

Simon Woods

Candidate Statement

I am a lifelong cyclist, who firmly believes that more people, cycling more often - and doing it safely, is the solution to a multitude of societal problems. I have cycled as a commuter, as a recreational cyclist and have participated in multiple multi day rides, both supported and unsupported - bitumen, gravel and trails. These activities have brought me much happiness, companionship and good health.

Obesity, diabetes, heart disease and depression are some of the medical conditions that increasingly impact on the health and wellbeing of our community and all are directly improved through cycling.

Our society has become dominated by the car, whether for school drop offs or work commuting and it is doing no one any good. More people cycling, reduces road congestion and pollution and improves the amenity of our communities as we shift from a society dominated by the car, to one which encourages cycling, walking and public transport.

Changing our society for the better in this way requires a long term strategic approach. It requires consistent, evidence based advocacy to achieve a cultural shift, as well as well thought through infrastructure investment.

We need to address the barriers to cycling, particularly in relation to safety. Shared cycle paths have their place, but dedicated, separated cycle lanes on major routes are essential. Getting people moving should be seen as a major public health initiative and requires a multipronged approach. We have changed society's attitudes to smoking, speeding and reckless driving. We must do better at changing the way society views cyclists and cycling and sees that the growth in this activity is a positive for everyone.

I also believe that we need better integration of our rail system with cycling infrastructure. We have a wonderful network of bike trails in our regional areas, but access by rail is problematic, with limited capacity on trains for bikes and the frequent substitution of trains with buses. Improving the rail network's capacity to transport bikes, unlocks the potential for more regional cycling and further activation of rural communities.

I can bring to the Board of Bicycle Network a strong understanding of Leadership and Governance. I have practical experience in both, mainly in the healthcare sector. I also teach Governance to Boards and Executives. I am a strong believer in the importance of a strategic approach to problem solving and have a good understanding of the importance of sound financial management, particularly in times of constrained resources.

Most importantly, I bring with these technical skills and experience, a continuing ongoing commitment to the activity and joy of cycling. I believe I can assist Bicycle Network to strengthen their existing role as the major advocacy group for cycling and enable them to build on their past achievements and achieve further success.