



**BICYCLE
NETWORK®**

VICTORIAN PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION 2022/23

FEBRUARY 2022



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Bicycle Network acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which we work and live and pay our respects to the first peoples of this country, their culture and elders, past, present and emerging.

Who we are

With nearly 50,000 members, Bicycle Network is one of the leading member-based bike riding organisations in Australia. 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 behaviour change programs such as Ride2School and Ride2Work
- providing services and insurance that support bike riders through nationwide membership
- running mass participation bike riding events such as the Great Vic Bike Ride

Bicycle Network can assist the Victorian Government in scoping and targeting achievable outcomes for bike riding and other forms of active travel. If you need our help to build bike rider patronage in Victoria, please contact us.

Dr Nicholas Hunter

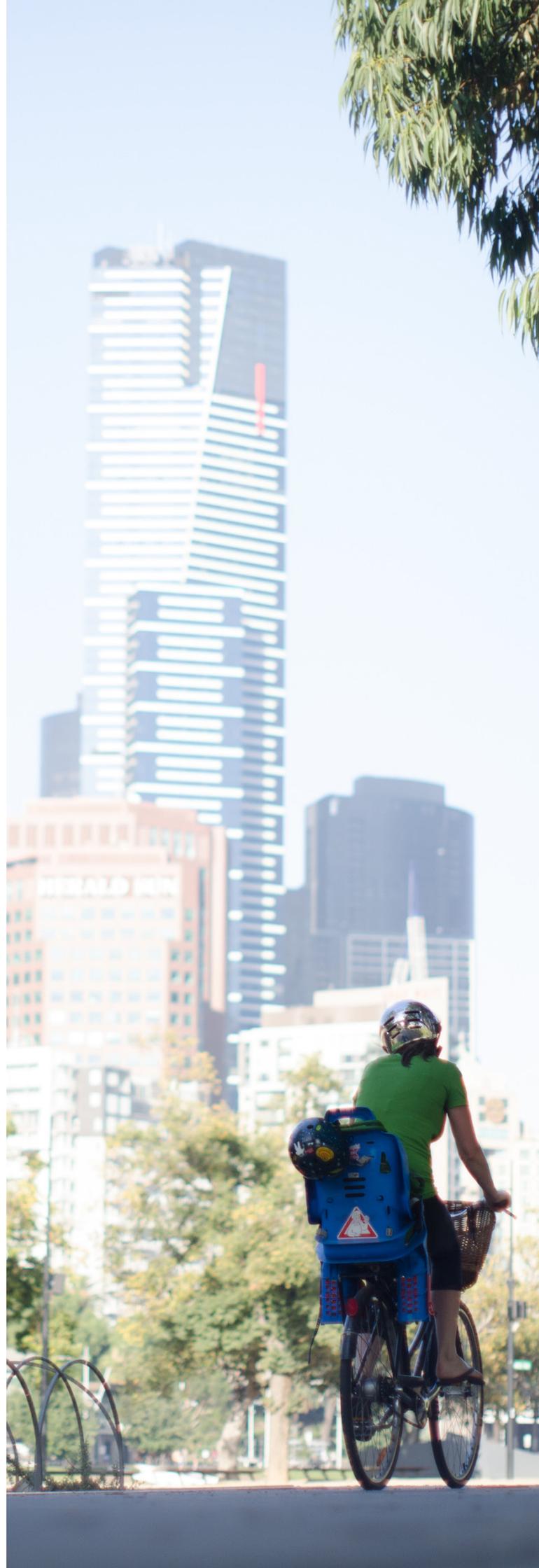
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Executive summary

The Victorian Government has announced that it will aim for **25 per cent** of trips in the state to be made by foot or bike. It is now 2022. It's time to make it happen.

The good news is that this goal is still achievable. But it requires dedicated investments into several new and existing projects. And it must start right now.

In Bicycle Network's pre-budget submission for the 22/23 fiscal year, we have offered a head start. The target of 25 per cent active travel trips by 2025 is broken down into **seven essential projects**. The projects, and their associated costs, are outlined below.

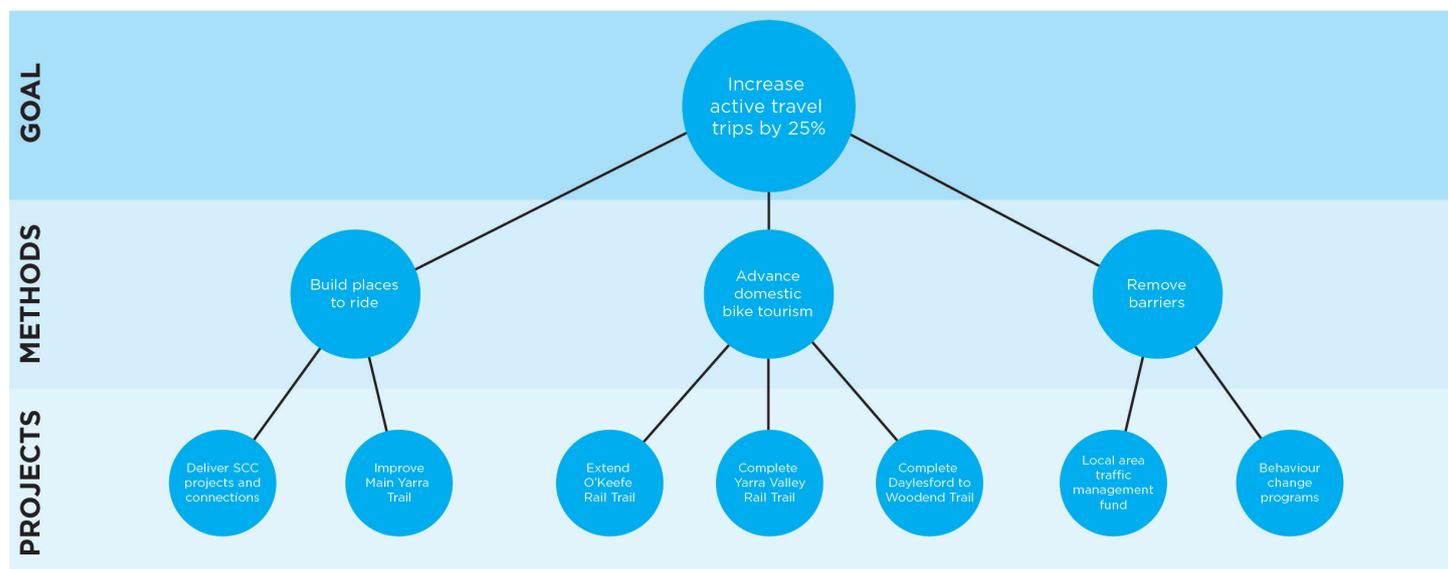
Advancing active travel in Victoria does not have to be complicated. We already have a large 'near market' of Victorians interested in riding a bike, but concerned about making the next move. Let's support them and hit our goals.



Budget impact summary

Recommendation	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	TOTAL \$m
1. Deliver Strategic Cycling Corridor projects and connections	\$18.0	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$18.0
2. Improve Main Yarra Trail	\$7.0	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$7.0
3. Extend O'Keefe Rail Trail	\$17.2	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$17.2
4. Extend Yarra Valley Trail	\$4.5	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$4.5
5. Build Woodend-Daylesford Rail Trail	\$4.5	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$4.5
6. Local area traffic management fund	\$10.0	\$10.0	\$10.0	\$10.0	\$10.0
7. Behaviour change programs	\$0.75	\$0.75	\$0.75	\$0.75	\$3.0

Let's hit 25 per cent active travel by 2025



In the *Climate Change Strategy 2021-2030*, the Victorian Government earmarked it will aim to make 25 per cent of all trips by foot or bike by 2025¹. In other words, the Victorian Government has three years to boost active travel up 7 per cent from its current mode share of 18 per cent.

The reason should be clear enough: active travel is recognized as the most sustainable form of transport, with a net zero carbon footprint and a means to curb air and noise pollution.

The Victorian Government also recognizes in its *Cycling Strategy 2018-2028* that riding a bike reduce the pressure on transport systems, by transporting more people per square metre than cars or trams².

Make no mistake, a pledge to boost active travel to comprise 25 per cent of trips is a fantastic commitment. But all great commitments need a great plan. And given that active travel has been stagnant since 2008, there must be a concerted effort to boost participation.

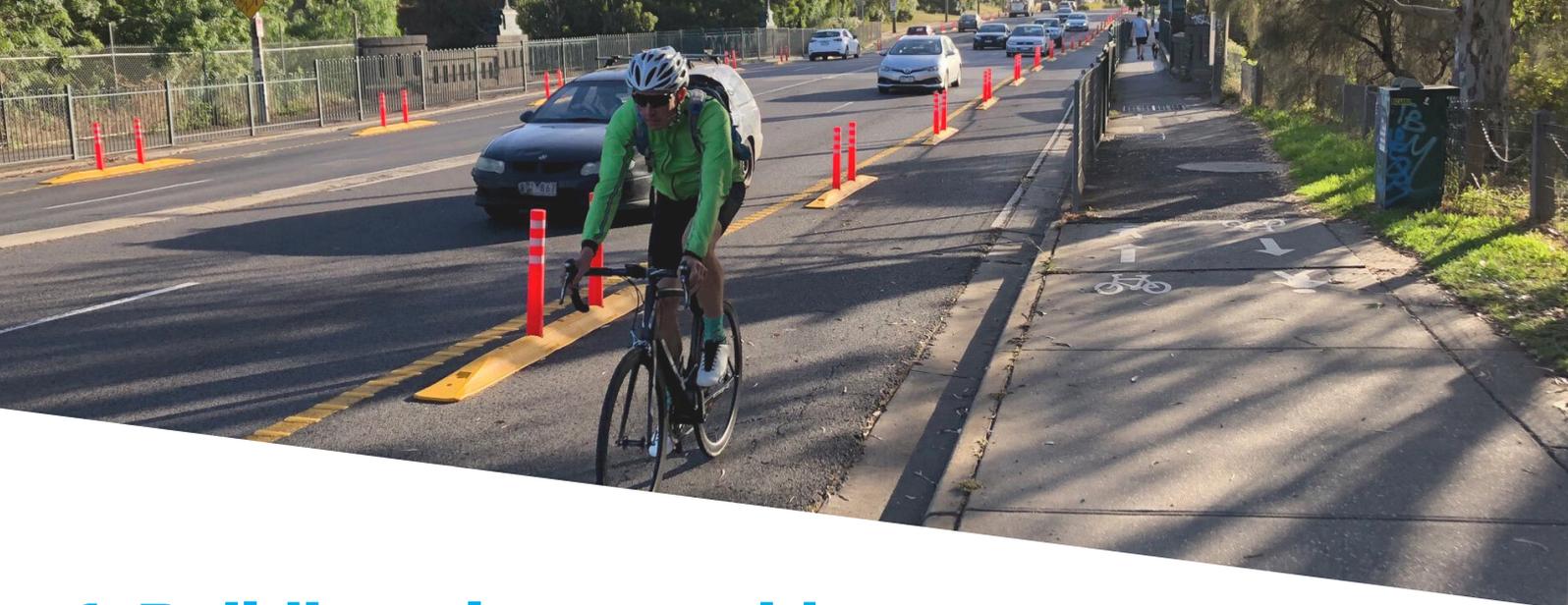
So let's work towards it. Let's turn the goals into investments.

In Bicycle Network's pre-budget submission, we have outlined several projects we believe are integral to moving our active travel domain forward and increasing bike uptake across the state.

We believe there are three necessary mechanisms to start getting more people on pedals:

1. **Build places to ride** – quite simply, we need to offer people a means to get around, and they must feel safe and confident in doing so
2. **Advancing bike tourism** – the perfect 'taster' for riding is getting families out of the house in fun and adventurous settings
3. **Remove barriers** – we must address the factors that stop or discourage people from getting on a bike

We have provided six budget allocation recommendations that each relate to one of these mechanisms. They are focused, feasible and carefully laid out to ensure the goals outlined in the Victorian Government's existing strategies are successful.



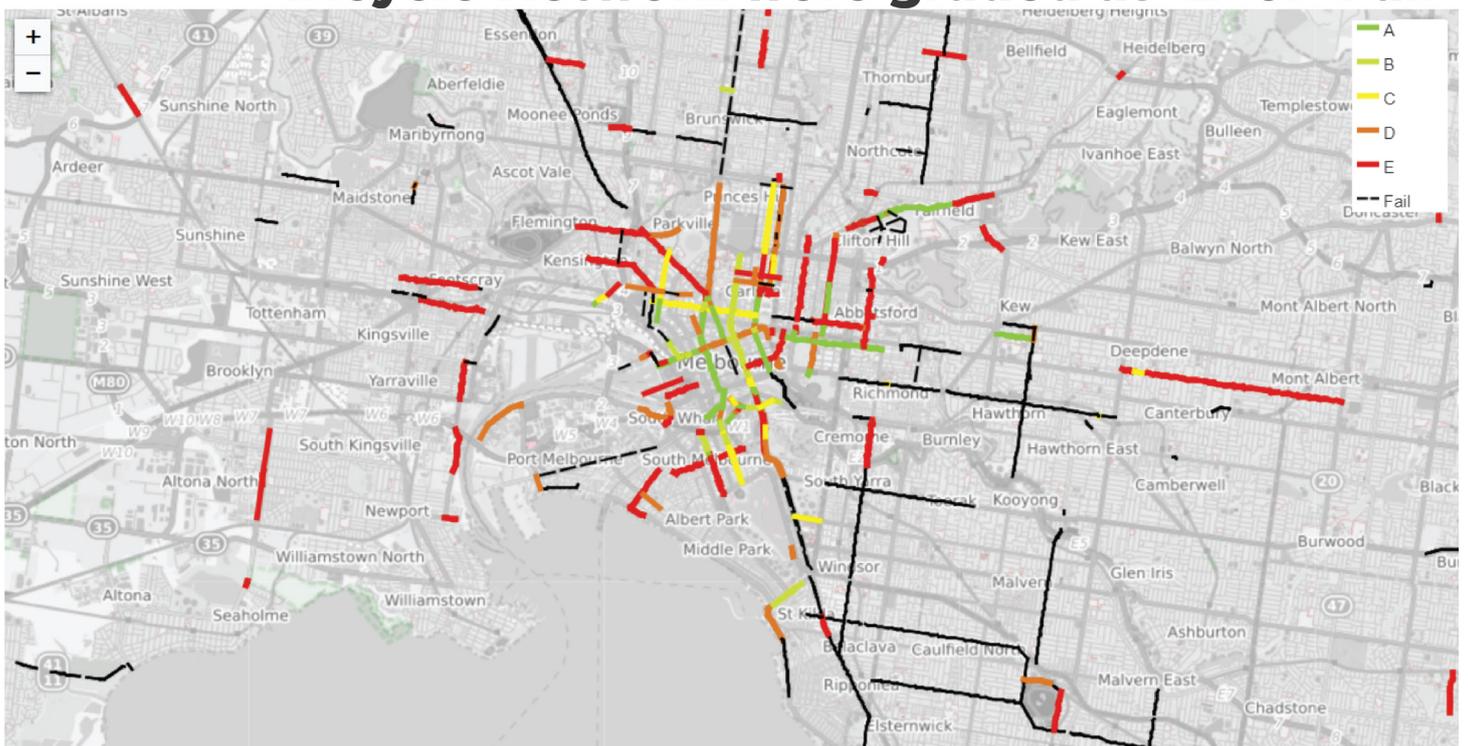
1. Building places to ride

As we move towards COVID-normal, widespread road congestion is slowly creeping back into the spotlight³. If there was a time to encourage a transport mode shift towards active travel, it is right now.

At present, our bike lane network is not at a quality that will convince people to give bike riding a try. Bicycle Network's 'Bike Lane Report Card' reveals that **70 per cent** of the bike lanes that were assessed rated as either an 'E' or 'Fail'. The majority of these are situated in outer Melbourne local government areas, where recent studies have revealed that most residents are 'interested but concerned' about riding a bike⁴.

The first step to increasing bike uptake, and achieving 25 per cent active travel by 2025, is to build places to ride.

Over 70 per cent of bike lanes assessed by Bicycle Network were graded as 'E' or 'Fail'



1.1 Deliver Strategic Cycling Corridor projects and connections

We have a strong and well-informed plan for building the Victoria's bike network. The Principle Bicycle Network (PBN) is the high-level plan for a fully connected active transport system, linked by important arterial routes known as Strategic Cycling Corridors (SCC)⁵.

The Victorian Government has shown a strong commitment to the ongoing delivery of SCCs. They form an essential component of Victoria's Cycling Strategy 2018-2028² and Plan Melbourne 2017-2050⁶, the strategy for growing Melbourne into the future. They are designed to be safe, low-stress, well-connected and easy to access.

Simply put, the SCC system is the blueprint for our bike future.

Completing the PBN will take time. As such, we must prioritise the rollout of SCCs that will lead to the highest impact in the short term. Bicycle Network recommends the following investments be made in the coming fiscal year.

1.1.1 Box Hill to Hawthorn Trail

Bicycle Network is encouraging that the section of the strategic cycling corridor from Hawthorn to Box Hill be prioritised in the 2022-23 Victorian state budget. With this critical trail section completed, the majority of a 30km strategic cycling corridor from Croydon to Melbourne's CBD will be completed.

In 2020, \$370,000 was secured by Paul Hamer MP for Box Hill and John Kennedy MP for Hawthorn to conduct a feasibility study into the trail⁷, yet roughly \$9m is still needed to complete the trail. At present, there are limited safe transportation options through the City of Boroondara for bike riders, with many riders currently having to use dangerous and inadequate roads such as Canterbury Road, Burwood Road or Riversdale Road.

The construction of a trail that follows the railway line east from Hawthorn station to Box Hill station will create a safer place to walk and ride to access the existing ten train stations along the route, over 20 schools, and countless local business and workplaces⁸. The new trail would also bring together and link a number of existing trails such as the Anniversary Trail, Gardiners Creek Trail, Capital City Trail and the Box Hill to Ringwood Rail Trail.

Communities in Melbourne's east have been advocating for a safer, off road transport option since 1995^{7,9} and in 2022, the community advocacy continues to call for action with over 1300 signing a petition in late 2021 to build the trail¹⁰.

1.1.2 Sunshine to Watergardens Link

Bicycle Network recommends the delivery of a bike link between two key activity hubs in the western suburbs: Sunshine and Watergardens. There is an existing shared path that runs along St Albans Road, parallel to the Sunbury railway line. However, this is currently unfit for purpose.

By building a higher quality corridor parallel with the railway line, people can ride all or part of their work commute in the CBD (similar to the Djerring Trail and Upfield Path). As well as providing access to stations, the link would offer access to schools, universities, and shopping districts.

At present, this corridor is classified as a 'main route' (C2) in the SCC network. However, we believe that this tremendous potential to boost active transport.



Partial funding from a Sunshine-Watergarden link would fall under Victoria’s ‘Big Build’ projects, namely the Airport Rail and Sunbury Line Upgrade. Bicycle Network are calling for additional funding from the Victorian Government to connect the pieces.

1.2 Improve the Main Yarra Trail

Bicycle Network is calling on the Victorian Government to commit \$7 million to building a new, fit for purpose bridge over the Yarra River at Abbotsford.

In 2018, \$200,000 was committed by the state planning minister, Richard Wynne to complete the project scoping of a new bridge at Walmer Street¹¹, however crucial funding for the construction of a new Yarra River bridge is yet to be committed. The current Walmer Street land bridge forms a critical piece of infrastructure along the Yarra Trail and is used more than 2200 users per day with over 1300 cyclists and almost 900 pedestrians crossing per day¹². However, the Walmer street bridge was built over 100 years ago as a pedestrian footbridge to cross the Yarra River is significantly too narrow at roughly 1.7m wide. The Collins Bridge at Gipps Street and the MacRobertson Bridge at Grange Road, are both similarly substandard for bike riders.

A 5m wide new bridge is desperately required to cross the Yarra and link the inner-city suburbs of Richmond, Abbotsford and Collingwood with the suburbs in Melbourne’s inner east, such as Hawthorn and Kew. Several fantastic opportunities exist to improve the crossings of the Yarra River along the Main Yarra Trail, including building better bike riding facilities across Studley Park Road and even building a new bridge at Church Street in Abbotsford.

Additionally, the bridges at Victoria Street, Bridge Road and Swan Street have all recently received tram upgrades, but infrastructure for people riding bikes remains second rate and could be significantly upgraded. Bicycle Network proposes a comprehensive review of these crossings be undertaken and a project of staged upgrades be planned, including the construction of a new bridge to cross the Yarra River.

Recommendation 1: Deliver Strategic Cycling Corridor projects and connections

Financial year	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	TOTAL
Budget impact	\$18.0	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$18.0

Recommendation 2: Improve the Main Yarra Trail

Financial year	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	TOTAL
Budget impact	\$7.0	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$7.0



2. Advancing bike tourism

COVID-19 continues to impact our nation's tourism economy. In 2020, Australia experienced a \$35 billion loss in tourism revenue, a 40 per cent decrease in international visits, and staffing reductions between 15-20 per cent¹³.

By March 2021, tourism-filled jobs had fallen a further 5 per cent. The slow and grueling economic uncertainty lead some to label 2021 as the 'life-and-death' year for tourism¹⁴.

Alarmingly, the crisis is continuing into 2022. As the Omicron variant spreads through communities, our tourism operators have not been able to bring in the revenue they expected over the summer holidays¹⁵.

Last year, the Victorian Government took action to support the sector by launching the 'Stay Close, Go Further' campaign, encouraging Victorians to get out and explore their backyard.

There is an exciting opportunity to further invigorate our state with bike tourism. Over 90 per cent of rail trails are in Victoria, artefacts of the gold rush era.

Rail trails are not just historical markers, they offer Victorians an opportunity to explore regional communities whilst getting active. It's the first time that many Victorians experience the enjoyment of riding a bike. It's a 'taster' of what riding a bike is all about.

This is why Bicycle Network believes that investment in our Victorian rail trails is extremely important.

2.1 Extend the O'Keefe Rail Trail

Bicycle Network recommends a funding commitment to extend Central Victoria's O'Keefe Rail Trail from Heathcote to Wallan.

The O'Keefe Rail Trail, constructed in 1993, is a scenic ~50 kilometer trail that cuts across the Mitchell and Greater Bendigo local government areas, and currently accommodates approximately 1000 riders in a typical weekend morning period¹⁶.

The proposed 'Wallan to Heathcote Rail Trail' (WHRT) would form a 78km extension southeast of the O'Keefe Rail Trail, connecting the towns of Heathcote, Tooboarac, Pyalong, Kilmote, Heathcote Junction/Wandong and Wallan.

A 2017 feasibility study¹⁷ outlined the strategic merit for advancing the WHRT project,

concluding that the economic benefits (\$23.1 million) outweigh the costs. Construction of the trail was demonstrated to be straightforward, with little impact to local ecology and Aboriginal heritage sites.

Bicycle Network views the O’Keefe Rail Trail extension as an exciting enhancement of the O’Keefe Rail Trail which will pave the way for a number of exciting opportunities:

- Establish future connections with the Heathcote wine region, and the adjacent Great Victorian Rail Trail at Tallarook.
- Preserve and celebrate the local history of Central Victoria.
- Support the local economies of Tooborac, Pyalong, Wandong, Heathcote Junction, Kilmore, and Wallan which offer a combination of cafes, local artisan crafts and breweries.
- Promote the physical health of Mitchell and Greater Bendigo shire populations, whose physical health profiles are lower than the Victorian average^{18,19}.

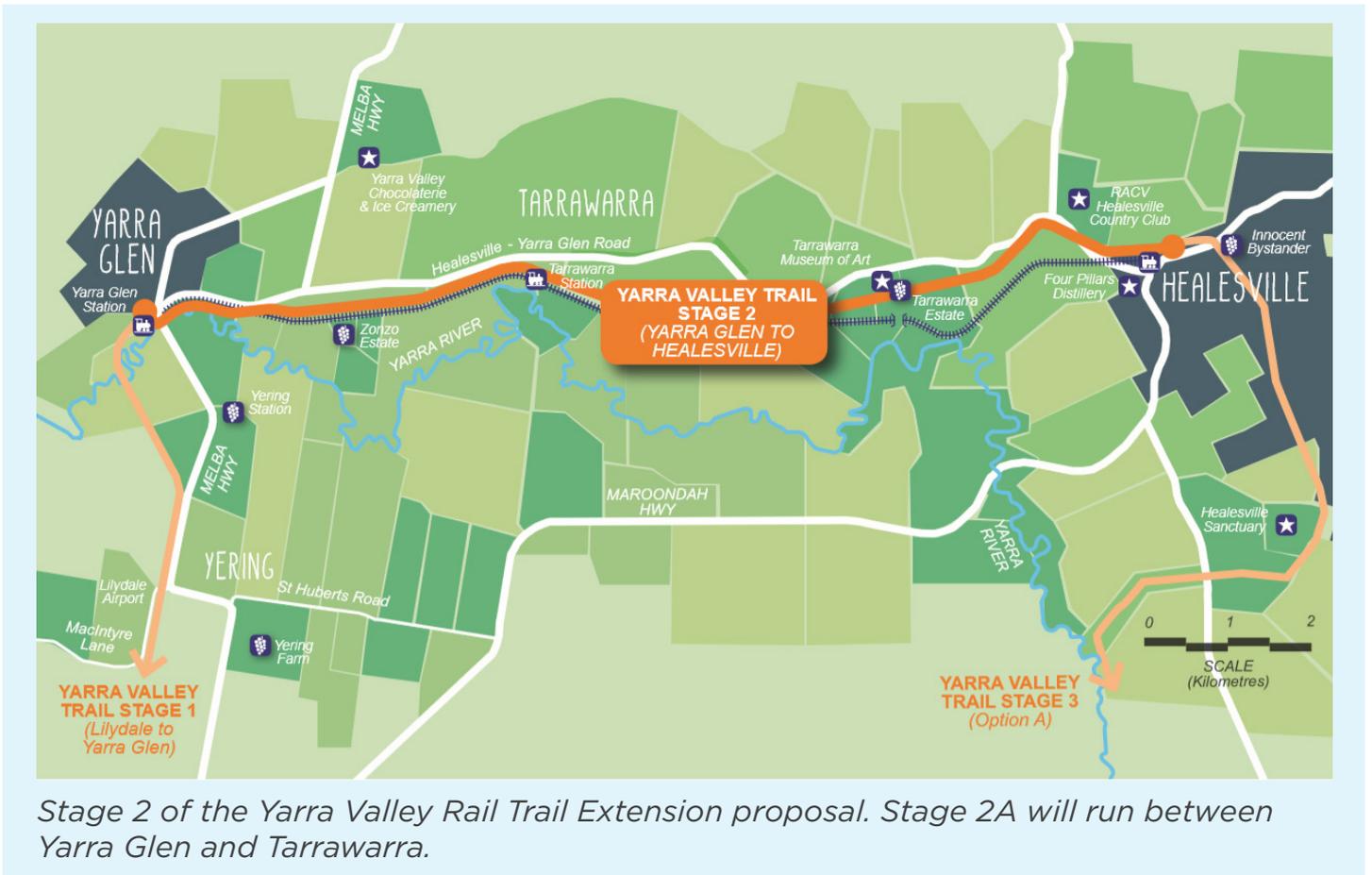
We strongly encourage the Victorian Government to support local businesses, historical societies, and the general bike riding public by providing the \$17.18 million in funding to complete the extension.



Proposed route for the O’Keefe Rail Trail Extension (Wallan to Heathcote Rail Trail). Source: RM Consulting Group

Recommendation 3: Extend the O’Keefe Rail Trail

Financial year	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	TOTAL (\$m)
Budget impact	\$17.2	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$17.2



Stage 2 of the Yarra Valley Rail Trail Extension proposal. Stage 2A will run between Yarra Glen and Tarrawarra.

2.2 Advance the Yarra Valley Trail

Bicycle Network is encouraging the Victorian State Government to commit \$4.5 million²⁰ in funding to start construction on stage 2a of the Yarra Valley Trail, including a southern Yarra Glen loop. The 18km addition to the highly popular Lilydale-Warburton Trail will significantly help to cement Victoria and the Yarra Valley as a sustainable tourism destination.

In 2018, \$2.5 million was committed by the Andrews government to complete Stage 1a and 1b of the trail, successfully connecting Lilydale with Yarra Glen. The next stage would take users from Yarra Glen, through the rolling hills and wineries of the Yarra Valley, to the Tarrawarra Museum of Art, over the Yarra river and to the township of Yerring.

The completed Yarra Valley Trail is estimated to bring 370,000 users each year and generate \$33.5 million in income for the region per annum²¹. Additionally, the trail is expected to generate 222 jobs for the region, including at least 40 jobs in the construction alone²². Linking the townships of Yarra Glen, Yerring and Tarrawarra by shared trail will also provide much needed active recreation infrastructure for the fast growing local community²³.

Recommendation 4: Advance the Yarra Valley Trail

Financial year	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	TOTAL (\$m)
Budget impact	\$4.5	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$4.5

2.3 Build the Woodend-Daylesford Rail Trail

Bicycle Network is proposing that Victoria's 2022-23 state budget commits \$4.5 million to build the highly anticipated 45km rail trail from Daylesford to Woodend. Whilst \$50,000 has been contributed by the Victorian Government for a scoping project, funding for construction of the trail is yet to be committed. With the 5km Domino rail trail between Trentham and Lyonville already completed (funded by Hepburn Shire), only 40km of trail needs to be built to complete the project²⁴.

The western sections of the trail will take users from Daylesford, through the towns of Musk and Bullarto, and onto the Domino rail trail at Lyonville. Additionally, the eastern sections of the trail will take users from the Domino rail trail at Trentham through the towns of Tylden, Fern Hill and eventually to Carlsruhe and Woodend. Those using the trail will have the option of completing their return trip in a single day or staying overnight in one of the towns and villages along the trail.

Whilst using the trail, visitors will also have the ability to experience some of the many tourist attractions of the region, such as Hanging Rock, The Hepburn Springs, multiple wildlife reserves, farm gates, wineries, cafes, museums and more. The full route will also take users along the historic goldrush era Carlsruhe train route and through many historically significant locations, providing the perfect opportunity to provide trail users with an opportunity to celebrate, recognise and learn about the indigenous and gold rush heritage of the region.

Not only will this rail trail provide critical sustainable transport infrastructure for residents of these growing towns, it is estimated to bring up to 62,000 additional visitors per year to what is already one of Victoria's strongest tourist economies²⁴. It is expected that this visitation will equate to up to \$4.10 million in income for the region each year and the construction of the trail will create 51 sustainable local jobs.

Recommendation 5: Build the Woodend-Daylesford Rail Trail

Financial year	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	TOTAL (\$m)
Budget impact	\$4.5	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$4.5



3. Removing and preventing barriers

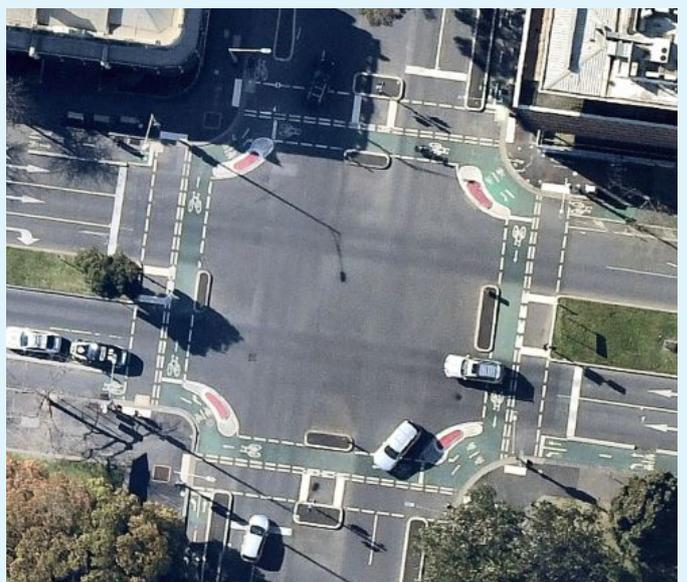
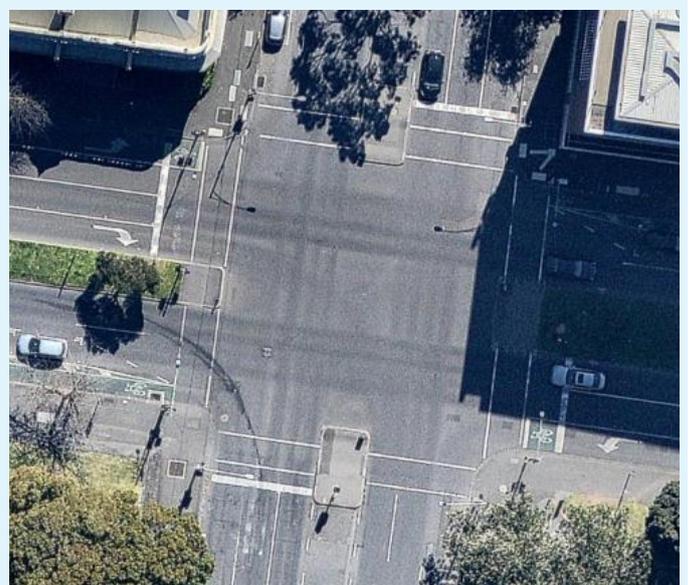
Building a bike network that people will want to ride is the first step towards boosting active travel and achieving our goal of 25 per cent active travel trips by 2025. But it isn't the only step we need to take.

Over 78 per cent of the Victorian population are interested in riding a bike but are concerned⁴. The concern may be the general safety of Victoria's roads, or it could simply be that they are not confident in hopping on a bike. In any case, these people represent our bike-riding 'near market'⁴, the cohort that are the key towards boosting active travel in Victoria. If we want them on board, we must address their needs.

For the benefits of bikes to reach the highest number of people, we need to identify and remove existing barriers to riding. We need to prevent other barriers before they arise. This involves a combination of policy change, infrastructure funding, and interventions.

3.1 Local area traffic management fund

While investment in the provision of active transport facilities in major projects is welcome and is delivering spectacular results, the opportunities to refashion local streets for safe and low-stress travel by bike riders and walkers has been neglected.



Traffic calming measures applied to the Albert-Landsdown street intersection, Melbourne.

Many local streets in Victoria could be highly attractive active transport corridors: they offer to directly connect riders and walkers to popular destinations with little delay or bother.

At low cost and with minimal irritation to neighbourhoods such streets can be treated to calm traffic and create conditions that will get many more people into healthy active travel while improving the environment.

The basic tools have been around for more than 20 years in the form of Local Area Traffic Management (LATM) schemes. Bicycle Network and a group of Melbourne councils developed such a toolbox in 2004.

Bicycle Network and the Municipal Association of Victoria intend to see this toolbox refreshed to incorporate recent learnings and new thinking in active transport, and to reflect growing community enthusiasm for better streets and more attractive biking and walking opportunities.

This refresh would incorporate recent policy advances in provision of active transport connections, movement and place, safe systems and tree cover.

While there is an appetite in local government and the community for such an initiative, to be successful the concept needs a powerful, accelerated launch.

We proposed that a funding mechanism be created to enable local government agencies to apply, singly or jointly, to develop active transport local streets using the new LATM toolbox.

This incentive, we believe, will unlock many opportunities in Melbourne and across the state that will pay significant dividends in improved transport options and more attractive local street environments.

Recommendation 6: Local area traffic management fund

Financial year	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	TOTAL (\$m)
Budget impact	\$10.0	\$10.0	\$10.0	\$10.0	\$40.0



3.2 Fund state behaviour change programs for bikes

Encouraging and supporting people to ride a bike is essential for a well-rounded state strategy. Indeed, the Victorian Cycling Strategy 2018-2028² emphasises the needs to increase the participation of underrepresented groups, and to Improve awareness and acceptance of cycling as a mode of transport.

The problem we face is that many interventions that aim to promote bike riding (and other forms of physical activity) have been unable to deliver a significant impact to the population due to poor funding²⁵.

Behaviour change should start with our younger population, teaching them the necessary skills that will set them up for life. And there is much work to be done.

Unfortunately, the number of Victorian children riding a bike has been in decline since 2011²⁶. Since the 1970's, the number of young people engaging in active school travel has plummeted from 60 per cent to between 25-35 per cent^{27,28}.

Bicycle Network recommends that the Victorian Government make a funding commitment to support behaviour change programs that promote a bike riding lifestyle amongst young people. Our Ride2School program offers positive motivation for schoolchildren by helping them increase their skills, ease their concerns, boost their confidence. It's a fun way to experience the joys of riding of bike.

By providing bike education at a young age, we can foster a generation of Australians that are familiarised with the diverse benefits of active travel and are motivated to enjoy an active travel lifestyle as they approach adulthood.

Recommendation 7: Fund state behaviour change programs for bikes

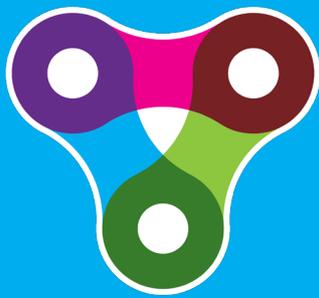
Financial year	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	TOTAL (\$m)
Budget impact	\$0.75	\$0.75	\$0.75	\$0.75	\$3.0

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