

RACT Policy #16 – Active Transport

Organisation	RACT
Business Unit	Road and Traffic Committee

Version	Author	Description	Date Revised	Review Date
1	R&T	Board endorsed	August 2015	August 2018

RACT POLICY

16 ACTIVE TRANSPORT

16.1 PREAMBLE TO POLICY

The RACT has a strong commitment to the concept of sharing the roads and protecting vulnerable road users.

The two most common forms of active transport are walking and cycling. The RACT recognises the benefits to be derived from these pursuits – benefits that range from health and fitness to environmental improvements.

16.2 BICYCLES AS ACTIVE TRANSPORT: PREAMBLE

As far back as the 1990s, RACT launched a booklet on road sharing between cyclists and motorists, and in 2008, it inaugurated Bike Assist for Ultimate members. Since its inception, Bike Assist has helped 80 cyclists.

An RACT member survey in December 2012 found that 74.2% of respondents rarely or never cycled. 25.68% cycled “about once a month” or more, but the majority of these confined their cycling to about once a month. The remaining 15.79% cycled more regularly - about once a week or more.

There appears to be no hard data available on cycle use in Tasmania, nor its projected increase. To date, most cycling infrastructure has developed on an ad hoc basis with councils and government generally responding to pressure from interest groups.

In its Tasmanian Walking and Cycling for Active Transport Strategy, the Tasmanian Government “recognises that it needs to take a more active role in the provision of policy and planning advice in relation to cycling and walking”.

16.3 RACT ACTIVE TRANSPORT POLICY: CYCLING

- a) **Infrastructure Funding** - The RACT believes a dedicated bicycle infrastructure fund should be established. Bicycle infrastructure should not be funded out of the roads budget.

A bicycle infrastructure fund should come under the aegis of a joint state agency and council body. It would plan current and future cycling infrastructure based upon firm evidence of growth patterns and the principle that cycling infrastructure should, for maximum potential, be integrated with other transportation modes: private and public transport, roads, ferries, and off road cycle ways.

The body charged with managing the fund would also prioritise the physical separation of cyclists, pedestrians, and other road users in developing future plans.

- b) **Advisory Group** - An advisory group should also be established as part of this arrangement. It would include stakeholders in equal proportion such as peak bicycle groups, tourism representation, schools representation, UTAS, Tasmania Police, freight logistics, Metro, the Tasmanian Bus Association, and the RACT.

- c) **Separation of infrastructure** - Through the mechanism described above the RACT will advocate that wherever possible cycling infrastructure should be physically separated from road infrastructure.

16.4 PRINCIPLES

To enhance bicycle safety now and into the future, the RACT is also committed to these principles:

- a) **Physical separation** - cycling infrastructure should be physically separated from roads for optimal safety. Wherever engineering and funding considerations allow, bicycle lanes must be physically separated from the road traffic. Only under exceptional circumstances should this condition be waived.
- b) **Standardised infrastructure** - existing roadside cycling infrastructure should be standardised across councils and across the state. Cycle lanes vary widely in their look and feel. RACT believes that one standard – instantly recognisable to other road users - should be adopted for high volume inner city roads, and a second, complementary standard should be used for bike lanes on lower volume suburban and rural roads.
- c) **Use of bicycle lanes** - cyclists must use and remain within a cycleway/cycle lane if one is provided (unless impractical to do so because of parked cars or other obstacles). Cyclists are currently permitted to travel two abreast, and this sometimes entails one cyclist travelling within a bicycle lane, and a companion travelling within the traffic flow. Where a bicycle lane is provided, bike riders should ride wholly within the bicycle lane.
- d) **Cyclists on footpaths** - Shared space should be safe space for all users. The RACT believes the state government should review the use of footpaths as shared transport corridors, allowing for input from pedestrians and cyclists as to how footpaths can be shared in safety for all users.
- e) **Education** - the state government must better educate cyclists and other road users about the road rules as they apply to bicycle users. Specific campaigns up to twice a year which include an enforcement element, should supplement ongoing awareness about the required safety equipment on bicycles and the road rules as they apply to cyclists.
- f) **Enforcement** - There are road rules governing cyclists. Better education of cyclists should be accompanied by better enforcement by Tasmania Police. Specific, high profile campaigns would help to focus cyclists on their responsibilities under the road rules.
- g) **Bicycle identification** - RACT strongly supports cycling as a commuting activity because of its environmental and health values and because of its potential to ease inner city traffic congestion. The RACT believes cycling will increase as a community activity, and as a tourism experience.

However, there are community concerns about the ability of authorities and others to identify a cyclist who may be involved in dangerous road and other behaviour. Debate in the community has centred around such options as licensing or registering cyclists or bicycles.

Given the growth expected to occur in cycling, given the potential for cycling to become a major tourism experience, and given the high road trauma toll involving cyclists, the RACT believes it is timely for the State government to review this matter so that proponents one way or the other can be better informed. It is unlikely that this debate within the community will disappear.

- h) **Lighting** - There is too much variance in the standard of lighting on bicycles. According to the road rules cyclists must use a flashing or steady white light that is clearly visible for at least 200 metres from the front of the bicycle. The RACT believes there must be a steady light mounted on the front of bicycles. If a cyclist additionally mounts a light on their helmet, it must also be a steady light. Flashing lights mounted on a rider's helmet can be particularly confusing for an oncoming motorist, and it is recognised that bright, flashing lights can affect some people with medical conditions.
- i) **Tourism and cycling** - The RACT recognises that cycling will form a discrete tourism segment in the years ahead. However, if more visitors are to be encouraged to choose cycling as a safe and viable touring option, accelerated investment in safe infrastructure and education programs that facilitate safer cycling will be vital. This is also the case if more Tasmanians are to be encouraged to choose cycling as a safe and viable transport option.

16.5 PEDESTRIANS AS ACTIVE TRANSPORT: PREAMBLE

Walking is a healthy social, school and work related activity. Government and transport planners should also view it as an important contributor to active transport solutions, particularly in cities, where it can contribute to less road congestion and carbon emissions; and increase social amenity.

The RACT promoted and assisted the development in Tasmania of the walking school bus concept, because it provided exercise for children before and after school, contributed to a lessening of greenhouse gas emissions, and lessened traffic congestion round schools in the mornings and afternoons.

There is currently no grouping to represent pedestrians in Tasmania and the attention given to pedestrian amenity at agency level is less than the focus placed on the lesser form of active transport: cycling.

16.6 RACT ACTIVE TRANSPORT POLICY: WALKING

- a) **Planning pedestrian infrastructure** - RACT believes that governments should systematically plan for infrastructure that will promote greater uptake walking as an attractive, safe, healthy and convenient alternative to other modes of inner city and urban transport.
- b) **Funding and management** - RACT believes local and state governments should commit to a funding mechanism to establish a unit which strategically plans for greater pedestrian input to active transport, and implements strategy.

This unit should establish a goal such as the one established by Sydney City Council: to have every urban resident ultimately living within a 10 minute (800 metres) walk of fresh food outlets, health services, bus or ferry stops, and social, learning and other key infrastructure.

Key walking routes into major urban centres and into the cities should be identified. These routes should allow integration with other forms of transport and new forms of transport, so that, for instance, buses can be used to link passengers to the key walking routes.

- c) **Maintenance and amenity** - The Unit should manage these routes to ensure their proper maintenance, and that they are an attractive means of active transport. Pedestrian corridors should be well sign posted, have amenities such as coffee stands, seating benches, and public toilets; and shade and protection from the elements. Pedestrians should feel safe using such infrastructure by the provision of good lighting.

- d) **Integration** - Governments should consider innovative transport solutions that encourage pedestrian activities, such as linking pedestrian corridors with small, electric bus services, and implementing free or low cost rental bicycle schemes. Pedestrian corridors to suburban centres and into the cities must have a whole of route approach. For instance, where the Hobart Rivulet track debouches onto Molle St, there is no pedestrian crossing and people walking into the city must cross a busy road, dodging traffic on Molle St as they do so.
- e) **City centre pedestrian activities** - Ensure that walking is a safe option and that obstacles to walking are removed. While no data is available for Tasmanian cities, up to 50% of walking time in Sydney CBD is spent waiting to cross a road.

Councils and the Tasmanian Government should trial and review a range of pedestrian friendly strategies:

- a. Longer walk sequences at city traffic lights identified as having high pedestrian use
 - b. Countdowns on pedestrian lights as exist in cities overseas
 - c. “Scatter crossings”, where the Walk light allows pedestrians to cross roads in several directions, including diagonally across roads, as exists in cities interstate
 - d. Better marked pedestrian crossings
 - e. In key areas, consider building pedestrian underpasses or overpasses, such as one linking the Hobart CBD to the waterfront.
 - f. Provide more space and therefore greater amenity for pedestrians – a boulevard effect – by widening footpaths and planting more trees in CBD streets.
 - g. Tasmanian cities should also, in conjunction with government, audit pedestrian routes in cities, identify which routes aren’t used by pedestrians and why; and implement strategies to increase and promote pedestrian passage. Coffee stands, seating, shade and cover, and public art can be utilised to attract more pedestrian flow and local “dwell time” in previously low trafficked parts of cities. This has benefits in promoting walking and healthy pursuit, brings alive quieter areas of a city, and increases the vibrancy of the city, as well as attracting new retail and economic activity to areas once deemed a “dead” part of the city.
-