



**BICYCLE
NETWORK®**

Tasmanian Budget Submission 2025–26

December 2024



About Bicycle Network

With over 47,000 members, Bicycle Network is one of the top member-based bike riding organisations in the world.

With a proud history reaching back close to 50 years, we are committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all Australians by making it easier for people to ride a bike.

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

We achieve this in Tasmania through:

- improving the bike riding environment by working with government at all levels to provide better infrastructure, data, policies, legislation and regulations
- delivering Ride2School and Back on your Bike programs to get more people riding across the state for transport and recreation
- providing services that support bike riders through membership
- encouraging more people to ride by providing free social rides
- being a key spokesperson on issues related to riding bicycles.

Bicycle Network would like to thank the Tasmanian Government for the opportunity to provide a submission for the Tasmanian Budget 2025–26. We look forward to working with you to get more people riding bikes and reaping the resulting health, economic and environmental benefits.

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Executive summary: infrastructure needs to deliver on strategic directions



Photo: new separated cycleway on Campbell Street, Hobart.

The government has delivered climate change, road safety, public health and active transport strategies that aim to improve conditions for people riding bicycles. However, there is a disconnect between what is being recommended in these strategies and major projects like the Macquarie Point Stadium, and what is being funded and delivered by State Roads.

There needs to be greater investment in all ages and abilities (AAA) infrastructure that will encourage more people to ride. Safe pedestrian and cycling infrastructure should be an essential element in the scope of all road projects. The safe systems approach to road infrastructure is clear on what is needed to protect people walking and riding.

We know that building active transport infrastructure is a crucial step, but we also need educational programs for people who don't know how to ride or are not confident. In the past, Bicycle Network events made profits that were reinvested in these sorts of programs. The downturn in the events industry post-Covid means this is no longer possible, so more government investment is needed to see these programs established and maintained.

Secure bike parking and access to e-bikes can also be supported by the government to encourage more people to swap a car trip for a bike.



Summary of budget requests

Financial year	2025–26 \$m	2026–27 \$m	2027–28 \$m	2028–29 \$m	TOTAL \$m
Bicycle infrastructure Fund	14.3	14.3	14.3	14.3	57.2
Ride2School program	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.60
Back on your Bike program	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.44
E-bike support	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	1.6
Bikes & public transport	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.8
Cycling tourism	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	6

The funding we are calling for would enable the delivery of Bicycle Network Tasmania's key requests of the Rockliff Liberal government:

1. Increase funding and establish an ongoing bicycle infrastructure budget to deliver more AAA cycleways.
2. Increase funding for the Ride2School and Back on your Bike programs to cover running costs and/or expand the programs.
3. Fund programs that encourage the uptake of electric bicycles for transport.
4. Activate secure bike parking at park-and-rides, ferry terminals, major bus stops and government service sites.
5. Fund a feasibility study for a Derwent Valley rail trail, design and construction of outstanding sections of the Coastal Pathway, cost overruns for NE Rail Trail.

Getting the cycling networks we need

- Increase funding and establish an ongoing bicycle infrastructure budget to deliver more AAA cycleways.

The development of the Better Active Transport Grants provides a basis the government can build upon to provide ongoing funding to the active transport network. We are well past the point where cycling paths should be considered one-off grant expenditures – we need to build consistent networks of AAA infrastructure if we are going to drive down climate emissions, reduce traffic congestion, limit road trauma and improve public health.

The federal government has opened its \$100 million Active Transport Fund which presents an opportunity for the state government to leverage federal money to provide more infrastructure. While we want to see a wider path installed on the Tasman Bridge, if the technical assessment comes back that it can't be done, then the money allocated to that project should be used for active transport funding more generally.

Funding for the AAA transport cycling network in greater Hobart is not secure and is not enough for it to be rolled out at the pace we need. We still don't have a AAA greater Launceston cycling plan and the north west coastal pathway is being held up because two sections need more funding to go ahead.



Image: new path connecting Wynyard and Burnie – Shared Coastal Pathway Facebook

Bicycle Network believes a good start would be a commitment from state government to establish a cycling infrastructure fund at just \$25 per head of the population per year or 10% of the transport budget. In Tasmania per head funding would be around \$14.3 million in the first year – a drop in the ocean compared to the many hundreds of millions that goes to roads spending.

A secure funding stream and program of works is necessary to deliver on the strategies and plans that have been released by the government in the past year, such as the Keeping Hobart Moving Plan, Transport Emissions Reduction and Resilience Plan, Tasmanian Walk, Wheel, Ride Strategy, and the Macquarie Point Multipurpose Stadium transport study.



Educating new riders

- Increase funding for the Ride2School and Back on your Bike programs to cover running costs & expand the programs.

While infrastructure is critically important to getting more people riding, there are also many children not being taught to ride and older Tasmanians who never learnt or haven't ridden for such a long time need a skills refresh.

Bicycle Network offers two education programs through government grants; however, this grant income is no longer sufficient for full-time, statewide operation due to superannuation changes, loss of income from our events and general inflation.

A discussion is needed about making such education part of recurrent funding rather than grant-to-grant funding. Charging participants for the cost of running the program would be too expensive for most people to afford, especially those we see from migrant, vulnerable and elderly communities.

Ride2School

Bicycle Network currently runs the Ride2School program in primary schools around the state, funded by a four-year grant from the Road Safety Advisory Council.

Ride2School provides children with improved riding skills and knowledge of how to look after their bikes. It can also work with schools to install adequate bike parking, track the rates of children riding and walking to school, and develop mapping to highlight the most comfortable routes to ride to school.

The program therefore addresses much more than road safety improvements. There is also scope to expand the program to secondary schools and to improve the intensity of training in the schools we are in, but the Road Safety Advisory Council doesn't have the capacity to increase funding.

Other relevant areas of the government could contribute to Ride2School funding, such as the departments of Education, Sport and Recreation or State Growth.

We'd like to employ a part-time instructor to work with the full-time instructor to ensure better coverage of the state. Another instructor would also give greater flexibility in delivery of the program allowing for staff leave and part-time work and could also be called on to help with the Back on your Bike program.



Image: Ride2School program being delivered at Mt Nelson Primary School in November.

Creating an ongoing funding agreement within Sport and Recreation, State Growth or Education could allow the program to expand and improve outcomes, while providing more certainty for employment and administrative planning.

The current annual grant is \$90,000. To cover the running costs of the programs and employ a part-time instructor/s to help cover the state, we are looking for another \$60,000 a year.

Back on your Bike

Our Back on your Bike program has been operating via a Healthy Tasmania grant which was renewed this year and expires in June 2025.

It delivers small-group and one-on-one riding skills sessions with adults who haven't ridden for many years or who were never taught to ride as children.

We have delivered sessions in partnership with groups working with people with disabilities, new migrant arrivals, people facing challenging life circumstances, employers and local councils. We are filling a much-needed gap for new migrants,



people in socio-economic distress, middle-aged and older Tasmanians, people wanting to learn to ride on the road, to ride an e-bike safely, and people with disabilities.

Participants in the program are overwhelmingly positive about the experience and follow-up surveys show it works to get people riding again.



Image: Hobart TAFE students Back on your Bike end-of-program celebratory bike ride in November.

The program is a relatively low-cost intervention, but we need more funding than the current \$50,000 per year to allow it to operate full-time and offer more sessions across the state.

The program's breadth means the Department of State Growth, RECFIT, Department of Health, and Department of Premier and Cabinet all benefit from its operation.

We need more funding to cover running costs and to offer an FTE staff position or two part-time positions. The current position is funded 0.6 FTE from the \$50,000 grant; another \$60,000 a year would cover running costs and FTE salary.

Bicycles connected with public transport

- Activate bike parking at major public transport hubs and government service sites by installing secure bike parking.

Secure bike parking cages or electronic parking docks should be implemented at major stops along bus routes, ferry terminals and government services.

Such bike parking should have a system that provides another level of security on top of a good quality lock to give people the confidence their bike will be there when they return many hours later. New technology is also providing options such as app-activated locking docks that also have e-bike charging options and don't require riders to carry their own locks. Locking docks are being used in New Zealandⁱ and some European and North American citiesⁱⁱ and are starting to be installed in Australia.ⁱⁱⁱ

Current and planned park-and-rides in Hobart have bike cages but no system to provide security. This needs to be rectified with funding to come up with an appropriate security layer to be used at these cages as well as planned expansion of ferry terminals.



Adding to MTB benefits

- Fund a feasibility study for a Derwent Valley rail trail, funding for outstanding sections of the Coastal Pathway, cost overruns for NE Rail Trail and marketing help for businesses tapping into cycling tourism.

The government should be looking to expand rail trails and shared paths and start marketing this type of family- and retiree-friendly cycling tourism to complement our successful mountain bike experiences. This sort of rail trail infrastructure involves people staying for multiple days and looking for food, drink and arts experiences to break up the ride.

A rail trail along all or part of the disused Derwent Valley rail line needs a feasibility study, especially as the rail group has not made any headway on a reliable, frequent tourist service along the line.

Dorset Council is looking for funding to supplement its existing Commonwealth grant due to rising costs from delays to the project.

And the coastal pathway needs funding for the outstanding sections between West Ulverstone and Penguin, and Wivenhoe to Heybridge to ensure it becomes a multi-day experience that will draw tourists from interstate and overseas. This is especially so as the proposed extension to Stanley may not be viable until the rest of the pathway builds a reputation.

ⁱ <https://www.lockydock.co.nz/> accessed 14 September 2022

ⁱⁱ <https://bikeep.com/> accessed 14 September 2022

ⁱⁱⁱ E-Micro has recently provided electronic docks to RAC Arena and Belmont Forum shopping centre in Western Australia, University of NSW, and the Pacific Fair Shopping Centre on the Gold Coast.