

BICYCLE QUEENSLAND STATEMENT | CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change threatens our current way of life and economy, as well as our health and the natural environment that cyclists treasure. Bicycle Queensland (BQ) recognises there is clear scientific evidence climate change is creating a health emergency. BQ commits to working with government agencies and other organisations to prioritise actions to:

- ✓ limit greenhouse emissions
- ✓ promote the health benefits of addressing climate change
- ✓ promote equitable but rapid and active transition from use of fossil fuels to renewable energy in the electricity and transport sector.

Role of cycling in managing climate risk

BQ as a cycling advocacy organisation is working to help lead mobility aspects of this transition. Promotion of active transport has the mutual benefit of reducing carbon emissions and reducing pollution related health disease. While much change requires government lead policy and systems change at a personal level transport is a key component to emissions and changing the way we travel can have a significant impact. The Australian Automobile Association suggests 80% of our motorists are concerned about the impact of cars on our environment.

How cycling can contribute to decarbonise transport

Cycling is a zero carbon and healthy way to travel, from both personal and community health and pollution perspectives. We know many commuting trips people make in their cars are of 5km or less:

- The average commute distance in Brisbane is just under 15km – 14.6km:
 - 22% of commutes < 5 km
 - 24% of commutes 5-10 km
- Active transport for commutes in Brisbane stands at about 5% - where good facilities exist, 5-10% of trips are active, in areas where infrastructure has lagged, rates range from 2-5%
- Toowoomba: 80% of commutes are < 10 km

There is a lot of work estimating the contribution cycling can make to reduced greenhouse emissions – the European Cycling Federation estimates one commuter who rides 8km to work x 4 days a week saves the planet from 750kg CO2 emissions and over 3,300km of driving annually. In addition to the carbon saved the benefits include

- ✓ Reduced congestion
- ✓ Healthier urban environments – less particulate and noise pollution
- ✓ Improved population health – reduced obesity, and improved mental health

BQ put forward cycling as a zero carbon option in the ongoing transitional adaption, shifts in attitudes and perceptions necessary to make our communities safe and sustainable for the future.

Our actions

BQ is working with governments to contribute to the changes we need to make. We would like this to be faster – our cities need to be sustainable and contribute to the health of the planet.

Advocacy

- Peak advocacy lobby for Qld

- Work with all levels of governments to ensure active transport remains a focus
 - Sits on advisory committees with State and local governments which focus on safety and infrastructure development
- Lobby for frameworks to aim to reduce the need to travel and promote cycling and other low-carbon alternatives to the car. This should also be a central objective for all relevant development agencies and local authorities.
- Lobby government to set targets for active transport in modal share (remove Brisbane)
- Engage as appropriate in public policy debate on climate change and the role of cycling in transport transition
- Utilise the BQ network – the social capital of 18000 Queensland's committed cyclists

How we are minimising our own carbon footprint

- Set a target for our organisational greenhouse emissions
- Events: Review our water/waste and energy practices associated with holding cycling events
- Increased use of video-conferencing for connecting with regional partners
- Divest from fossil fuel suppliers with no proactive plans to transition to sustainable energy sources

Engaging constructively with stakeholders

Promoting commuting

- Working with employers to support active transport options
- Providing *try an ebike* days
- Working with other cycling bodies and transport NGOs
- Continue to provide insurance and support to members
- Take advantage of the BQ social capital – 18000 members

Recent drought and bushfires have highlighted the vulnerability of ecosystems and our communities to climate variability. We need to act urgently to rapidly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, adapt and build resilience in our communities.

Evidence

In 2015, the World Health Organisation assessed climate change as “the greatest threat to global health in the 21st century”. We acknowledge the Paris Agreement with its aims of limiting increases in global temperatures. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Panel Global Warming of 1.5 Degrees has found to limit temperature increases our communities need to transit to zero greenhouse gas emission by mid – century. Climate change threatens the future of our way of life and economy, as well as our health and the natural environment that cyclists treasure.

Transport globally is responsible for much greenhouse gas emission – 24% of emissions in Europe, just lower than the 29% of emissions attributable to the energy sector; road transport alone contributes 20% of all greenhouse emissions in Europe. In addition, emissions from energy industries are falling faster than those from change in the transport sector. Urban centres are heat islands – almost 90% of Australians live in urban areas, putting our communities at greater risk of heat related disease and pollution. The health communities in Australia and globally are increasingly their call for change. Currently in Australia pollution accounts for 1.5% of deaths annually and air pollution from motor vehicles and coal fired powered generation costs of over AU \$2.5 billion a year.

References

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. *Global warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change.* IPCC, World Meteorological Organization, 2018. Geneva, Switzerland. <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

Watts N, Amann M, Arnell N, Ayeb-Karlsson S, Belesova K, Boykoff M, Byass P et al. *The 2019 report of The Lancet Countdown on health and climate change: ensuring that the health of a child born today is not defined by a changing climate.* **Lancet.** 2019 Nov 16;394(10211):1836-1878
[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(19\)32596-6/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(19)32596-6/fulltext)

Beggs PJ, Zhang Y, Bambrick H, Berry HL, Linnenluecke MK, Trueck S et al. *The 2019 report of the MJA-Lancet Countdown on health and climate change: a turbulent year with mixed progress.* *Med J Aust.* 2019 Dec;211(11):490-491.e21. Epub 2019 Nov 13.

Australia's commuting distance: cities and regions. Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics, Dept Infrastructure and Regional Development, Australian Government.
https://www.bitre.gov.au/publications/2015/files/is_073.pdf.

F Kuster. *Calculating the economic benefits of cycling in EU-27.* European Cyclists Federation, June 2013.
http://www.bicyclescreatechange.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/ECF_Economic-benefits-of-cycling-in-EU-27.pdf.pdf

Cycle more Often 2 cool down the planet! Quantifying CO2 savings of cycling. European Cycling Federation Brussels, 2011. https://ecf.com/sites/ecf.com/files/ECF_CO2_WEB.pdf

Spickett, J.T., H.L. Brown, and K. Rumchev, *Climate change and air quality: the potential impact on health.* *Asia Pac J Public Health*, 2011. **23**(2 Suppl): p. 37S-45.

Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), *Air Pollution Economics: Health Costs of Air Pollution in the Greater Sydney Metropolitan Region.* 2005: NSW, Sydney.

Bureau of Transport and Regional Economics, *Health impacts of transport emissions in Australia: Economic Costs. Working Paper no. 63,* 2005: Canberra, Australia. p. Department of Transport and Regional Services.

Xie E, de Barros EF, Abelsohn A, Stein AT, Haines A. *Challenges and opportunities in planetary health for primary care providers.* *Lancet Planet Health* 2018;2(5):e185–87.

European Cycling Federation and resources: <https://ecf.com/resources/reports> ;
https://ecf.com/sites/ecf.com/files/Fabians%20ECF_Economic-benefits-of-cycling-in-EU-27-3.pdf

RACQ The Climate change challenge
<https://www.racq.com.au/cars-and-driving/driving/greener-motoring/the-climate-change-challenge>

Cycling UK Climate Change
https://www.cyclinguk.org/sites/default/files/document/2017/07/climate-change_1d_brf.pdf