

# 2023 Webinar – Can Australia create transport behaviour change at scale through e-bike incentive schemes

Questions and answers

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**Webpage:** <https://www.weride.org.au/webinars/e-bike-incentives/>

**When:** Tuesday, 4 April, 10am – 11am AEST

## Presenters bios

- **Stephen Hodge**, Director - National Advocacy [stephen@weride.org.au](mailto:stephen@weride.org.au), +61 (0)411 149 910.
- **Sam Johnson bio.** Sustainable Transport Analyst, World Bank - Transport Global Practice
  - Sam Johnson works in transport infrastructure advisory (roads, maritime, aviation) for the World Bank. He is a strong advocate for bicycle urbanism as a core element of sustainable mobility. He has a Bachelor of Engineering (Civil) (Hons1), Graduate Diploma in Sustainable Development and Humanitarian Action, and is final stages of a Masters of Global Development Practice at Harvard University.
- **Cameron Bennett bio.** Graduate Research Assistant, Portland State University.
  - Cameron Bennett is a second-year master's student in transportation engineering at Portland State University. His work as a graduate research assistant focuses on promoting and facilitating the uptake of electric bicycles. He serves as president of the PSU ITE-STEP (Students in Transportation Engineering and Planning) student group. He received Dwight David Eisenhower Transportation Fellowships presented by the U.S. Department of Transportation at the Transportation Research Board 2022 and 2023 annual meetings. Cameron's passion lies in the promotion of cycling in all its forms through engineering design, planning, policy, advocacy, and community-driven engagement. In his free time, you can usually find him moving through the mountains on a bike, vertical rock, a pair of skis, or his own two feet.
- **Jenny Box bio.** Deputy Director of Behavior Change, Cycling UK.
  - Jenny Box is responsible for projects across England, Scotland and Making cycling easier, the charity's innovative new e-cycles programme. Through 2021-22 Jenny undertook a secondment to the Department for Transport's Active Travel team leading on Active Travel Social Prescribing pilots and local authority e-cycle pilots. Prior to this, Jenny was Head of Behaviour Change for England at Cycling UK and before entering the active travel world, Jenny has held national management roles for two large governing bodies of sport, developing and delivering programmes on youth leadership, increasing participation and volunteering in sporting activities.
- **Ben Carr bio.** Co-Founder and Director, Lug+Carrie
  - Ben is a mobility Expert with 15 years of experience in the mobility sector, ex-Head of Production and Vehicle Design for Europe's fastest growing Micro-mobility Provider, CIRC (now Bird), Ben has designed 15+ metro and light rail vehicles which are currently in service, he was co-founder White Octopus GmbH, Berlin. B.A. Product Design, Swinburne University and Weissesee Kunsthochschule Berlin

# 2023 Webinar – Can Australia create transport behaviour change at scale through e-bike incentive schemes

## Questions and answers

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### UK PROGRAM BACKGROUND

- 1 Does the UK have an incentive for employees to buy a bicycle and save tax?
  - The UK has had one of the most successful employee based tax incentive schemes
    - o <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-to-work-scheme-implementation-guidance>
- 2 - Is there an issue in charging e-bikes at workplaces?
  - Jenny Box - There has been in some cases, yes. But we have outdoor charging cabinets to reduce risk, and keep insurers/Health & Safety people happy!
- 3 - How did you decide that 1 month is long enough for the free loan, or is that just based on cost?
  - Jenny Box - It was a decision based on cost and potential reach in year 1 of the programme. We were keen to try 3-month loans, and so wouldn't rule this out for future years' delivery to test that too.
- 4 - Awesome to see high uptake amongst Women. Was there anything that the program did to push this? Or was this "organic"?
  - Jenny Box - Organic, but we always have a strong focus on messaging and imagery to ensure it's clear the programme is open to all and certainly an option for all. We are (anecdotally) seeing that women feel safer on an e-bike on the roads and more parity with other road users as they're more sturdy, speedier at junctions / on hills etc. so we'll continue to share that messaging.
- 5 - Great program! I'm curious to hear about scale and speed. Is an 8M pound program sufficient to reach the 50% walking & cycling modal target this decade? What would be achieved by adding a zero?
  - Jenny Box - Not on it's own! It's part of a whole suite of offers from walking programmes, other cycling behaviour change programmes and all the infrastructure development across towns and cities to provide safe routes to walk and cycle.
- 6 - In the UK, does the program partner along side schools primary/secondary to encourage younger generation to ride to school? awareness/ safety program etc.
  - Jenny Box - We've kept the programme to over 18's for the purposes of data collection, GDPR and fun things like that, but we've been considering how we could work with colleges/apprenticeships/universities in the future to try and impact changes to travel behaviour, before their first car is purchased etc. So, not yet, but not off the cards for the future.

# 2023 Webinar – Can Australia create transport behaviour change at scale through e-bike incentive schemes

## Questions and answers

---

- 7 - do you provide personal cost calculators for people to understand the benefit to their household budget?
- Jenny Box - We do as a charity for wider work to help people understand the cost savings of cycling compared to driving, and have a big focus on supporting households with the cost of living crisis at the moment, so that theme runs through all our comms.
- 8 - Are there any services that you can direct people to if they can't afford to buy an e-bike? (And thanks for being up in the middle of the night!)
- Jenny Box - So, we have cycle to work schemes (salary sacrifice schemes) and many stores provide interest free finance options. There are also local government schemes to provide opportunities to lease but this isn't universal. Through our programme, Evans Cycles are offering a 15% discount to all our beneficiaries. It's also part of the work we're doing now to see what else can be done to help make e-cycles more affordable, and lobby government to consider options to support more people to have the opportunity. Especially those on low income, not in full time employment etc.

### ECONOMICS OF UK PROGRAM

- 9 - Has Cycling UK and/or the Making Cycling Easier program been impacted by the recently announced funding cuts announced by the UK Government for active travel?
- Jenny Box - The cuts announced so far are purely to the capital / infrastructure budget, so no impact on us at the moment
- 10 - Great program! I'm curious to hear about scale and speed. Is an 8M pound program sufficient to reach the 50% walking & cycling modal target this decade? What would be achieved by adding a zero?

### EQUITY

- 11 - In terms of equity I am interested in programs for elderly and mobility challenged. Also looking at courts and drunk / drug driving convictions - does anyone deal in any of these spaces?
- Cameron Bennett – there is conversation in emerging e-bike incentive programs in North America to include or provide additional incentives for “adaptive” e-bikes and e-trikes. These will help to serve elderly and mobility-challenged people more directly.
- 12 - Affordability maybe a great barrier in AU, are there any plans promote access?
- This is one of the key outcomes of an e-bike incentive scheme and we believe it would promote access.

# 2023 Webinar – Can Australia create transport behaviour change at scale through e-bike incentive schemes

## Questions and answers

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13 - What are positive examples of ebike incentives for low-income communities where ebikes may be less affordable?

- Cameron did present on a number of examples with the leading US example coming from Denver
- <https://www.denvergov.org/Government/Agencies-Departments-Offices/Agencies-Departments-Offices-Directory/Climate-Action-Sustainability-Resiliency/Sustainable-Transportation/Electric-Bikes-E-Bikes-Rebates#:~:text=Standard%20Rebate%3A%20a%20Denver,of%20an%20e%2Dcargo%20bike.>
- Cameron Bennett – The City of Tigard in the state of Oregon is establishing e-bike lending libraries for two low-income housing units. Many programs are restricted to certain target groups or income classes. See the “Income Qualified?” and “Low-Income Option?” columns of the [TREC tracker](#).

14 - What is your current approach to giving older e-bikes and specifically the batteries a second life?

- The US has a battery recycling program led by the bicycle industry is Call2recycle
- <https://www.call2recycle.org/e-bikes/>
- Extending the life of batteries and e-bikes is a challenge across the world and we haven't found the perfect solution yet.

## SCOOTERS

15 - How have UK e-bike share schemes compared with e-scooters in take-up and support by Government?

16 - How have e-bike share schemes compared with e-scooters in take-up and support by Government?

- Jenny Box -I'd have to go find the stats for you on that one I'm afraid, I don't have a quick response to that one, sorry!
- - Jenny Box - But to follow up - government funding for e-scooters remains for "trials" and "pilots" whereas e-bike share schemes are funded consistently, from local government so are more accepted than the scooters at present.

# 2023 Webinar – Can Australia create transport behaviour change at scale through e-bike incentive schemes

## Questions and answers

---

### **BICYCLE SUBSCRIPTION SCHEME**

17 - Is anyone doing a Rent to Own scheme or something similar?

- Lee Roberts - I recently noticed that UNSW, my employer, has a novated lease program for ebikes.
- Irene Moser - I have a novated lease from Sparque.au through my employer (Swinburne University) in Melbourne.

18 - What geographic extent around Melbourne does Lug+Carrie operate?

- We have subscriptions active across VIC, that said our at-home servicing only extends out to 25kms from the CBD. We also operate in Brisbane and Sydney.

19 - Do you work with local council to assess infrastructure barriers - narrow bikeways, very bumpy surface, pedestrian mix?

- Lug and Carrie provides information to LGA's. Much of this information is provided by state and national bicycle organisations.

20 - Does Lug+Carrie have a rent-to-own option?

- We do. Every customer can purchase the bike they are on, in which we take their payments into account.

### **AUST EBIKE REGULATIONS**

21 - Why are Australia's e-bikes so much more regulated re: speed.

- Peter Bourke - In May 2012 the Aust Gov adopted the European Standard EN15194. This is a direct copy of Europe. Since that time, Europe has introduced Speed Pedalecs - but not across the board - and they are about to finalise a cargo bike standard. As mentioned Aust is often slow to adopt, and this is the case as we haven't taken the next step.

22 - Would be helpful if e-bikes would give assistance in Australia to 35 km/h rather than current 25 km/h.

- The Australian bicycle industry is lobbying for increased power and speed to carry increased loads at a faster rate.
- The three main models we have looked at are the three tiers from the US, 25/45kmh from Europe and the 300w from New Zealand

# 2023 Webinar – Can Australia create transport behaviour change at scale through e-bike incentive schemes

## Questions and answers

---

23 - Re: Higher E-bike speeds....

Are they ridden more on-road? I've heard most US places have pretty poor bike infra but I wonder whether this is a reaction to needing to be in general traffic. In Aus (outside of Vic) footpath riding is pretty commonplace, which I think is a big part of why we get capped at 25...

- Peter Bourke - I can't comment on higher use of higher speed bikes, but in Aust the 25kmh cap is in place because we did a direct adoption of the European standard and regs in 2012 (EN15194). The Gov has not reviewed speed or power since that time. It is also illegal in Vic and NSW for adults to ride on footpaths.
- It is also illegal in Vic and NSW for adults to ride on footpaths.

### PROGRAM SUPPORT

24 - As Darebin Deputy Mayor, the big challenge I have is I can't get support for this sort of thing from enough of my councillor colleagues. There are 9 of us - 4 are very supportive but 5 are very pro-car. Any ideas for how to get them on board apart from through community pressure?

- Stephen Hodge - It may be that a schools program may create social license to proceed further, worth a chat! [stephen@weride.org.au](mailto:stephen@weride.org.au)
- Sam Johnson - Being pro e-bike isn't anti-car. Being pro e-bike helps achieve other goals that your councilors likely value - cheaper transport for voters, improved livability and quality of life for voters. Doing e-bike incentive programs is a SAFE BET - it will provide a higher return on investment than the cost to government.
- Diane Johnson - Encourage participation in Biketober, and have a 'come and try day' for them to try out the Ebikes - we've done something similar at Wyndham CC and it's worked a treat.
- Fay Patterson - As a thought, how about borrowing bikes from your library? Not as costly, market it as a community initiative - not car initiative.
  - o Anna Gurnhill - The ACT Government has a good example of this - an established e-bike library; funded through ACT Government grants and a non-profit organisation manages it. Up to six month wait lists; 1 week free e-bike loan. Evaluation has shown high levels of those who loan an e-bike go on to purchase one. There are a number of different types of e-bikes (including cargo) available. The program has recently been extended.

<https://www.climatechoices.act.gov.au/policy-programs/canberras-electric-bike-library>

# 2023 Webinar – Can Australia create transport behaviour change at scale through e-bike incentive schemes

## Questions and answers

---

### ECONOMICS OUTCOMES OF PROGRAMS

25 - Q for Cameron Bennett: Have e-bike prices increased where / when incentives are offered?

- Cameron Bennett – This is not a phenomena that we have witnessed but is not one that we have tracked directly. E-bike prices in general have gone up over the past few years due to COVID-related pipeline challenges and inflation.

26 - Question for Cameron: The Denver evaluation report is excellent. Interested to know if have you observed any direct commercial growth (i.e. new business and mode shift in freight/deliveries) as a result of cargo bike subsidies? where can we find out more?

- Cameron Bennett – The cargo bike delivery space is still relatively young in North America. Most US cities aren't set up well to support wide scale adoption of commercial cargo bikes. The Austin, TX, program is probably the best one to point to due to their additional incentive for commercial users. However, we have not spoken with the program managers directly and don't have any idea how widely that incentive is being used.

27 - We still appear to have tax incentives for buying cars / utes rather than e-bikes. How do we change that?

- We would prefer to see removal of tax incentives for cars in Australia. The incentives were reviewed in recent years in Australia and the implications are challenging from a political and practical standpoint. Politically extremely challenging, one the key practical is the financial impact on charities, and the shortfall this would require the Government to address.
- It can be done, it just needs a Government interested in the process.

28 - As these schemes promote and increase e-bike ownership and use, are places seeing an increase in e-bike thefts? Are quality locks and information on effective bike locking given to people at point to purchase/subscription? We are using 529 Garage (bike security platform) in some cities here in New Zealand, what other tools are people using to tackle theft of e-bikes?

- Cameron Bennett – Some e-bike brands have built-in tracking and theft deterrence technologies (such as VanMoof). Users may attach Apple Airtags to their bikes to track them in the case of theft. An increase in theft hasn't been formally reported that I am aware of, but anecdotally I would say that they tend to be targeted by thieves.

# 2023 Webinar – Can Australia create transport behaviour change at scale through e-bike incentive schemes

## Questions and answers

---

### BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE

29 - Why is nobody talking about infrastructure suitable for biking. The same goes for bike and e-bikes as goes for cars: Build the dedicated, safe and interconnected bike lanes and they will come. The main apprehension about commuting on e-bikes, is the lack of safe infrastructure. Comments?

- Dianne Johnson - The problem in some spaces in Victoria is that many spaces have been car centred for a very long time. It's now about managing changes to keep a safe space for cyclists, pedestrians and changing attitudes from vehicle drivers
- Jenny Box - Agreed that infrastructure is really important, but it's not just a case of "build it and they will come". If you don't consider cycling an option for you, you don't have access to a bike, or don't have the skills/confidence then outreach and behaviour change is crucial to sit alongside this so it's not just the 'usual suspects' using infrastructure. If we really want to make cycling an option for all, and branch out to much broader audiences, then safe infrastructure and behaviour change work must be committed to in parallel.
- Irene Moser - Bike lanes take space and Councils are scared of people getting upset about losing parking.
  - o Council's need to balance the needs of the motorists, with pedestrians, with businesses and then costs of changing an already car centred planning situation. We are not so afraid of people getting upset about losing parking, but more about State and Federal Govts not listening to the needs of the council and over-riding decisions made by council.
  - o Irene Moser - I'm pushing Whitehorse about their Easy Ride Routes - even those don't have a separate cycling lane!
- Cameron Bennett – In Portland, we have the most robust bike network we have ever had. Yet, we have seen decreasing percentages of bicycle transportation over the last decade. This indicates that cultural and economic variables may be just as powerful as infrastructure in encouraging mode shift.

30 - Has fear of riding in traffic been a big obstacle in these programs and how has it been tackled?

- Proving safe riding options and routes is critical. This program is about providing access to bicycles, but it must operate parallel to a continuous improvement of infrastructure networks across our cities and communities.
- Cameron Bennett – [previous research from PSU](#) found an increase in feelings of confidence and capability from the introduction of an e-bike vs. a conventional pedal bike.

31 - Proving safe riding options and routes is critical. Here in Australia we have a major issue with conflict between drivers and riders. Until this is resolved and people feel safe riding, we will not see cycling scale in cities and larger centres

- There are a number of factors that support riders and promote growth in riding. Incentives are one of those. We agree that infrastructure is critical, but either can lead the growth in riding.

32 - A lot of great cycling infrastructure in WA, just waiting for e-bikes to take off!

- Dianne Johnson - Edward Rose - do you have a specific example? I would love to use it to Prove to my Council we need this.



# 2023 Webinar – Can Australia create transport behaviour change at scale through e-bike incentive schemes

## Questions and answers

---

### OTHER RESOURCES

33 – what levers do you think should be pulled to speed up that normalisation?

- Investment in infrastructure as well as support/behaviour change programs works hand in hand to normalise riding.

34 - What would a good model for incentivisation in Australia look like?

- Tracey Washington - Hi Dave, Tracy here from QLD Univ of Technology. My colleague Kristi Heesch and I have research we are doing in this space for QLD. Please keep an eye out or shoot me an email and I will keep you up to date [tracy.washington@qut.edu](mailto:tracy.washington@qut.edu)

35 - For an overview of the potential for ebikes in Australia, check this out

<https://www.churchilltrust.com.au/project/the-auto-skills-australia-churchill-fellowship-to-understand-how-light-electric-vehicles-including-e-scooters-could-improve-transport-systems/>

The Auto Skills Australia Churchill Fellowship to understand how Light Electric Vehicles, including e-scooters, could improve transport systems - Churchill Trust

The Auto Skills Australia Churchill Fellowship to understand how Light Electric Vehicles, including e-scooters, could improve transport systems - Land, Commerce and Logistics — Transport and infras...

Thank you so much to the Jenny, Ben, Cameron, Sam, Stephen and WeRide. Fantastic presentations everyone! Very inspiring and timely. This is a very dynamic and exciting space combining infrastructure, behaviour and social policy.