

Cycling Benefits

There are three main benefits from increasing the proportions of trips undertaken by bicycle within Australian cities:

- a) Increased personal health
- b) Reduced car emissions, hence cleaner air and less climate change impact
- c) Improved community through reduced traffic congestion and greater connection to neighbours, cyclists like pedestrians actually greet each other

The most effective way to significantly increase the use of cycling as transport is to provide improved cycling facilities. The most important of these is the cycle route. It is very simple to determine if a cycle path is sufficiently safe to encourage regular use by a significant number of people. Just ask yourself the question: "Would I allow my children to cycle here?" If the answer is no, then the cycle route will never be widely utilised.

Sadly, even most of the officially designated cycle routes in Sydney answer this question in the negative. I am currently attempting to encourage children at my kids school to cycle to school. The one factor that massively impedes progress is the complete absence of any safe cycling routes. The same was equally true at their previous school. Thus, 90% of parents drive their children the few kilometres to school, creating traffic chaos around our inner city school and forming the car dependence habit within our youth.

Almost every person I talk to would love their children, and many also themselves, to cycle regularly as a means of transport. Purely due to safety concerns, they are simply not comfortable with doing so.

The best way to increase the number of safe cycle routes is to fund them on the *desired* percentage of use. That is, if we think that it is reasonable and desirable for bicycles to account for 20% of trips taken, then 20% of RTA funding needs to be directed towards cycling infrastructure. This would very quickly raise the level of cycling which would have immediate and substantial benefits for our health, environment and community.

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