Transport and Infrastructure Net Zero Consultation Roadmap

Take the survey

Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water

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Queensland

14 Postcode

4305

15 What area best describes where you live?

Regional area

16 1. Do you support the proposed guiding principles?

Not answered

17 1.1 Please add details to your response.

Not answered

18 2. Do you support the use of the avoid-shift-improve framework as a tool to identify opportunities for abatement?

Not answered

19 2.1 Please add details to your response.

Not answered

20 3. Do you agree the development of a national policy framework for active and public transport will support emissions reduction?

Not answered

21 3.1 Please add details to your response.

Not answered

22 4. What should be included in a national policy framework for active and public transport and how should it be developed?

Not answered

23 5. What additional actions by governments, communities, industry and other stakeholders need to be taken now and in the future to ensure the movement of people contributes to transport emissions reduction?

Not answered

24 6.1 What additional actions by governments, communities, industry and other stakeholders need to be taken now and in the future to ensure that the movement of goods contributes to transport emissions reduction?

Not answered

25 6.2. How would these actions address the identified challenges and opportunities for emissions reduction in the movement of goods?

Not answered

26 7. Do you agree with the proposed net zero pathway for light road vehicles?

Not answered

27 7.1 Please add details to your response.

Not answered

28 8. The Australian Government is currently developing an Australian New Vehicle Efficiency Standard and has already begun to implement actions in the National Electric Vehicle Strategy.8.1 What additional actions by governments, communities, industry and other stakeholders need to be taken now and in the future to reduce light vehicle emissions?

Not answered

29 8.2 How would these actions address the identified challenges and opportunities to reduce light vehicle emissions?

Not answered

30 9. Do you agree with the proposed net zero pathway for heavy road vehicles?

Not answered

31 9.1 Please add details to your response

Not answered

32 10. The proposed pathway for heavy road vehicles relies on a mix of battery electric, hydrogen fuel-cell and low carbon liquid fuels.Rank from 1 to 3, the order in which these should be prioritised for emissions reduction.

Not answered

33 10.1 Please add details to your response. Why did you rank them in that order?

Not answered

34 11. What role should low carbon liquid fuels play in the heavy vehicle

decarbonisation?

Not answered

35 12. What additional actions by governments, communities, industry and other stakeholders need to be taken now and in the future to reduce heavy vehicle emissions?

Not answered

36 13. Do you agree with the proposed net zero pathway for rail?

Not answered

37 13.1 Please add details to your response.

Not answered

38 14. The proposed pathway for rail relies on a mix of battery electric, hydrogen fuel-cell and low carbon liquid fuels.Rank from 1 to 3, the order in which these should be prioritised for emissions reduction.

Not answered

39 14.1 Please add details to your response. Why did you rank them in that order?

Not answered

40 15. What role should low carbon liquid fuels play in rail decarbonisation?

Not answered

41 16. What additional actions by governments, communities, industry and other stakeholders need to be taken now and in the future to reduce rail emissions?

Not answered

42 16.1 How would these actions address the identified challenges and

opportunities to reduce rail emissions?

Not answered

43 17. Do you agree with the proposed net zero pathway for maritime?

Not answered

44 17.1 Please add details to your response.

Not answered

45 18. The Australian Government is engaging in consultation as part of the development of the Maritime Emissions Reduction National Action Plan and those consultations will also inform the final Roadmap and Action Plan. 18.1 What additional actions by governments, communities, industry and other stakeholders need to be taken now and in the future to reduce maritime emissions?

Not answered

46 18.2 How would these actions address the identified challenges and opportunities to reduce maritime emissions?

Not answered

47 19. Do you agree with the proposed net zero pathway for aviation?

Not answered

48 19.1 Please add details to your response.

Not answered

49 20. The Australian Government has already engaged in consultation on aviation decarbonisation through the development of the Aviation White Paper and those consultations will also inform final Roadmap and Action Plan.

Not answered

50 20.1 What additional actions by governments, communities, industry and other stakeholders need to be taken now and in the future to reduce aviation emissions?

Not answered

51 21. Do you agree with the proposed net zero pathway for transport infrastructure?

Not answered

52 21.1 Please add details to your response.

Not answered

53 22. What additional actions by governments, communities, industry and other stakeholders need to be taken now and in the future to reduce transport infrastructure emissions and ensure that transport infrastructure is ready for and enables low-emission transport modes?

Not answered

54 22.1 How would these actions address the identified challenges and opportunities to reduce transport infrastructure emissions?

Not answered

55 23. What additional actions by governments, communities, industry and other stakeholders need to be taken now and in the future to ensure the energy mix is ready to support transport emissions reduction?

Not answered

56 24. How should the use of low carbon liquid fuels (LCLFs) be prioritised across different transport modes over time to achieve maximum abatement?

Not answered

57 25. What are the best ways for the Australian Government to work collaboratively with industry, business, governments and communities to implement the proposed pathways?

Not answered

58 25.1 What are good domestic or international examples of partnership and collaboration on transport and transport infrastructure emissions reduction that could inform the final Roadmap and Action Plan?

Not answered

59 25.2 What opportunities can Government leverage to show leadership in Australia and internationally?

Not answered

60 26. What measures and metrics should be used to evaluate the final Transport and Infrastructure Net Zero Roadmap and Action Plan?

Not answered

61 26.1 What other data and evidence could governments use and how could this offer further insights on the pace, scale and location of transport emissions reduction pathways?

Not answered

62 27. Do you have any feedback on the proposed review process?

Not answered

63 28. Do you have any further feedback on the Consultation Roadmap and proposed pathways?

Not answered

64 28.1 Is there anything missing? Are the sections appropriately integrated? Is the Roadmap appropriately ambitious?

Not answered

65 29. Is there any further information or documentation that you wish to be considered with your submission?

Not answered

66 Would you like to upload a document?

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67 Have you removed any identifying information from your submission?

Yes

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240726 Rachel Nolan Net Zero Transport submission_.pdf

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Honourable Rachel Nolan
Ipswich
QLD 4305

26 July 2024

Dear Ministers

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the *Transport and Infrastructure Net Zero Consultation Roadmap,* a critical element in Australia meeting its obligations under Australian and international law to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 43% of 2005 levels by 2030 and to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

I commend the government for taking the important step of developing the consultation paper and seeking feedback.

While I hold a number of transport and policy related roles, as Chair of *Bicycle Queensland*, Queensland Chair of *The McKell Institute* and Member of the Commonwealth's *Rail Industry Innovation Council*, I make this submission in my personal capacity, drawing on my experience in the field and ongoing policy interest.

That experience includes having had the privilege of being a Member of the Queensland Parliament (2001-12) and ultimately Minister for Transport and Finance. In those roles, I was able to support one of Australia's most successful ever emissions reduction policy (the Queensland land clearing restrictions which allowed Australia to meet its Kyoto Protocol targets) and later, as a Minister, to direct significant investment to public transport and active transport ($100m per year in 2010); to establish Australia's first Office of Sustainable Transport, in order to re-direct the policy focus of the Department of Transport and Main Roads from an engineering led penchant for highway building to a more modern and holistic sustainable transport approach, and to undertake road safety reforms which led to an historically low Queensland road toll.

Some of those experiences informed a later, major policy report I wrote for The McKell Institute in 2021, *Riding the Revolution, A New Approach to Active Transport in South East Queensland.*[1] I attach that paper as an addendum to this submission, noting that some of the substantial policy research informing the submission is included in the earlier report.

While I appreciate that a proportion of Australia's transport emissions arise from freight (which clearly must shift to rail in the absence of reliable, low emission truck

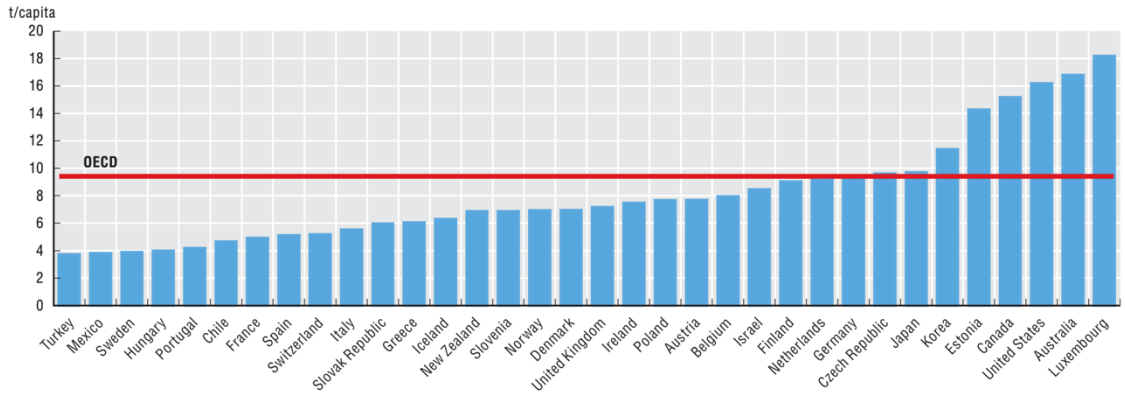
[1] https://mckellinstitute.org.au/research/reports/riding-the-revolution/

technology), this submission focuses on passenger transport, which is more my area of expertise.

The context : Transport emissions are high and rising in Australia

As OECD data makes clear, Australia has among the highest per capita emissions of any country in the world.[2] In Queensland, where I live, it is worse, with the state having per capita emissions of 34.3mtCO2, nearly twice the national average.[3]

Figure 1.6. **CO_2 emission intensities per capita, 2013**



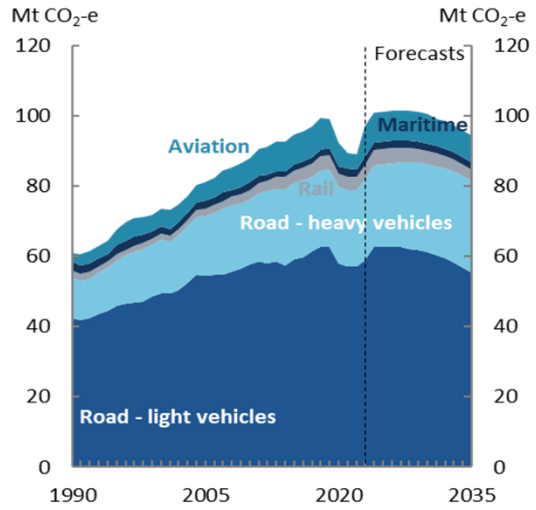
Contrary to the popular belief of a big and somewhat frontier nation, Australia's high rate of emissions do not arise from the country's physical size (we are among the most urbanised populations in the world) but from our heavy reliance on coal for electricity generation, our highly car dependant urban transport networks, our continuing rate of deforestation and the relative immaturity, particularly following the 2012 abolition of the carbon tax and the subsequent decade of policy stasis, of our country's emissions reduction efforts.

While the current federal government came to office with a well developed suite of policies to address the highest emissions sources, stationery energy for domestic and industrial purposes, through the Safeguard Mechanism and the Rewiring the Nation investment fund, transport emissions remain a significant challenge. As the consultation roadmap makes clear, transport emissions are high and going up, meaning they are likely to become Australia's largest source of emissions by 2030 –

[2] https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264235199-5-en.pdf?expires=1721961713&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=59AA23A6C11019ACF21486409531C47B

[3] https://www.stateoftheenvironment.des.qld.gov.au/pollution/greenhouse-gas-emissions/total-annual-greenhouse-gas-emissions

Emission trends from the transport sector projected to 2035



Source: DCCEEW, Australia's emissions projections 2023, Australian Government, 2023.

The current federal government has developed some policy in this field, legislating New Vehicle Efficiency Standards, which will act as a safeguard mechanism for vehicle importers, and developing a national electric vehicle strategy but with the average Australian vehicle being 10.6 years old[4] and technological challenges (including battery disposal) remaining, it would be unrealistic to think that transport emissions can be reduced by 2030 by relying on a transition to electric vehicles alone and unwise to rely on that technological shift alone in the longer term.

Transport Emission Reduction : the limited examples of global success

The challenge for Australia is to reduce transport emissions whilst the country continues on a pathway of economic and population growth. According to World Bank analysis for the period 1990 to 2018, only 12 countries achieved this "absolute decoupling "of transport emissions from economic and population growth, with Australia having achieved a "relative decoupling," in which emissions continued to rise but at a proportionally lower rate than the other two.[5]

Across the world, those countries which are most notable for achieving significant improvements in transport emissions have all done so through a combination of technological shift (emissions standards and a shift to electric vehicles) and mode share change to public and active transport.

Norway has incentivised electric vehicles through incentives including tax exemptions, free parking and access to bus lanes. EVs now make up 83% of new car sales.[6] In

[4] https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/industry/tourism-and-transport/motor-vehicle-census-australia/latest-release - :~:text=Average age of vehicles across,average age of 9.5 years.
[5] https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/766991634561185532/understanding-drivers-of-decoupling-of-global-transport-co2-emissions-from-economic-growth-evidence-from-145-countries
[6] https://www.visitnorway.com/plan-your-trip/getting-around/by-car/electric-cars/

addition, it has expanded in public transport and transitioned the public transport fleet to electric and biofuel vehicles.[7]

The Netherlands has invested heavily in cycling infrastructure, with a movement that emerged primarily in response to concerns about urban traffic congestion in the 1970s. The country is regarded as the world's most bike friendly with 27% of ordinary trips (38% in Amsterdam) being undertaken by bicycle.[8] It has also invested heavily in public transport and the EV transition.

Germany has focused on mode share shift to public transport with significant public transport infrastructure investment, as well as seeking to reduce vehicle emissions including through a transition to EVs and by investing in hydrogen fuel cell technology for public transport.

The United Kingdom (much like France) has drawn on its experience of addressing air pollution in the 1950s. It has banned the sale of new petrol and diesel cars from 2030, invested in public transport (such as London's Elizabeth Line and HS2) and in London a significant investment in active transport infrastructure. Paris, similarly has taken a two pronged approach, building cycling infrastructure whilst tripling parking charges for SUVs in order to create significant financial disincentives for those high polluting and unsafe vehicles.

Sweden has invested in low emissions vehicle technology including biofuels and promoted mode share change to public and active transport.

While it can be expected that the Australian trajectory may improve as a result of the new vehicle emissions standards and EV strategy, the international experience lends weight to the proposition that other strategies, most particularly mode share shift, must also be a part of the Australian solution.

<u>Mode shift : the critical factor in reducing transport emissions</u>

Despite its high level of urbanisation, Australia is one of the most car dependant countries in the world. The status is a result of a significant historical factor; the fact that our cities have developed in the high income, car dependant post war period which generated urban sprawl; and of policy choice, specifically the fact that Australian policy makers have essentially privatised transport provision; forcing people to travel in their own private cars whilst giving no real thought to the overall diminution of urban amenity which has occurred as a result of that choice.

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[7] https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/national-transport-plan-2022-2033/id2863430/?ch=6#:~:text=all new city buses shall,place with virtually zero emissions.

[8] https://www.government.nl/topics/bicycles/bicycle-policy-in-the-netherlands

The car dominated and suburban approach has contributed to six significant externalities which significantly impact Australians' quality of life -

- Congestion[9]
- High transport costs[10]
- Loss of urban amenity[11]
- Declining social cohesion (including road rage as people interact with each other on a non-human scale)[12]
- Carbon emissions
- Obesity[13]

As I set out in the McKell Institute *Riding the Revolution* paper, a shift to active (and public) transport provides the opportunity to significantly reduce Australians' cost of living while also improving urban amenity and addressing the lifestyle related health issues which threaten Australians' quality of life and the medium term sustainability of the healthcare system.

The economic viability of investing in safe active transport infrastructure is demonstrated by the cost benefit analysis often quoted by the Queensland Government (perhaps optimistically) that cycling infrastructure has a cost benefit ratio of 5:1,[14] while the potential for change is demonstrated by evidence quoted by We Ride (on behalf of Bicycle Queensland and others) in their May 2024 submission to the Climate Change Authority, that more than two thirds of Australians, when surveyed, indicate they would like the opportunity to walk and ride more as part of everyday life.[15]

Next steps : an achievable policy program

There are three ways in which governments can achieve desired policy outcomes; they can *legislate* (to ban or limit undesirable activities); regulate (for instance by establishing new bodies to drive policy change) or *provide incentives* in the form of

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[9] Infrastructure Partnerships Australia estimates that Brisbane drivers spend on average 45 hours a year in congestion https://infrastructure.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Australian-Travel-Time-Metric-2020-Brisbane-Release.pdf

[10] The Australian Automobile Association estimates the average cost of transport for Australians is $455 per week or 16% of income, of which less than 10% can be attributed to public transport fares https://data.aaa.asn.au/transport-affordability/

[11] https://www.unsw.edu.au/newsroom/news/2022/07/why-cycling-lanes-should-be-on-the-fast-track-for-cities - :~:text=Cycling lanes can also boost,locally," Dr Harris says.

[12] https://eprints.qut.edu.au/36792/

[13] The Australian Insttitue of Health and Welfare estimates that 66% of Australian adults and 26% of children are overweight or obese https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/overweight-obesity/overweight-and-obesity/contents/about

[14] https://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/travel-and-transport/cycling/cycling-investment-in-queensland

[15] https://www.weride.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Australian-bicycle-organisations-submission-to-CCA-2024-Issues-paper_Final-b.pdf

subsidies or financial rewards or, as Cass Sunstein has argued in *Nudge*, to provide small incentives to push people in the direction of different behaviour.

Clearly, the incentive pathway is the most seamless to implement. With the shift to new emissions standards representing the legislation end of the spectrum, the international evidence suggests that real changes in mode share can be achieved through the provision of incentives (infrastructure that makes public and active transport safe and available, along with policy changes that encourage the move) and that regulatory change, including the establishment of new agencies to design and implement the shift, provide the most practical pathway.

To facilitate emissions reductions through shift in mode share, the Commonwealth should undertake a number of actions –

First, **clear goals of emissions reduction from transport related sources must be determined**. While modelling undertaken for the Climate Change Authority currently indicates that the 43% emissions reduction target is likely to be achieved (primarily on the back of energy policy), it is clear that transport emissions must begin trending down by the end of this decade. Exactly what transport emission targets are to be put in place and what proportion can be expected to be achieved through the shift to vehicle electrification will then guide what has to be achieved by mode share change.

Second, **the essential focus of the Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure and Transport must change** from the traditional role providing grants to state governments for national highways and other, primarily road, infrastructure projects to a policy department in which emissions targets drive mode share targets which in turn inform funding decisions through a well informed and rational economic lens. That shift will require a significant uplift in the capability of the department which could be structured through a central **Office of Sustainable Transport** (the model I adopted in Queensland) or through a new external body.

Third, meaningful collaboration will need to be undertaken with the states given that they continue to hold primary responsibility for transport policy and for the provision of road, public and active transport networks. That collaboration should lead to a **National Partnership for Sustainable Transport** which establishes clear targets for emissions reduction through mode shift and a clear funding mechanism to support the shift.

Fourth, **there needs to be a fundamental shift in transport funding towards public and active transport**. The United Nations recommends that 20% of transport funding should be dedicated to active transport[16] with a 2022 General Assembly resolution

[16] https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/urgent-investment-needed-walking-and-cycling-infrastructure-save

calling on all member states "to integrate cycling into public transportation, in urban and rural settings in developing and developed countries." While the Commonwealth's recent announcement of $100 million in active transport funding over four years is welcome and is the first Commonwealth investment in active transport since those committed by then Transport Minister Albanese in 2009/10, it represents a very small proportion of the Commonwealth department's near $20 billion overall annual budget.[17] While Queensland is committing more ($315 million over the forward estimates), that sits in a Transport and Main Roads budget of $37.4 billion ie. well under 1%. **The Commonwealth should aim to devote 5% a year of the transport budget to active transport by the end of the forward estimates** with meaningful targets also established for public transport.

Fifth, incentives should be introduced to encourage the shift to active and public transport. At present in Australia, we provide diesel fuel rebates to primary producers, tax breaks to buyers of luxury utes and financial incentives for the purchase of electric vehicles – but nothing for the form of transport, bicycles (including e-bikes) and scooters which involve the lowest emissions in their manufacture and no emissions at all in their use. Incentivising public and active transport through infrastructure development which makes them safe and accessible and through "human level encouragements" like bike to school groups, taxation incentives and other micro-encouragements (as set out in part in the McKell report) will redirect transport policy from harmful to positive outcomes.

Sixth, **there needs to be regular public reporting** (though the Climate Change Authority, the Office of Sustainable Transport or a new national body) on infrastructure funding and the achievement of goals. A shift to sustainable transport will be a long term and concerted project. Transparency will create a mechanism through which public and therefore policy attention can be maintained over time.

As I said at the outset, I commend the Commonwealth for undertaking this important work. While transport emissions policy has been ignored for more than a decade, the evidence is clear that transport emissions must be turned around and that a balanced approach to doing so through both technological change and mode share shift provides the least risk policy pathway whilst also providing opportunities to reduce Australians' cost of living improve their quality of life.

I am more than happy to discuss this submission further should you so require.

Yours sincerely

Hon Rachel Nolan

[17] Noting that contains the non-transport elements of the department's activities

MCKELL INSTITUTE QUEENSLAND

Riding the Revolution

A NEW APPROACH to ACTIVE TRANSPORT in SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND

OCTOBER 2020

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MCKELL INSTITUTE QUEENSLAND

Riding the Revolution

A NEW APPROACH to ACTIVE TRANSPORT in SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND

OCTOBER 2020

AUTHORS

RACHEL NOLAN

Rachel Nolan is the Executive Chair of the McKell Institute Queensland. Rachel is a public policy specialist focused on economic and sustainability policy. In addition to her McKell role she advises South East Asian governments on public policy and infrastructure through University of Queensland International Development and sits on commercial and NFP boards.

Rachel is a former Queensland Minister for Finance, Natural Resources, the Arts and Transport. As Transport Minister (2009-11) she sought to reorient the department to a sustainable transport focus, establishing an Office of Sustainable Transport and overseeing $100 million in active transport expenditure in a single year (2009-10). She was presented with the Cycling Promotion Fund's national award for contribution to cycling by a politician.

RUTVIKA MANOJKUMAR KANANI

Rutvika Manojkumar Kanani is a final trimester student in the Masters of Environmental and Urban Planning at Griffith University and is an intern at the McKell Institute.

Before coming to Australia to continue her studies, Rutvika completed a Bachelor of Civil Engineering degree at Silver Oak University in Ahmedabad, India. In 2019 she was awarded a Griffith University Academic Excellence Award.

Rutvika holds a passion for sustainable urban design and hopes upon graduation to establish a career in Australia in this field.other organisations.

THE ADVISORY PANEL

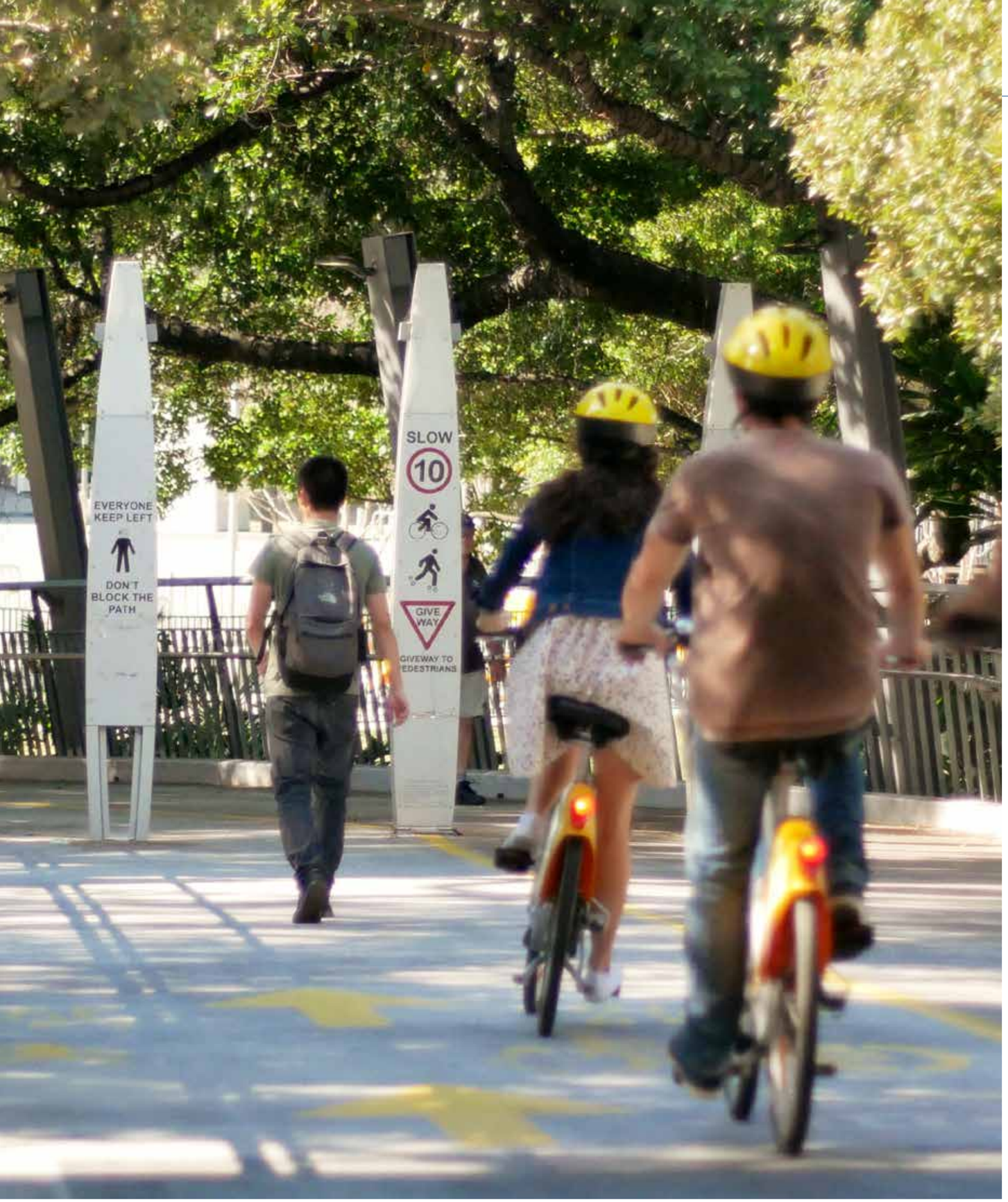
JOHN BRANNOCK

Adjunct Professor John Brannock is the inaugural Adjunct Professor of Town Planning at the University of Queensland and is a course co-ordinator at the university, having lectured undergraduate and graduate programs there for 25 years. John is a Life Fellow of the Planning Institute of Australia, a former Chair of the Queensland Heritage Council, a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and Fellow of the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand.

A keen cyclist, John has ridden across the Gobi Desert, up to the 5,600m Kardung-la Pass in the Himalayas, through the Atacama Desert and over the Andes. He has also completed the Simpson Desert 5 day race.

JIM GALL

Adjunct Professor Jim Gall is Adjunct Professor of Design at Queensland University of Technology.
An architect and environmental scientist, Jim has been exploring the design of places and things that are able to be sustained and which sustain us for 30 years. Jim is the Director of Gall Architects and has advised local governments on sustainable design.



CONTENTS

FOREWORD

For 40 years, South East Queensland has been one of Australia's fastest growing regions. Drawn by lifestyle factors, a pervasive sense of optimism and economic opportunity, new residents have flocked to the region.

Growth has fuelled prosperity and increasing urban sophistication but it also embodies risk. It has long been recognised that without good land use and transport planning, South East Queensland would grow "Los Angeles style" into a massive, unsustainable, freeway striped conurbation stretching 200km from the Sunshine Coast to the Tweed, and west beyond Ipswich to Toowoomba.

Since 1995, when the Queensland Government stepped into regional planning with the first South East Queensland Growth Management Plan, active transport (walking and cycling) has been recognised as a key driver of urban sustainability and quality of life.

State and local governments have produced numerous active transport plans and supported them with some of Australia's highest levels of funding. In places, great outcomes have been achieved but active transport mode share, the proportion of trips made by walking or cycling, remains stubbornly low.

This status quo is not acceptable. If South East Queensland is to realise the benefits of active transport — in terms of public health, environmental sustainability (particularly climate change), household budgets and public finance — change needs to happen.

Right now we have an extraordinary opportunity to make a switch. Two convergent trends, the rise of electric assisted or e-bikes and the coronavirus pandemic are pushing people onto bikes in large numbers. Infuriatingly, a lack of preparation, particularly at a local government level, means the opportunity to seize that moment and translate it into sustained transport change is passing day by day.

This paper sets out to capture the moment; ***to ride the revolution we are in.*** Drawing on the best available data and years of expertise in urban sustainability, it outlines a new approach to active transport planning, one that will capture the current opportunity and create a new policy and administrative framework to drive change for years to come.

The authors and advisory panel hope the paper will serve as a turning point, with the adoption of its recommendations contributing to the more sustainable transport future so clearly needed in South East Queensland.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 1995, the Queensland Government and key South East Queensland local governments have identified that active transport must be a key driver of sustainable urban growth.

A range of strong policies have been developed and in recent years, Queensland has had the best funding record of any state in the nation.

Still, active transport mode share remains stubbornly low with between 4 and 9.9% of all trips taken by walking and cycling.

This McKell Institute paper seeks to delve into those concerning trends. It examines active transport policy in Queensland in a number of parts presenting:

- The case for active transport on health, environmental and economic grounds
- An overview of active transport policy in Queensland and Australia
- A synopsis of best case active transport cities around the world, and
- The imperative — with COVID-19 and the rise of e-bikes seeing commuters shift to cycling in record numbers.

The paper argues that we are sitting in the midst of an active transport revolution, one that can be made permanent with the adoption of a bold and determined new policy approach.

The report acknowledges the work done so far but says now is the time for a bold new approach with 8 key recommendations for change including:

1. **That government should recognise the potential of e-bikes; the revolution which is already upon us, with state and local governments developing e-bike commuter strategies and the federal government immediately scrapping Australia's 5% e-bike tariff**
2. **That SEQ local governments develop their own Ciclovias, Sunday inner city road closures which would get thousands of people out riding in a festival atmosphere without disrupting weekday traffic**
3. **Open pop up bike lanes in Brisbane, Ipswich and on the coasts — before the opportunity of quiet streets created by COVID-19 is completely lost**
4. **Build infrastructure — but make it fast, cheap and connected, not gold plated**
5. **Undertake a serious cost benefit analysis of active transport funding — because the public and private financial benefits though clear, have not been properly understood or budgeted for by governments**
6. **Direct infrastructure stimulus spending to active transport**
7. **Restore targets to state government active transport planning — what gets measured gets done**
8. **Create a Sustainable Transport Commission to coordinate policy, direct spending and report on outcomes**

PART 1:
THE CASE FOR ACTIVE TRANSPORT

Like much of the western world, South East Queensland faces a number of significant, related threats ; the emerging climate crisis, driven in part by the state's own very high level of per capita emissions; a tidal wave of obesity which is seriously endangering public health, the ever-present reality of household financial stress and serious pressures on public finances.

All of those factors are combined in an environment of rapid population growth with the region, for this paper defined as the "200km city" running from the Sunshine to the Gold Coast and west to Toowoomba, growing at 2% a year from 3 to 3.7 million people between 2009 and 2019.[1]

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, that growth was expected to continue at existing rates and trends. The impact of the pandemic on overseas and interstate migration is now impossible to predict.

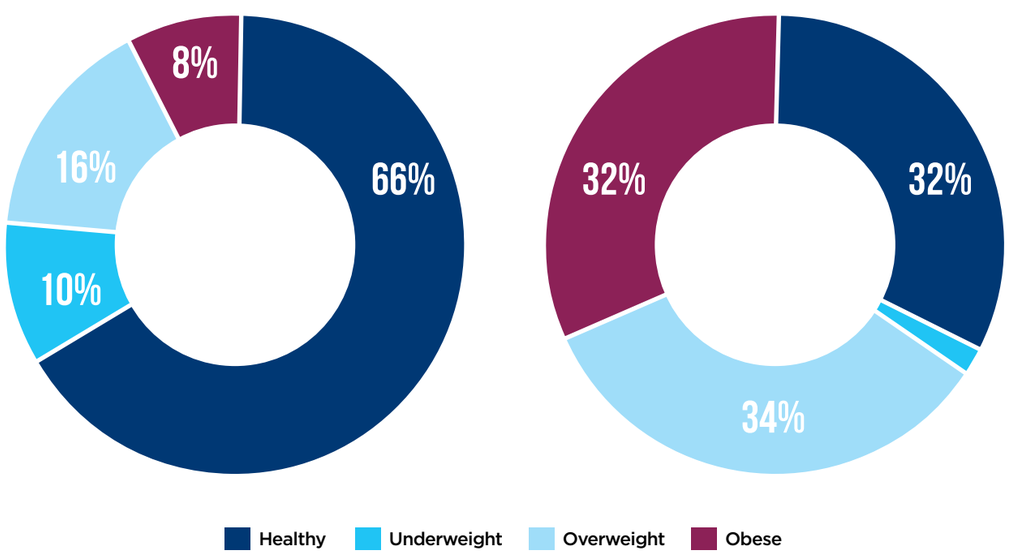
The health case for active transport

Life expectancy has increased dramatically in Australia in the last century or more. Improvements in food supply, a revolution in public health and medicine and a prolonged period of peace have seen life expectancy at birth increase from 49 years in 1890 to 83 in 2016.[2]

Nonetheless, those same factors have contributed to a rising tide of chronic disease, much of it linked to sedentary lifestyles.

On latest Queensland health data, 24% of children and 66% of adults are overweight or obese.[3]

FIGURE 1.1 WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION OF QUEENSLANDERS 2017-2018



Source: Queensland Health, 2019

Worryingly, Queenslanders are becoming more overweight all the time, the proportion of the population who are overweight or obese growing from 61% to 65% in the 10 years to 2017. The Queensland figures reflect a national trend; in 1980 just 10% of Australian adults were obese, by 2012 it was 25%.[4]

And the collective weight gain threatens both length and quality of life. While at this stage, life expectancy is continuing to increase, far more people are afflicted by the ill health and chronic diseases associated with unhealthy weight.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare identifies that 47% of Australians suffer from one or more of 10 identified high priority chronic conditions. Of those conditions, which include heart disease, lung disease, mental illness and back pain, excessive weight can be a cause or exacerbating factor in all.[5]

There is no proven cure for the obesity epidemic. As a 2011 article in *The Lancet* put it "unlike other major causes of preventable death and disability, such as tobacco use, injuries, and infectious diseases, there are no exemplar populations in which the obesity epidemic has been reversed by public health measures."[6]

Nonetheless, just as it is understood that the epidemic is driven by declining rates of physical activity and by dietary changes (increasing portion size and the rise of convenience foods), it is widely acknowledged that active transport can be a key factor in turning it around.

A 2017 study in the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health which modelled the impacts of increasing active transport mode share (from doubling current rates of walking and cycling to pushing them to 30% of trips) found that active transport could drive measurable life expectancy and quality of life change as well as pushing health costs down.[7]

The modelling is consistent with a 2017 study published in *The Lancet* which tracked 6,000 adults over 4 years, showing that those who changed their journey to work trip from active or public transport to car commuting saw an average 0.3kg/m2 increase in Body Mass Index (BMI) whilst those who switched to active transport experienced an equivalent weight loss.[8]

While the weight changes were relatively small, The Lancet commentary noted that the mode change was from active or *public* transport and that the trends quantified the already well established phenomenon of the late twentieth century urban planning trend towards single use developments having driven a range of negative public health consequences.

Car commuting drives carbon emissions

As previous McKell Institute research has shown, Queensland is the highest emitting state, in one of the highest per capita carbon emitting countries in the world. Queensland's per capita emissions are 32 metric tonnes, compared to an Australian average of 15 tonnes, 6 for Europe and 7.5 for China.[9]

FIGURE 1.2 QUEENSLAND'S EMISSIONS AS % OF AUSTRALIA.

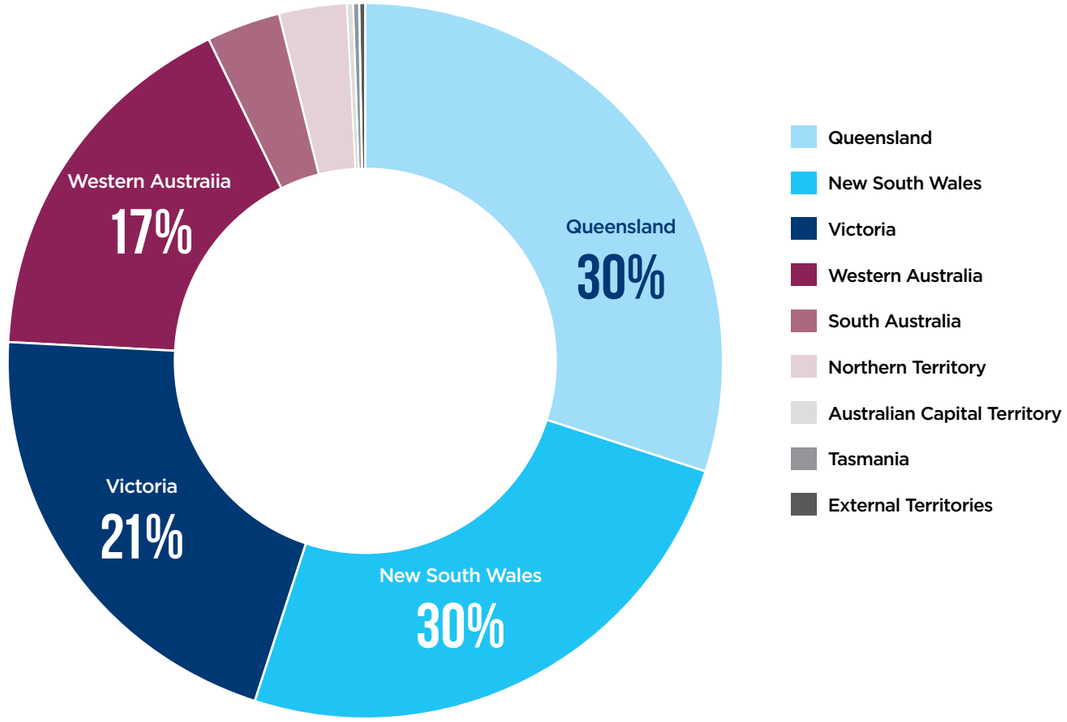
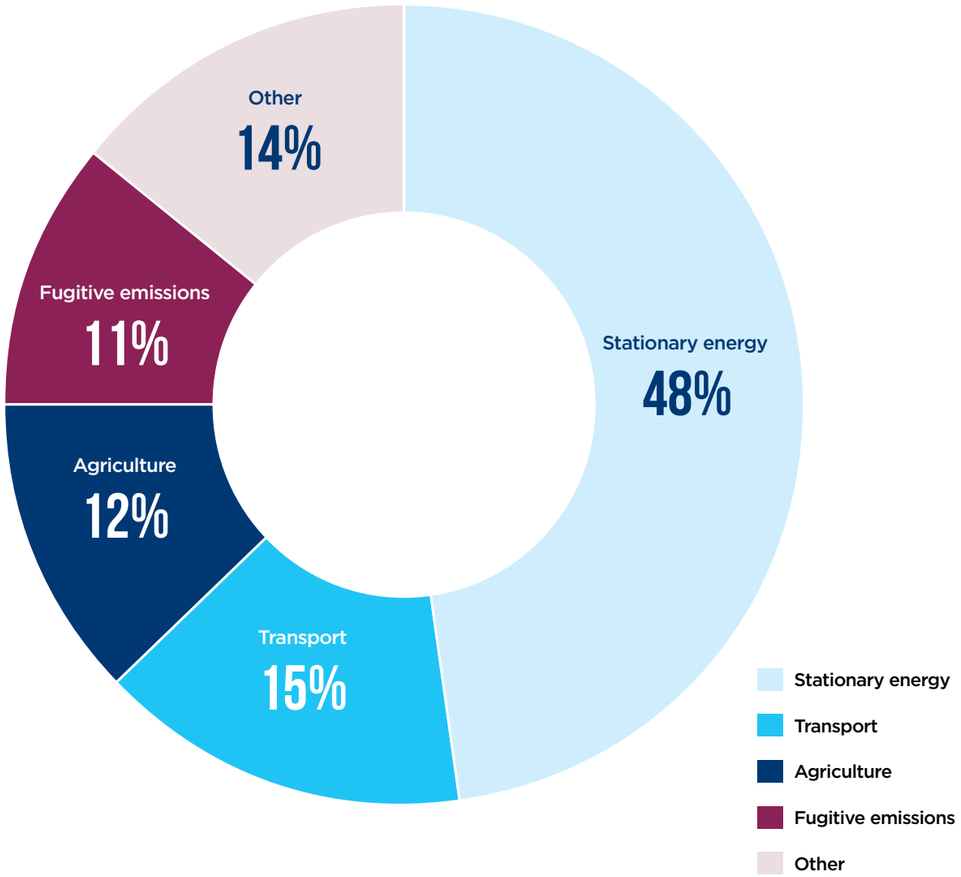


Chart: Liliana Tai and Isabella Olsson
Source: Queensland Government, State of Environment, 'Total annual Greenhouse gas emissions' (2020) Created with Datawrapper

Half of Queensland's carbon emissions come from power stations. But the second largest contributor at 14.7% is transport, with the state's 5 million people producing 22 million tonnes in transport emissions (up from 11 million in 1990) in 2016.

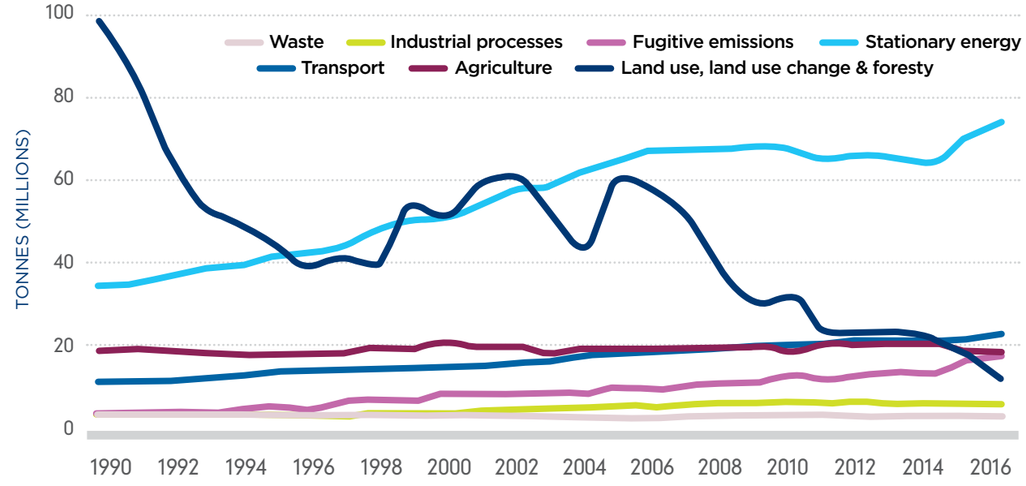
FIGURE 1.3 EMISSIONS BY SECTOR 2016



Source: Queensland Government • Created with Datawrapper

The Queensland Government has proven it can reduce emissions through targeted policy — the state's controversial land clearing laws have caused land use emissions to plummet. It is now seeking to address stationary energy emissions through a 50% renewable energy target by 2030. There is, however, no overarching policy for transport emissions reduction, 45% of which come from passenger cars.

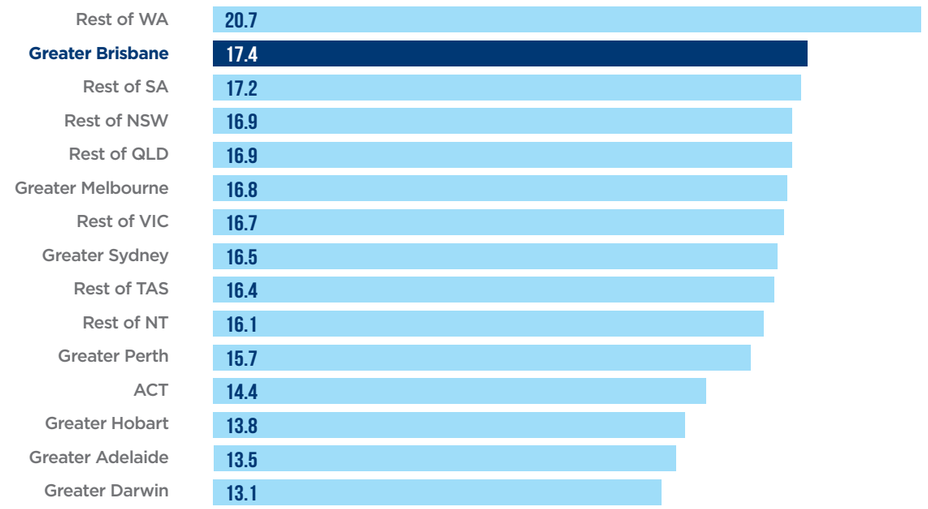
FIGURE 1.4 TRENDS IN QUEENSLAND EMISSIONS BY SECTOR



Source: Queensland Government • Created with Datawrapper

At an average of 17.4km from home to work, South East Queenslanders have the second longest commutes in the country behind only regional Western Australians (20.7km).[10]

FIGURE 1.5 DISTANCE OF THE COMMUTE FOR CITIES AND REGIONAL AREAS



a. Employed persons who did not travel to work on Census day have been excluded, as have those with no fixed place of work.

b. Average distance based on place of work in the week prior to Census day and place of usual residence. Excludes distances 250km and over between place of usual residence and place of work.

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2016 • Created with Datawrapper

The long commutes are driven by a range of factors including land use patterns (urban sprawl), the nature of work in South East Queensland — with a full 25% of Brisbane CBD workers commuting from Logan, Ipswich and the coasts[11] and Australia's highly segregated education system. In 2019, research by Dr Matthew Burke and others at Griffith University found that private secondary school students in South East Queensland on average travel twice as far to school as their public school peers. With those long commutes occurring in the morning peak, education segregation is contributing significantly to congestion, a trend that will only get worse as the flight from state schools continues.[12]

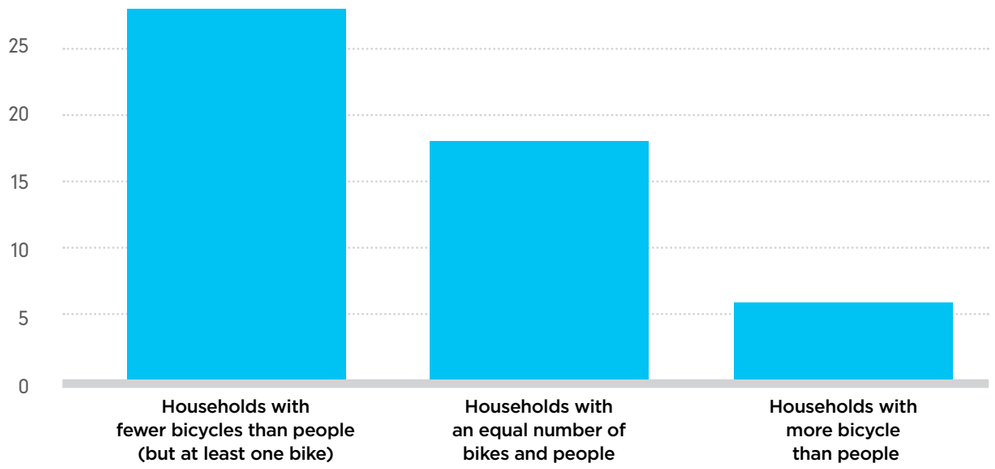
Long commutes mitigate against active transport. While at 19.4km average public transport commutes are only slightly longer than average direct car commutes (16.7km), active transport commuters travel on average only 3.6km.[13]

Running a car is expensive

South East Queensland's longer commutes and dispersed public transport network inevitably drive high levels of private vehicle ownership. 2016 census data shows 54% of SEQ households had two or more cars compared to an average of 50% across all Australian capitals. 18% had three or more cars, up from 16% at the last census in 2011.[14]

Bike ownership, however, is also high. Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads data shows that 51% of households have access to one bike while 24% have as many bikes as people or more.[15]

FIGURE 1.6 BIKE OWNERSHIP ACROSS QUEENSLAND



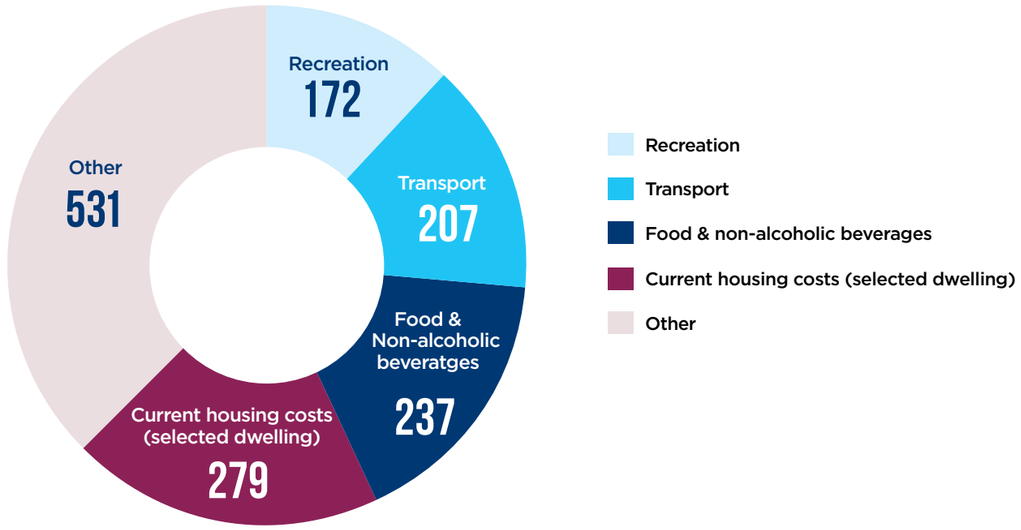
Source: Queensland Government Department of Transport and Main Roads • Created with Datawrapper

Yet while the majority of a bike's cost lies in its purchase, cars are expensive to run.

On average Australian household weekly expenditure of $1,425, transport at $207 is the third highest expense behind housing and food.[16] For most people, that's car expenses with analysis from the Australian Automobile Association showing that cheapest possible new car, a Kia Picanto would cost nearly $6,000 a year to run. An SUV like a Mazda CX-8 or Toyota Fortuner were found to cost in the order of $11,500 to $12,000 per year.[17]

Conducting its own economic analysis, **the Gold Coast City Council's 2017 Active Transport Plan estimated that the average household would be $7,000 a year better off without a second car.**[18]

FIGURE 1.7 BREAKDOWN OF AVERAGE WEEKLY EXPENDITURE ($)



Source: ABS Cat 6530.0 Household Expenditure Survey 2015-16 • Created with Datawrapper

In an environment of low wage growth[19] and housing stress,[20] both issues on which McKell has produced earlier research, the significant costs to households of running second and third cars must be considered. In 2018 a Grattan Institute analysis of ABS house and income data showed that 30% of households had less than $1,600 in accessible savings and 10% had less than $90 in the bank.[21]

The 2018 McKell Institute report *Mapping Opportunity* showed that these people are particularly concentrated in outer metropolitan areas.[22] The financial imperative is clear: if active transport could be improved sufficiently for outer metropolitan dwellers to give up the second or third car, a real difference could be made to many Australians' material circumstances.

More cycling cuts congestion and may well improve public finances

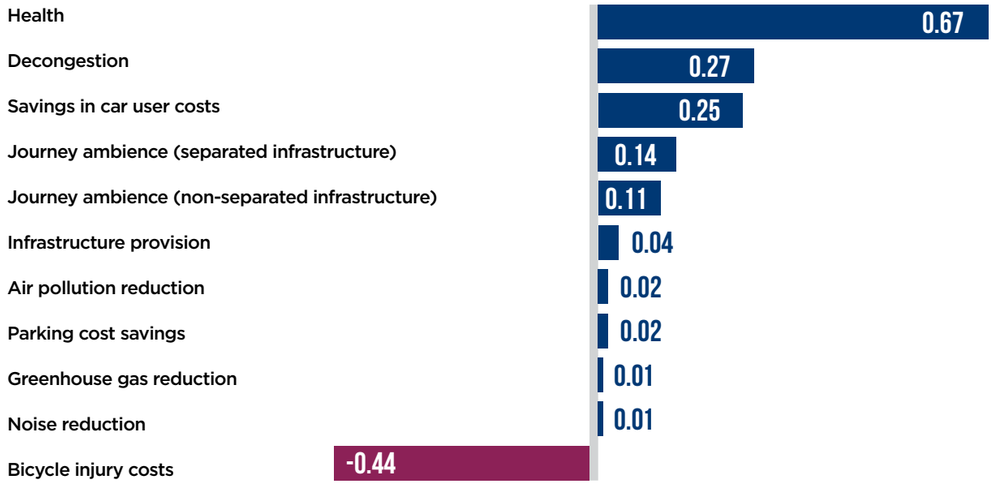
In recent years, Australian governments have developed rigorous cost-benefit assessment methodologies to guide infrastructure funding decisions. The Infrastructure Australia framework seeks to maximise public benefit, driving out subjective and political considerations and replacing them with objective analysis of economic benefits, climate change consequences and land use impacts of particular projects.[23]

The federal government has developed a similar (though not directly comparable) process for active transport infrastructure, *the Australian Transport Assessment and Planning Guidelines for Active Transport.* Applying the methodology, the **Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads concludes that well positioned active transport infrastructure returns $5 for every $1 invested.**

As the graphic below demonstrates, the most significant benefit derives from improvements in public health (fitness overall outweighing the increased risk of bicycle accidents) but gains are also made in decongestion and decreased infrastructure costs.[24]

In addition, one of Australia's most distinguished transport planners, Peter Newman AO, identifies significant benefits of active transport for local economies. In *The New Infrastructure for a New Economy* Newman argues infrastructure needs to be built today to accommodate the innovation of tomorrow with local economic centres built without car corridors being one such emerging change.[25]

FIGURE 1.8 ECONOMIC VALUE OF BENEFITS PER KILOMETRE CYCLED ($AUD)



Source: Queensland Government Department of Transport and Main Roads • Created with Datawrapper

At present, Queensland is the most financially stressed of the Australian states. Public debt is forecast to increase to $102 billion in 2021, partly as a result of coronavirus. Queensland's current car dominated transport model brings real and measurable public financial costs.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads had a capital budget in 2018-19 of $3.425 billion, most of which went to roads [26] yet Infrastructure Australia estimates the annual cost of congestion in Brisbane (costs which are split between the public and private sectors) is $2 billion a year.[27] In addition, the cost of Queensland's public health system is increasing year on year by more than 5%, a figure which is well above state revenue growth and which is driven in large part by the cost of chronic disease.[28]

On these numbers, it becomes clear that **active transport should be seen not as a discretionary item which is "nice to have" on top of the business as usual transport infrastructure model but as a mainstream driver of private and public financial gains.**

PART 2:
CYCLING POLICY IN QUEENSLAND & AUSTRALIA

In 2016, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) called for 20% of member governments' transport funding to be dedicated to walking and cycling, citing road safety and environmental concerns as the primary drivers.[29]

Despite the UN mandate and the clear possibilities for active transport to drive economic, environmental and social change, the status quo of designing roads primarily for cars and trucks continues.

Active transport funding in Australia

A 2018 analysis by Neil Sipe and others at the University of Queensland found that most states devote less than 2% of transport funding to active transport. While acknowledging that active transport figures were difficult to distinguish in overall roads and transport budgets, the UQ analysis identified Queensland at 1.5% ($33 million in a $2.2 billion 2015/16 roads budget) as Australia's second best jurisdiction for active transport funding, behind only the ACT.[30]

FIGURE 2.1 FUNDING FOR ROADS AND CYCLING 2015/2016

STATE	CYCLING ($M)	ROADS ($M)	CYCLING FUNDING AS % OF ROAD FUNDING
ACT	16	109	14.3
NSW	32	5281	0.6
NT	4	245	1.4
Queensland	33	2202	1.5
South Australia	4	569	0.6
Tasmania	2	126	1.5
Victoria	17	1999	0.9
Western Australia	16	1679	0.9

Source: University of Queensland

Queensland's identified spending share was well over twice that of New South Wales (0.6%) and 40% more than Victoria. Even so, the Queensland analysis likely underestimated the Queensland spend with some active transport funding being effectively hidden in major road or public transport projects (which as a matter of policy must incorporate active transport) and other funds distributed to councils through Local Government Department grants.

Across Australia, municipal governments perform better for active transport funding than do states while the federal government, particularly since 2013, has funded very little active transport infrastructure.

For the study period (2015-18), Brisbane City Council devoted around 5-7% of its transport budget to active transport, a figure which was comparable to that of Sydney at the time.

Since the 2018 study, however, things have changed with both Sydney and Melbourne commencing very significant new active transport projects. Sydney has commenced a major inner city cycle lane project (including road closures to traffic) funded by 25% of the council budget.

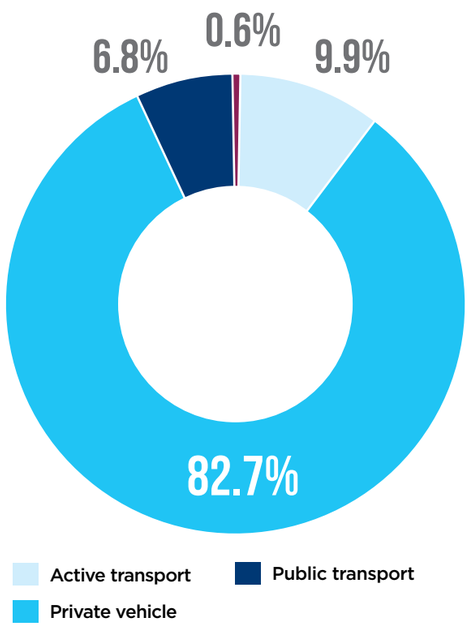
The Melbourne Active Transport Strategy 2030 acknowledges that within the CBD 89% of trips are currently undertaken by walking. That fundamental realisation has driven a significant spatial shift with the specific purpose of turning more space over to active transport modes. The project received 51% of the council transport budget in 2017-18 and more than 25% in each of the out-years to 2021. [31] [32]

On current mode shares, all three major Australian cities perform poorly, though Melbourne and Sydney may be expected to improve when the next data — from the 2021 census — becomes available.[33]

Active transport mode share in SEQ: The latest data

Through the Department of Transport and Main Roads, the Queensland Government conducts a periodic Household Travel Survey. The latest survey, in 2018, showed that just 9.9% of all trips in Queensland were undertaken by active transport, compared to 83% by private vehicle.

FIGURE 2.2 MODE OF TRAVEL (QUEENSLAND)

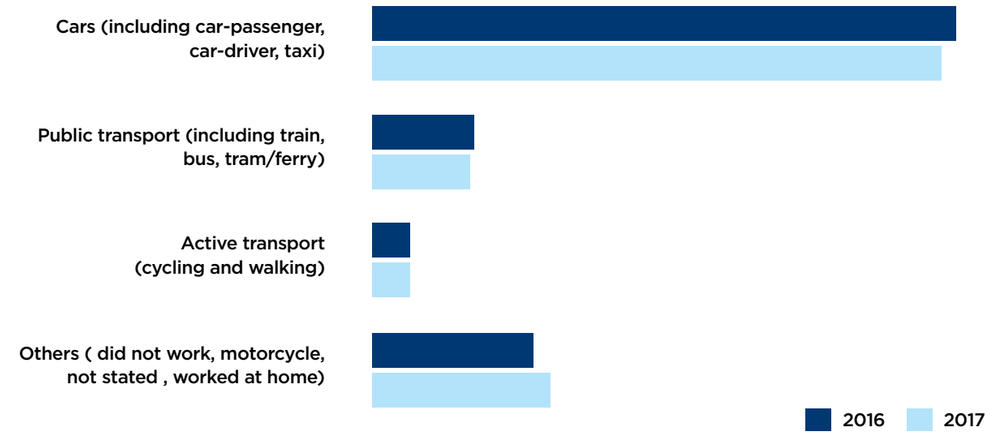


Source: Queensland Household Survey (2019)

The figure was virtually unchanged from 2011 when 9.1% of trips were by active transport.

Perhaps more concerningly, data from the census indicates even lower levels of active transport take-up. The census focuses on journeys to work, not all travel, so cannot be directly compared to the Household Travel Survey. It does, however, take a population snapshot, one which in 2016 showed that just 4% of people in Greater Brisbane travelled to work by active transport, exactly the same figure as recorded in 2006.

FIGURE 2.3 METHOD OF TRAVEL TO WORK (GREATER BRISBANE)



Source: ABS Census 2006, 2016 • Created with Datawrapper

Queensland Government policy on active transport

THE 2013 PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

In 2013 the Queensland Parliament's Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee released a bipartisan report recommending changes to Queensland's cycling policy settings.

The Committee received 106 submissions with key pieces of evidence relating to the reasons for Queensland's low level of cycling take-up and the history of cycling and active transport policy in the state.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads provided the committee with detailed results of its own 2011 research revealing that while many people indicated a desire to align with the government's own stated goal of "more cycling, more often" they were reluctant to do so for reasons associated with a poor perception of safety.

FIGURE 2.4 PERCEPTION OF SAFETY: THE KEY BARRIER TO CYCLING IN QUEENSLAND

REASON NOT TO RIDE	% OF RESPONDENTS
Unsafe road conditions	67.1
Speed / volume of traffic	52.5
Lack of bicycle lanes / trails	48.1
Weather conditions	44.3
Destinations too far away	36.7
No place to park / store a bicycle	26
Don't feel safe riding	25.3
Too hilly	23.4
Don't like wearing a helmet	16.5

Despite the poor result in improving mode share and the continued resistance to cycling, the committee heard that federal, state and local governments had consistently released policies with strong mode share targets including:

1997: SEQ Integrated Regional Transport Plan — increase cycling trips from 2% to 8% by 2011

1999: Austroads "Australia Cycling — The National Strategy 1999–2004": Double bicycle use

2003: Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads — increase cycling trips from 2% to 8% by 2011

2006: Brisbane City Council Transport Plan for Brisbane: increase cycling trips from 2% to 5% by 2026

2010: Austroads National Cycling Strategy: double the number of people cycling in Australia by 2016

2011: DTMR Queensland Cycle Strategy: double cycling's share of commuter trips by 2021 and triple by 2031 [34]

The Committee heard that monitoring of those targets had consistently been poor, leading to a lack of accountability for outcomes.[35]

The committee noted that issues around cycling in the community were "divisive" and generated a great deal of emotion with many people not regarding cyclists as legitimate road users. It explicitly rejected that animosity, recommending an inclusive approach focusing on vulnerable road users.

While the committee received submissions across the broad spectrum of active transport policy issues, it chose primarily to take a road safety focus. Having identified cyclists as vulnerable road users, the committee's key recommendations focused not on the sustainability or other benefits of improving cycling's mode share but on road rule and technical standard changes to reduce physical risk.

FIGURE 2.5 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 2013 PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY AND THEIR STATUS

NUMBER	RECOMMENDATION	IMPLEMENTED
8	Introduce minimum overtaking distances around cyclists	Y
15	Undertake a 2 year trial to exempt cyclists over 16 from wearing helmets in 60km and under zones or when using bike hire schemes (CityCycle)	N
19	Amend road rules to facilitate safe cycling by allowing bikes on pedestrian crossings	Y
20	Permitting cyclists to roll through stop signs	N
33	Introduce new road rules and increase penalties for road rage / menacing behaviour towards cyclists	N
34	The Transport Minister should explicitly rule out introducing registration for bike users	Y
35-41	That consistent technical standards for bicycle infrastructure be developed and applied across Queensland	N
60	That road safety funding for cycling should be commensurate with the proportion of the population who cycle (18% in 2011)	N

Queensland Government active transport policy

The State Government's primary active transport policy documents are the Queensland Cycle Strategy (the current strategy 2017-27 being the most recent in a series of strategies dating back to the 1990s) and the Queensland Walking Strategy, the first of which was released in 2019.

Since the 1990s, Queensland cycling policy has centred on a number of key interventions:

- Infrastructure spending : with priorities determined by
  - a policy requirement that all new transport infrastructure should accommodate cycling (a policy not adhered to by the Newman Government but reinstated in 2015)
  - individual projects along Principal Cycle Network Plans (planned in conjunction with local government and publicly available), and
  - grants to local governments
- New planning regimes focused on local connectivity
- Active Transport promotion: such as bike campaigns and periodic Ride to School initiatives
- Rule changes including the introduction of the 1 metre rule, requiring cars to pass at least a metre from bikes (1.5m in high speed areas).

The current Cycle Strategy is consistent with that earlier work, though for the first time it does not include specific targets for active transport mode share. The Strategy has a number of elements:

Vision: more cycling more often

Building and connecting infrastructure: including separated bikeways and better way finding

Encouraging more riders: through promotional activities

Sharing our roads: through existing rules and enforcement mechanisms

Powering the economy: which the Queensland Government has done in recent years through very successful rail trail developments in regional areas

Using research and data: by engaging for instance with Griffith University

Making it happen: through a Cycling Action Plan which sets out more specific policy actions such as "auditing the feasibility of including electric bike charging stations at public transport nodes.[36]

In 2018, the Queensland Government indicated an intention to spend $67.5 million in the financial year and $240 million over four years on cycle infrastructure through both direct projects such as the flagship veloway — a cycle highway beside the South East Freeway — and through grants to local governments for cycle paths.[37]

The funding, as indicated above, distinguishes Queensland as the state jurisdiction most strongly committed to active transport though a detailed report on progress is not currently available, with the scheduled two yearly Cycle Strategy Review (due in 2019) having not yet been handed down.

The consequence, however, of state and local government cycling policy is clear. Despite a strong record of plans, targets and infrastructure spending above national averages, cycling mode share in South East Queensland remains low and the state government, in omitting targets, is proceeding cautiously. There is clearly a case for exploring a new approach to active planning policy in South East Queensland.

Seizing the opportunity to build infrastructure: The Queensland cycling infrastructure policy

The Queensland Cycling Infrastructure Policy was first developed in the mid 2000s. It provides that cycling infrastructure is *explicitly* provided when public transport and roads projects are developed along identified Principal Cycle Networks and *implicitly* provided (that is considered and sometimes provided) for transport projects which are not on identified Principal Cycle Networks.[38]

While the language is technical, it is in effect a policy to "build in" cycling connections from the beginning.

The policy's logic is that cycling lanes add only marginal additional cost to major construction projects and that, if the opportunity is missed at the outset, major stand-alone cycling projects simply cannot be added retrospectively.

The policy has created a number of South East Queensland's most significant cycling links — through the Ipswich Motorway upgrade, the Gateway Bridge duplication and the Ted Smout (Brighton to Redcliffe) Bridge.

Having been entrenched until 2012, the policy was rendered entirely ineffective by the Newman Government which slashed active transport funding. The policy change was flagged with a controversial decision to cancel a bike path which formed part of the Darra to Springfield rail extension early in the government's term. The planned cycling corridor would have connected Springfield, 34km from Brisbane City, to the CBD via the new path and the existing Centenary Cycleway. Its abandonment in favour of an additional road lane means that Springfield may never have a safe cycling connection to Brisbane.[39]

The Cycling Infrastructure Policy was reinstated in 2015 and is again delivering new cycling infrastructure. While the policy is sound and is supported by this report, it is the case that the "take the opportunity" framework on occasion creates high quality bike paths without connections into the broader cycle network.

That's exactly the outcome on the Ipswich Motorway where a high quality cycle path alongside the upgraded highway ends abruptly at Dinmore, forcing cyclists onto a busy and dangerous main road for the remaining stretch to Ipswich. It's also currently the case in Brisbane where the state government's new V1 veloway meets a CBD lacking designated bike routes.

This failure to connect is a key frustration of South East Queensland cyclists and a barrier to improved perceptions of safety. Fixing it is at the core of two of this paper's recommendations: for fast, cheap and connected infrastructure and for a Sustainable Transport Commission to better coordinate SEQ cycling policy and infrastructure prioritisation.

Local government active transport policy in South East Queensland

The State Government plan is complemented by, though not aligned with, a series of South East Queensland local government plans. Those plans vary wildly in their level of ambition with none being effectively monitored.

FIGURE 2.6 SEQ LOCAL GOVERNMENTS: A MYRIAD OF DISCONNECTED CYCLING POLICIES

GOVERNMENT	PLAN	TRIP TARGET	ACTIONS	MONITORING
Queensland Government	Qld Cycle Strategy 2017-27	None	As above	Overdue
Gold Coast City Council	Active Transport Plan 2017-27	Walking 7.5%, cycling 4.5% by 2026	Infrastructure roll-out including green bridges	None
Brisbane City Council	Brisbane Active Transport Strategy 2012-26	Walking 15%, cycling 5% by 2026	1700km of bikeway by 2031 (aspirational target in Brisbane Vision)	None
Ipswich City Council	iGo Active Transport Plan 2016	Walking 11%, cycling 3% when Ipswich reaches 435,000 pop (2031)	Prioritise development of Principal Cycle Network. No specific funding allocation	None
Sunshine Coast Regional Council	Sunshine Coast Active Transport Plan 2011-31	Walking 13%, cycling 5% by 2021	Significantly increased funding to bike infrastructure	None

Rail Trails: How the Queensland Government is driving regional economies and cycling culture through low cost public infrastructure

From 1865, when the first Queensland Government railway was constructed, the colony (later state's) growth was driven and directed by the railway. With many of those historic branch lines having been closed in the motor vehicle era, the state now has an extensive network of flat and picturesque disused rail corridors, many of which remain in public hands.

In recent years, the Queensland Government has developed a concerted plan of rail trail development, backed by a $14 million rail trail local government grants program delivered between 2017/18 and 2020/21.[40] The state now has a number of well-established trails including:

The Brisbane Valley Rail Trail, a 161km stretch running from Yarraman to Ipswich, which is the longest rail trail in Australia and was completed through State Government funding in 2018

The Kilkivan to Kingaroy Rail Trail, 88km in the South Burnett

Atherton Tablelands Rail Trail, 20.5km from Atherton to Walkamin

A new **Bundaberg to Gin Gin Rail Trail** is now being planned following matching $9.5 million commitments from the Queensland Government and Bundaberg Regional Council.[41]

The trails have generated significant economic activity in regional areas with an explosion in domestic tourism usage through the coronavirus lockdown. They also play a critical role in developing a cycling culture.

A NEW OPPORTUNITY: THE BOONAH IPSWICH TRAIL WOULD MAKE IPSWICH A HUB FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION

In 2011, Queensland's then Department of Local Government and Planning undertook detailed planning for a Boonah–Ipswich Trail, a 71km connection along the picturesque Fassifern Valley from Ipswich via Flinders Peak and Wyaralong Dam to Boonah.[42]

The plan was supported at the time by the Ipswich and Scenic Rim Councils. It has the potential to make Ipswich a major active recreation hub by linking the existing heavily utilised Brisbane Valley Rail Trail to the SEQ weekend destination of Boonah. It would also link the extensive mountain bike and recreation area at Wyaralong Dam created by the State Government in the late 2000s with a new mountain bike park being planned by Somerset Council at Esk.

Development of the trail may be relatively low cost with 20km at the Ipswich end from Hardings Paddock to Flinders Peak having already been constructed by the Ipswich City Council and much of it extending along gazetted but unformed Scenic Rim council roads.

In 2012, the Boonah–Ipswich Trail was shelved but its missing links remain a possibility for healthy outdoor recreation, regional economic development and the continued creation of a cycling culture.

BIKELASH: A GROWING RESISTANCE TO ACTIVE TRANSPORT

While a number of governments including Queensland, Sydney, Melbourne and the Sunshine Coast retain strong commitments to cycling, social attitudes in the field have become increasingly mixed.

As the Queensland Parliamentary Committee noted in its 2013 report, cycling, a once inclusive and seemingly benign activity, is increasingly a target for society's growing rage.

The anti-bike and anti-cyclist phenomenon which sees road rage directed against cyclists and organised protests opposing improvements in cycling infrastructure has been observed from Portland, Oregon to London.

In South East Queensland, it's been experienced as vandals placing thumbtacks on bikepaths[43] while in Sydney a motorcyclist who killed a cyclist by running him off the road in 2013 was convicted of manslaughter after suggesting the cyclist "deserved it."[44]

The phenomenon has been sufficiently observed across the western world that it has been granted a name: *bikelash.*

While no definitive or rational explanation for the rage appears in the literature, it is clear that in some circles cycling has come to represent elitism, free riding (in that cyclists don't pay registration) and, as one cognitive neuroscientist has written for the BBC, a kind of "breakdown in the moral order of the road."[45]

With political leaders ever sensitive to public opinion, it is possible that bikelash at least in part explains the recent diminution of commitment to cycling infrastructure and promotion.

Cyclists say they're being targeted by 'mantraps', as thumbtacks dropped along popular routes

ABC News Online, 1 March 2018

Sydney man jailed for eight years over cyclist's death on highway

ABC News Online, 3 July 2017

Man sentenced to 12 months after cyclist's 'road rage' death

Bega District News, 7 February 2019

OF THE WORLD'S ACTIVE TRANSPORT CITIES, THE DANISH CAPITAL COPENHAGEN IS WIDELY REGARDED AS THE WORLD LEADER.

PART 3:
THE INTERNATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT: BEST PRACTICE FROM CYCLING CITIES AROUND THE WORLD

Policy inertia around active transport is often explained away with the assertion that Australia's far flung and sprawling cities are ill suited to a walking and cycling culture. With a moderate climate, no city snow, a high level of affluence, a reasonable tax base (compared at least to some in the OECD), wide streets and relatively modern infrastructure, the pre-conditions for cycling and walking in Australia are stronger than they are in most successful active transport cities.

Indeed, contrary to the common view that some cities are "naturally" better disposed to cycling than others, the following section provides an overview of a number of urban centres with strong active transport records. **In all of them, cycling and walking have resulted from long term and deliberate policy interventions.**

Copenhagen, Denmark

Of the world's active transport cities, the Danish capital Copenhagen is widely regarded as the world leader. 29% of all trips in Copenhagen and 41% of trips to work are undertaken by bike. Collectively, the city's residents own 675,000 bicycles and just 120,000 cars.[46] And while it's easy to look at Copenhagen with its historic streetscapes and high density urban environment and assume natural or physical factors have driven the trend, Copenhagen's cycling culture is in fact a result of deliberate policy choices made from the 1970s onwards.

While cycling was popular in the early twentieth century in Copenhagen (as it was in Australia) the period between the end of the Second World War and the 1970s saw cars overtake bicycles as a preferred mode of urban transport. In the 1970s however, protests emerged, as people who did continue to use bikes took to the streets calling for better bicycle safety. The protests created a public consciousness and every national budget from 1982 to 2001 allocated specific funds for cycle paths and safety measures.[47] In more recent times such measures have been further cemented, driven not primarily by safety concerns but by the city's stated goal to become carbon neutral by 2025.

Bogotá, Colombia

With a GDP per capita of $6,667USD[48] (compared to $57,373 for Australia), Colombia has far less private or public wealth than this country. Yet in its capital, Bogota, one in ten of the city's 8 million residents cycle every day (Uniman et al., 2017; Moro et al., 2018). 70% of all trips taken are for work and another 20% for study (Uniman et al., 2017; Bogota D.C., Plan Bici, 2016; Moro et al., 2018).

Like other great cycling cities of the world, there is nothing "natural" or "inevitable" about the Bogota experience. Rather, it is the result of policy and, in classic Latin American style, passionate activism.

The genesis of Bogota's cycling transformation is *Ciclovia*, a Sunday event in which 120km of city roads are closed to motor vehicles from 7am to 2pm, liberating the roads for the thousands of people who turn out to cycle, run or walk without fear of traffic.[49]

Ciclovia was the brainchild of Ortiz Mariño, an activist now in his 70s who studied architecture and design in the United States during the tumultuous political and social upheavals of the late 1960s. As Mariño describes the experience he was radicalised by the political possibilities of the era but alerted, through his field of study, to the destruction of urban areas being driven by flight to the suburbs. On returning to Colombia he was "shocked to see we were following the American path of urban development" and so, viewing the bicycle as a tool of equality, urbanism and environmental consciousness, he and his peers began the first *Ciclovia*, convincing city officials to close just two city streets to cyclists on a Sunday in December 1974.[50]

Ciclovia quickly became a weekly event and the public embrace of it influenced broader government policy with a commitment to develop a world class cycling network called 'CicloRutas'.

Between 1990 and 2002, government spent US$180 million building cycle lanes beside bus lanes allowing outer suburbs to connect to the city centre and transit hubs. In 1990 the city of Bogota spent almost half the United States' annual cycle infrastructure spend and the construction of what are now more than 476km of dedicated bike lanes has dramatically impacted mode share. With CicloRutas, the share of daily bike trips has increased from 1% in 1995 to 5-6% in 2016. From 2005 to 2015, Cycling trips were increased by 57% and from 2011 to 2015, cycling trips were increased by 30%.[51]

In 2015, government launched a further strategy, Plan BiCi to promote cycling in newly built neighbourhoods and to encourage young citizens to ride. The city council has a vision of making Bogota the cycling capita of the world and having cycling routes within 500m of every house in the city.[52] The main objective of this four year (2016-2020) plan is to double the mode share of cycling to 10% of all trips and build at least 120km of new cycling paths.

The transformation that began with the passion and joy of *Ciclovia* has been noted around the world. The Sunday road closure is now undertaken in diverse parts of the world from Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur to Mexico City and Paris.[53]

THE GENESIS OF BOGOTA'S CYCLING TRANSFORMATION IS CICLOVIA, A SUNDAY EVENT IN WHICH 120KM OF CITY ROADS ARE CLOSED TO MOTOR VEHICLES FROM 7AM TO 2PM, LIBERATING THE ROADS FOR THE THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WHO TURN OUT TO CYCLE, RUN OR WALK WITHOUT FEAR OF TRAFFIC.

THE JAPANESE USE PRACTICAL BICYCLES KNOWN AS 'MAMACHARI' WITH FEATURES LIKE CHILD SEATS AND BIG BASKETS WHICH MAKE BICYCLES PRACTICAL FOR MULTI PURPOSE JOURNEYS.

Japan

In Japan, 15% of trips are taken by bicycle, a result that has been achieved without significant infrastructure spending. Policy researchers argue that while there have been many important decisions made to encourage cycling and discouraging car ownership and usage, bicycles have largely emerged as an informal, private and practical means of transportation for the majority of the population, without significant government planning.[54]

This evolutionary cycling take-up has two notable features. First, it has emerged from the integration of cycling with public transport. With Japan already having a strong public transport culture, it is common for people to use bikes to get to public transport stations. Second, and displaying a similar practicality, the Japanese use practical bicycles known as *'Mamachari'* with features like child seats and big baskets which make bicycles practical for multi purpose journeys.

In terms of bicycle ownership, there is not much difference between Australia (0.45 bicycles/capita) and Japan (0.57 bicycles/capita). However, significant difference has been noted in bicycle usage, which shows that in Japan almost half of the population rides bicycle once a week compared to Australia, only 1 in 7 people.[55]

Portland, Oregon

Through poor planning and exceptional population growth in the postwar period, Australian cities bear more in common with those of the United States than they do with Europe, Latin America or Asia. Amongst sprawling, new world cities, Portland Oregon is widely regarded as an active transport exemplar.

In 2017, Portland had a journey to work mode share of 5.7% walking, 6.3% cycling and 57% traveling alone in a car.[56] While by no means high in absolute terms, this active transport mode share is around ten times the US average and nearly twice as good as the best performing Australian city, Hobart. Portland's current plan, to 2035, aims to increase active transport mode share to 7.5% walking and 25% bicycle, explicitly warning that current population growth means that without significant behaviour change "the transportation system will fail."

The Portland plan has a number of elements; the introduction of "neighbourhood greenways," essentially suburban streets with traffic calming and 20mph (32kph) speed limits, bike lanes with varying levels of protection on major routes, a bikeshare scheme, "bike boxes" allowing bicycles to queue first at traffic lights and programs encouraging children to ride to school. With 99 miles (158km) of protected bike lanes built between 2009 and 2019 and a further 90 (144km) planned for the subsequent five years, the focus is on changing the city quickly.

The 20 year Portland Bicycle Plan is being delivered by a stand-alone unit within the city's Department of Transportation. That unit publishes a detailed annual infrastructure plan, provides yearly progress reports, conducts community consultation and ensures independent verification of the program with Portland State University conducting equity reviews which ensure access to bike infrastructure reflects the city's socio-economic and racial dispersion rather than becoming purely an "elite" phenomenon.

Portland's bicycle plan has met resistance — in both Seattle and Portland the shift to sustainable transport has been characterised by some groups as a "war on cars". Rather, however, than abandoning active transport, Portland has addressed resistance — by improving consultation, by clear planning focused on "fast and cheap" rollout and by using pop-up bike lanes which can be removed at low cost in cases where communities remain unconvinced about the change.[58]

A local light: The Sunshine Coast's *Aura* by Stockland

On the Sunshine Coast, urban developer Stockland has reversed the common trend for new housing developments to be far flung and poorly connected with Aura, a major urban development south of Caloundra.

With strong support from state agencies Economic Development Queensland and the Department of Transport and Main Roads, Stockland has planned Aura as a benchmark active transport city from its inception.

Aura has 200km of planned cycling paths and has been planned to facilitate walking and safe cycling between schools, workplaces, shops and residences. Visitors are offered e-bikes to get around on arrival and Stockland partner the Australian Cycling Academy have run programs like teaching children bike skills in local parks and initiating a Ridescore program which places a chip in kids' bikes, allowing parents to see when the bike has arrived at school and giving kids rewards for riding more often.[59]

In 2018, Stockland was awarded a Built Environment Award by Weride, Australia's primary advocacy group for cycling.[60]

PART 4:
E-BIKES, COVID-19 & A BOOM IN CYCLING

E-bikes: the revolution is already here

Even before coronavirus swept the world, cycling was experiencing a revolution. E-bikes are bicycles with a rechargeable battery that kicks in as the rider pedals, complementing the strength of the pedal stroke to provide extra acceleration. While some have a throttle in addition to pedal activation, pedelec technology activated by the pedal stroke means e-bikes are still primarily bicycles not motorbikes.

E-bikes were first developed in the 1990s but have seen rapid technological evolution in recent years as a result of lithium-ion batteries. On anecdotal evidence, they now account for around 30% of bicycle sales in Australia. Having retailed for around $5,000 in recent years, the cheapest e-bikes on the Australian market are now priced at just over $1,200.[61]

While electric cars are yet to take off into the mainstream, e-bike technology does now have the capacity for most people's day to day needs. A typical $3,000 commuter e-bike has a 250 watt motor (about the same pedal power as a reasonably fit recreational rider can sustain for an hour[62]), a range of 50km and a recharge time of around 4 hours.[63]

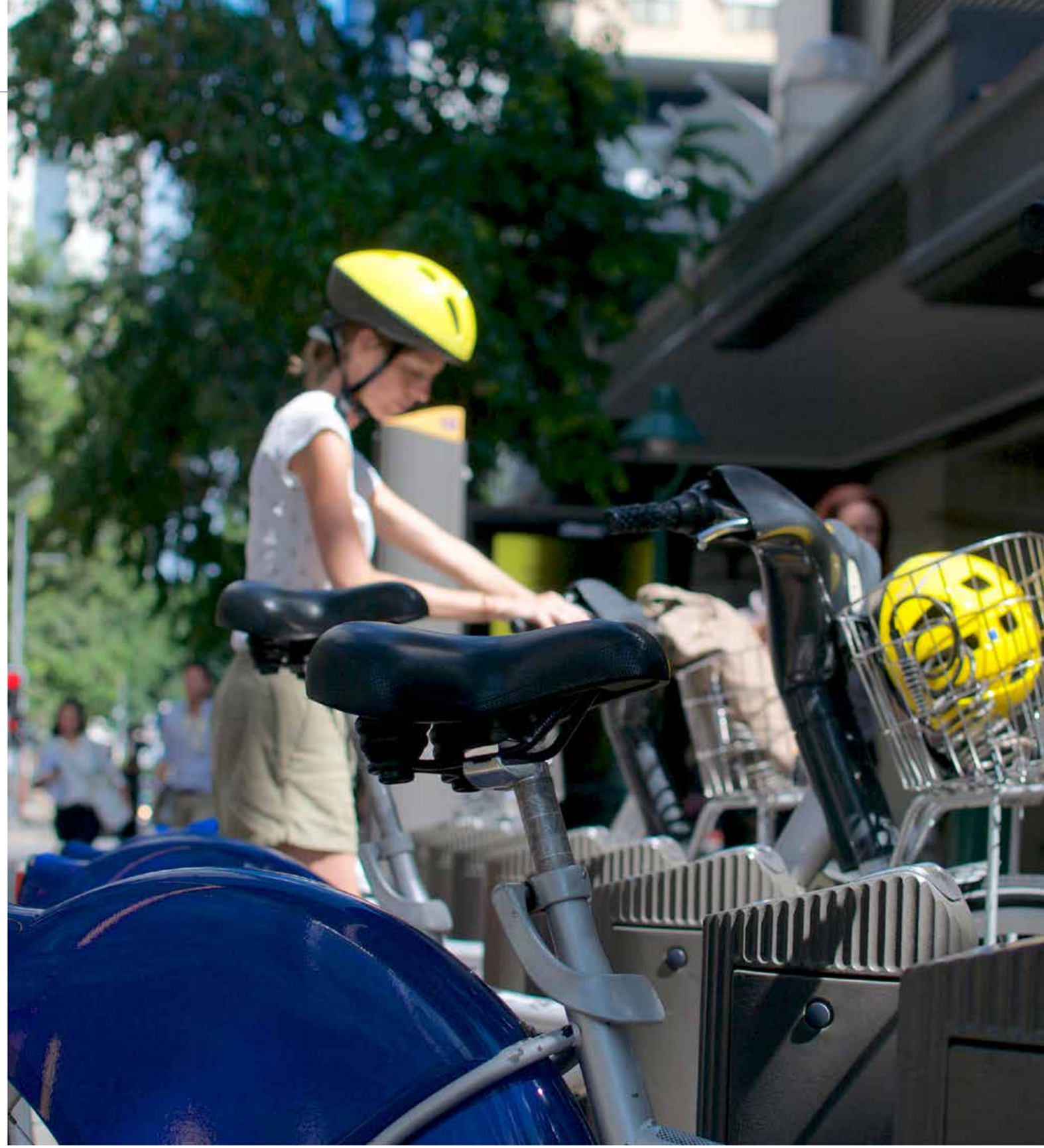
With the average South East Queensland commute standing at 17.4km, the potential of e-bike commuting *if safe bikelanes were provided* is obvious.

To this point, Australian governments have responded to e-bikes through an entirely negative framework, one which has mitigated their risks rather than captured their possibilities.

In 2012, Australian standards for bicycles were brought into line with those of Europe, limiting the power of e-bikes at 250 watts and ensuring they could not be ridden motor-assisted at more than 25km per hour.

In 2018, the federal government responded to a rise in e-bike imports by introducing a 5% tariff on e-bikes imported from the primary manufacturing hubs of Europe and Taiwan.[64]

While the first regulatory intervention was necessary for safety reasons, the second has entirely failed to spur local e-bike manufacturing. What's most notable is that no Australian jurisdiction has yet developed a plan to take advantage of the transport revolution electric bikes bring.



Coronavirus changes modes of travel overnight

As the coronavirus pandemic has swept the world, economic activity and the traffic congestion that accompanies it have dramatically slowed. At the time of writing (October 2020), the OECD was projecting GDP contraction of 9% in Europe and 7% in the United States, assuming no significant second wave of coronavirus infection occurred.[65]

Having seen GDP decline by 0.3% in the March quarter and 7% in June, Australia confirmed its first recession in 29 years when official quarterly economic data was released on 2 September 2020.[66]

It has long been understood that congestion and economic growth go hand in hand. Predictably then, the general decrease in economic activity and the dramatic transition to people working from home has seen a collapse in congestion and an improvement in air quality around the world.[67]

Perhaps most notably from a transport planning standpoint, small decreases in overall traffic volumes have created exponential improvements in congestion. The Australian Roads Research Bureau reported for instance that while 28% fewer vehicles were using Melbourne's Monash freeway during the first coronavirus lockdown, congestion fell by between 88% and 95% in weekday peaks.[68] That trend has been repeated across major city road networks. In April, data from technology firm HERE showed that in every major Australian city, roads which would generally be heavily congested in peak hour were now clear.[69]

And while road travel has declined as a result of the pandemic, public transport usage has fallen to an even greater degree. Real time spending data released by economics consultancy AlphaBeta in August showed that whilst overall Australians' spending per person was down by 14%, the biggest single fall came in the category of public transport spending, which collapsed by 62%, more than pubs (-48%), travel (-41%) and road tolls (-19%).[70]

The congestion trends had two significant implications – **First, we now know for sure that relatively small reductions in vehicle numbers can bring about big improvements in congestion.**

Second, there is real concern that should workers return to the office but continue to avoid public transport, congestion could very quickly become worse than it ever was before.

COVID: Cars are off the road and bike sales have skyrocketed

Meanwhile, there's been a third perhaps less anticipated impact of the coronavirus. Around the world and in Australia bicycle sales have gone through the roof.

While Australians have always owned a lot of bicycles (bike sales outstrip cars in some years), they are now riding more than ever for three reasons: transport (through public transport avoidance and the advent of quieter, safer roads); health and fitness, particularly when gyms were closed; and the greater time spent with family as people both lost their jobs and worked from home.[71]

In the first wave of the pandemic bricks and mortar bicycle stores reported demand growth of 50% while one major online retailer reported 210%.[72] One retailer described bikes as "the new toilet paper".[73]

Local governments have reported increases in usage of their bike paths from 100% in parts of Brisbane[74] to 78% in Melbourne and 41% in Ipswich.[75] Many schools have reported a surge in children riding to school, leading advocacy groups like Bicycle Queensland to call for more bike racks and for ride to school programs which will ensure the COVID inspired shift becomes a permanent feature.

FIGURE 4.1 BIKES AT FERNY GROVE STATE SCHOOL (BRISBANE) DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

PHOTO CREDIT: BICYCLE QUEENSLAND, 2020.

Cycling uptake and demand for bikes has been so great that most major Australian bicycle retailers are now reporting shortages of stock.

And the rise in bike sales and usage stands in stark contrast to the collapse in car sales brought about by the pandemic. In 2019-20, the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads 75,289 new car registrations bringing the total number of registered vehicles (including trailers, boats and caravans) to 5.448 million (from a population of 5.187 million people).[76] The increase in car registration was the smallest Queensland had experienced since 1999-2000.[77]

The world's leading cities have changed their policy settings overnight

The dramatically changed circumstances have led to widespread calls for better transport policy.

The McKell Institute has previously recommended congestion charging trials in Australian cities,[78] a call which has been renewed by some policy commentators including the Grattan Institute during the pandemic. Congestion charging may be a rational policy but it is one for which Australian policy makers so far have shown zero appetite.[79]

Slightly (though not entirely) less controversially, pop up bike lanes have been adopted by cities around the world as a means of both taking advantage of the quieter roads and ensuring a safe and uncrowded commute for the multitudes now avoiding public transport.

In Germany, 133 cities received resident submissions resident for the temporary lanes in April following a campaign from Environmental Action Germany. Berlin was the first city to act, using tape and temporary markers to widen existing bike lanes into vehicle space in order to allow cyclists to maintain social distancing.[80] Bikelash arose, with the right leaning Free Democratic Party, describing the move as an "unnecessary provocation".[81]

In France, the national government developed a €20 million plan for repairing bicycles, installing temporary bike parking spaces and financing cycling training sessions, to ensure the bicycle plays a key role in the post-lockdown period. Much of the spending is in Paris, which has been moving towards becoming a cycling city for some years and in Bordeaux where 78km of temporary bike lanes are being built.

Brussels has added 40km of bike lanes and Milan 35km.[82] Boston, Minneapolis and Oakland have transformed numerous streets into car-free zones, while New York announced that it would temporarily open 100km of roads to pedestrians and cyclists.[83] Seattle announced it would permanently close 20 miles (32km) of roads, while Toronto is seeking to create 25km of new bikeways.

The City of Melbourne, which already had plans to build 40km of new bike lanes over the next decade, has announced they will now be built over two years. 12km are to be installed immediately as pop up lanes.[84] Optimism about the City's move has led the RACV, traditionally the motorist lobby group, to call for other suburban councils to follow suit.

> **Car parks out, footpaths and cycling lanes in as city prepares for post-COVID commuters**
>
> *The Age, 7 May 2020*

The City of Sydney with the support of the New South Wales Government announced 10km of new inner city lanes in May,[85] indicating that the urgent nature of the opportunity meant normal consultation processes would not be followed. It was a sharp turnaround from a State Government in which the Roads Minister had, as recently as 2014, supported the idea of licensing cyclists as a means of limiting bad behaviour on roads.[86]

FIGURE 4.2 SYDNEY'S NEW CYCLE LANES.

PHOTO CREDIT: CITY OF SYDNEY COUNCIL

The clear lesson from COVID in Australia and around the world is that those cities which were already on the front foot on active transport have seized the opportunity to cement a change in mode share.

Pop up bike lanes during COVID: The Brisbane experience

As cities around the world which had well developed plans for active transport enacted them during COVID-19, Brisbane was slower to act.

In **early May 2020** an Opposition motion for an immediate COVID inspired "mobility plan," was rejected by the existing council administration as "pathetic".[87]

In **late May**, Bicycle Queensland developed a specific COVID related CBD pop-up bike lane proposal and presented it to council and the state government.[88] [89] A second advocacy group, Bicycle Network released *Pedalling to a Better Normal : A six month Plan to stimulate the economy, create jobs, save lives and get Australians moving.*[90] In response council announced a joint committee with the state government to work on missing links in the cycle network.

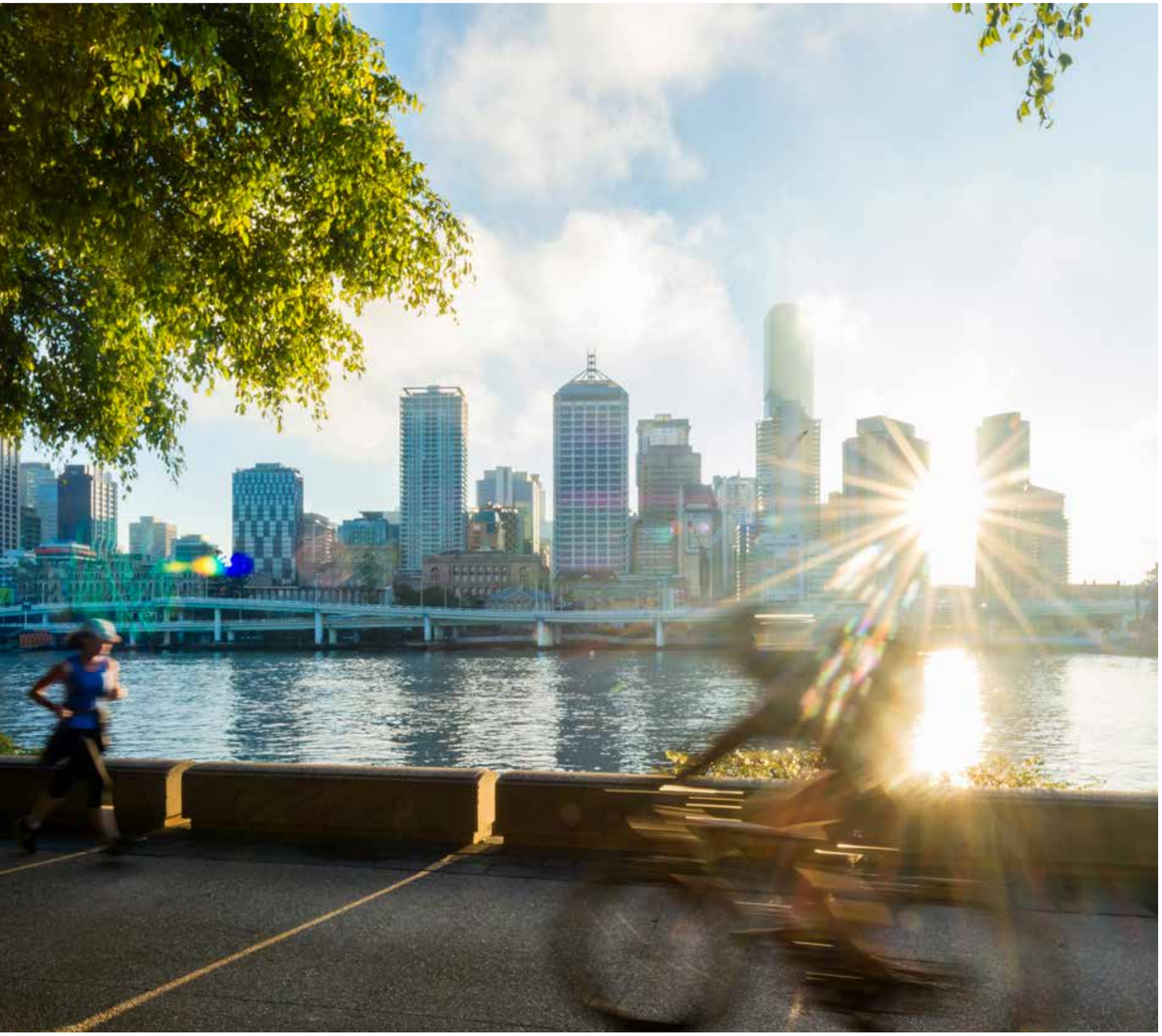
In **June** the council brought down a budget ostensibly prioritising cycling with the Lord Mayor saying council would "work with the Queensland government to roll out new pop-up bike lanes in the CBD as soon as possible".[91]

In **July** the joint council / state government committee met.[92]

In **August**, council announced a plan for a Citylink Cycleway, a network of permanent lanes through the CBD to be developed in the future.[93] The concept of pop-up bike lanes was rejected on the basis that the project was technically complex, with council indicating it did not want to install infrastructure quickly, only to have to rip it up later.[94]

On **29 September**, council released details of the Citylink Cycleway, now as a 12 month pop up trial. The bi-directional bike lanes are to be installed on Edward and Elisabeth Streets by Christmas and on Albert Street by January. A $2.2 million budget has been allocated.[95]

FIGURE 4.3
ARTIST'S IMPRESSION OF BRISBANE CYCLE LANES



PART 5:
RECOMMENDATIONS

Twenty-five years after the Queensland Government first sought to guide the shape of South East Queensland with its initial non-statutory SEQ Regional Growth Management Framework, state and local governments have produced a number of plans for land use, urban growth and sustainable transport in the large and fast growing South East Queensland corridor.

Transport plans have consistently recognised the social and economic consequences of congestion and have included ambitious targets for increasing cycling and more recently walking as a proportion of transport mode share in the region.

Commendably, Queensland cycle funding has been higher than that in other jurisdictions but while the number of active transport trips has significantly increased (in line with population growth), mode share has remained steadfastly low with between 4 and 10% of journeys taken by active transport.

This paper has canvassed a number of themes :

- The compelling reasons for active transport, in terms of health, climate change and the environment, household budgets, congestion and public finance
- The often strong policy response but stubborn mode share of SEQ active transport
- The disconnect between State and local government policies — and notable absence of the Commonwealth from the critical policy space
- The clear learning from overseas experience, that active transport cities are not accidents but policy constructs, and
- The revolution we are in – as e-bikes and the COVID-19 pandemic create an instant, forced but in many senses welcome change in behaviour

The paper does not seek to critique government policy but rather acknowledges that without efforts made so far, active transport would most likely have completely collapsed as a mode of transport, as has occurred in some of the world's most car dependant cities.

Now, however, it is clear that if the possibilities of sustainable transport are to be realised, significant policy change will have to occur. The necessary change is happening in cities around the world right now, providing a clear indication example of the opportunity South East Queensland is missing.

THE REPORT MAKES A NUMBER OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That government should recognise the potential of e-bikes; the revolution which is already upon us

With base model $3,000 e-bikes now having a range of 50km and the average South East Queensland commute sitting at 17.4km, the opportunity is already here for commuters of average fitness and bike skills riding to work — if only they could overcome current poor perceptions of safety.

Unlike electric vehicles, which are much studied but still some time away, e-bikes are available now and are selling in significant numbers.

State and local governments must immediately develop e-bike policies and infrastructure plans to capture the potential of these new devices as a means not just of recreation but of commuting.

The Federal Government should remove all e-bike tariffs as a matter of priority.

2. That SEQ local governments develop their own *Ciclovias*

Government resistance to road closures is understandable — we are all creatures of habit and motoring lobbies are among Australia's most powerful. The imperative to protect road capacity does not, however, apply to inner cities on the weekends. Rather, significant evidence exists that bike commuters and casual weekend bike riders generate their own economic activity — traveling shorter distances and shopping locally.

In Bogota and now in the South East Asian region including in Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur, *Ciclovias* or regular Sunday inner city street fests, are a regular activity. They cut congestion, improve air quality, create joy through exercise and a festival atmosphere and, critically, create a cycling culture.

Opportunities exist for SEQ *ciclovias* — in Brisbane CBD and Southbank, in Ipswich where the CBD desperately needs to attract people and on the Gold and Sunshine Coasts, including during holiday periods.

3. Open pop up bike lanes — before the opportunity is completely lost

While Brisbane City Council has stalled through the COVID lockdown period and other councils such as the Gold Coast, Logan and Ipswich appear not even to have contemplated the possibility, it does remain the case that fewer people than normal are commuting to offices, a trend that may yet continue for a longer period.

With every day that goes by, however, the window is closing and we are moving not just towards the prospect of a once in a generation lost opportunity but to the prospect of congestion which is worse than before as workers return to the city but continue to avoid public transport.

As Sydney, Melbourne and a raft of international cities have shown, now is the time for pop up bike lanes. Councils must act.

4. Build infrastructure — but make it fast, cheap and connected

While South East Queensland has some very high quality bicycle infrastructure such as the veloway and the Coronation Drive bike path, it remains the case that cyclists rightly complain of significant gaps in the network and poor connections. There are two real reasons for these disconnects — the interaction between various levels of government and the tendency to gold plate infrastructure.

As examples, the State has largely funded Coronation Drive and the Toowong Centenary Highway overpass but Sylvan Road remains a problem, the State created a major veloway along the Ipswich Motorway but there is no safe connection from Dinmore to Ipswich.

A "fast and cheap" approach would allow temporary solutions to be created and tested without significant infrastructure spending. A fast roll-out would create momentum and public confidence in the active transport project.

5. Undertake a serious cost benefit analysis of active transport funding

The State Government actively promotes an analysis suggesting that for every $1 invested in cycling infrastructure, $5 is returned in measurable public and private benefits. Its funding decisions, however, suggest it is not entirely confident in the analysis it itself has undertaken.

In 2018, the government indicated an intention to spend $67.5 million of a $3.425 billion Department of Transport and Main Roads budget on cycling infrastructure. A direct percentage cannot be drawn from the raw figures — DTMR cycling spending is supplemented by grants for rail trails etc and is therefore higher than the reported figure, while the DTMR budget includes funding for ports and railways, none of which can be displaced for bike paths.

Still, there is clearly a disconnect here.

What is clear is that the overall Transport and Main Roads budget is clearly historical and rolled out on a business as usual basis. No comprehensive or serious analysis has ever been undertaken on the financial benefits of a step change in active transport funding: would the benefits of a revolutionary shift to active transport funding in terms of congestion reduction, health savings and road funding costs merit a serious redirection of some share of local and state governments' roads budgets?

On the evidence available, the answer is likely yes.

With public finances so clearly constrained, such an analysis should rigorously and independently be undertaken.

6. Direct infrastructure stimulus spending to active transport

As the Commonwealth and State Governments develop plans to emerge from the COVID recession, funding will inevitably be directed to road projects. As DTMR's own figures indicate, however, the cost benefit ratio of active transport projects is consistently stronger than that of roads.

Queenslanders have shown us the trends they choose in these times with bicycle stores throughout the state reporting bike shortages through surging demand. That demand can be entrenched in new, more sustainable transport patterns. It would be a tragedy to miss the opportunity.

7. Restore targets to state government active transport planning

Having been criticised for a failure to meet active transport mode share targets, the State has responded, it would seem, by removing measurable aspiration altogether. As the management aphorism goes however, "what gets managed, gets done."

Targets should be restored to active transport policy setting and outcomes should be publicly reported on.

8. Create a Sustainable Transport Commission to coordinate policy, direct spending and report on outcomes

The Queensland Government and a number of SEQ local governments have strong policies and, in many cases, reasonable budgets for active transport but coordination is hit and miss, reporting is largely non-existent and commitment to outcomes remains a matter of political will rather than a sustained, long term project.

The opportunities — for health, the environment and public and private finance, are too significant for active transport to be considered a "nice to have" or an afterthought.

The establishment of a Sustainable Transport Commission, with bipartisan support, would overcome many of those problems. It could co-ordinate planning and spending between governments, ensure the prioritisation of cities transformation through active transport was maintained and report at least biannually on outcomes.

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CONTACT THE MCKELL INSTITUTE QUEENSLAND

T. 0457 838 903 **E.** queensland@mckellinstitute.org.au
PO Box 749, Hamilton QLD 4007
@McKellInstitute www.facebook.com/mckellinstitute
www.mckellinstitute.org.au