



The Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP

Treasurer

PO Box 6022, House of Representatives

via online submission

Pre-Budget Submission 2026

Friday, 30 January 2026

Reinstate the National Active Transport Fund for safety, health, access and community wellbeing

Introduction

We Ride Australia ('WeRide') is the independent voice for cycling in Australia. WeRide works with governments at all levels, peak bodies and bicycle organisations to raise awareness of the multiple benefits of cycling for individuals, communities, businesses and Government.

Investment to increase walking and cycling mode share is transformative for communities, creating local jobs, better health, access and community wellbeing while enhancing productive use of roads and road safety, reducing emissions and cost-of-living pressures for families.

The National Active Transport Fund (NATF), introduced by the Hon Catherine King MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, has demonstrated the significant demand for and potential impact of direct, matched funding for active transport across Australian communities as they seek to improve safety, health, access and community wellbeing.

This demand was clear with applications from Councils, Governments and local organisations for the \$100m NATF exceeding a billion dollars in total project value according to Minister King¹.

Pre-Budget Submission

WeRide calls on the Australian Government to fund a \$100m National Active Transport Fund in the 2026-27 Budget and in each of the following three Budgets.

¹ <https://minister.infrastructure.gov.au/c-king/speech/alga-roads-conference-bendigo>

A compelling case

The economics of investment in active transport present a compelling case and the public support is significant.

- More than half of all trips for all purposes every day in Australia are 5km or less, distances easily walked or cycled by many in the community, especially those without a license or with limited access to a motor vehicle,
- The Australian Transport Assessment and Planning Guidelines report the health value of walking is \$3.71 per km and the health value of cycling is \$1.88 per km²
- Providing options to avoid car trips enhances the productive use of our roads for freight and other economically important transport tasks,
- Public support is significant for walking and cycling with 76% of Australians supporting more footpaths and cycleways, and 60% supporting a government rebate for bicycles and e-bikes³.

The choice of people to walk and cycle is heavily influenced by the quality, accessibility and safety of infrastructure, overcome by the projects funded under the NATF.

- WeRide's Australian cycling and e-scooter economy report found that 64% of people think riding on roads shared with cars is dangerous, and 64% of people think the infrastructure is not safe enough.⁴
- Dedicated cycling infrastructure, including paths that physically separate cyclists from cars, can help create safer cycling environments.⁵

National Policy Support

Specific policies to make the choice to walk, ride or use public transport easier, safer and more attractive are contained in federal, local and state government strategies, in peak automobile association positions and across the full gamut of built environment, planning, transport and health peak associations. A limited number of examples follow:

- **State governments:** NSW ([double the 1.5bn annual trips by walk/bike in 20 years](#)), VIC ([Plan for Victoria](#)), QLD ([Queensland Cycling Strategy](#)), WA ([WA Active Travel](#))

² Monetary figures have been adjusted to 2024 dollars using the Reserve Bank of Australia Inflation Calculator (RSA Inflation Calculator), converting original 2013 values to real 2024 values. Figures obtained from the City of Sydney.

³ <https://australiainstitute.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Policies-to-increase-rates-of-active-transportation.pdf>

⁴ WeRide (2023) The Australian cycling and e-scooter economy in 2022, p 22, <https://www.weride.org.au/australiancyclingeconomy/>

⁵ Pearson et al (2023) 'Barriers and enablers of bike riding for transport and recreational purposes in Australia', Journal of Transport and Health, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jth.2022.101538> quoted in the Australia Institute's 'Proactive investment – Policies to increase the rates of active transportation', <https://australiainstitute.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Policies-to-increase-rates-of-active-transportation.pdf>

[Strategy](#)), TAS ([Tasmanian Walking and Cycling for Active Transport Strategy](#)), ACT ([Active Travel Plan 2024-30](#)), SA ([SA Transport Strategy 2025](#))

- **Councils**, examples: City of Sydney ([double walking and cycling in 20 years](#) – under renewal), Sunshine Coast Council ([Active Travel Plan 2011-2031](#)), City of Vincent WA ([Transport](#)), Merri-bek Council ([Moving around Merri-bek Transport Strategy](#)).
- **Committee for Sydney** ([Build a complete network of physically protected cycle lanes](#)), **Committee for Melbourne** ([Create an urban environment which encourages the uptake of active transport](#)).
- **Australian Automobile Association** ([‘If active transport is to play a meaningful role... sufficient funding for suitable infrastructure will be needed’](#))
- **Planning Institute of Australia** ([Achieving net-zero emissions report](#))
- **Transport Planners Association** ([Transform people’s travel choices through encouraging behaviour change & public, active and shared mobility](#))
- **Heart Foundation** ([Blueprint for an Active Australia – Active Travel](#))
- **Australian Medical Association** ([Active Travel Position Statement](#) & [media release](#))
- **Local Health Districts**, eg. Western Sydney Local Health District ([Movement: walking, cycling, public transport](#))
- **Engineers Australia** ([..Transport Aus Society proposes EA recommends that the federal government provides funding to state and local governments to support active transport infrastructure](#))
- **Austroroads** ([Prioritising Active Transport report](#))
- **Public Transport Association of Australia & New Zealand** ([public transport, walking and cycling projects typically having higher cost-benefit ratios than road building](#)).

About We Ride Australia

We Ride Australia builds on 20 years of national advocacy to empower decision makers and inspire all Australians to choose cycling. As the independent voice for cycling in Australia, WeRide works to:

- **Present the positive, healthy and safe reality of daily cycling across the country by children, adults and seniors from all walks of life** – our [globally recognised](#) and highly successful [RideScore Active Schools program](#) is currently undergoing a significant development in preparation for national expansion. The peer-reviewed evaluation of the trial revealed RideScore participants increased their trips to school by an astounding 55%!
- **Build the case for investment** – the [Australian Cycling Economy Report](#) revealed that people riding bikes in Australia contribute \$18.6bn in economic and social contributions, including nearly a billion dollars in health and social benefits.
- **Disseminate evidence and data to support the role of cycling** in safety, health, access and community wellbeing.

We do this by working with government at all levels to raise awareness of the multiple benefits of cycling for individuals, communities, businesses and Government and advocating for policies and investments to create more cycle friendly communities.

Submission Summary

The National Active Transport Fund, introduced by the Hon Catherine King MP, sought to improve safety, health, access and community wellbeing through the provision of active travel infrastructure. It was exceptionally well received across the country with applications exceeding available program funding by more than four times.

Australians would like to walk and cycle more than they currently do but are prevented by a lack of safe, convenient infrastructure.

Providing separated infrastructure for walking and cycling directly addresses the alarming recent increases in vulnerable road user crashes and trauma that is evident despite significant increases in road safety funding.

Governments at all levels, peak bodies and professional associations are largely unanimous on the value of investment in active transport infrastructure – evident in their policies, strategies and public position statements.

Providing alternatives for daily local trips by private motor vehicle are valuable for a Government seeking to increase the productive use of existing transport infrastructure.

Significantly increased national funding for active transport is a popular, sensible, economically beneficial and productive investment that supports families and communities across Australia.

Pre-Budget Submission

WeRide calls on the Australian Government to fund a \$100m National Active Transport Fund in the 2026-27 Budget and in each of the following three Budgets.

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