting all road users, particularly those most vulnerable on our roads, such as bike riders. With more Tasmanians cycling as a healthy alternative transport option, we need to ensure our road environment is safe for all road users.

I support a minimum one-metre clearance when motor vehicles overtake bike riders and a re-elected Labor government will conduct a trial mandating a minimum passing distance of one metre by drivers when overtaking bike riders, similar to the trial that is planned in Queensland. Improving protection for vulnerable road users and creating a better shared understanding of what is the right behaviour to use on the road is a priority for Labor.

I believe that through public education we can positively influence road user behaviour. As the Minister responsible for road safety I have asked the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources to develop, as a priority, a Tasmanian based education and awareness campaign, building on similar campaigns developed in other jurisdictions.

I have asked the Road Safety Advisory Council to form a new Cycling Safety Steering Committee to provide advice on prioritisation of a suite of initiatives to address issues around cycling safety, including education, infrastructure, communication of road rules, a minimum passing distance trial and campaign and penalties. The Committee will not only include cycling organisations like Tasmanian Bicycle Council, Cycling Tasmania and the Amy Gillett Foundation, but also include motor vehicle user groups and Tasmania Police.

As Minister for Infrastructure I ensure that money spent on building new roads, safety improvements and road maintenance also benefits cyclists, for example shoulder sealing and lane widening. Any new infrastructure or major upgrades of existing roads have taken into account cyclists needs. For example both the Kingston and Brighton bypasses include separated cycle paths, as well as wide sealed shoulders.

I have introduced the Vulnerable Road User Program, where local councils are asked to submit applications for funding to provide better infrastructure on council roads specifically aimed at improving safety for vulnerable road users, including cyclists. Tasmanian Labor is committed to providing the funding for this program of \$1.5 million over the next two years, and \$500,000 a year thereafter, through the Tasmanian Road Safety Levy.

### **2. Will you commit to ongoing funding to the Department of Sport and Recreation at current levels or higher? *The Department of Sport and Recreation manages an ongoing allocation of \$1.5Mpa to the Trails and Bikeways program.***

Since its inception in 2008-09, the Trails and Bikeways Program has leveraged around \$13 million worth of development projects across Tasmania, resulting in more than 150 kilometres of tracks.

As well as providing positive economic outcomes, the Trails and Bikeways Program is helping Tasmanians participate in sport, recreation and physical activity.

If re-elected to Government the Labor Party is committed to the ongoing funding of this program, including \$500,000 for 2014-15.

**3. Will you commit to a NEW allocation of \$30M to the PUCN program?**

*Under the current Government there is in-principle support for the Principal Urban Cycling Networks program (PUCN) but no funding approval.*

As part of the implementation of the Tasmanian Walking and Cycling for Active Transport Strategy the Government has worked with local government, educational establishments, bicycle user groups and community organisations to identify Principal (transport-oriented) Urban Cycling Networks for the Launceston, Hobart and Burnie/Devonport urban areas. The Government committed over \$1 million for the planning and design on the implementation of some key Principal Urban Cycling Networks routes. The Government has also implemented a Positive Provision Policy for Cycling Infrastructure which ensures that the needs of bike riders are considered at the start of the planning and design process for road infrastructure upgrades and in the development of maintenance contracts.

Under the recently announced Community Roads 2 Program the Labor Party has committed \$2.1 million to upgrade 7 kilometres of the West Tamar Highway roadside cycling infrastructure from Trevallyn to Riverside (3.5 kilometres each way). This is identified as a priority project under the Principal Urban Cycling Network.

Under the same program Tasmanian Labor has also committed \$500,000 to the construction of a further 700m bicycle lane on the Bonnet Hill section of the Channel Highway between Taroona and Kingston. This is also recognised as a priority project and an integral link in the Southern Principal Urban Cycling Network. The project to address gaps in the old highway from Kingston and Huntingfield (Summerleas to Algona roundabouts) is identified as a priority project under the identified Principal Urban Cycling Networks. The Government has granted \$30,000 to the Kingborough Council to complete a missing section of the Kingston Trail Network.

A number of other projects under Labor's second round of the successful \$110 Community Roads Program will assist to improve safety for all vehicles, including bicycles, travelling on these roads.

4. If elected, would you participate in a bicycle round table event in mid 2014, held to gather key stakeholders to evaluate current and potential actions to keep riders safe? AND
5. If elected, would you maintain funding for an annual professional development event around best practice at both state and local government levels?

The Government convened a successful Cycling Roundtable Forum in November last year and the report generated from this forum will be used, among other things, to inform the development of the Tasmanian Road Safety Advisory Council Third Action Plan, which will include a focus on vulnerable road users, such as cyclists and pedestrians. Strategies identified at the Forum will also be considered in the development of actions under the Tasmanian Walking and Cycling for Active Transport Strategy.

If re-elected to Government, the Labor Party would like to hold a similar event in 2014 and I would be pleased to participate.