



**BICYCLE
NETWORK®**

Pedalling to a better normal

**A six-month plan to stimulate the
economy, create jobs, save lives and get
Australians moving**

24 May 2020



About Bicycle Network

With more than 45,000 members, Bicycle Network is one of the top five member-based bike riding organisations in the world and the largest in Australia. With a 40-year history, we are committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all Australians by making it easier for people to ride a bike.

Operating nationally, we have a measurable, successful and large-scale impact in community participation and the promotion of healthy lifestyles through bike riding.

We achieve this through:

- improving the bike riding environment by working with government at all levels to provide better infrastructure, legislation, data, policies and regulations
- delivering successful, large-scale and measurable behaviour change programs such as Ride2School and Ride2Work
- providing services that support bike riders through nationwide membership
- running mass participation bike riding events such as the Great Vic Bike Ride and United Energy Around the Bay
- being a key national spokesperson on issues related to cycling and physical activity.

Leveraging this experience, this document contains Bicycle Network's six-month plan to save lives, create jobs, stimulate the economy and get Australians moving as cities begin to ease lockdown measures.

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1. Bike riding is a golden opportunity to stimulate the economy and minimise the spread of COVID-19

COVID-19 provided our governments with a heart wrenching choice between saving lives and Australian jobs. So far, Australian governments have done remarkably well at minimising lives lost. As the threat to life eases and the focus shifts to employment and the economy, it would be a tragedy if instead of moving forward we slipped back.

The bicycle has been described as a simple solution to the world's most complicated problems. It has been instrumental in helping us survive the crisis and it now has a key role to play in helping us come out the other side stronger.

At the start of lockdown, few predicted that bike riding would rescue people desperate to escape their homes. The number of Australians riding bikes has soared. Bicycle Network's recreational bike counts recorded increases as high as [270 per cent on bike paths](#). Bicycles quickly replaced toilet paper as the 'must have' item with bike shops experiencing extraordinary demand.

Populations around the world have turned to the inexpensive, efficient bicycle as a post-COVID-19 saviour. Realising that we can't return to the days of overcrowded public transport and that roads will not cope with increased single-occupant vehicles, cities and governments around the world have acted quickly to make it easier for more people to commute by bike.

The speed at which cities are transforming and incentivising bike riding is unprecedented. Cities such as Berlin, Montreal, Bogota, Paris and Athens have, within days, installed kilometres of protected bike lanes that usually take months (see appendix). Additionally, France, Italy and England are providing citizens with financial incentives to get them pedalling (see appendix).

Now is the time for Australia to get moving. The window of opportunity is open, but it's closing fast.

Before we know it, Australians will be returning to their workplaces as our focus turns to employment. The horrifying possibility exists that the stimulus our economy so badly needs will be stultified if it coincides with traffic congestion that gridlocks our streets.

Now is not the time for federal, state and local governments to lay responsibility in each other's lap. Bicycle Network's six-month health and stimulus plan calls on all levels of government to do their part, coordinate and work together to future proof the health and economic sustainability of our communities.

We urge you to read our *Pedalling to a better normal* plan carefully. It calls for governments to immediately provide better places to ride, incentives for people riding bikes, supportive laws and programs that embed bike riding for transport and recreation as a social norm.

More people on bicycles is vital if Australia is to provide crucial employment and re-stimulate the economy without surrendering the ground made in saving lives. There is simply no other way for Australians to move around quickly and efficiently while maintaining their physical distance.

Churchill said, 'Never let a good crisis go to waste.' Unless Australian governments act immediately to make bicycles part of the solution, a once in a lifetime opportunity will slip through our fingers.



2. Six-month health and stimulus plan for federal, state and local governments

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, over three million Australians rode a bike for recreation every week. That number has been even greater during lockdown. However, the census shows that less than 200,000 ride to work every day. Australians don't ride to work because they're concerned about vehicles, particularly heavy vehicles. Therefore, if we remove the problem and provide separated places to ride protected from vehicles, we'll prevent a congestion catastrophe as people find alternatives to public transport.

The *Pedalling to a better normal* plan provides actions that can be implemented immediately. It calls for whole of government co-operation and sharing of the costs. The total government investment required to get more people riding bikes to save our looming transport disaster is only \$904 million.

This investment will provide employment and stimulate the economy through \$370 million invested in 750 kilometres of shovel ready adaptable bike lane projects, \$525 million invested in bike riding incentives including a paid ride-to-work scheme and tax rebates for new bicycles, and \$9 million invested in programs to encourage and support children and less experienced bike riders. The following table is an estimated costed summary of the proposed six-month plan *Pedalling to a better normal*.

Level of government	Providing better places to ride a bicycle	Incentivising bike riding	Supportive laws	Programs
Federal government	Fund 250 kilometres of adaptable, separated bike lanes throughout Australia. Investment: \$100m	Provide a \$5 a day incentive for any Australian who rides-to-work. Investment: \$250m Provide a tax rebate for commuter bicycles and pedelec e-bikes Investment: \$75m Introduce a subsidy scheme to accelerate heavy vehicle safety upgrades and an immediate tax write off for new heavy vehicles that meet the revised standards. Investment: \$150m	Introduce improved national safety standards for all new vehicles.	Fund and implement a national Ride2School and Road Ready program. Investment: \$5m Fund and implement a national Ride2Work program. Investment: \$3m Fund and implement a national heavy vehicle and bike rider training program. Investment: \$1m



<p>State and Territory governments</p>	<p>Fund and build 250 kilometres of adaptable, separated bike lanes throughout each state and territory.</p> <p>Total investment: \$100m</p> <p>Approximate investment per state proportionate to population: NSW 80kms - \$32m, VIC 65kms - \$26m, QLD 50kms - \$20m, WA 25kms - \$10m, SA 15kms - \$6m, TAS 5kms - \$2m, ACT 5kms - \$2m, NT 5kms - \$2m.</p> <p>Provide additional and expanded bike boxes, bicycle prioritised intersections and signs.</p> <p>Total investment: \$50m</p> <p>Approximate investment per state proportionate to population: NSW \$16m, VIC \$13m, QLD \$10m, WA \$5m, SA \$3m, TAS \$1m, ACT \$1m, NT \$1m.</p>	<p>Introduce a business grants scheme for bike parking and end-of-trip facilities.</p> <p>Investment: \$50m</p> <p>Approximate investment per state: NSW \$16m, VIC \$13m, QLD \$10m, WA \$5m, SA \$3m, TAS \$1m, ACT \$1m, NT \$1m.</p>	<p>Unify Australian laws by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VIC: passing a minimum passing distance law and removing the age limit on footpath riding • NSW: removing the age limit on footpath riding. <p>Reduce speeds to 30km/h on state-controlled roads in built up areas – near schools, parks, shopping precincts and on residential streets.</p>	
<p>Local governments</p>	<p>Fund and build 250 kilometres of adaptable, separated bike lanes.</p> <p>Total investment: \$100m</p> <p>Provide additional signage. (The amount allocated will depend on density and size.)</p> <p>Total investment: \$20m</p>		<p>Reduce speeds on council-controlled roads to 30km/h in built up areas - near schools, parks, shopping precincts and on residential streets.</p>	<p>Trial 'slow streets' and closed street days in appropriate areas.</p>



3. Cities have already identified where to build the bike lanes

We know where to build the build lanes. The specific streets and roads are contained in our future city plans. Sometimes these are called strategic cycling corridors, sometimes they are called the principal bicycle network. Australian cities have strategies and the *Pedalling to a better normal plan* simply calls for those strategies to be accelerated.

For example, Sydney's [Future Transport Strategy 2056](#) sets the vision for transport for the next 40 years. Similarly, Melbourne's [Transport Strategy 2030](#) establishes a long-term vision for all city commuters. The [Victorian Cycling Strategy 2018-28](#) and [Plan Melbourne 2050](#) also outline the strategic cycling corridors which are the cornerstone of Melbourne's principal bicycle network.

In Melbourne, this will result in protected, pop up bike lanes being installed in the next six months on key commuter routes like St Kilda Road, Sydney Road, Rathdowne Street, Exhibition Street, Royal Parade and La Trobe Street Bridge.

Australia should have hundreds of kilometres of bike lanes well advanced in planning that are ready to build. Regrettably, we are behind.

Accordingly, while there are some 'shovel ready' bike lanes sufficiently advanced with their planning to be built immediately, this package also requires government to combine, speed up the process and cut the red tape.

4. Appendix

Global governments response to pandemic

City/countries	Initiative to make bike riding for recreation and transport easier
Athens	Allocated 50,000 square metres of public space for cycling and walking, traffic banned on selected streets
Auckland	Built 22km of adjustable bike lanes
Barcelona	Removed car parking from 21km of city streets for bikes
Berlin	Built 22km of adjustable bike lanes
Bogota	Opened up 76km of new bike routes
Budapest	Implementing the city centre bike network which includes 19km of adjustable bike lanes
Dublin	Implementing temporary mobility plan - allocates new space for pedestrians and cyclists
France	€20 million plan to get people pedalling - includes €50 bike repair reimbursement
Italy	Introduced 70% subsidy for new bikes up to €500
London	London Streetspace programme to roll out new adjustable bike routes
Manchester	£5 million for pop up cycleways and widened pavements
Mexico City	Proposed 130km of temporary bike lanes
Milan	Implementing Open Roads plan includes temporary infrastructure and 30km/h speed limits
Montreal	Implementing 217km of adjustable bike lanes
New York	Opening 160km of streets to pedestrians and cyclists including the provision of temporary bike lanes
Oakland	Closing 119km of roads (10% of the city's total) to vehicles
Paris	Removing 72 per cent of city car parking removed, adding 650km of new, adjustable bike lanes
Rome	Building 150km of new adjustable bike lanes
Scotland	£10 million investment for active travel infrastructure
Sydney	Six new cycleways (10km of new bike lanes in total)
United Kingdom	£250 pound emergency active travel fund including pop up bike lanes, protected space for cycling and new cycling corridors.
New Zealand	Innovating Streets for People fund - cities can apply for 90% funding to widen sidewalks and temporary bike lanes