



# A More Cycle Friendly Canberra

The Best Cyclepaths in the Nation



Canberra**liberals**

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# Cycle Friendly City

## Our Vision

A Canberra Liberal Government will make a significant investment in restoring Canberra's cyclepaths, to make them once again among the best in the world.

The Canberra Liberals recognise the contribution that cycling makes to improving the health outcomes, reducing road congestion and cutting emissions of pollutants and greenhouse gases by taking cars off the roads.

**The Canberra Liberals endorse the target of increasing cycling from 2.3% of work trips to 5.0% in 2011.**

## Backing A Better Cycling Network

The Canberra Liberal cycling policies are aimed at helping to overcome the two main physical reasons why people choose not to travel by bike, namely fear of traffic and excessive trip times due to indirect routes and poorly signposted junctions. We have five priority initiatives for our first term in government, to support the expansion of cycling activity in Canberra.

- 1 We will spend \$900,000 to signpost the entire cyclepaths network, to help tourists and commuters to get to their destinations without getting lost.
- 2 We will spend a further \$2.1 million on a maintenance blitz to repair and replace degraded, unsafe and sub-standard sections around our ageing network of off-road cyclepaths.
- 3 We will consult with the cycling community to prioritise key missing links in our cyclepaths network both on-road and off-road, we will work with ACTPLA to make necessary planning changes and we will commission engineers to pre-design these upgrades so that a rollout can be staged as future funds become available. Funding of \$4 million will be provided beginning in 2010.
- 4 We will invest \$120,000 in secure bike lockers at park-and-ride facilities across Canberra.
- 5 We will ask the new independent Infrastructure Commissioner to assess and publish estimates of the maintenance work needed to sustain the existing network into the future, as well as to sustain proposed new sections in the network.

The Stanhope Government claims it is committed to the target of 5% cycling by 2011, but it won't stump up the construction plans, the transport policies or the necessary investment required to help the community achieve that target. Only the Canberra Liberals have backed up this target with funding commitments to make our cyclepaths functional and to deliver secure bike lockers at park-and-ride facilities across the ACT.

The ACT Government cannot expect people to cycle in peak periods when many of the routes they need are missing from the cyclepath network. Nor will people be attracted to a network that is un-signposted and riddled with decaying dangerspots. Several sections of off-road cyclepaths meander along winding diversions and could be more direct.

If we want people to cycle to work, then we need a cyclepath system designed to efficiently get them from the suburbs to the town centres where they need to go.

## How much work is needed?

Canberrans can be rightly proud of the extensive network of cyclepaths around our city. But there is a need for a significant new investment to complete this unfinished network and particularly to sustain the life of the ageing off-road infrastructure.

If the backlog of maintenance needs on our off-road cyclepaths is not promptly rectified, these valuable assets will deteriorate below repairable levels and a major reconstruction effort will eventually be required.

The Stanhope Government knows full well what work is required to repair and complete the building of the cyclepath network. Three reports have been published in recent years including the 2004 *Ten Year Masterplan for Trunk Cycling*, the 2005 *Canberra's Commuter Bicycle Network* report and the 2007 *Commuter Cycling Network* report.

- These studies identify a total of 46 potential projects that have been costed; prioritised; and assessed for demand and type of use.
- But by this year the Stanhope Government has only completed one of these projects.

We recognise that the network cannot be transformed overnight. But our investment plans allow for a steady and significant series of improvements to fill in the missing gaps, address the maintenance backlog and modernise the design standard along sections of the network.

The Stanhope Government is very clever at wetting the public appetite and making vague aspirational promises, but it has a lacklustre record of achieving real improvements in the off-road cycling network.

# The Liberal Action Plan

## Signs for Cyclepaths

Canberra's cyclepaths are very poorly signposted. This is a great source of frustration for tourists, as well as for new cyclists who are attempting to get to work. Any transport system should be well signposted if it is to be functional.

The lack of signs on Canberra's cyclepaths is ridiculous. We have Australia's best system of paths, but perversely we have the worst signposting in the country. The system is predicated on an assumption that travellers already know the network. This is not an arrangement that encourages new patronage. We need some basic signs to inform travellers of the choice of destinations where paths intersect and to let cyclists know the respective distances to alternative destinations. There should also be warnings about changed conditions on some sections of the paths, such as warnings about sharp corners.

Even the line marking on the cyclepath pavement is deficient. Original markings have often worn away or are faded. These lines need to be repainted in fresh white paint to help separate oncoming streams of cyclists and to provide safe conditions for cycling at night and in the rain.

Cyclists tell us of several frustrations with the lack of signs, directions and markings.

- Some cyclepaths terminate at road intersections and it is not possible to see the place or direction in which the cyclepath resumes across the road.
- Some cyclepaths join at junctions and it is not clear which is the right path for which destination.
- Many cyclepaths are set back from roads and other landmarks, so it is difficult to ascertain where particular suburbs or turn-offs sit in relation to the main cycle route.

Pedal Power, the peak lobby group for cyclists in Canberra have asked for an investment of \$300,000 per year over a period of three years to complete the proper signposting of our cyclepaths.

**A Canberra Liberal Government will commit funding for the required signposts in full and up-front. We will back this commitment with a spend of \$900,000 to finish signposting the cyclepaths in 2009.**

This is a relatively small investment to help people navigate a network which is estimated to be worth \$80 million. It is an investment that is long overdue and should not be delayed any longer.

	2008-09 \$000	2009-10 \$000	2010-11 \$000	2011-12 \$000
Bike path signposting	400	500		

This is an investment that will have a real impact on encouraging people onto their bikes in greater numbers. For example, when signs were installed on the Sullivans Creek cyclepath, the recorded level of cycling increased by 29%. Similarly once we initiate a broader rollout of cyclepath signage, we anticipate some level of increased patronage right across Canberra's cyclepaths. Canberra has some excellent cyclepaths, but they are no good to commuters if they are going to get lost and delayed on the way into work.

## Fixing the Maintenance Backlog

Canberra's cyclepaths have served the recreational cyclists of the City well for many years. But unfortunately with the passage of time, many sections of the off-road cyclepaths have been allowed to fall into an embarrassingly bad state of disrepair.

Pedal Power, representing some 2,000 cyclists has identified a backlog of at least \$1.7 million of work affecting kilometres worth of sections on the network.

- Some 4,995 metres of asphalt surfaces have been damaged by tree roots, along with 270 metres of concrete sections on the cyclepaths.
- Another 405 metres of concrete is broken and damaged to a point where it requires replacement.
- 1,800 metres of asphalt has excessive cracking.
- Several structures need attention, including dangerous drainage and poorly designed verges.

We will not sit on our hands and let a great public asset deteriorate further.

**A Canberra Liberal Government will spend \$2.1 million on cyclepath maintenance in 2009 above current budgeted expenditures, representing \$1.7 million to repair a backlog of maintenance work, plus capital upgrades of \$0.4 million to reconstruct and straighten some sections where cracks and other faults are emerging.**

The capital upgrade component will include the first in a series of works aimed at straightening the cycle routes, in order to make the off-road cyclepaths more direct for commuter cyclists.

We will aim to complete as much of the maintenance and signposting work as possible prior to the 2009 World Mountain Bike and Trials Championship. This international sporting event is being hosted in Canberra from 1 to 6 September

2009 at the Stromlo Forest Park. More than 750 of the world's top mountain bike riders will be visiting Canberra. We aim to give these visitors a great and lasting impression of Canberra, as a cyclist-friendly city.

	2008-09 \$000	2009-10 \$000	2010-11 \$000	2011-12 \$000
Maintenance backlog	1200	500		
Capital upgrade stage 1		400		

In May 2008 we announced that a Canberra Liberal Govt will appoint Australia's first Infrastructure Commissioner, as an independent watchdog with responsibility for advising government on whole-of-life costs for constructing and maintaining assets.

Our decaying cyclepaths will be one of the first assets that we will ask the Infrastructure Commissioner to give urgent attention to.

**We will ask the Infrastructure Commissioner to assess and publish independent estimates of the actual and required maintenance work needed to sustain the existing cyclepaths network into the future and the required whole-of-life investment to support proposed new sections and upgrades of the network.**

We will determine future increases in maintenance and upgrade funding beyond 2009-10, based upon consideration of the independent advice from the Infrastructure Commissioner and building upon the Ten Year Masterplan.

## Completing Key Missing Links

A Canberra Liberal Government is committed to expanding the road cycle lane system and the off-road cyclepaths, as integral and important parts of our sustainable and integrated transport plan.

The mainstay cycling policy of the Stanhope Government has been to selectively paint on-road cyclelanes, because this involves the least money.

**A Canberra Liberal Government will continue the existing policy of selectively providing for new on-road connections at modern design standards, as relevant roads are resurfaced or upgraded.**

In 2004 the ACT Planning and Land Authority together with Roads ACT commissioned a *Ten Year Masterplan for Trunk Cycling and Walking Path Infrastructure*, looking at on-road and off-road missing links. These planning agencies have provided an important basis for identifying options for filling in the missing links, but it is the responsibility of the government to make decisions to fund the gaps.

The 2004 Masterplan recommended that the steps for future action should include feasibility studies in key corridors to quantify the physical work required. Further studies on on-road options were undertaken in two subsequent reports in 2005 and 2007. A Canberra Liberal Government will put top priority on a rollout of some of

the proposed new cyclepaths that connect to key centres of work. In particular we acknowledge three main areas of need including:

- feeders from Belconnen into North Canberra;
- improved routes through North Canberra into Civic (particularly between Dickson and ANU) and from North Canberra to Russell; and
- enhanced off-road links from Deakin into Barton and Civic.

A key priority for a Canberra Liberal Government is to fill-in key missing links in the present off-road cyclepaths. Pedal Power has acknowledged that new and improved off-road connections are vital if we are to increase levels of cycling activity. Plainly not all cyclists have the confidence to mix it on the roads with cars.

“[M]any people feel uncomfortable cycling on arterial roads, even with cycle lanes. For this reason it will also be important to build separate cycle paths in high volume/high speed situations, largely around the major destinations where cycle paths end suddenly.” (Submission to the Ten Year Master Plan study).

The Canberra Liberals recognise that there are varying comfort levels among cyclists and we believe it is therefore very desirable to provide off-road connections as alternatives to some of the most heavily used arterial roads.

**A Canberra Liberal Government will consult with the cycling community on prioritising the most important missing links in our cyclepaths network. We will work with ACTPLA to make necessary planning changes and we will commission engineers to cost, prioritise and plan a rollout of upgrades to complete the top priority missing sections, including in the off-road network of cyclepaths. Construction of some key missing links will be funded beginning from 2010 onwards.**

	2008-09 \$000	2009-10 \$000	2010-11 \$000	2011-12 \$000
Capital – Planning and Completing Missing Links in the Cyclepaths Network			2,000	2,000

We guarantee that existing works budgeted for Cotter Road and Jerrabomberra wetlands will be completed. After these works wind up in mid 2010, an expanded construction program will take over with an allocation of \$2 million per year.

Under a Canberra Liberal Government the network of cyclepaths, both on and off road will be enhanced and modernised to better meet the needs of both recreational and commuter cyclists and to ensure that essential safety standards are being achieved. We will also advance planning studies on routes within town centres proposed in the 2007 *Commuter Cycling Network* report.

# Cyclist Safety

A Canberra Liberal Government will use information on asset deterioration, identified hazards and reported accidents, as a basis for prioritising works within the regular maintenance spend on cyclepaths.

We will have a strong regard to safety issues as we plan future connections, upgrades and maintenance work. Roads ACT has recently undertaken an independent road safety audit of on-road cycle lanes along arterial routes, using the Australian Road Research Board. The study looked particularly at Northbourne Avenue, Commonwealth Avenue, Adelaide Avenue, Yarra Glen and Hindmarsh Drive. Roads ACT has reported that:

“Generally a high level of compliance with the standards was reported. Some items for improvement were listed.” (Presentation to Australasian College of Road Safety)

The Stanhope Government has previously refused to release safety audit research to the Opposition, including the Australian Road Research Board study. By contrast a Canberra Liberal Government will publish the findings of safety studies and will consider objective expert advice on how to maintain the safety of the system and how to best improve the network into the future. We will report to the public on the potential improvements identified by the Australian Road Research Board. As traffic volumes and conditions change in the future, we will continue to periodically review safety issues.

Decisions on any changes or improvements to the cyclepath network will be evidence-based and made in very close consultation with the community. We will not be creating new gaps in the cyclepaths networks and any replacement cyclepaths will need to be real improvements on the paths they replace, in terms of design standards, travel time and support from the cyclist community.

## Bike Lockers at Park-and-Ride

A Canberra Liberal Government will invest in secure bike lockers at park-and-ride facilities across Canberra.

We recognise that many of the cycle journeys within town centres are relatively flat, but often the journey between town centres can involve a steep journey down lengthy hillsides. For instance a resident in Belconnen will face a downhill cycle to get to work in Civic, but they may be deterred by the uphill ride home. We aim to increase cycling by making it easier for cyclists to access the bus network for difficult legs of their cross-city journey.

**A Canberra Liberal Government will install secure bike lockers at park and ride facilities, to provide enhanced access to bus services for cyclists.**

We will provide \$120,000 for purchase of additional bike lockers in 2008-09. We will also monitor the future demand for additional lockers.

	2008-09 \$000	2009-10 \$000	2010-11 \$000	2011-12 \$000
Bike lockers for park-and-ride	120			

Secure lockers help to protect bicycles from vandalism and theft. They can also provide storage for bicycle accessories such as helmets, pumps and clothing.

The Canberra Liberals are committed to making serious investments in sustainable transport. We have taken the time to consult with the community and have proposed some important solutions to encourage more cycling, with an aim of doubling the take-up of cycling in peak hours when our roads are most congested. We believe this target is achievable, but it is only achievable under a government with concrete plans, real new funding and smart solutions to make it happen.