

"May sustainable transport systems be at the heart of Adelaide's success as a people-friendly and environmentally responsible city."

Ms Emma Johnston
Secretary to the Select Committee on Public and Active Transport
Parliament House
North Terrace
Adelaide SA 5000
(08) 8237 9339
sctransport@parliament.sa.gov.au

27 Aug 2022

Submission to the Parliamentary Select Committee on Public and Active Transport

To the President and Members of the Select Committee,

Bike Adelaide is the leading voice engaging with local governments on cycling for transport issues across Greater Adelaide. Please accept this submission prepared on behalf of our members.

The aims of this submission are to discuss:

1. the main problems preventing safe cycling and barriers to becoming involved in cycling for transport;
2. key initiatives to improve opportunity, accessibility and inclusivity of cycling in South Australia for people of all ages and abilities.

The health, environmental and social benefits are widely documented and researched ad nauseum, such that there is near consensus over the positive effects of cycling. Despite these widely accepted benefits, the significant economic, safety and productivity benefits of cycling are often overlooked and eschewed in transport planning and policy-making. The City of Unley *Walking and Cycling Strategy 2022–2027*¹ best demonstrates the breadth these overlooked benefits including:

- Reduce transport construction and maintenance costs
- Decrease congestion
- Increase in property, business and land values
- Decrease reliance on cars and car ownership
- Reduce household travel costs
- More efficient use of space
- Increase in local business visitation
- Safer motor vehicle speeds on streets
- Higher productivity and creative inspiration
- More resilient cities
- Funding saved on health and transport use on other policy issues
- Attract investment and reinvestment
- Promotes tourism
- Attracts talent and creative worker
- Improves passive surveillance

¹ <https://yoursay.unley.sa.gov.au/wcp2022>

Cycling represents the single most efficient form of vehicle transport in terms of use of road and storage space, conversion of energy, indirect and embedded emissions, cost-benefit ratios for investment and infrastructure maintenance liabilities.

The COVID-19 lockdowns and work-from-home orders through 2020 and 2021 (and continuing in some cases) saw noticeable increases in spending in local cafes and restaurants, shops and services. This was attributed to people not wanting to, or being able to, travel far. This increase in local activity highlighted the need for safe, convenient and well connected walking and cycling infrastructure in our neighbourhoods. It also highlighted the lack of infrastructure to support resident access without relying on a car. This is especially salient for children, young people, families and the elderly who have more nuanced mobility needs, where they are not eligible to drive themselves or do not have access to safe alternative transport.

These needs were somewhat recognised during the COVID lockdowns in 2020, where proposals to shut down public transport were quickly quashed, recognising the disproportionate effect the lack of transport access would have on children, the elderly, people with disabilities, people with low incomes and people who are not otherwise eligible to drive. In some sense, there is an implicit admission that our transport system is car-dependent and fails to meet many South Australians' transport needs.

Main Problems

Adelaide and South Australia generally suffer from a combination of five main problems that have made cycling unsafe or unviable option for many people to travel regularly:

1. non-contiguous infrastructure (discontinuous, disconnected or disappearing infrastructure)
2. infrastructure which does not support different types and abilities of cyclists
3. lack of funding for cycling projects
4. negative motorist attitudes towards cyclists and their safety
5. heavy focus on recreational cycling instead of as a transport mode.

The single biggest factor influencing people's decisions to cycle in South Australia is feeling safe while travelling. The feeling of (un)safety is embedded in the main problems discussed here. The road environment in Adelaide, and the infrastructure and planning environment underpinning it, is designed to facilitate as many motor vehicles moving as fast as possible. This is in direct opposition to what we understand as safe cycling and walking conditions. Low motor traffic speeds and volumes are conducive to safe shared spaces, and physically separated infrastructure supports active travel in higher speed and volume areas. This is not to say that all roads should be low speed and low traffic, rather that there is a lack of application of safe active transport principles across different road environments.

South Australia lags in implementing international (and national) best practice solutions and draws from a limited toolbox of design options. It is clear that painted lines on arterial roads do not keep people safe nor do they support people in their decision to cycle. There is subsequently an assumed mutual exclusivity between safe streets and efficient streets, resulting in unsupportive infrastructure and prioritising car traffic.

People will often base their transport decisions on a complex matrix of factors, including time, cost, route, passengers, convenience, comfort, directness, and safety. Individual priorities and preferences will generally influence which factors will take precedence for deciding a transport mode. However, where our streets have been designed to prioritise motor vehicle traffic, it has two main outcomes. Firstly, that it is more convenient and direct to travel by car. Secondly, that it is more comfortable and (more importantly) safe to travel by car.

South Australian Government Data Directory Road Crash Data² indicates the following road crash results over the period 2017–2021 (inclusive):

- 43 pedestrian fatalities
- 14 cyclist fatalities
- 1064 pedestrian and cyclist hospital admissions

² <https://data.sa.gov.au/data/dataset/road-crash-data>

- 2031 pedestrian and cyclist hospital treatments
- 411 private treatments of pedestrian and cyclist injuries

This equates to 3563 collisions between motorists and either a pedestrian or cyclist, on average of 712 collisions per year or 1.95 per day. That is, on average, a motorist hits a pedestrian or cyclist nearly twice per day in our state over the last five years. These figures are an indictment on the lack of action to address the problems articulated in this submission.

1. Non-contiguous infrastructure

Adelaide's cycling network is typified by how fractured it is and the unsafe, sudden circumstances in which facilities end or change. In this context, we refer to non-contiguous infrastructure as routes and corridors where the nature of the infrastructure changes without consideration for the different types and levels of skills of different types of riders who may use it. This provides environments which have limited utility for some cyclists and inherently excludes the possibility of some journeys occurring.

The most widely found example is a painted bicycle lane which ends abruptly near an intersection, usually with a sudden merge with a turning lane. This invariably causes several issues for cyclist safety, including entering a motor vehicle lane or having motor vehicles cross. Cyclists are suddenly required to navigate multiple motor vehicle lanes to reach the intersection, often with motorists changing lanes and speeds in close proximity. Motorists often disregard the presence of cyclists when there are no painted lanes and cyclists tend to experience increased aggression and belligerence from motorists; the logic being that because there are no cycle lanes, the cyclists have no right to be there.

Many commuter cyclists use main roads to travel from suburbs to the city centre. These roads often have bike lanes which usually double as car parking lanes or as clearways. Car parking in bike lanes forces cyclists into motor traffic lanes, which have much greater speeds. The speed differential creates a large risk to cyclists and many motorists respond aggressively to a cyclist attempting to pass parked cars. This often takes the form of excessive speeds when passing or passing too closely, heightening the danger to cyclists. To this end, the available bicycle infrastructure is frequently broken and serves motor traffic as priority users.

Non-contiguousness also refers to the lack of appropriate connections between cycling routes. Many local road networks allow more comfortable spaces for cyclists which are low traffic volume with (generally) lower speeds. While useful, many of these networks are severed by main roads which form major barriers to connectivity and serve to prevent safe movement between areas. This is especially common where many local roads lead to major roads but the major road has very few safe crossing points or the crossing points require cyclists to make long detours to reach. This lack of connectivity directly influences the likelihood of someone undertaking a cycling journey if they know the route is separated by major roads, rail or natural features.

2. Unsupportive infrastructure

Unsupportive infrastructure refers to the inability of the infrastructure to accommodate the needs of different types of cyclists. This is in recognition of the principle that cyclists are vulnerable to motorists and have different tolerances for sharing space with motorists, and also have different levels of confidence in safely handling different types of infrastructure and traffic scenarios. This includes the needs of children to safely ride independently to school, for parents to ride with their children, and for cyclists to build skills and confidence in environments that support their current skill level.

Much of the cycling infrastructure available for transport in Adelaide is a single painted line on the road separating them from motor vehicles travelling 50kph, 60kph or more. This type of road treatment is fundamentally unsupportive to people who do not wish to cycle in close proximity to fast-moving motor vehicles and therefore is not conducive to forming a cycling network. A common refrain in cycling circles is that 'paint is not infrastructure'. Given the high speed differential of cyclists and motorists, few cyclists choose to use painted cycle lanes on roads unless they have no other choice or are very confident riders. It

must be stated that a cyclist's confidence will not prevent them from being collided into by a motorist. Because of the perceived and actual high risk to cyclists using painted cycle lanes, many people either choose to drive or must take more circuitous routes. Unsupportive infrastructure effectively encourages people to drive instead and contribute to the traffic conditions that make cycling unsafe for others. It additionally means that people who are not able or eligible to drive have very few independent transport options or are reliant on another person to drive them. The lack of supportive infrastructure has excluded children, families, elderly people and mobility aid users from following a safe route. Consequently, Adelaide is quickly solidifying its position as an outlier amongst major Australian cities in its hostility to cycling as a viable, cheap and accessible means of transport for people of all ages and abilities.

3. Under-funding

Cycling has been historically neglected in State Budgets and is generally relegated to specific projects which are seldom connected to existing cycling infrastructure. The State Bicycle Fund (SBF) is a severely under-nourished resource that has received only meagre injections during the previous Marshall and Weatherill State Governments. Compared to other state jurisdictions, South Australia has consistently committed the lowest proportion of transport funding to cycling and active transport.

Interstate we have seen increased funding for cycling projects not only in response to changes in transport behaviours through the COVID pandemic but also in response to increased demands for safe and sustainable transport alternatives and to help ease the cost-of-living.

Some recent interstate examples of funding have included:

- \$8 million in grants across 50 active travel projects in 38 LGAs (WA, April 2022³)
- \$7.4 million in grants across 74 cycling projects in 51 LGAs (WA, January 2021⁴)
- \$347 million allocated over four years for active travel in 2022/23 State Budget (WA, June 2022⁵)
- \$710 million allocated over four years for active travel in 2020/21 State Budget (NSW, Dec 2020⁶)
- \$950 million allocated over five years for active travel in 2022/23 State Budget (NSW, Feb 2022⁷)
- 268.8 million allocated to active transport in 2022/23 State Budget (QLD, July 2022⁸)
- \$12 million in active transport project grants to LGAs (*ibid*)

By comparison, South Australia maintained the budget for cycling projects at approximately \$3 million for the entire State, for which all of South Australia's local councils must compete. It is highly likely that the striking unavailability of funding generates fierce competition for it or otherwise discourages many councils from bothering to request funding if they cannot receive adequate funding. With many councils' financial resources tightly constrained and obligated to foot hefty road maintenance bills, there is little incentive for councils to undertake active transport projects out of their own funds alone. This has likely led to many councils holding a backlog of active transport projects and improvements that *could* be achieved if State funding were available to co-fund them.

When considering this languid fund compared to other states and that grants from the State Bicycle Fund are provided on a dollar-for-dollar basis, we see how quickly the SBF could be depleted by only a small number of relatively small projects. For scale, the proposed East-West Bikeway through the Adelaide CBD was budgeted at \$6 million with equal joint funding from the City of Adelaide and the State Government.

³ <https://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Pages/McGowan/2022/04/More-than-8-million-dollars-in-grants-to-connect-WA-communities.aspx#:~:text=An%20%248%20million%20McGowan%20Government,over%20the%20next%20two%20years.>

⁴ <https://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Pages/McGowan/2021/01/Record-WA-cycling-investment-continues-with-latest-grants-round.aspx>

⁵ <https://micromobilityreport.com.au/infrastructure/policy-and-funding/record-spending-for-active-transport-in-wa-budget/>

⁶ <https://www.bicyclenetwork.com.au/newsroom/2020/12/03/nsw-government-to-invest-710m-in-walking-and-cycling/>

⁷ <https://bicyclensw.org.au/increased-funding-for-nsw-bicycle->

<infrastructure/#:~:text=Bicycle%20NSW%20is%20now%20delighted,over%20the%20next%20five%20years.>

⁸

<https://statements.qld.gov.au/statements/95797#:~:text=The%20Palaszczuk%20Government%20has%20awarded,in%20the%202022%2D23%20budget.>

This single project cost twice as much as the total funding available for cycling projects grants for the entire state.

During the 2022 State and Federal election campaigns, Bike Adelaide (along with other organisations such as the RAA⁹ and the Greens) made calls for modest increases to the State Bicycle Fund, asking for guaranteed, year-on-year contributions to the fund of \$10 million. This still equates to less than one third of the \$35 million allocated to the Glen-Osmond Fullarton Rd intersection widening project, or 0.1% of funding allocated to the proposed Torrens to Darlington motorway.

4. Negative motorist behaviour towards cyclists

Cyclists often experience outward hostility and aggression from motorists which discourages many from taking up or continuing regular utility cycling. This often compounds with cases of motorists' negligence or inattentive driving, creating dangerous cycling environments, causing near misses or collisions. It is common for cyclists to be verbally abused by motorists when a near miss has occurred, usually when the motorist is at fault.

Conversely, some cyclists refer to near misses as a result of SMIDSYs: "Sorry mate, I didn't see you". This is where motorists either hit or nearly hit a cyclist, usually in an instance where a cyclist has right of way and a motorist has failed to yield, or when a motorist has failed to check for other road users that are not in cars. The SMIDSY refrain is often used to subtly (if unconsciously) shift blame for the incident away from the motorist as just an accident rather than a case of negligence. This tends to undermine the real safety issue negligence poses to cyclists, resorting to a 'no harm done' resolution. However, for a cyclist that has been hit or nearly hit, the consequences can be far greater (physical injury, bike damage, shattered confidence to ride) than for a motorist who may only suffer superficial damage to their car.

Bike Adelaide, through its advocacy regularly hears of people who would ride more if cycling on roads were safer. Sadly, in many conversations we are told that someone used to ride regularly but stopped because of a collision or too many near misses with motorists. The psychological and trauma effects of negligent driving are seldom discussed and further demonstrates that the major barriers to cycling lay in the real and perceived threats to safety posed by motorists and the often accompanying complacent and unaccountable responses from motorists.

5. Focus on recreational cycling

South Australia has taken a largely recreational approach to supporting cycling which is created by and symptomatic of a policy environment which does not address bicycles as vehicles. This inconsistency is highlighted by South Australia proudly hosting the Tour Down Under (TDU) and proclaiming a state-wide love of cycling. Regrettably, during the TDU we also see a rapid increase in cyclists attempting to use the roads and a commensurate increase in media vitriol that the cyclists have no place to be there. The media outrage arising from cyclists using the roads indicates that South Australians broadly acknowledge our roads are unsafe for cycling and that separate, dedicated facilities are required for the system to work.

For infrastructure, this recreational focus has resulted in an under-provision of a functional cycling network and in favour of isolated shared-use trails. For example, the Coastal Trail linking Adelaide's beaches has become a victim of its own success, highlighting the high desire for safe places to ride but it is often so congested with recreational pedestrians and cyclists that it becomes too difficult to walk or cycle without conflict. Paths like this work best when the volume is much lower so that users have space to negotiate movements.

Shared paths highlight the circumstances under which the safety and practical needs of pedestrians and cyclists diverge and subsequently require separate facilities. This typifies much of the cycling network, especially the Torrens Linear Trail bisecting the city, which simultaneously serves as a leisurely path for pedestrians and a vital cycling trunk route. Experientially, the two are incongruent and the needs of

⁹ <https://daily.raa.com.au/raa-calls-for-south-australian-cycling-investment/>

recreational pedestrians and transport cyclists diverge swiftly. The need for separate infrastructure is clear and shared-recreational paths are not an adequate solution.

However, because cycling has been so heavily tied to recreation, this type of infrastructure is usually the preferred option for planners and project teams, with a view to preserving as much road space as possible for cars and car parking. The focus on recreational cycling then has had the effect that functional transport cycling networks are too fractured and inconsistent to support a greater variety of cyclists (by age, confidence and ability).

We must acknowledge the high value for tourism and visitation cycling can bring to our city and region. The Shiraz Trail and Riesling trails have great outcomes for tourism by improving access to our premier wine regions and demonstrating that tourism and transport can be decoupled from car use. However, the lack of work to address the need for local travel options by bicycle remain unaddressed and serve to isolate many people in the community from access to safe, functional transport options.

Research conducted by mobility researcher, Justin McCulloch (2017, University of Adelaide) demonstrated that cyclists visiting suburban high streets in Goodwood, Walkerville and Prospect spent almost as much money per visit as a motorist in local shops and cafes but visited more frequently. A key underlying enabler was that transport costs were not a factor for the visitors, and their bicycles allowed them to reach their destination conveniently. This bolsters the case not only for tourism and visitation but also the need for high quality local networks to improve access within our neighbourhoods and built-up areas.

Key Initiatives

1. Lower default speed limits

There is a growing desire for lower default speed limits in residential areas to ensure the road is safe for all road users. This addresses one of the largest safety concerns for pedestrians and cyclists which is being in a space with fast moving motor traffic. The difference in speed (speed differential) between a car and a pedestrian or a car and a cyclist is a crucial factor in the survivability of a collision.

Since 2015, the WA Department of Transport has been progressively implementing 30kph streets as part of the Safe Active Streets program to support cycling¹⁰. After initially allocating \$3 million to conduct the first trials, these Safe Active Street projects have involved some physical traffic calming measures, delivering results of 300% increase in cycling in the program areas and reductions of up to 900 vehicles per day on some streets¹¹.

Adelaide metropolitan councils have produced many reports over the last decade evaluating the effectiveness of reducing residential speed limits including City of Charles Sturt¹² (2015) and most recently City of Norwood, Payneham and St Peters¹³ (2022). Reports like these detail the variety of resident concerns related to vehicle volumes and speeds on residential streets, motorist behaviours related to rat-running, speeding and failing to give way, the poor or variable condition of footpaths and cycling routes and lack of safe crossings at busy roads and intersections.

It is clear that even outside of a cycling perspective, there is significant appetite from residents across metropolitan Adelaide to reduce the speed of motor vehicles, make efforts to reduce their volume and to make streets safer to cross and use by foot and bike. This measure has clear benefits for reducing collisions and supporting active travel journeys. It also assists in reducing car dependency by making local streets safer to use for children and young people who would otherwise be driven by their parents or caregivers.

¹⁰ <https://www.transport.wa.gov.au/activetransport/safe-active-streets-program.asp>

¹¹ https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-08-18/30kph-speed-limit-on-wa-streets/101337556?utm_campaign=abc_news_web&utm_content=facebook&utm_medium=content_shared&utm_source=abc_news_web&fbclid=IwAR1XQO_xxJfD4qaxfrWzn00pWE7mKhbl6d3Xv5WS6kTqahBIBU573GSmrrQ

¹² https://www.charlessturt.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/160354/Evaluation-of-40-kmh-Speed-Limit-for-Local-Streets-in-CCS-2.pdf

¹³ https://www.npsp.sa.gov.au/our_community/community_consultation

Bike Adelaide strongly recommends that DIT and Councils collaboratively identify key trial areas for 30kph streets in a variety of council areas, including Adelaide CBD, inner- and outer-suburban areas and regional towns. Trial streets or clusters of streets should incorporate existing cycling routes and potential new routes to assess the uptake or increase in cycling and reduction of motor vehicle volumes.

2. Targets for cycling journeys

The recently adopted City of Unley *Walking and Cycling Strategy 2022–2027* included specific targets for walking and cycling journeys by residents. This serves three main purposes: firstly, it sets benchmarks against which to compare the effectiveness of new projects; secondly it sets intentions for types of journeys to be improved, including commutes to work or school or shopping/utility trips; thirdly it gives precedence to apportioning funds to achieve those aims. Setting targets for measured trips is a simple and tangible way for setting goals and measuring the success of cycling initiatives.

Bike Adelaide pointed out during the consultation of the Draft State Cycling Strategy in early 2022 that no such targets were included. We critiqued that without setting such targets, there was no indication of real intent to improve the conditions cyclists face, nor does it address the latent cycling journeys that would occur by bike if conditions were improved.

3. State Bicycle Fund

The State Bicycle Fund (SBF) must form a key part of the State's transport budget to improve access to funding for Councils. This fund recognises the severe limitations placed on Council transport budgets, which are generally consumed by the high maintenance liability of expansive local road networks. It additionally recognises the broader network efficiencies gained by small, low-cost measures in local roads. During the 2022 State Election, Bike Adelaide asked candidates of all major parties to advocate for \$20 million annually for the SBF, recognising that the current \$3 million is clearly insufficient to meet councils' needs and does little to attract or inspire action to improve cycling.

State Government bolstering this fund could unlock the backlog of capital works across metropolitan councils and allow for increases in rates of local cycling journeys. This would enable councils to pursue their capital works agendas and provide the basis for identifying priority areas for larger, State Government-led projects requiring greater funding.

4. Dedicated Active Transport Budget

From an advocacy perspective, funding for important cycling projects is often difficult to secure, where many politicians and critics are put-off by cost. With some exceptions, notably the ongoing Mike Turtur Bikeway Overpass project, cycling rarely receives such financial support, despite being dwarfed by the budgets for destructive, complicated expansions of suburban intersections with marginal or no economic, productivity, safety or environmental benefit in the medium- or long-term.

Conversely, it has been common for major roadworks to include some improvements or inclusions of cycling facilities. We are currently seeing mixed results from this approach in the Torrens Rd level crossing removal project. The existing cycling route following the railway will certainly be improved by passing under Torrens Rd, allowing better local connections and improved safety for less confident cyclists. However, the bridge structure itself presented an easy opportunity to install kerb-separated bike lanes to improve safety, instead opting for painted lines separated cyclists and 60kph motor vehicles. It is clear this approach to bundling cycling into road projects can be efficient but it is also clear that it still leads to mostly sub-standard outcomes for cycling.

By comparison, the \$35 million Fullarton/Glen Osmond Rd project did not include any cycling facilities despite strong community advocacy to include them. Residents noted that large volumes of Glenunga High School students cycle through the intersection from Parkside, and Glen Osmond Rd is a well-known commuter route for confident riders. There was a clear need expressed for better facilities there which will

remain unmet due to this inconsistent approach to road projects that put motor vehicles ahead of all other modes.

Bike Adelaide consequently, urgently, recommends forming a dedicated active transport budget from which to draw funding for specific projects. This would mean that funding is available for State Government projects

Bike Adelaide wishes to express its thanks at the opportunity to present this submission to the Select Committee and has been pleased by the efforts of Parliament to gain further understanding of the issues faced by active and public transport users and advocates in this State. There is great local interest in building more sustainable cities that also address the ongoing accessibility, inclusivity and equity challenges attached to our car-dependent transport system, and to also meaningfully address State Government spending on expensive road projects with limited benefit. We welcome this advancement in the discussion of alternative transport modes and the prospects they provide South Australians.

We trust you will accept these comments in good faith and will afford them due consideration.

Regards,



David Elliott, Chair
