

## JOINT STATEMENT

# Nine practical ideas to rapidly ease the fuel crisis - starting now

*Rapid, low-cost and practical actions to keep Australia moving, reduce fuel use, and help families avoid high fuel costs.*



Photo credit: Shane Stirling/WestCycle, reuse permitted with attribution.

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## This is the moment to act

**Australians are paying more at the pump, and it won't ease soon.** More than 60 gas and oil sites have been damaged in the Middle East conflict so far<sup>1</sup>, and the crisis will reverberate for months and years to come.

**Cost-of-living relief from fuel tax cuts has been short lived and may be making the problem worse.** The average price of fuel has continued to increase across Australia despite state and federal fuel tax cuts<sup>2</sup>, and cutting tax on fuel increases demand at the very moment supply is tight.

**The fuel tax cuts are costing Australia more than \$16 million a day<sup>3</sup>,** and the main response to reduce fuel use has been a \$20 million advertising campaign<sup>4</sup>.

**Fuel needs to be prioritised for essential services and those who need it most:** emergency services, waste collection, farmers, families in outer suburbs and regional areas without public transport, carers, tradies, shift workers. That means helping everyone else use alternatives to driving for more of their everyday trips.

**Governments in our region are already acting.** Across the Asia-Pacific, governments have implemented emergency oil conservation measures to reduce demand, including work-from-home mandates<sup>5</sup>. In New Zealand, fresh ideas to cut fuel use have been proposed<sup>6</sup>.

**Australians are already shifting how they travel.** In WA, people are driving less<sup>7</sup>. The City of Sydney recorded 600,000 bike-share trips in March, a 25% jump on the previous month, while Transport for NSW reported a 5% dip in motor traffic<sup>8</sup>. Bicycle sales have spiked<sup>9</sup>. State and local governments are beginning to respond, making public transport free<sup>10</sup> and exploring pop-up infrastructure for walking and cycling<sup>11</sup>.

**State and local governments are beginning to act to give people more options for daily travel,** including making public transport free<sup>12</sup> and exploring pop-up infrastructure to support walking and cycling<sup>13</sup>. The following ideas for governments build on this momentum.



Australian Government advertisement, Level 2 of the Fuel Security plan.

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## Most of our daily trips are very short

Around two thirds of car trips in Australian cities are under 5 km<sup>14</sup>, with most of these journeys easily undertaken by walking or riding in less than 15 minutes given the right conditions. Households can save money on fuel when it is easier and more comfortable to use walk, ride and public transport.

## Nine ideas to ease the fuel crisis

The actions we outline are low-cost, proven, and ready to go. They complement longer term interventions<sup>15</sup> and can be achieved for less than the cost of extending the current fuel excise cuts for five months (\$2.19 billion)<sup>16</sup>.

1. **Crossings and footpaths** near schools, shops and stops
2. **Pop-up bike lanes** on key commuter routes
3. **More frequent public transport services**
4. **Pop-up bus-priority lanes**
5. **Shorter wait times** at push-button crossings
6. **Fuel-saving speed limits**
7. **\$100 vouchers** for bicycle repairs
8. **Rapid grants for bike parking and end-of-trip upgrades**
9. **\$500 vouchers** to buy a bicycle



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## IDEA 1

# Crossings and footpaths near schools, shops and stops

## What it does

*Safe crossings at busy roads and footpaths along streets near schools and local shops, and to access bus stops, make it safer for everybody to walk for short trips.*

Pedestrian crossings and footpaths make short trips on foot easier and safer, helping families cut their fuel bills by walking instead of driving.

Everybody should have the option to walk when going to the shops, dropping kids at school, or catching the bus. Unfortunately, in suburbs across Australia, missing footpaths, kerbs without ramps, and busy roads without safe crossings form barriers between where people live and the places they want to go. No-one wants to feel unsafe or put loved ones in harm's way, and so many people default to using a car for these short journeys. Crossings and footpaths make streets safer for people.

## Case study

Unlocking funding for local governments to rapidly install safe crossings and gaps in footpaths would significantly upgrade the walking network for local communities.

Pop-up crossings have been proposed several times<sup>17</sup>. In the UK, residents took it upon themselves to install crossings at minimal cost on school routes in the 2010s<sup>18</sup>.

## Indicative cost

**\$300 million.**

This could support 15,000 new crossings at a cost of \$20,000 per crossing<sup>19</sup>.



Photo Credit: 10,000 Steps Program, CQUniversity, reuse permitted with attribution.



Priority pedestrian crossing, Subiaco, Western Australia, 2026.

Photo Credit: Joint statement signatories, reuse permitted with attribution.

## IDEA 2

# Pop-up bike lanes on key commuter routes

## What it does

*Rapidly creates safe routes for people to ride bicycles and e-scooters.*

Pop-up lanes provide space anyone can feel safe using to ride to school, shops, or work.

Quickly installed using temporary bollards, kerbing, and planter boxes<sup>20</sup>, pop-up lanes can be delivered for less than 20% of the cost of installing permanent infrastructure<sup>21</sup>. This also means they are easy to change, and perfect for trialling and reconfiguring routes so they work best for local communities. To make things even quicker, local and state government bike plans and active travel strategies already have potential routes mapped out<sup>22</sup>.

Adelaide City Council is already considering a pop-up lane program to give their community more options for travel through the fuel crisis<sup>23</sup>.

## Case study

Pop-up bike lanes have been successful around the globe<sup>24</sup>, as well as in Australia. During COVID-19, six pop-up cycleways were constructed within three months that delivered 38% of Sydney's fully separated cycleway network<sup>25</sup>. The COVID-19 policy window led to a 3,000% increase in rate of delivery of separated cycleways throughout Sydney<sup>26</sup>. In Melbourne, COVID-19 accelerated about 100km of pop-up bicycle paths<sup>27</sup>, some of these were made permanent<sup>28</sup>. Seville, Spain, installed 77km of bike lanes in less than 18 months, for around \$400,000 per kilometre, quickly growing cycling mode share from less than 1% to more than 6%<sup>29</sup>.

## Indicative cost

**\$300 million.**

This could build 1000km of new bike lanes across the country, at a cost of \$200-400,000 per kilometre<sup>30</sup>.



Pop-up bike lane materials in Newcastle, New South Wales, 2021.

Photo Credit: Joint statement signatories, reuse permitted with attribution.



Pop-up on bike lane on Sydney Park Road, City of Sydney, New South Wales.

Photo Credit: [Jullietta Jung](#).

### IDEA 3

## More frequent public transport services

### What it does

*Gives more people the option to use a bus, train, tram or ferry for everyday travel.*

Making public transport more frequent it can be reliably used for journeys that would otherwise be undertaken with a car.

Many towns and suburbs are underserved by public transport, leaving people with few options for travel beyond using a car. Residents in regional towns have been calling for new bus services to ease the fuel crisis<sup>31</sup>.

While public transport fares have been cut in some states, people who live in areas without frequent public transport do not benefit.

Additional drivers, buses, trams and trains would support more frequent services.

### Case study

Service frequency and availability is consistently the most important factor influencing public transport use. For example, a study in Western Australia reported that bus service frequency is the single biggest contributing factor to patronage numbers, followed by journey fare<sup>32</sup>.

### Indicative cost

#### **\$500 million**

Each state can boost their public transport services, invest in jobs for more drivers, and more buses, ferries, trams and trains. For example, \$500 million could pay for 500 new electric buses at a cost of about \$1 million per bus<sup>33</sup> and the annual salary of 1000 bus drivers for four years, to operate those new buses, with typical salaries of around \$65,000-\$90,000 per driver per year<sup>34</sup>.



Bus stop in Perth suburbs.

Photo Credit: Joint statement signatories, reuse permitted with attribution.



Bus stop in Perth, near to activity centre.

Photo Credit: Joint statement signatories, reuse permitted with attribution.

## IDEA 4

# Pop-up bus-priority lanes

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## What it does

*Helps buses stay on schedule, giving households a viable alternative to driving for longer journeys.*

Temporary bus-priority lanes can be quickly delivered along busy transport corridors using paint and signs. By not sharing lanes with other traffic, buses stay on schedule and become a reliable travel option for longer journeys.

## Case study

In just a few weeks, pop-up bus lanes were created in England during COVID-19, as part of a £250 (A\$470) million emergency active travel fund<sup>35</sup>. This fund also included protected bike lanes, wider footpaths, and safer pedestrian crossings.

## Indicative cost

**\$500 million.**

1000km of pop-up bus lanes across the country could be built, at a cost of \$400,000-\$600,000 per kilometre. Using paint to dedicate lanes is estimated to be about 20% of the cost of more permanent bus lanes<sup>36</sup>.



Some bus priority lanes already exist, such as the Cahill expressway bus lane, Sydney, New South Wales.

Photo Credit: Corey Farwell, [Wikipedia Commons](#).



Bus lane, Albany Highway, East Victoria Park, Western Australia.

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IDEA 5

## Shorter wait times at push-button crossings

### What it does

*Makes walking faster and more attractive for short trips.*

Citizen research in Australia has revealed many crossings have long wait times for pedestrians<sup>37</sup>. Even a short walk to the local shops can involve several crossings, with each wait adding minutes to the journey. If walking becomes too frustrating, or takes too long, people are more likely to jump in the car. Crossings that give pedestrians priority with on-demand push buttons and short pedestrian phase times. Shortening the amount of time people must wait at traffic lights is a simple and low-cost way to make walking an appealing option for short trips<sup>38</sup>.

### Case study

‘Signal optimisation’ efforts in Queensland have explored reducing pedestrian wait times at crossings<sup>39</sup>. In New South Wales, artificial intelligence was used to analyse camera data to cut crossings when crowds appeared<sup>40</sup>.

### Indicative cost

**\$20 million.**

Reprogramming traffic controls costs around \$2000 per intersection<sup>41</sup>. 10,000 high priority intersections could be reprogrammed for \$20 million – providing convenient and safe crossings across the country.



On-demand crossing, Cambridge Street, West Leederville, Western Australia.

Photo Credit: Joint statement signatories, reuse permitted with attribution



On-demand crossing, South Street, Hilton, Western Australia.

Photo Credit: Joint statement signatories, reuse permitted with attribution.

IDEA 6

## Fuel-saving speed limits

### What it does

*Lower speed limits save fuel and make a better environment for walking and riding.*

Reducing speed limits in built-up areas lowers fuel use by an average of 7%<sup>42</sup>. Cost-wise, this is equivalent of saving drivers around 15 cents per litre<sup>43</sup>. So as well as reducing fuel use, this also provides further cost relief on top of the current 32 cents per litre tax cut<sup>44</sup>.

### Case study

Responding to the need to reduce fuel use, Pakistan recently reduced speed limits on its national highways from 100km/h to 80km/h<sup>45</sup>, which has been found to be the most fuel-efficient speed in such an environment<sup>46</sup>.

Hundreds of cities globally, including cities in Australia, have trialled and implemented 30km/h speed limits, resulting in smoother, slower driving and lower fuel use<sup>47</sup>. Wales introduced a default with exceptions speed limit change in September 2023, at a total implementation cost of £34 million - roughly \$68 million. Default speed limits are not typically signposted. Wales have experienced tremendous safety gains<sup>48</sup> and lower car insurance costs<sup>49</sup>. In Wales, the cost of implementing a countrywide change to the legislated default speed limit in built up areas was around \$61 million – with estimated health and prevention savings threefold this<sup>50</sup>.

### Indicative cost

**\$300 million.**

A \$300 million fund could enable local governments to implement area-wide speed limit reductions to save fuel, in collaboration with state and territory governments. State and territory governments could also explore rapid legislative reforms to save fuel, by implementing statewide fuel saving default speed limits in built-up areas.



The current default speed limit in built-up areas is 50km/h.

Photo Credit: Joint statement signatories, reuse permitted with attribution.



Most states and territories in Australia already have some streets with fuel-saving speed limits. Photo from Western Australia.

Photo Credit: Joint statement signatories, reuse permitted with attribution

## IDEA 7

# \$100 vouchers for bicycle repairs

## What it does

*Gets the bikes already in people's sheds back on the road quickly, cheaply, with direct support to local bike shops.*

Just over half of Australian households own a bicycle<sup>51</sup>. Vouchers will help get any unused bicycles back on the street and keep those already on the street running well. Bike shops in Australia are reporting strong demand for repairs and servicing<sup>52</sup>.

The typical cost of a one-hour bicycle service is \$90AUD to \$130<sup>53</sup>.

Vouchers could be distributed using a simple model, such as through government Apps. The rebate could be claimed by participating bike shops after undertaking repairs.

Similar models for distributing vouchers were created for dining out, for arts and for recreation, during COVID-19, such as the \$25 Dine & Discover vouchers in New South Wales<sup>54</sup>.

## Case study

The UK's Fix Your Bike scheme issued more than 400,000 £50 vouchers (roughly A\$100) for bicycle repairs and servicing<sup>55</sup>. At 12 months, voucher users were riding more often than those who didn't participate, including replacing trips they previously would have needed to do by car<sup>56</sup>.

## Indicative cost

**\$20 million.**

This could get around 200,000 bicycles back on the street.



Bicycle repairs are booming, but for those Australians doing it tough, a free bicycle service could help get their dusty bike moving again.

Photo Credit: Jorge Royan, [Wikipedia Commons](#).



Bicycle repairs can help get broken bikes back on the street.

Photo Credit: Chris Southwood.

**IDEA 8**

## Rapid grants for bike parking and end-of-trip upgrades

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### What it does

*Providing bicycle parking and post-trip showers, to support people to ride and walk to work.*

Supporting schools and businesses to provide end-of-trip and bike parking facilities makes it easier for more people to walk and ride.

It could operate by scaling up and diversifying existing grant schemes.

### Case study

Bicycle parking at workplaces has been found to increase bicycle trips to work<sup>57</sup>.

Existing grant funding for bicycle parking, such as Your Move in Western Australia, could be rapidly scaled up and expanded to end-of-trip facilities, for schools and workplaces<sup>58</sup>.

### Indicative cost

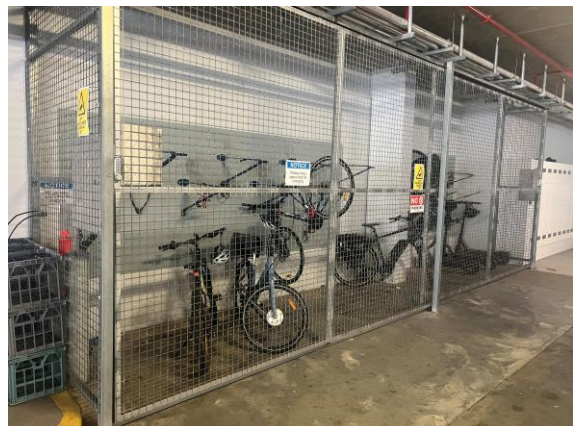
**\$200 million.**

This could support more than 10,000 grants of between \$10,000 and \$25,000.



Outdoor easy-access bicycle parking.

Photo Credit: Joint statement signatories, reuse permitted with attribution.



Workplace secure bicycle parking.

Photo Credit: Joint statement signatories, reuse permitted with attribution.

## IDEA 9

# \$500 vouchers to buy a bicycle

## What it does

*Gives households who don't currently have a working bike an extra option for getting around.*

Just less than half of all Australian households don't have a bike<sup>59</sup>. Australian bicycle shops are reporting a sharp uptick in demand for bikes as more people look for options to save on fuel costs<sup>60</sup>.

The provision of vouchers for legal bicycles would build on this momentum, by addressing the upfront costs of bicycles. It gives more households more options for local trips<sup>61</sup>. Modelling for WeRide Australia suggests good returns on investment from bicycle subsidies<sup>62</sup>.

Vouchers could be means tested, like some existing kids' sport voucher schemes<sup>63</sup>. Alternatively, vouchers could be distributed universally at greater speeds and lower administrative costs.

## Case study

Launched in 2020, 12 million people in Paris and surrounding regions have accessed 400,000 vouchers, with €150 million disbursed of between €100 and €1,200 (roughly A\$160 to A\$2000)<sup>64</sup>. A survey of recipients found that the subsidy encouraged 61% of voucher recipients to ride more regularly<sup>65</sup>. Research shows that financial incentives can help reduce car (and thus fuel) use<sup>66</sup>.

In Australia, some local governments have implemented their own bicycle voucher schemes<sup>67</sup>.

## Indicative cost

**\$50 million.**

This could support 100,000 \$500 vouchers.



Vouchers can help people to purchase a bicycle to use as a vehicle for commuting and errands.

Photo Credit: Joint statement signatories, reuse permitted with attribution.



Vouchers can help people to purchase a bicycle or legal electric bicycle to use as a vehicle for commuting and errands.

Photo Credit: Joint statement signatories, reuse permitted with attribution.

## A coalition ready to act

The following coalition of transport and health sector signatories has developed and endorsed the Joint Statement.



Suggested citation: Coalition of transport and health organisations. *Joint statement: Nine practical ideas to rapidly ease the fuel crisis - starting now*. Published June 2026. Accessed DD/MM/YYYY. Available from: URL.

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