



Active Transport Policy

February 2021

RACT Policy – Active Transport

Mobility Strategy Pillar: Sustainability

Sustainability is the third component of RACT's mobility strategy. Within this pillar, RACT's vision is to have active transport options that encourage Tasmanians to undertake increased physical activity.

Policy statements

Active transport explained

- Active transport options, primarily walking and cycling, are important for human and environmental health.
- Active transport infrastructure, such as cycleways, walkways and multi-modal transport options, are required to keep Tasmanians safe and encourage the public to undertake increased physical activity.
- As well as benefitting human and environmental health, high active transport participation rates are likely to contribute to managing peak hour traffic.

Purpose of this policy

- Through RACT's Advocacy Strategy a strong focus has been placed on future sustainability incorporating active transport advocacy.
- This policy addresses positive co-existence between cyclists, pedestrians, private vehicles, heavy vehicles and public transport through improved infrastructure, education, incentives and enforcement in Tasmania.

Relevance to RACT

- RACT, like all Australian automobile clubs, has transitioned away from a sole focus on the motor vehicle and onto all forms of mobility. This is part of a new outlook that centres on sustainable transport, including active transport options.
- The safe integration of cyclists and pedestrians with private vehicles and public transport through better infrastructure, incentives and education is an ongoing challenge for all road authorities and stakeholders, including RACT.

Background, evidence and position

Background

- Active transport can prevent respiratory and cardiovascular disease, obesity, diabetes, heart disease and cancer through physical activity and less exposure to emissions. It can also reduce traffic injury and noise stress (World Health Organisation, 2018).

- However, the dominance of car journeys are a result of current limitations on other modes of transport, such as walking and cycling, but also public transport (City of Hobart, 2018).
- A shift in investment towards active and public transport and away from cars, roads and parking can create mobility equality, while reducing transport costs, congestion and greenhouse gas emissions (Climate Council, 2016).
- Public transport can increase healthy outcomes as trips can be multimodal, with people walking or cycling at both ends of the journey (Heart Foundation, 2018).
- Bicycle transport takes up minimal space on roadways compared to private vehicles, allowing more people to travel. This is a more efficient use of the network compared to road construction as it reduces congestion (Bicycle Network Tasmania, 2018).
 - However, the lack of safe and separated cycling infrastructure is a barrier to some people riding a bicycle for transport in Tasmania.
 - Separation of cyclists from vehicles is the most effective way to reduce the risk of rider injury. Cycleways also alleviate safety concerns of cyclists, enticing more people to ride (Bicycle Network Australia, 2017).
 - Separated cycleways, wider footpaths, street furniture, landscaping, narrower streets and lower speed limits in key CBD, suburban, urban fringe and regional areas can increase the appeal of walking and cycling (Heart Foundation, 2018).
- Growth in urban fringe areas across Tasmania has resulted in dispersed, low density residential development, making it difficult for people to walk and cycle for transport (Transport Access Strategy, 2016).
 - First and last mile issues are prevalent for Tasmanians living or working in outlying areas, where the nearest bus stop is beyond walking or cycling distance. This makes it less likely that a person will use public transit.
 - Unless there are connected active travel routes in regional or urban fringe areas, people who live or work in these areas are forced into vehicle ownership due to a lack of transport options.
- Higher density, more compact and connected environments encourage people to walk and cycle regularly as key locations are closer together. This includes first and last mile connections to public transport (Transport Access Strategy, 2016).
 - Evidence shows that people will walk 400-800m or cycle 3km or to access quality public transport, providing there are suitable bike storage facilities at the transfer point. Safe, well-connected, direct cycling and walking routes are important in supporting public transport connections.
 - There is also evidence that people will cycle around 6km to work and other destinations.
 - However in order for people to walk or cycle as part of their journeys, they need well-connected, navigable, direct and safe walking routes. There is evidence that higher density, more compact urban and suburban environments encourage people to walk or cycle more because the places they need to go are located closer together than in regional areas.
- Tasmania's population is ageing faster than the rest of Australia, meaning there are more elderly people facing barriers in accessing transit services due to mobility limitations, particularly for those living in outlying areas. This refers to issues with footpath quality on routes to public transport. (Transport Access Strategy, 2016).
- Speed has been identified as a key risk factor in road traffic injuries, influencing both the risk of a road traffic crash as well as the severity of the injuries that result from crashes (World Health Organisation, 2019).

Evidence

- The proportion of people aged 18 and over classified as physically inactive in Tasmania is approximately 68%, which is well above the national average of 66% (ABS, 2015).
- More than 67% of Tasmanians are now overweight or obese compared with 63% nationally (ABS, 2015).

- In Tasmania, 85% of people use a private vehicle to get to work, with about 7% of people across Tasmania walking or cycling to work (Transport Access Strategy, 2016)
 - For school related trips within Tasmania, 30% travel to school by car, while 15% of students walk or cycle.
- In terms of major centres specifically, 85% of people in Greater Hobart and 89% of people in Greater Launceston use a private vehicle to get to work. Nationally, the figure is 79% (ABS, 2016, Greater Launceston Transport Vision, 2020).
- Approximately 8% of people in Greater Hobart walk or cycle to work. This is the second highest number of walkers for an Australian capital behind Canberra (9%) (ABS, 2016).
 - Approximately 6% of people in Greater Launceston walk or cycle to work (Greater Launceston Transport Vision, 2020).
 - Approximately 4% of people in both Burnie and Devonport walk or cycle to work (ABS, 2016).
- Greater Hobart's average commute is 13.8km, while the average commute in Greater Launceston is 9km. The national figure is approximately 16.5km (ABS, 2016).
- The RACT 2018 Greater Hobart Travel Behaviour Survey revealed:
 - 75% of respondents commute by private vehicle, with nearly 50% as the sole occupant
 - 23% of respondents are most likely to walk or cycle in Greater Hobart
- The RACT 2019 Greater Launceston Mobility Survey revealed:
 - 96% of respondents commute by private vehicle, with more than 60% as the sole occupant
 - Just 2% of respondents ride or walk in Greater Launceston
 - 21% of people consider inadequate public and active transport facilities to be the biggest concern to mobility in Launceston.
- Approximately 60% of 1355 respondents to the Tasmanian Travel and Physical Activity Study either did not have access to, or could not ride a bicycle. Approximately 80% had access to a car or motorcycle (Menzies Institute for Medical Research, 2018).
- Approximately 90% of private dwellings have one or more registered vehicles in Greater Hobart, on par with the national figure. In Greater Launceston, 91% of dwellings have one or more registered vehicles, with Burnie recording 88% and Devonport 87% (ABS, 2016).
- In terms of dwellings, 85% in Greater Hobart, 91% in Greater Launceston, 90% in Burnie and 87% in Devonport are detached. This is typical of urban sprawl and a car-reliant population. Nationally, the figure is 73% (ABS, 2016).
- Participating in 30 minutes of moderately intense physical exercise daily can lower the risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and osteoporosis, and improve mental and physical health (Transport Access Strategy, 2016).
- In Tasmania, pedestrians are involved in an average of 9% of fatalities and serious injuries per year, with cyclists involved in an average of 4% of fatalities and serious injuries (Department of State Growth, 2017).
- When Spanish city Seville introduced a network of separated cycleways, the number of bicycle trips increased from about 3 million to 16 million and crashes with cars decreased from 15 per million bicycle trips to 6 (Bicycle Network, 2017).
- The National Road Safety Strategy (NRSS) recommends more speed limits of 40km/h or lower in pedestrian and cycling areas (NRSS, 2011-2020).
- Pedestrians have a 90% chance of survival if hit by a car travelling at a speed of 30km/h or below, but less than a 50% chance of surviving an impact at 45km/h or above (World Health Organisation, 2019).

Position

RACT

- Urges all levels of government to work towards achieving mode share targets and specific active transport actions outlined in RACT's Greater Hobart and Greater Launceston mobility visions.
- Urges all levels of government to implement a network of separate and signed cycleways and walkways on Tasmanian roads, both through investment in new infrastructure or retrofitting on-street parking/narrow roads. These must be in line with RACT's Greater Hobart and Greater Launceston mobility visions.
 - Governments must also work towards increasing these active transport solutions across regional Tasmania, including through the widening of roads to accommodate cycle lanes.
- Urges local government and the Tasmanian Government to implement other initiatives that reduce interaction between vehicles and cyclists/pedestrians through the removal or significant reduction of vehicles and parking in place of active transport. This includes:
- Wider footpaths, speed bumps, kerb ramps and tactile ground indicators, elevated crossings and median islands, longer crossing timing with countdown timers, scramble crossings, overpasses, narrower street entries as well as bicycle crossings. Urges local government and the Tasmanian Government to support and implement speed limit reductions to 30km/h but only in areas of high pedestrian or cyclist activity across Tasmania, such as retail or school precincts. This can be an adjustable basis where appropriate.
- Urges local government and the Tasmanian Government to:
 - Establish first and last mile active transport links to public transport through cycleways and walkways and facilitate bicycle carriage on public transport
 - Implement storage lockers and showers and transport terminals. Workplaces and educational institutions should also implement the same initiatives.
- Urges all levels of government to improve urban planning strategies so residences are closer to active and public transport corridors, employment, education, services, and recreational activities in order to reduce car dependency and transport disadvantage.
- Strongly supports laws that dictate the vehicle passing distances from cyclists, including 1.5 metres in speed zones more than 60km/h and at least 1 metre on zones below 60km/h.
- Does not support the introduction of additional transport taxes to fund the establishment of separated active transport facilities.
- Supports the installation of audible crossings and ramps for mobility-challenged pedestrians, as well as ramps onto public transport.
- Will educate road users on the rules and safety requirements for cyclists, pedestrians and motorists relating to cycleways, passing distances, safety gear and lights.
- Will continue to support educational and enforcement activities by Tasmania Police to encourage safe behaviours and compliance by all pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.
- Encourages a coordinated approach between government, researchers and stakeholders to create an active travel culture. This approach should address community education and incentives, health and cost benefits, transport planning, infrastructure, land use planning and social welfare issues in Tasmania through:
 - An updated Active Transport Strategy that is tailored to population growth and increased walking and cycling as well as modern active travel infrastructure.
 - A behaviour change program that educates people on the health and financial benefits of active transport. This program should also include the provision of incentives, including financial incentives as well as those that improve the experience of cycling and walking, such as cycleways, walkways and first and last mile connections to public transport.
 - A representative body for pedestrians in Tasmania that can report back to relevant governmental agencies, similar to Bicycle Network Tasmania.

Scope

Policy application and ownership

This policy applies to:

- Tasmanian pedestrians, cyclists, motorists and public transport patrons
- Bicycle Network Tasmania
- Pedestrian Council of Australia
- Metro Tasmania and public transport manufacturers
- Local government
- Tasmanian Government policy makers and ministers
- Australian Government policy makers and ministers
- Sustainability and traffic experts

The ownership and responsibility of this policy is with the RACT Board.

Approvals

Date of approval: [insert date]

Date of review: [insert date]

Signature of CEO: [insert signature]