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Sydney’s bikeability score improves after COVID response measures rolled out

In an Australian first, We Ride Australia has scored every Australian capital on the ability to travel by bicycle between key local destinations with Sydney hot on the heels of Melbourne with a score of 43 out of a possible 100.

We Ride’s Executive Officer, Peter Bourke, led the Bicycle Transport Analysis (BTA) project in Australia.

“We are very pleased to see the immediate increase to Sydney’s bikeability score from 38 to 43 following the completion of the 6 new separated bike lanes as part of the City’s COVID response,

“Sydney’s 10% improvement demonstrates that connecting the network and addressing missing links has had a significant impact on the city’s bikeability, making it easier for workers who would like to ride a bike in the city for their daily commute,

“Lower speed limits and the new separated lanes have had a material impact on bicycle safety and amenity in Sydney, but they could do even better with more investment,” said Peter Bourke.

“The Bicycle Transport Analysis allows every Council in the country to analyse their local community networks and create stress maps that help pinpoint where and how cities and towns can invest to make riding easier, more enjoyable and safer,

“Our objective is to enable cities and towns of all sizes everywhere to carry out a BTA and encourage them to build connected, convenient bicycle networks that we know encourage more short daily trips by bicycle,” said We Ride’s Peter Bourke.

“This has never been more important as many Australians have chosen to ride a bike during the COVID-19 pandemic because they felt safer with so little traffic on the roads.”

“Also, as we invest in COVID recovery, we mustn’t forget that people arriving at local shops by cycling and walking spend more¹ and more local jobs are created² building bikeways than roads for the same amount of money,” said Mr Bourke.

The ratings system was developed by We Ride’s partners in the USA and uses open source, publicly available data. More than 650 North American, European and Australian cities have now been scored with Sydney comparable to cities such Philadelphia (43) and Palo Alto in California (44). The closest cities in Australia are Perth (42) and Melbourne (45).

¹ For a summary of the evidence, Sustrans, 2019. Accessed 3.11.20:

<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/5224/common-misconceptions-of-active-travel-investment.pdf>

² Mining Recovery Act Data for Opportunities to Improve the State of Practice for Overall Economic Impact Analysis of Transportation Investments. 2012, AASHTO, Accessed 3.11.20:

http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/nchrp/docs/NCHRP08-36%28103%29_FR.pdf

The Bicycle Transport Analysis will be extended in 2021 and Local Governments wishing to participate in the program should contact We Ride Australia.

Contact:

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Further information:

- The BTA's utilise open source data, including the Australian Census and OpenStreetMaps (OSM), Qgis along with GIS data made available by cities and Councils.
- The full range of city maps and breakdown of the scoring can be seen at www.weride.org.au/bta
- International city scores can be seen at <https://bna.peopleforbikes.org/#/>