

Central Coast Council

Cycling Strategy

APRIL 2021

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Central Coast Cycle Strategy is a plan to support the growing culture of cycling. Central Coast is now known as a place where cycling is either a preferred and/or viable option for short and medium trips within the local area. Council's aim is to see cycling embedded in the area's way of life, bringing with it opportunities for social connection and inclusion, recreational activity, economic growth, positive environmental gains and individuals and community health benefits.

Cycling is experiencing a resurgence in participation rates, not only in Tasmania but throughout Australia and across the world, both as a means of transport, for commuting and as a recreational activity. There has been an exponential growth in cycling since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Anecdotal evidence suggests cycling is now regularly seen as a fun way to exercise and particularly so when there was little opportunity to participate in organised sport and/or recreational activities, such as gyms, during the pandemic. This renewed interest in cycling is likely to continue to grow into the future even when the 2020 pandemic is a distant memory.

Cycling is proven to be effective in creating strong social networks, improving local accessibility, enhancing liveability, and creating a vibrant economy, while reducing negative environmental impacts created by motor vehicle use.

The Council acknowledges its responsibility for improving cycling networks and facilities in Central Coast. Work is continuing on the Coastal Pathway project linking Latrobe (in the east) to Wynyard (in the west). Central Coast is in a prime position to take full advantage of the Coastal Pathway as it will transect the entire length of the municipal area from Leith (in the east) to Heybridge (in the west). By the time the Coastal Pathway is completed, it is estimated the Council will have invested in excess of \$10m towards the overall cost.

The Council as part of its annual budget considerations will look to improve cycling linkages and local networks to ensure the Central Coast community can easily access the Coastal Pathway. More opportunities to encourage local cycling will also be considered, ensuring where practical all new and upgraded pathways are built to a sufficient width, allowing for shared purposes between cyclists and pedestrians.

By supporting a culture of cycling the Council is committed to providing for the future of its community. Encouraging and supporting cycling tourism and events will be a focus of the Council in coming years, to ensure that enhanced economic benefits are achieved.

1.1 Engagement

The 2014–2019 Cycling Strategy was developed collaboratively with the Bike Strategy Advisory Group which was made up of community members who represented many aspects of cycling from within Central Coast. As this updated Strategy is in many respects a restatement of previous commitments, it was not deemed necessary to undertake wide community consultation during the review, however the Strategy does require the Council to consult more broadly on future

plans for cycling infrastructure, following the completion of the Coastal Pathway through Central Coast.

Council's Infrastructure Services Department are preparing a Pathways Plan to ensure connectivity between areas within towns and with the Shared Pathway. When completed the Pathways Plan will inform future infrastructure priorities.

The Council is committed to continuing to work collaboratively with the community, its neighbouring councils, the Cradle Coast Authority, and various Tasmanian Government agencies including Police, Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of State Growth, and the Education Department.

2 PURPOSE

The purpose of the Central Coast Cycle Strategy is to:

- encourage people to make more use of their bicycles,
- identify the benefits of cycling, and
- encourage cycling as an alternative transport and/or recreational opportunity.

Central Coast has a long history of cycling and is fortunate the linkages between riders and the community appear stronger than perhaps in other regions.

Although the community uptake of cycling has increased, there remains barriers to cycling which are not underestimated by the Council. These barriers can include safety concerns, increased traffic, and changes in residential density. Using the growing popularity of cycling to engage those members of the community currently not participating in regular physical activity, by providing a framework to support a vibrant and healthy cycling culture, is one of the primary aims of the Council's Strategy.

Central Coast roads are great for road cycling and training, with many providing enough space for bikes and vehicles to travel comfortably together. The area is well recognised for cycling, with potential growth from tourism, events, and a cycle business economy.

The Council recognises there is ongoing work to be done with building infrastructure and shared pathways to further encourage families and new users to take up cycling. Where possible, it is the Council's aim that shared pathway infrastructure will provide opportunity for mobility and social inclusion for as many user groups as possible.

The Council has been building its cycling network spine over the past few years and with the ongoing development of the Coastal Pathway, there is a strong foundation for the future of cycling in this area.

3 CONTEXT

The Central Coast Cycling Strategy outlines the Council's plans to further support the growing culture of cycling within the community for health, well-being, enjoyment, and environmental benefits which are accrued by reducing the reliance on other means of transport.

The Council adopted its first Central Coast Cycle Strategy in 2014. The aim of the strategy was:

To enhance cycling in Central Coast, making it an enjoyable, relaxing, and safe experience, and Central Coast a place where cycling is a viable option for short and medium trips that cannot be made on foot.

3.1 Federal

The Australian National Cycling Strategy 2011 – 2016 remains the most recent available resource for understanding the Federal Government's vision for the future of cycling in Australia. The Strategy outlines the following:

Vision

Double the number of people cycling in Australia over the next five years.

Objectives / Priorities

- 1 **Cycling Promotion:** Promote cycling as both a viable and safe mode of transport and an enjoyable recreational activity.
- 2 **Infrastructure and Facilities:** Create a comprehensive and continuous network of safe and attractive routes to cycle end-of-trip facilities.
- 3 **Integrated Planning:** Consider and address cycling needs in all relevant transport and land use planning activities.
- 4 **Safety:** Enable people to cycle safely.
- 5 **Monitoring and evaluation:** Improve monitoring and evaluation of cycling programs and develop a national decision-making process for investment in cycling.
- 6 **Guidance and best practice:** Support the development of nationally consistent guidance for stakeholders to use and share best practice across jurisdictions.

3.2 State

The Tasmanian Walking and Cycling for Active Transport Strategy (January 2010) developed by the then Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources, remains the available resource for understanding the State Government's vision for the future of cycling in Tasmania. This Strategy outlines the following:

Vision

To create a safe, accessible, and well-connected transport system that encourages more people to walk and cycle as part of their everyday journeys.

Objectives

The vision supports the priority areas of the Tasmanian Urban Passenger Transport Framework to:

- 1 **Reduce greenhouse emissions:** Climate change means that we need to transition to a low carbon emissions transport system, including promotion of low carbon passenger transport options, such as walking and cycling.
- 2 **Create liveable and accessible communities:** Our urban areas must support a broader range of transport modes. We need more compact, connected communities that reduce overall distances travelled and car reliance through the provision of safe walking and cycling opportunities. Social inclusion is also important – our transport systems should aim to cater for the broad range of needs within our communities.
- 3 **Increase travel reliability:** Providing consistent travel times for all transport users, including pedestrians and cyclists, to ensure that we can predict the time taken to travel to a destination and reliably plan our journey. This is in contrast to mobility, which aims to simply reduce the time it takes to travel between different destinations and emphasises the fastest mode of transport – generally cars.
- 4 **Encourage healthy, active communities:** Many of our daily trips are short journeys. Many people make these short trips by car, and there is significant opportunity to substitute these trips with walking or cycling. The flow-on benefits for the health of individuals are significant.
- 5 **Integrated transport and land use planning:** We need to ensure our land use decisions support our passenger transport system. We have dispersed, low-density urban areas with many outlying centres. While we can't change the land use planning decisions of the past, we can strategically plan and design our existing metropolitan areas so that future development is more sustainable and supports attractive and efficient low carbon transport modes.

Tasmania's Plan for Physical Activity 2011 – 2021 Developed by the Premier's Physical Activity Council in consultation with the community includes the following:

Vision:

All Tasmanians experience and enjoy the many benefits of regular physical activity.

Goal 1: Become a community that values and supports physical activity.

Goal 2: Create built and natural environments that enable and encourage physical activity.

Goal 3: Develop partnerships that build and share knowledge and resources.

Goal 4: Increase opportunities for all Tasmanians to be physically active where they live, work and play.

The aim of the Physical Activity Plan was for a 10% increase in the rates of participation in physical activity by different age groups by 2021.

3.3 Local

Four of the five strategic directions identified by the Council in its Strategic Plan 2014–2024 easily relate to the Central Coast Cycling Strategy:

- Strategic Direction 1 – The Shape of the Place.
- Strategic Direction 2 – A Connected Central Coast.
- Strategic Direction 3 – Community Capacity and Creativity.
- Strategic Direction 4 – The Environment and Sustainable infrastructure and have been identified to provide the guidance toward the outcomes of: – socio-economic well-being – resilient and engaged community – healthy community and healthy lifestyle – healthy environment.

These strategies have been identified to assist in meeting the following outcomes:

- socio-economic well-being;
- resilient and engaged community;
- healthy community and healthy lifestyle; and
- healthy environment.

4 BENEFITS OF CYCLING

Cycling provides improved health, environmental, economic, and social benefits for the community.

4.1 Health Benefits



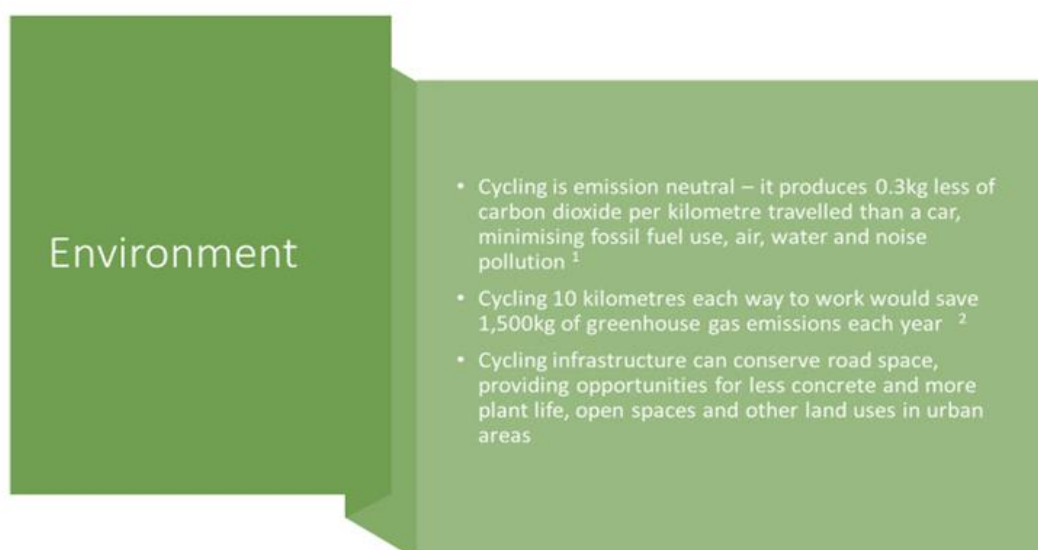
¹ Better Health Channel, 2020. Cycling – Health Benefits, Melbourne: Victoria State Government. www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

² Mensline Australia, 2019. Cycling – the exercise for positive mental health, www.mensline.org.au

The health of the population underpins the social and economic well-being of every community. Research has shown that improving the health of communities through primary health prevention measures such as walking, and cycling are generally low cost, and these measures are more likely to have greater long-term success as they become part of everyday behaviour.

Cycling is a great means of integrating exercise into the day, and by cycling for transport people can engage in physical activity without investing excessive time, money, or commitment to making it happen. Transport options that provide incidental exercise offers people with busy lives a means of reducing their risk of disease and ill health. Leisure cycling is also an important means of getting daily exercise to maintain a person's health and well-being.

4.2 Environmental Benefits



¹ European Cyclists' Federation, 2013. How much CO2 does Cycling really Save?, www.ecf.com

² Bicycle Network, 2019, Sustainable commuting, www.bicyclenetwork.com.au

The transport choices people make plays an important part in minimising the impact the community has on climate change. Even a small reduction in short vehicle trips can generate a significant reduction in emissions.

Cars contribute to other environmental issues such as noise and air pollution, and road traffic can also affect water quality and contribute to a loss of biodiversity due to road run-off.

If a person walked or cycled to work 3km each way, they reduce their greenhouse emissions by up to 350kg per year.

4.3 Economic Benefits



¹ European Cyclists' Federation, 2013. How much CO2 does Cycling really Save?, www.ecf.com

With cycling rated as a popular physical activity there is an opportunity for further growth of business and tourism experiences in Central Coast, such as those which have been developed in other areas.

These include, but are certainly not limited to, high country cycle tours, the development of identified farm gate produce, “foodie” or culinary cycle trails and experiences, winery tours, art tours and off-road cycle parks.

Opportunities exist as Central Coast and neighbouring councils expand their cycle infrastructure for further development in tasting trails and local cycling experiences, particularly with the development of the Coastal Pathway linking Latrobe in the east and Wynyard in the west.

The economic incentive for people to choose to ride their bicycles is strong, importantly with savings on fuel and car registration, insurance, and maintenance.

The exponential growth in mountain biking has seen the development of facilities throughout the State. Thanks to the efforts of the Cradle Coast Mountain Bike Club, many of the old forestry trails in the Dial Range have now been stitched together with some single track sections providing a wonderful world of climbing and descending.

The Penguin Mountain Bike Park is located just 2km from the township of Penguin. The park features more than 6km of XC single trail and manmade features in the centre of the old speedway featuring jumps, wall rides and a smaller skills park. The park is suitable for riders of all levels and is an ideal area to progress from a fresh beginner to a more seasoned rider. The Penguin Mountain Bike Park is also a good starting point for longer and more challenging rides into the Dial Range at the southern end of the park.

Research has shown that retail businesses can benefit from more people using bicycles to shop, not to mention growth in cycling businesses themselves. Tourism activity associated with Mountain Biking and the Coastal Pathway development should not be underestimated.

4.4 Social Benefits



Cycling can provide an opportunity to meet new people and help build the community's social capital. As a fun activity, cycling offers a range of social benefits including a way to meet new people, enjoy the company of others and visit new and interesting places.

5 VISION FOR CYCLING

The Council aims to provide a convenient and connected cycling network which is safe, accessible, and attractive. The cycling network will cater for and engage with the community to ensure cycling is seen as a viable alternative to other means of transport. Increasing community participation in cycling ensures people are both healthier and more connected. At the same time less reliance on other forms of transport is good for the environment and will improve Central Coast's sustainability in the longer term.

Cycling in Central Coast will be an enjoyable, relaxing, and safe experience, and

Central Coast is a place where cycling is a viable option for short and medium trips.

5.1 Goals and Priorities

Safe

The Council will invest in safe cycling infrastructure and will collaborate with others to educate the community on safe behaviours.

Convenient

The Council will work at prioritising infrastructure that supports convenient cycling as a sustainable and well-integrated mode of transport.

Planned

The Council will plan for and implement affordable strategies to improve cycling within Central Coast to allow increased participation in the future.

Sustainable

The Council will promote and support cycling as a fun, healthy and a sustainable activity.

Innovate

The Council will actively engage and support new and innovative opportunities and solutions which encourages increased participation in cycling.

6 PRIORITIES

It is the Council's objective to strengthen and support the culture of cycling in Central Coast. To achieve this aim, the Council will actively promote:

- Investment in cycling education, information, and infrastructure.
- Cycling to be the first choice for trips between 2km and 7km.
- Where cycling is the natural and best choice for many trips.
- Where the benefits of cycling are acknowledged by all sectors within the community.

6.1 Safety

Delivering safe cycling opportunities in the network for all levels of skills and confidence through ongoing improvements to cycling infrastructure and networks. To do this Council will aim to:

- Ensure cycling routes are maintained at an appropriate level of service for their safe use.
- Ensure Council approved road works consider the safety and convenience of cyclists.
- Advocate for increased investment by the Tasmanian and Australian Governments in local road safety programs with a particular focus on cycling.

6.2 Business, Tourism and Events

Building on the momentum of the increase in cycling, look for opportunities to further promote Central Coast as a place to visit for cycling holidays, events, and relaxation. To do this Council will aim to:

- Continue the support for the completion of the Coastal Pathway ensuring Central Coast's linkage is to a high standard and seamlessly integrates into the Council's own local cycling network.
- Collaborate with other neighbouring councils to attract regionally significant cycling events to the Cradle Coast area.
- Support and encourage events which include leisure cycling, off-road (mountain biking), and closed road races in Central Coast.
- Seek funding opportunities for the hosting of cycling events in Central Coast.
- Encourage further private sector investment in the development of infrastructure which supports the cycling tourists.

6.3 Education

Comprehensive promotion and engagement programs are essential in supporting a culture of cycling. To do this the Council will aim to:

- Raise the profile of cycling through media, schools, workplaces, and the wider community.
- Promote existing cycle networks and routes as a safe, enjoyable, and relaxing option for local travel and recreation purposes.
- Work closely with the State and Federal Governments and other local councils to develop a cycling culture.
- Support initiatives such as “Ride2School” and “Ride2Work”.
- Promote events and initiatives which help to build a cycling culture, including “Bike Week”.
- Support initiatives and programs such as driver education, cycling skills courses, enforcing traffic laws, and reducing motor vehicle speeds, all which aim to improve the safety of cyclists and to promote it as a safe transport alternative.

6.4 Infrastructure

A high quality cycling network used by people of all ages and abilities reduces safety concerns, and therefore helps to make cycling enjoyable. People are more likely to cycle if the facilities and surrounding area are safe. To help create this environment the Council will:

- Actively advocate and participate in the development of the Coastal Pathway from Latrobe to Wynyard.
- Consult with the community on future plans for cycling infrastructure in Central Coast.
- Provide seamless linkages to the Coastal Pathway from the local cycling networks that are planned, developed and/or upgraded.
- Develop a network of cycle friendly routes which access popular destinations within Central Coast.
- Ensure that any dedicated cycling infrastructure is safe for use by all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.
- Plan for further cycling infrastructure development, such as track loops, linking in with public transport, way finder signage and end of trip facilities.
- Provide way finding signage which identifies routes which avoid busy roads.
- Educate road users to see cycling as a legitimate road use.

- Promote cycling routes to popular destinations.
- Provide bike friendly infrastructure within town centres.
- Maintain a long term commitment to supporting a culture of cycling and engage with key partners and stakeholders in prioritising investment in cycling.

7 CONCLUSION

The Council's aims through this Cycling Strategy are to continue its work on improving accessibility, social inclusion, health, environment, air quality and community safety outcomes.

To this end the Council will continue its leadership role in:

- considering cycling infrastructure in future planning deliberation.
- raising the profile of cycling and promoting its wide ranging benefits.
- engaging the community including residents, businesses, and educational institutions in planning, promoting, and supporting cycling through information, events, and promotional activities; and
- ensuring where possible that transport and land use developments allow for direct, convenient, and interconnected routes between key destinations and residential areas.

The success of this Strategy will be dependent on the Council and the community working collaboratively together.

The Central Coast Cycling Strategy will be reviewed by the Council in 2025.