

Monday 22 June 2020

Hon Anastacia Palaszcuk MP  
Premier and Minister for Trade  
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### **Cycling is the road to recovery**

Dear Premier,

I write in relation to the unprecedented surge in popularity bike riding is having as a result of COVID-19, and the importance of seizing this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, which is not just about getting more people exercising, but also to help rebuild our economy.

As you know, cycling is a key activity for Queensland, delivering a range of economic, environmental, social and health benefits for individuals and our state. More than 800,00 people across Queensland cycle every week – with higher than average participation rates occurring in Mackay, Gladstone and Cairns. A significant 92% of Queensland adults rode a bike as a kid and 81% have positive memories of this. In Queensland, most people are cycling for exercise, wellbeing, fun and transport. Fear for personal safety, as well as poor access to safe and connected infrastructure are identified as barriers to cycling. These are concerns also held by experienced cyclists.

Cycling increased 300% in popularity during COVID-19 as it provided a way for people of all ages to remain connected to their community and maintain their physical and mental health. The pandemic also made cycling one of the safest forms of transport, and continues to be a key component in the transport network. Shared pathways and cycling routes across the state have had their capacity tested with some counters indicating an 80-130% increase. Bike sales are up 400%, with standout items including kids' bikes and helmets, electric bikes and mountain bikes. A survey commissioned by Bicycle Queensland of more than 3,000 people across the state found that 81% of the respondents wanted to keep riding their bikes for health, recreation, and transport after the pandemic. Respondents new to cycling cited purpose-built cycling infrastructure and education as immediate needs to assist them with maintaining this behaviour.

In these difficult times, giving people options to maintain their physical and mental health has been a priority for your Government. We believe this should continue. We have the opportunity to enable the community to build on the health and lifestyle benefits they enjoyed during COVID-19 and support active transport choices. Your Government's own assessment program for bicycle infrastructure has demonstrated that each dollar spent on bikeways can return up to \$5 in benefit to the community and align to the long-term health and liveability goals for Queensland. With Bicycle Queensland's traditional support activities for recreational cyclists paused (e.g. cycling events such as Brisbane to Gold Coast Cycle Challenge), we are well-positioned to take advantage of new opportunities and suggest the following initiatives:

- 1. Accommodating for the increase in cycling in public spaces and workplaces**
  - a. Building and investing in vital infrastructure – fast-tracking the delivery of the state’s Principle Cycling Network Plan and harnessing the benefits of Federal Funding Infrastructure grants for LGA’s – to be delivered in 20/21 FY. Cycling and walking paths are specifically listed as eligible community infrastructure for this program.
  - b. As more people return to work by bicycle, support to workplace and facility managers to facilitate this process – assistance with bike parking / racking facilities, installing electric bike charging points, active transport salary packaging to support bike purchases and vouchers for essential education and training.
  
- 2. Helping new cyclists to be safe through education**
  - a. Provide bicycle safety training and education – rules, signage, safe passing, signalling, and understanding road /shared path user interactions and etiquette.
  
- 3. Supporting new cyclists to continue riding**
  - a. Develop riders confidence through bicycle maintenance vouchers for access to essential basic skills training to ensure bicycles are kept in good, safe working order.
  - b. Implement Bicycle Queensland’s “Bike Friendly Town” Tourism Plan to assist small business and the tourism sector to build a new tourism asset – future-proofing for the growing domestic and international cycle tourism market.

COVID-19 has changed the way we live. Cities and towns will need to create scalable ways to accommodate different types of transportation and health while maintaining appropriate safety norms – both in the short and long-term. A commitment of \$22M from the Economic Recovery Strategy would go a long way to supporting the safety of a greater number of Queenslanders to stay active and commute to work and study by bike.

Now is a great time for the Government to invest in expanding the horizons for health and lifestyle across our great state. Bicycle Queensland would welcome the opportunity to partner in the delivery of this initiative, but most importantly, now is the time to provide education and support safe bike riding in all its forms, across Queensland.

Kind regards,



Rebecca Randazzo  
Chief Executive

CC: Dave Stewart, Director-General, Department of Premier and Cabinet