

20191205 Advertiser article by Katie Gilfillan

Bike riding is so Australian. Seeing a kid peddle for the first time is simply magic. I challenge anyone to not smile when they see a kid wobble past them on a bike loving life. And yet we have abandoned a life of walking and riding and now instead prioritise cars in every decision. I would ask the community – is this for the better?

It isn't the community's fault though. For years Governments have been selling the message that if they build bigger roads people will be able to travel faster and further. And yet – do people feel free travelling on our roads today? We have tried the fix the problems with bigger roads and I would say most of the public would call it a fail. The question is are they now ready to throw their support at another fix?

Luckily around the world cities are showing us the way. Instead of only investing in one network for cars they are investing in networks to support people to walk, cycling and catch public transport and it works. These cities are thriving.

On cycling, the bicycle network in Adelaide receives less than 1% of the state transport investment budget with funding being cut in recent years. One intersection expansion, to add a couple lanes, can cost up to \$200 million dollars – far more than the whole bicycle network receives in a year. How can Adelaide build a decent network with that? A lack of funding creates conflict on our streets as inadequate infrastructure forces cars and bikes together. Local councils have also been left in the lurch as State Funding to help them build a local network has dried up. In comparison Auckland is investing \$600 million over 10 years and Sydney \$200 million. That's before we mention New York, Vancouver, Montreal, Melbourne, Perth.

It is great we have the Frome Street bikeway but 3 years on from promised funding the City of Adelaide is yet to start an East-West bikeway. Not one street running East-West through the city centre provides a safe route for people to cycle. Why wouldn't we support people to make a healthy and efficient transport choice? Why would we force everyone to choose a car? It just doesn't make sense.

On a positive note some councils are leading the way. The City of Charles Sturt, Port Adelaide Enfield, Marion Council and the City of Unley are among those supporting their community to cycle. Overall improvements are happening including the coast path and recently completed Outer Harbor Greenway which is an exceptional piece of safe cycling infrastructure supporting people of all ages to cycle. The Marino Rocks Greenway is also a great route for people as are priority

bike route local streets such as Porter/Rugby street in the City of Unley. With more of this type of infrastructure you could entice more people to try riding, and truly reduce congestion on our roads. For the \$200 million you could spend on one intersection expansion you could instead begin to transform Adelaide's transport future.

Overall however Adelaide is falling behind global transport trends and I fear for the impact this will have on the future of our city. Our enviable life style is at risk as housing densities increase and the critical transport strategies that are needed to support this change are non-existent. But it isn't too late. If the community speaks up and calls for something else the Government will listen. The Your Say survey shows people are supportive of building a better bike network. Let's get on with it or do we want our city full of major road ways like South Rd? Is that the great Australian dream? Because Cross Roads is on the agenda next and who knows where to from there. It leaves me asking where will the people fit?

Instead, let's invest in Adelaide's bike network and create a city full of happy, smiling kids, loving their ride to school with their friends. And of course, a network for the adults who also want to have a happy and healthy life. As a community I think we are ready.