



Australian Local Government Bicycle Account 2011



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Australian Bicycle Council

The Australian Bicycle Council coordinates the implementation of the Australian National Cycling Strategy 2011 - 2016. The Council also maintains the Cycling Resource Centre (CRC) an on-line information hub of cycling information.
www.cyclingresourcecentre.org.au.

The Council is supported by Austroads and the Commonwealth Department Infrastructure and Transport.

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Overview

In July 2011 the Australian Bicycle Council (ABC) and the Australia Local Government Association (ALGA) surveyed Australian local government authorities about their efforts to encourage more cycling. The survey is an initiative of the Australian National Cycling Strategy 2011-16 (NCS), which aims to double the number of Australian cycling by 2016.

The survey was undertaken to understand at a national level:

- how councils prioritise and fund cycling initiatives
- the types and extent of cycling infrastructure in place
- how the Australian Bicycle Council can better facilitate local government encouragement of cycling

A similar survey was undertaken in 2007 which has provided comparative data and allows us, for the first time, to track progress at a local government level across Australia.

Thank you to the staff of the 305 councils who responded to the survey. We know many of you are juggling multiple roles and are pressed for time. We appreciate your efforts to gather the information required to respond to the survey and hope that the final report is of value.

Key results

- Councils responding to the survey spent more than \$72 million on bicycle-related programs in 2009-10.
- Survey participants reported receiving \$26m from Australian government and \$26 m from State governments.
- More than two thirds of responding councils either have a bicycle strategy or are working towards one.
- There has been a significant increase in the proportion of councils undertaking cycling counts from 12% in 2007 to 21% in 2011.
- As at June 2010, councils responding to the survey reported having constructed 11,704km of cycling infrastructure. When their cycle networks are complete the infrastructure will measure 17,842km.
- Survey participants reported the installation of 508 sporting and recreational facilities including: 36 velodromes, 113 mountain biking facilities and 360 BMX/skate facilities.

Survey design and limitations

The Local Government and Cycling Survey was conducted via an online survey. In June 2011 all local government CEOs were invited to participate in the survey via email. Two invitations were sent via post to remote councils who did not appear to have operating email accounts. A reminder email was sent in July 2011.

Participation in the survey was voluntary. While many councils provided the full suite of information requested, some only partially answered the survey questions. The voluntary nature of the survey may provide biased results, particularly if there are systematic differences between people who respond and people who do not

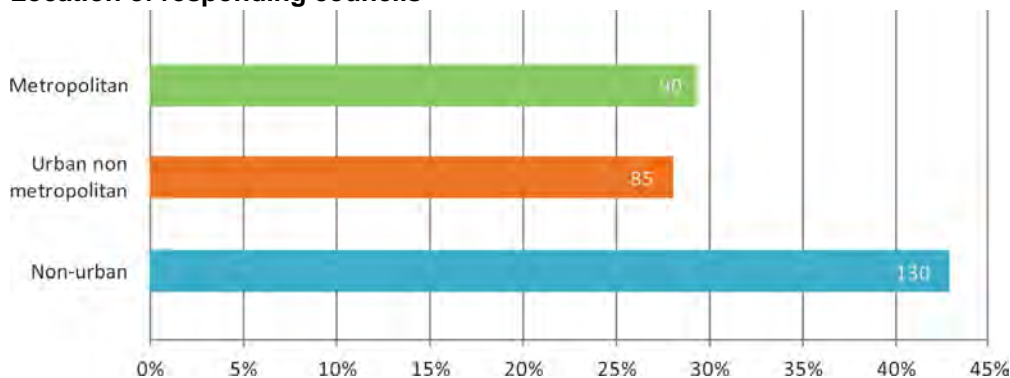
The survey relies on self reporting. While self-report studies have many advantages, they also suffer from specific disadvantages including:

- self-reported answers may be inaccurate; this is currently a potential issue for active transport research where there could be a social desirability or expectation bias
- participants may forget pertinent details or lack information about the subject .

Characteristics of responding councils

All 558 Australian local government authorities were given the opportunity to participate in the survey. A total of 305 (55%) responses were received, this is a significant increase on the 2007 response rate of 29%. This would seem to indicate that cycling is being increasingly recognised by local government as a priority for their communities.

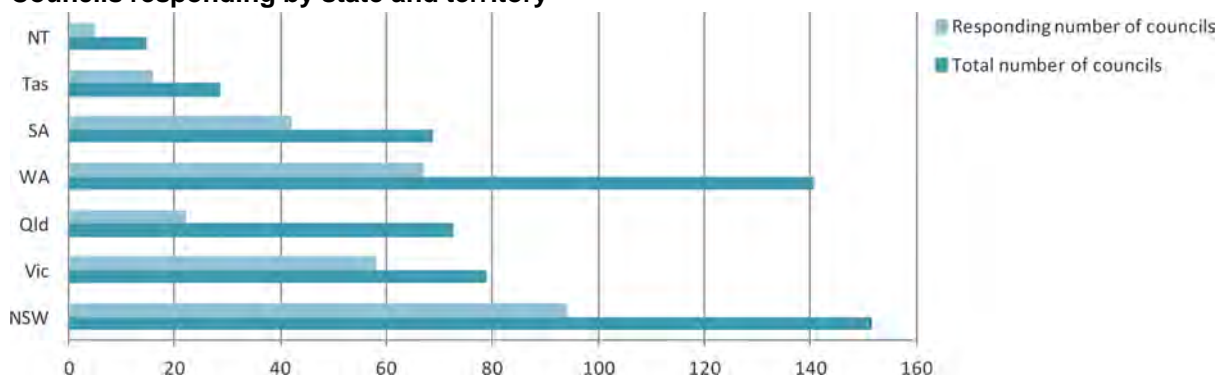
Location of responding councils



Participants were asked to nominate what type of area their council was located in: metropolitan; urban non-metropolitan; and non-urban. The councils in the non-urban category were regional, rural, and Aboriginal councils.

175 of the responding councils were located in urban and metropolitan areas while 130 councils were located in non-urban areas.

Councils responding by state and territory

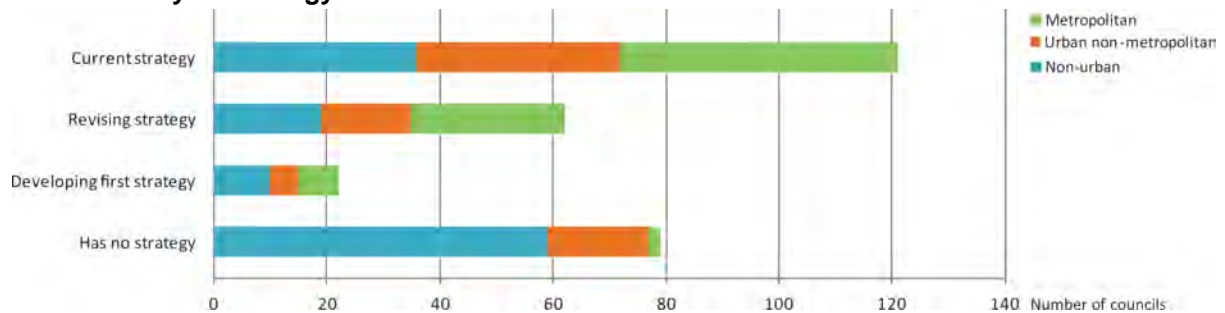


The highest proportion of councils responded from Victoria (73%) and NSW (63%). A lower proportion of Queensland and Western Australian councils responded to the survey.

Bike strategy

Participants were asked to provide information about the status and content of their bicycle strategies or plans. They were also asked how the bicycle strategy was integrated with other council strategies and plans.

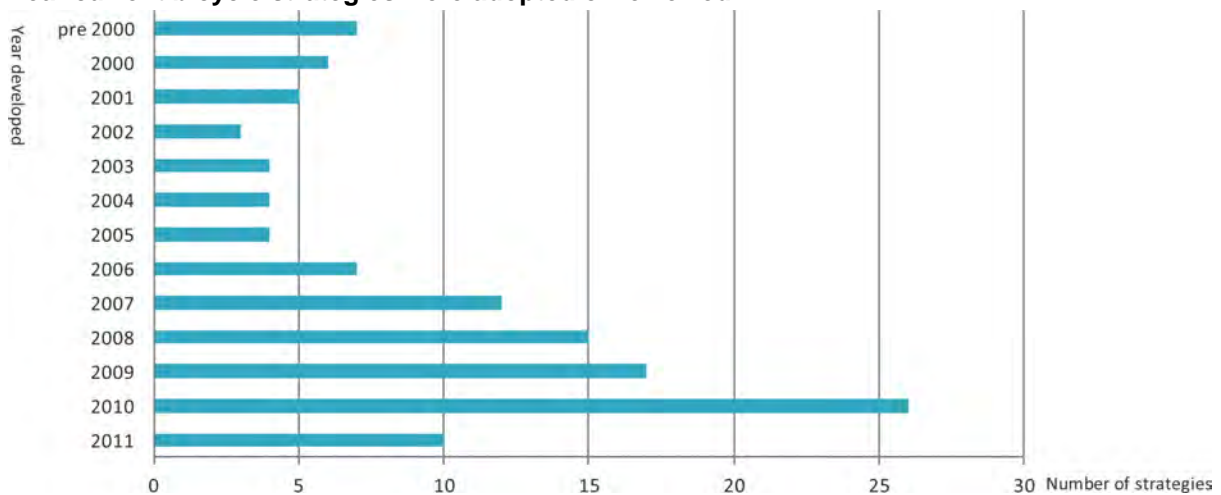
Status of bicycle strategy



More than two thirds of responding councils either have a bicycle strategy or are working towards one. In 2007, 70% of respondents reported either having or working towards a plan.

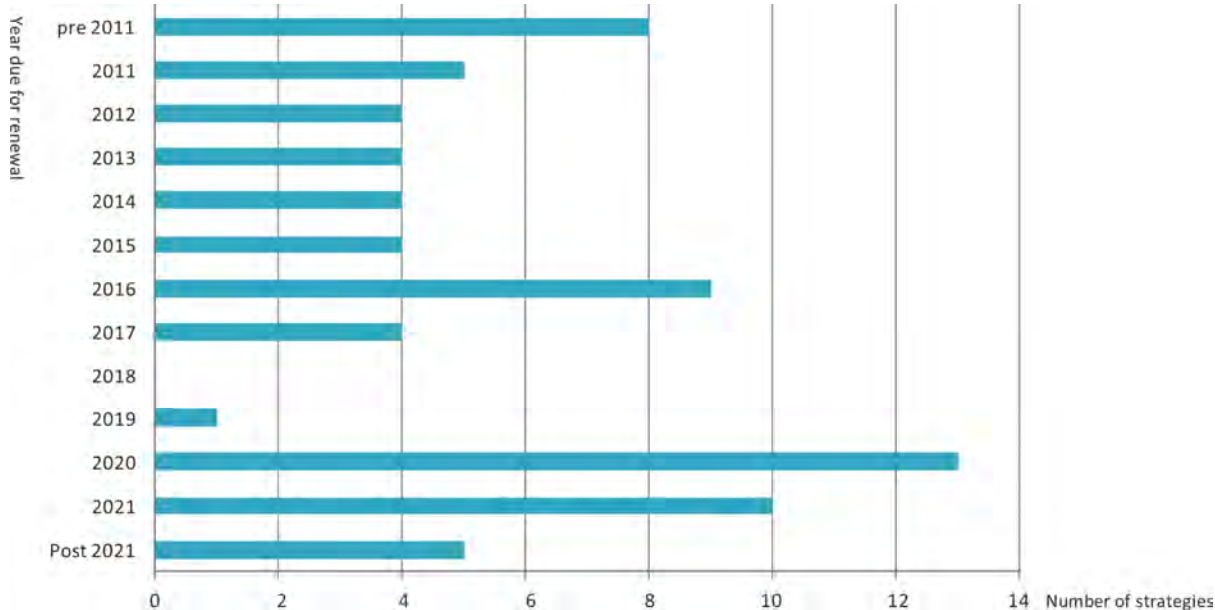
121 councils report having a current bicycle plan or strategy. A further 84 councils are either revising an existing plan or working towards their first. Metropolitan and urban councils are more likely to have a current strategy than non-urban councils.

Year current bicycle strategies were adopted or reviewed



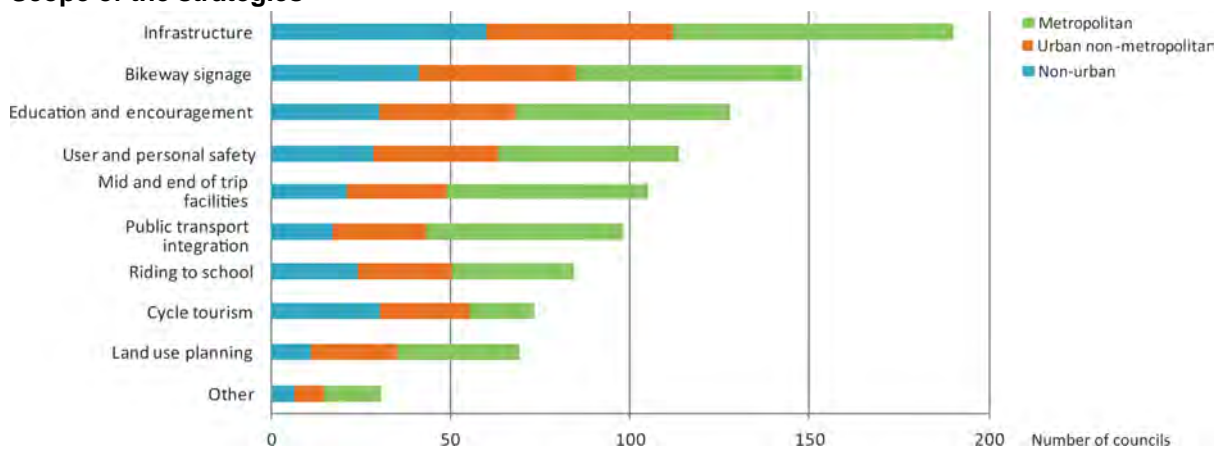
Two thirds of the current strategies are less than five years old. A handful of strategies are reviewed on an annual basis. Seven councils reported having strategies that were adopted before 2000.

Year of Bicycle Strategy Completion



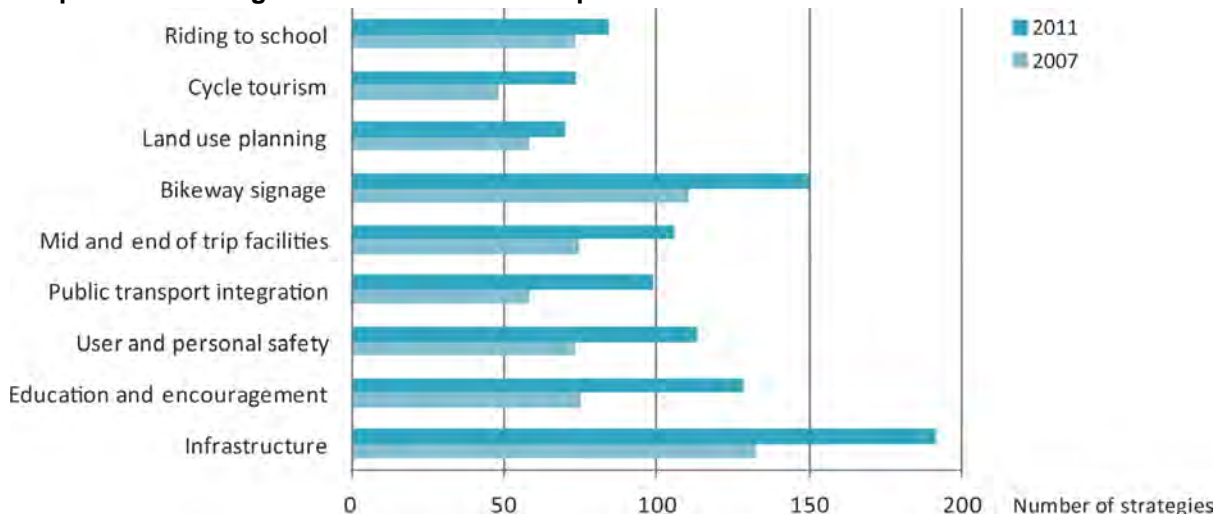
Participants were asked what year their cycling plan or strategy ended. Eight councils reported having strategies that were due for renewal before 2011 but which had not yet been revised. In the next 10 years, 58 strategies will be completed.

Scope of the strategies



The most common elements in local government bicycle strategies are infrastructure (96% of all respondents included infrastructure in their strategies) and bikeway signage (75% respondents).

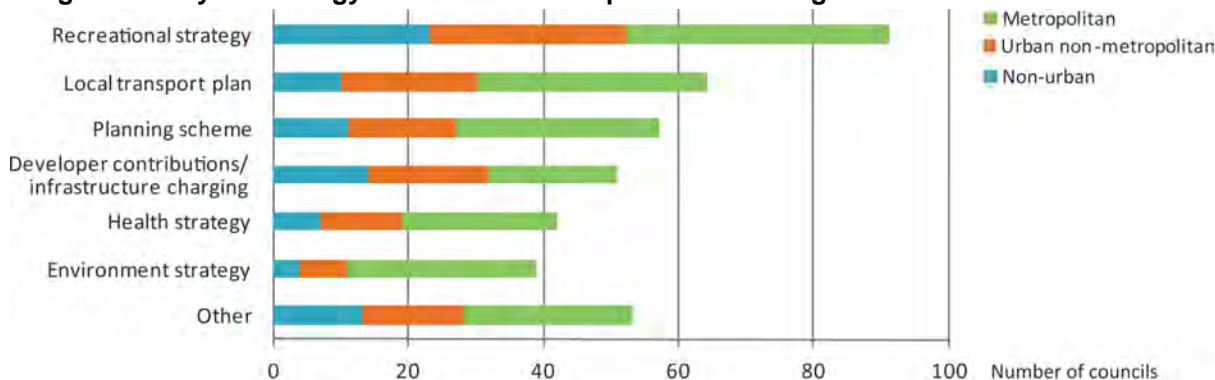
Scope of the strategies – 2011 and 2007 comparison



In comparison with the 2007 survey results, a higher proportion of councils are including education and encouragement programs, safety, integration with public transport, and tourism in their bicycle strategies in 2011. A lesser proportion of councils responding to the survey in 2011 included riding to school, land use planning and bikeway signage.

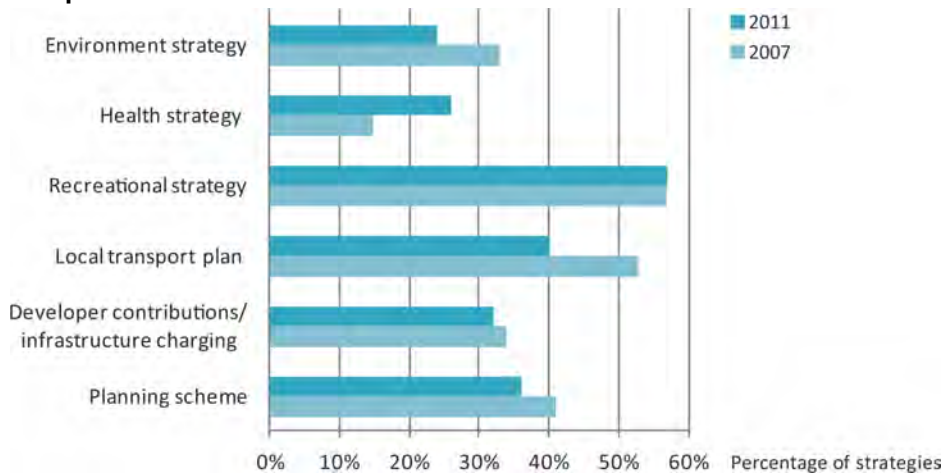
Urban sprawl and travel distances were consistently identified by survey respondents as barriers to more people riding a bicycle. Addressing land use planning in the bicycle strategy is one long term solution in both brown and green field developments.

Integration Bicycle Strategy with other council plans and strategies



Councils are more likely to reference their cycling strategy in their recreational strategy than their transport strategy. This is particularly the case for non-urban councils.

Integration Bicycle Strategy with other council plans and strategies – 2011 and 2007 comparison

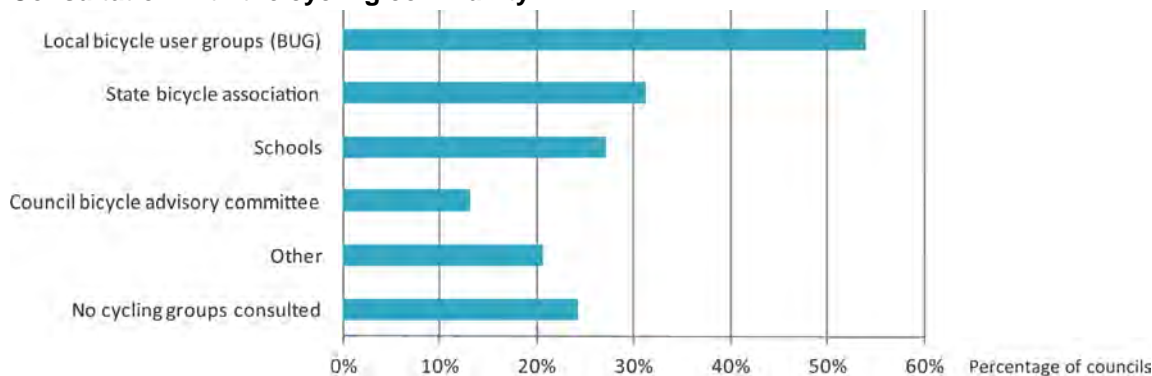


Councils responding to the survey in 2011 were generally less likely to reference their cycling strategy in other strategies in comparison to those repsonding in 2007. The 2011 reslts show a signifcant increase in the proportion of plans intergrated with local government health strategies. However, there has been a signifcant decrease in the proportion of bicycle plans that are intergrated with the local transport plan.

Consultation

Participants were asked which cycling user or advocacy groups they consulted with on cycling issues.

Consultation with the cycling community



54% reported that they consulted with local bicycle users groups. The self identified 'other' category included the police, state road authorities, the local hospital, local bicycle retailers, recreational cycling groups, tourism professionals, other council committees such as sustainability and active transport, and individual riders.

A higher proportion of respondents to the 2011 survey said they did not consult cycling groups. 13% of responding councils did not consult cycling groups in 2007 in comparison to 24% in 2011. But the councils that do consult, are consulting more extensively.

In 2011 54% of respondents reported that they consulted with local bicycle users groups – a significant growth from 30% in 2007. In 2007 18% of respondents reported that they consulted with state advocacy organisations, this increased to 31% in 2011.



In February 2010 Parramatta City Council and Bicycle NSW signed a Memorandum of Understanding to mutually promote, lobby and provide for active transport. At the time the council had already invested significant resources to implement a network of safe bicycle routes and facilities for cyclists .

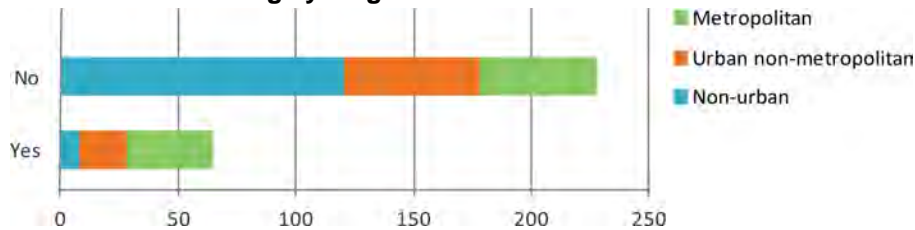
Parramatta City Council Lord Mayor Cr Paul Garrard said, "Riding to work is not only a healthier option, it is a great way to save on costs, escaping traffic snarls and at the same time doing good for the environment by reducing your carbon footprint."

Source: Bicycle NSW

Monitoring

Participants were asked if they undertook cycling counts, and if so what types, and whether they had a target mode share for cycling.

Councils undertaking cycling counts



65 (21%) councils reported that they undertake cycling counts, this is significant increase on the 2007 survey results which reported 12% of responding councils undertaking counts.

Most (88%) councils undertaking counts are located in metropolitan and urban areas.

Of all the councils undertaking counts:

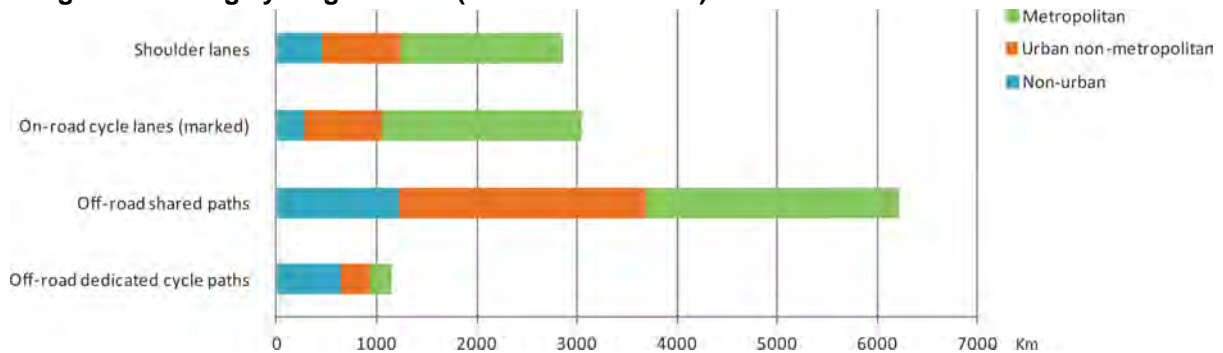
- 42 use manual counts (35 used manual counts alone and seven used manual counts and another counting method).
- 35 councils participated in the annual Bicycle Victoria Super Tuesday count, for 16 this was the only method of counting.
- The most extensive manual counting reported by a council was monthly manual counts on cycleways and six-monthly manual counts throughout the road network at 100 intersections.
- 24 councils have automatic counters in place, and three reported having access to data from automatic counters on regional routes provided by a state government road authority.

11 (3%) of councils reported having mode share targets, all were in urban areas. Targets ranged from 4-10% of journey to work, and 5-10% of all trips by bicycle. All councils who have mode share targets also undertake counts, they also all undertake programs that encourage and promote bicycle use.

Infrastructure

Participants were asked to report on the length of their cycle networks as at 30 June 2010 and the expected length of the network when was completed. They were also asked to detail end-of-trip and recreational infrastructure.

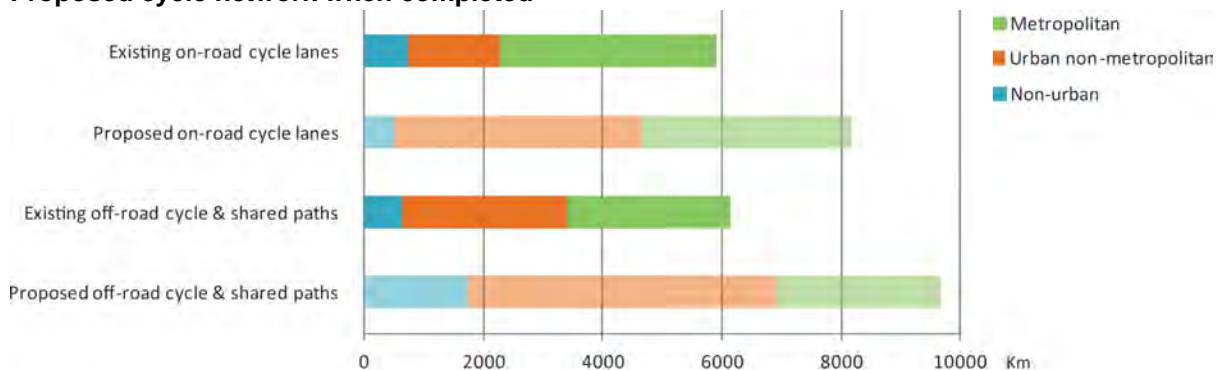
Length of existing cycling network (as at 30 June 2010)



As at June 2010, councils reported having constructed 11,704km of cycling infrastructure. More than half (53%) of the infrastructure is off-road shared paths. Urban based councils have significantly more cycling infrastructure than non-urban councils.

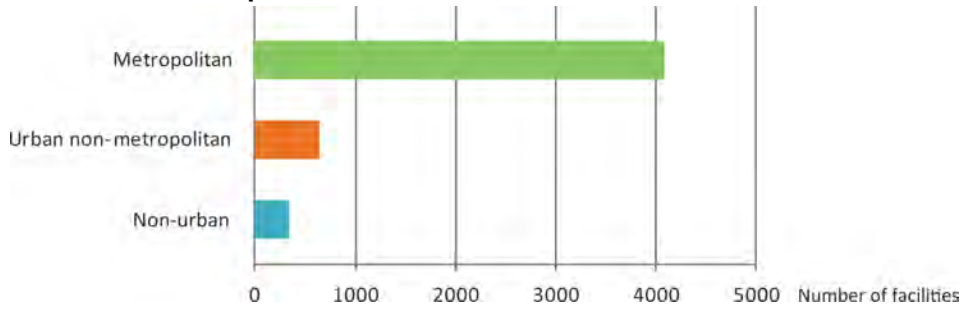
Responding councils have an average of 44km on-road and 38km off -road infrastructure, a significant increase from 2007 when responding councils had an average of 21km on-road and 30km off-road infrastructure.

Proposed cycle network when completed



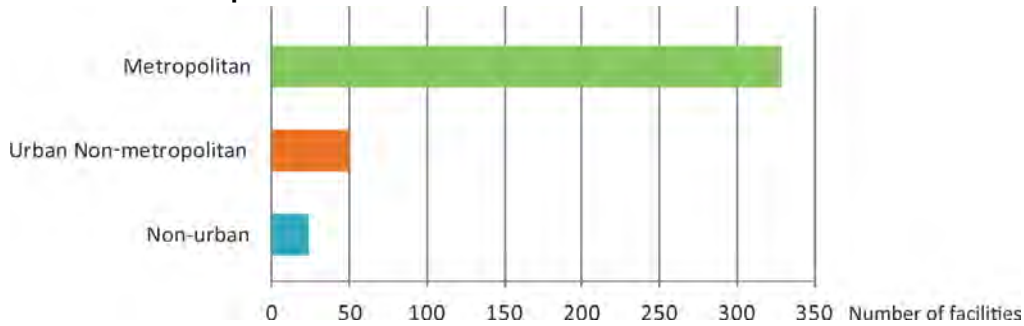
Councils responding to the survey reported that when their networks were completed, they would consist of 9,675km off-road and 8,167 km of on-road cycle paths – a total of 17,842km. This represents a 52% growth in the total network.

External end-of-trip facilities



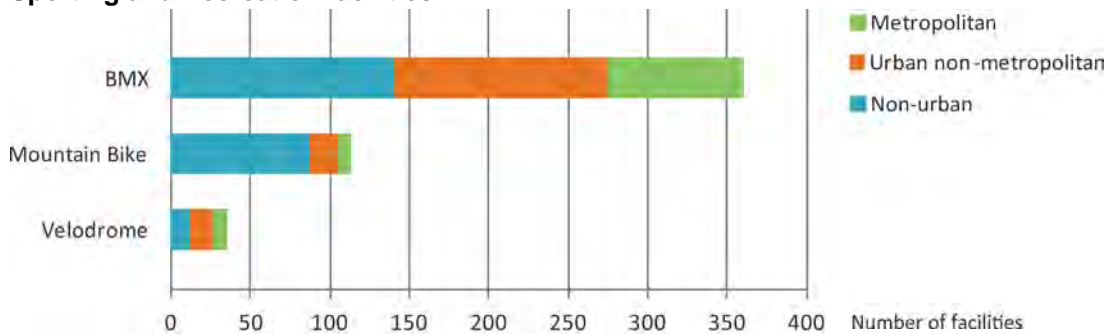
Councils responding to the survey reported the installation of 5,047 external end-of-trip facilities, (including bicycle parking racks, rings and enclosures at recreational and retail hubs). The majority of these facilities (81%) are provided by metropolitan councils.

Internal end-of-trip facilities



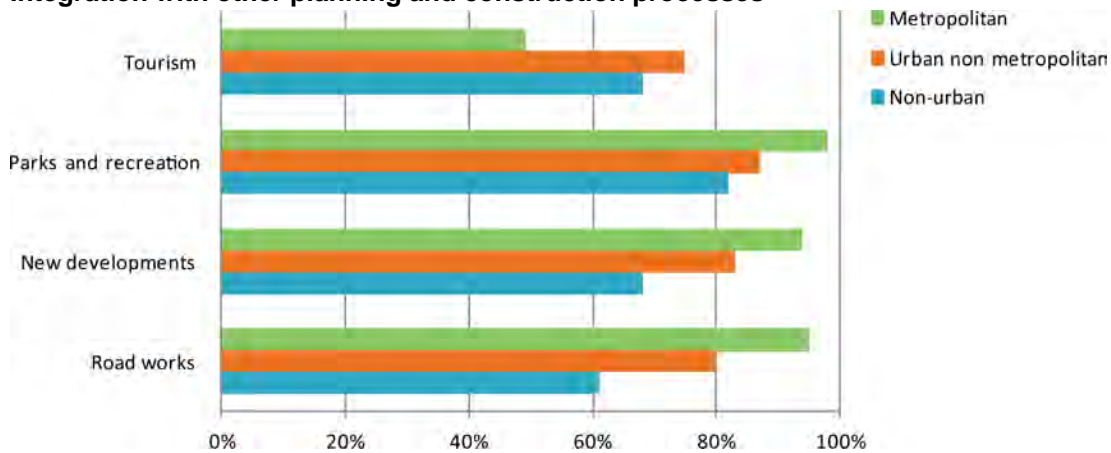
Survey participants reported the installation of 397 internal end-of-trip facilities, (provided within council owned, tenanted or managed buildings including secure parking, lockers, and showers). The majority of these facilities (82%) are provided by metropolitan councils.

Sporting and Recreation facilities



Survey participants reported the installation of 508 sporting and recreational facilities, (including velodromes (36), mountain biking facilities (113) and BMX/skate facilities (360)). Non metropolitan councils are more likely provide sporting and recreational facilities than metropolitan councils.

Integration with other planning and construction processes

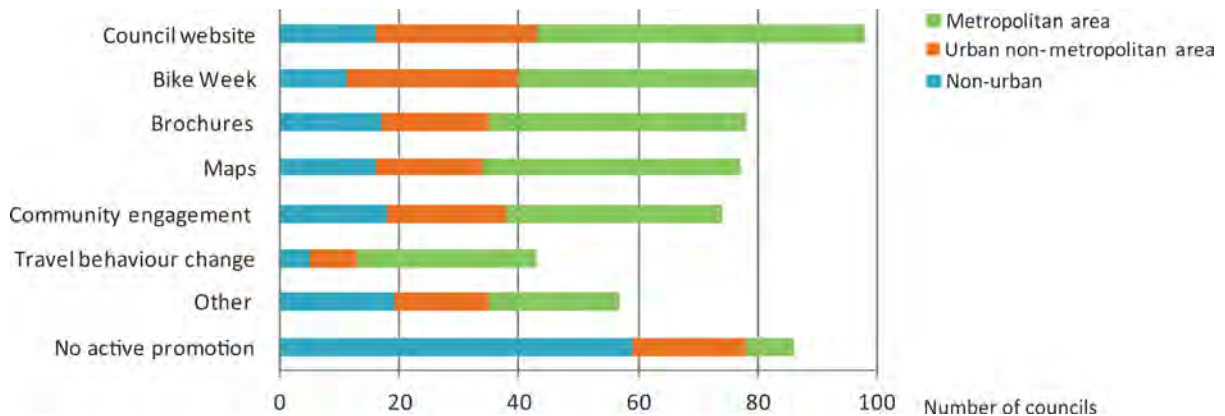


Councils were asked how they integrate the provision of bicycle facilities into road works (construction/maintenance); new developments; parks and recreation; and tourism. Most of the councils responding to this question indicated that they integrated cycling facilities to some extent with all of the processes listed. Responses indicate there are opportunities for metropolitan councils to consider the potential of cycling tourism and for non-urban councils to better integrate cycling facilities into road construction and maintenance programs.

Promotion and Encouragement

Participants were asked how they had actively promoted cycling over the 12 months to 30 June 2010. They were asked for specific information about the availability and format of maps of local cycle network.

Promotional activities undertaken



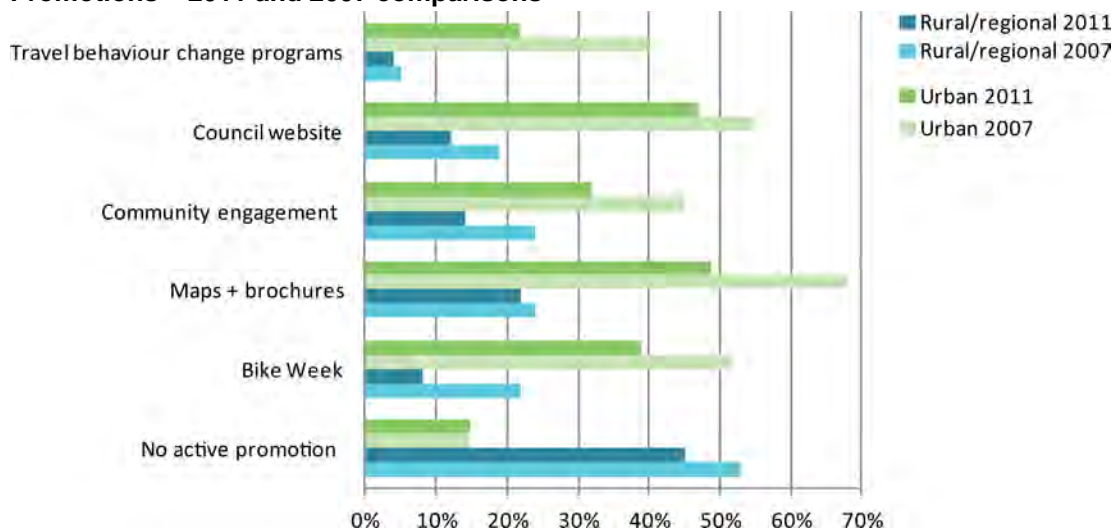
Inclusion of cycling information on council websites is the most popular form of promotion. The 'other' category included stalls at community festivals, funding of local bicycle user groups, free cycle skills and maintenance courses, Ride to Work and Ride2School promotions and breakfasts, advertising, promotion and sponsorship of recreational cycling events, Share the Road campaign and cycle tourism promotions.

35% of respondents reported that they undertook no active promotion. There was a significant difference between urban and non-urban councils, with urban councils far more likely to undertake promotional activities than non-urban councils.



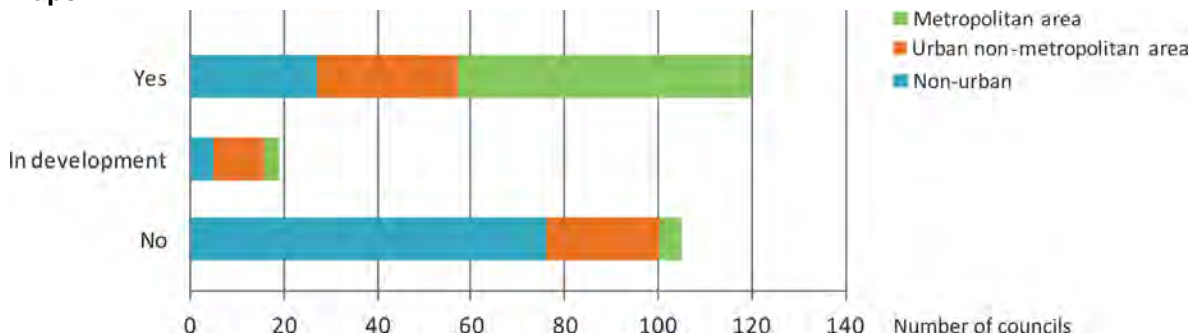
Women on Wheels is a comprehensive package of training workshops, social activities and support services to help women start riding and keep riding. Run by the City of Stirling in Western Australia, the successful program identifies and then finds ways to overcome the barriers which stop women cycling. More than 200 women have completed the Learn to Ride course.

Promotions – 2011 and 2007 comparisons



In comparison to 2007, a smaller proportion of councils are implementing promotions and encouragement strategies to encourage behaviour change. This result is also reflected in reduced expenditure on encouragement and promotions which has dropped from \$6K on average per council to \$5.5K per council.

Maps



57% of responding councils either have a map of cycling facilities or are currently developing one. In 2007, 48% of responding council did not have a map, in comparison to 43% in 2011. 22% of maps are available in hardcopy and online.

Expenditure and Funding

Participants were asked to provide information about their level of expenditure in relation to new infrastructure, maintenance of infrastructure and encouragement programs. They were also asked to provide information about the sources and levels of external funding.

Council expenditure in bicycle related programs in 2009-10



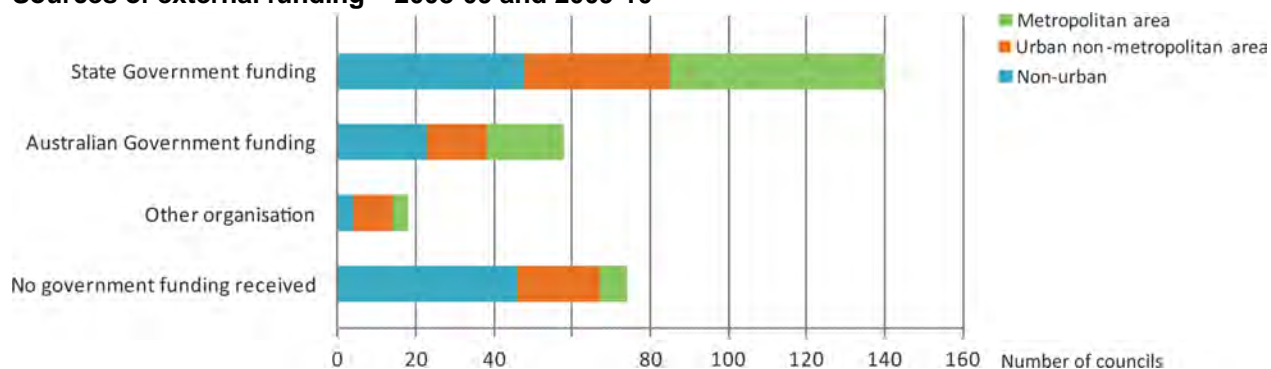
The total expenditure reported by responding councils in the 2009/10 financial year was \$72.9 million (\$46.6m in metropolitan, \$18.4m in urban non-metropolitan, and \$7.9m in non-urban council areas).

In comparison the total expenditure reported in the 2007 survey was \$37 million (\$21.9 million in metropolitan areas and \$15.6 million in non-urban areas).

The average spend per responding council increased from \$194K in 2007 to \$239K in 2010.

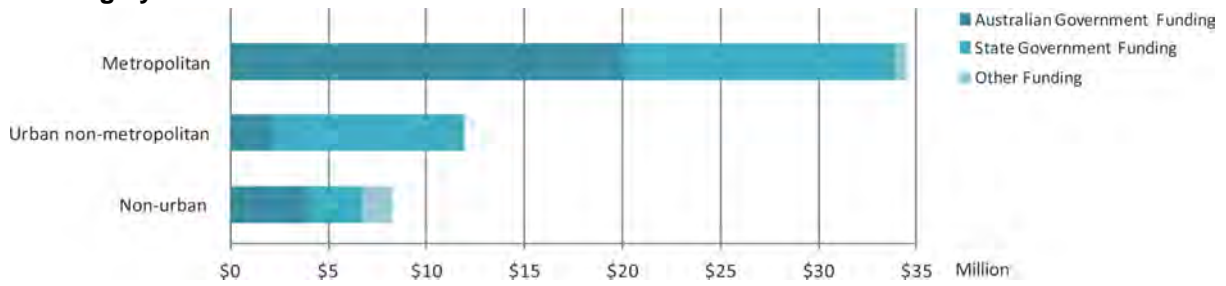
Expenditure on new infrastructure accounts for 94% of the total cycling expenditure. Maintenance accounts for 4% and encouragement, education and promotion programs account for 2% of total expenditure.

Sources of external funding – 2008-09 and 2009-10



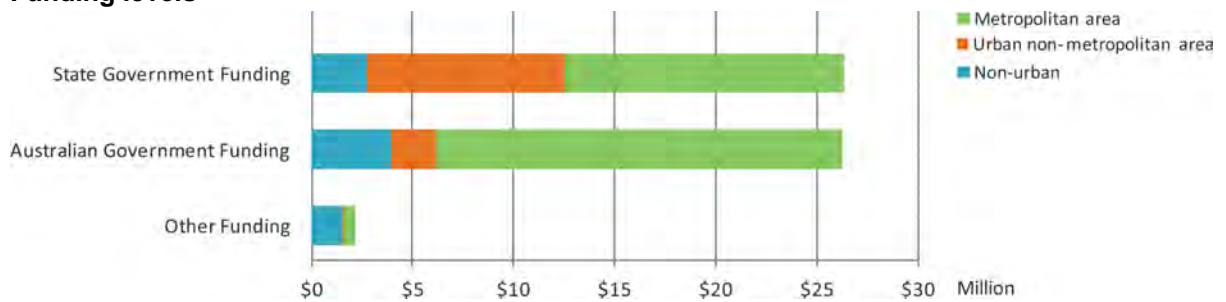
Participants were asked if they received funding to build cycling infrastructure, develop cycling programs or other cycle related activity in 2008/09 or 2009/10. 216 (71%) councils indicated that they had received external funding. Of those that did receive funding, 65% were funded by state government, 27% were funded by the Australian government and 8% were funded by other organisations. The other organisations included private philanthropists and community organisations.

Funding by council location



In 2008/09 and 2009/10 survey participants received \$54.7m funding. Metropolitan councils received \$34.5m (63%), urban non-metropolitan councils received \$11.9m (22%) and non-urban councils received \$8.3m (15%).

Funding levels

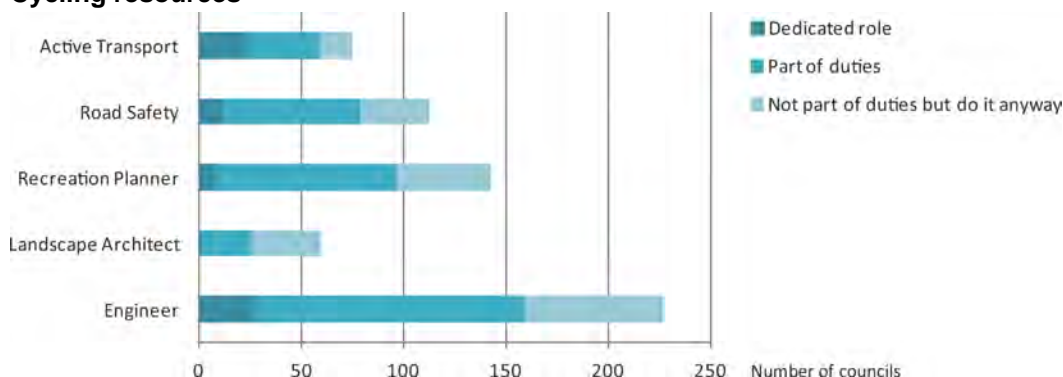


Survey participants reported receiving \$26.3m Australian Government, \$26.3m State Government and \$2.1m other funding.

Council staff

Participants were asked which council staff look after cycling related activities and whether the position was a dedicated cycling or active transport role, part of the position's duties or not part of the position description but done anyone.

Cycling resources

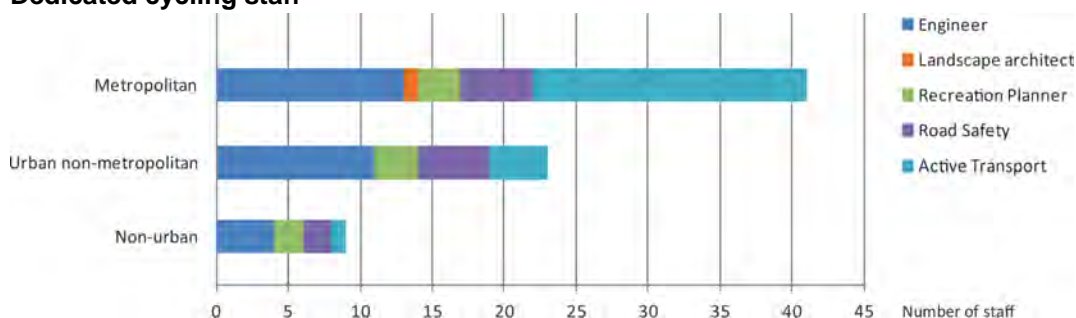


There are a wide range of staff involved in bicycle related activities in local government. The roles fall into Recreation, Planning, Engineering, Environment, Assets, Road Safety, Tourism, Events, Public Works, Community Development, Community Health and Economic Development.

Most councils do not have staff solely dedicated to cycling or active transport but rather cycling activities are undertaken as part of their duties – most often these are engineering, recreation or road safety staff. Councils have an average of one full time equivalent staff member working on cycling matters. The 2007 result was almost identical.

In 2011 councils reported significantly higher numbers of staff resources working on cycling projects. The highest number of full time equivalent staff working on cycling projects in any one council in 2007 was six. In 2011 one metropolitan council reported having 25 full time equivalent staff working on cycling projects, another reported 15 full time equivalent staff. Two non-metropolitan urban councils reported having five full time equivalent staff working on cycling projects. One large non-urban council reported having 10 full time equivalent staff working on cycling projects.

Dedicated cycling staff

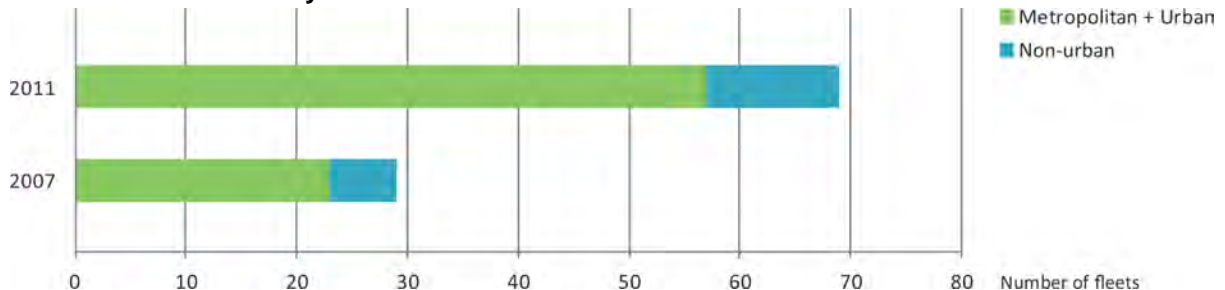


73 authorities (24%) reported having dedicated cycling staff. Metropolitan based councils were more likely to have dedicated staff cycling staff and reported larger teams of people working on cycling projects. 23 non-metropolitan urban councils and nine councils in non-urban areas reported having dedicated staff cycling staff.

Bike fleets

Participants were asked if they had a bike fleet for staff to use, how many bikes were in the fleet and whether the fleet included electric bikes.

Number of bike fleets by council location



24% of responding councils have a bike fleet for staff use, a significant increase on the 15% of the councils responding to the 2007 survey. The majority (83%) of fleets are located in metropolitan and urban councils.

Survey respondents reported 280 bikes in 69 local government bike fleets across Australia. Bike fleet sizes ranged from 1 bike to 30. Most fleets (83%) had one to five bikes. 16 fleets include electric bikes with two fleets being wholly electric. One council reported that since introducing electric bikes into their fleet, there was no demand for the fleet's non-electric bicycles.



In August 2011 Coffs Harbour City Council added six bikes to its vehicle fleet for short staff trips within a 5km radius around the city. The cost of the six sturdy handmade Dutch Gazelle bicycles, two of which have electric motors to provide extra power when travelling uphill, was provided through a \$10,000 NSW Government Environment Trust grant.

Source: Coffs Harbour Advocate

Barriers to increased cycling

Councils were asked to identify what was holding their community back from being more involved in cycling.

128 councils provided responses; many were detailed and provided multiple reasons. The responses across all council types was consistent with urban and rural/regional councils reporting similar sets of barriers.

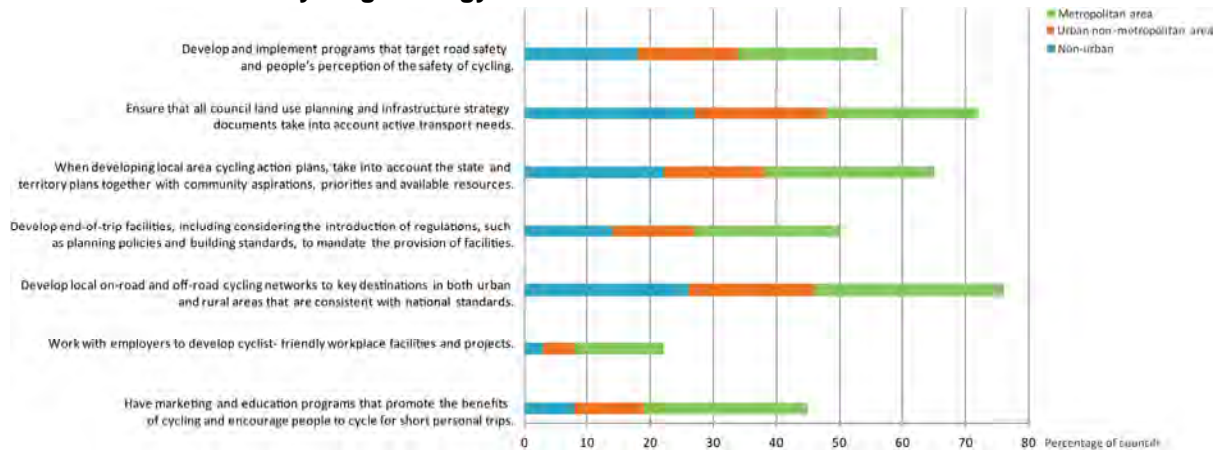
The barriers included:

- Urban planning – sprawl
- Transport planning – failure to consider active transport in transport planning, lack of public transport, and lack of integration of public transport with active transport
- Car dependency – ingrained nature of car use, social attitudes towards car ownership
- Perceptions of safety
- Perceptions of cycling as a sporting activity rather than a transport option
- Lack of funding for infrastructure and programs
- Incomplete infrastructure networks
- Topography and weather
- Community demographics – age, income, rate base
- Negative media
- Lack of political or internal leadership
- Lack of community support
- Lack of local cycling culture - including no nearby bike shop or mechanic

Links to the National Cycling Strategy

Survey participants were provided with a list of actions identified as the responsibility of local government in the National Cycling Strategy 2011-16. Councils were asked if they undertook the activities.

Links to the National Cycling Strategy outcomes



Most survey respondents are developing infrastructure networks and integrating active transport into land use planning and strategy. Far fewer councils are working with employers on cycling projects or developing promotional or educational campaigns to encourage cycling.

Support from the Australian Bicycle Council

Participants were asked what support the Australian Bicycle Council could provide to assist in the promotion of cycling and infrastructure development.

More than 150 suggestions were made, these have been collated and summarised below under six broad themes:

- lobbying and advocacy
- guidelines
- other resources
- funding
- education
- communication and coordination.

Lobbying and advocacy

There was a strong call for the Australian Bicycle Council (ABC) to continue working with all levels of government to support cycling both strategically and financially.

There was a call for the ABC to work towards reducing car use including significantly reducing funding for road projects that do not cater to active transport needs.

There was also a call for the ABC to provide public recognition of the work being done by local government to encourage cycling.

Guidelines

There was a strong call for the ABC to provide guidelines to improve the standard of cycling infrastructure (design, construction and maintenance) to best practice international standards.

A number of specific guidelines were requested including:

- Guidelines on bicycle parking and other end of trip facilities
- Guidelines for fringe areas and remote or rural communities
- Standards and designs for cycling paths and infrastructure
- Guidelines to enable the prioritisation of bike friendly Local Area Traffic Management treatments (including traffic calming and speed limits)
- Guidelines on costings
- Cycle network planning and strategy
- Best practice guidelines for Section 94 contribution plans, and inclusions in LEPs and DCPs to ensure developers formally consider active transport in development proposals.

Other resources

There was a strong call for ongoing access to general information and advice.

The most frequently requested resource was access to case studies of Australian councils that had successfully planned and implemented both infrastructure and encouragement programs. Specific requests regarding the case studies were that they should feature: a range of councils types; projects of varying budgets; different types of infrastructure (including central end of trip facilities); and how councils overcame obstacles (such as removing parking, incorporating infrastructure on narrow roads). A number of councils also requested international best practice case studies.

There was a high level of interest in having access to promotional and safety programs and campaigns that could be adapted and used locally. Specific requests included: safety brochures that covered visibility, bellring, sharing the road and negotiating roundabouts; promotional resources targeted to specific users such as workplaces and older people; material and ideas to help promote Bike Week; and media releases and campaigns promoting cycling.

A number of councils requested one-on-one feedback and advice about their bicycle strategies, infrastructure issues and promotional strategies.

There was also a strong call for a set of resources to help promote cycling within council to elected members, senior management and staff; with the aim of encouraging funding and support, integrated planning, and staff engagement across the organisation.

Councils requested access to bicycle usage data.

A number of councils requested resources specifically catering to the circumstances of rural and remote communities.

Councils also requested the development of a cycling professionals network that would include ongoing professional development opportunities across a wide range of topic areas.

Other resource requests included: research that supports advocacy for infrastructure development; a database of information; information about how to advocate to government for increased funding; and signage.

Funding

More than one third of the suggestions included a request for increased funding. This included:

- funding for regional network development
- funding for maintenance
- funding for crown land purchase
- changing the 1:1 funding ratio to 2:1
- increasing the level of state and federal funding .

There was also a strong call for information about funding opportunities.

Education

A number of councils requested access to locally based education programs to teach riding skills to people of all ages. An education program designed for school students was mentioned by a number of councils. One council suggested a partnership program with Austcycle that would deliver training to local schools.

Communication and coordination

Another consistent request was for better coordination between neighbouring councils, and between all levels of government. A consistent and coordinated approach to infrastructure, signage and programs between councils and resources that enable bicycle networks to be tackled at a regional rather than individual council level were mentioned numerous times.

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