



Bicycle riding encouragement guide

Making the most of riding infrastructure in your community



Queensland
Government

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A note about Infra + Cycle Network Local Government Grants

Infra + (Infrastructure + Promotion) is a funding element based on the success of the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) Active Towns pilot program conducted between 2013 and 2015.

From 2018, Infra + is available to councils who wish to undertake targeted initiatives to encourage behavioural change associated with cycling infrastructure delivered through TMR's Cycle Network Local Government Grants.

The aim is to rapidly increase both the awareness and usage of cycling infrastructure, such as bicycle paths, networks and end-of-trip facilities.

This bike riding encouragement program guide should be read in conjunction with the guidelines for the Cycle Network Local Government Grant Program, which is available via www.tmr.qld.gov.au/cycling



Bicycle riding in Queensland

Bike riding is a winner. It's good for health and fitness, great for the family, kind on the environment, doesn't need petrol and it can help build a sense of community while making the most of Queensland's great outdoors.

For local councils and communities, there's a whole list of proven economic, environmental and social benefits. That's why the Queensland Government is committed to its vision for more bike riding, more often.

Queensland should be a place where riding a bike for sport, transport or recreation is an accepted, popular and safe part of everyday life. New bike paths and facilities are one of the best ways to achieve this, but to make sure we're all out using them, we also need to change behaviour. This can be achieved through building local awareness of infrastructure together with encouragement programs that make a difference. That's where this guide will help.

Who is this guide for?

This guide is primarily designed for those involved with the Infra + Cycle Network Local Government Grant Program, where funding is available for local councils to combine new cycling infrastructure with bike riding encouragement.

However, there are many groups that can help grow bike riding, from local councils, to Bicycle User Groups, to community organisations. Together with infrastructure, policy and funding, what you really need is a team of ready and motivated promoters.

So if you're ready to roll, this guide offers practical advice and tips on developing a bike riding encouragement program to get the most out of the infrastructure in your community.



How does this guide work?

When it comes to bike riding, every community is different. Different people, different roads, different paths, different weather, different needs, different magpies. That's why there's no one fixed program to grow bike riding.

This guide embraces learnings from the Queensland Active Towns pilot program plus the latest research to demonstrate the components of an effective bike riding encouragement program. You can then localise this approach by taking into consideration your infrastructure and the needs of your community.

Components of a Bike Riding Encouragement Program





Four essentials of a bike friendly community

Growing bike riding in a community is not easy. There are many variables, components and challenges to consider.

Ultimately, however, there are four key criteria to ensuring lasting change: **safe infrastructure, local awareness, positive bike culture and willing bike riders.**

It will be handy to keep this in mind as you develop and refine your bike riding encouragement program for your community.



What makes an effective encouragement program?

Many things affect bike riding in a local community. For example access to dedicated paths, cycling policy, media coverage, safety concerns and whether people even have access to bikes. Generally, these are either barriers *to* bike riding or enablers *of* bike riding.

Rather than attempting to tackle all the barriers and enablers, a meaningful encouragement program identifies which ‘segments’ to target and then develops components to lower the barriers and leverage the enablers of bike riding behaviour. This forms the basis for any behaviour change program.

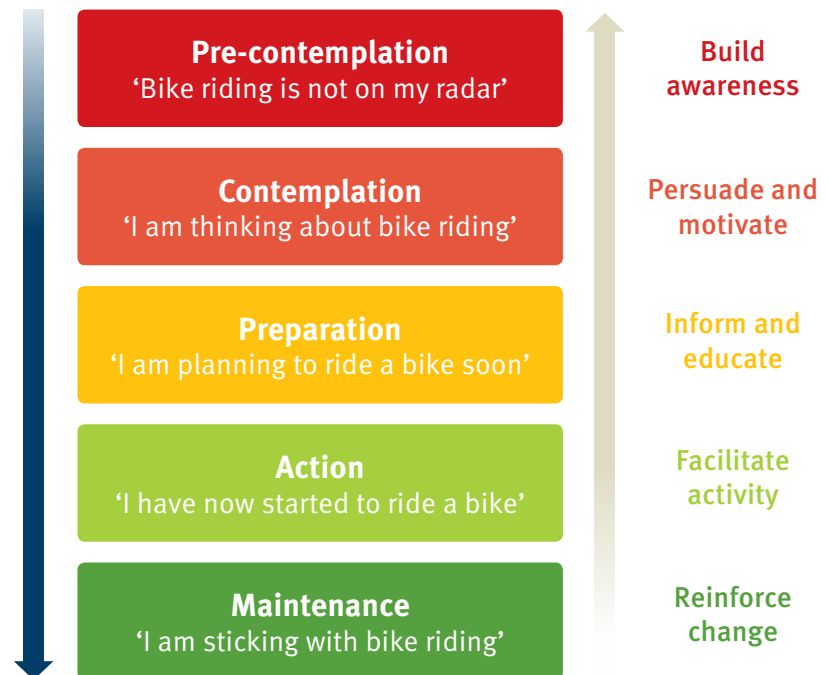


1. Key stages of behaviour change

Behaviour change is not immediate and there’s no quick fix. It’s a process of moving through stages, for example: not even thinking about bike riding, to considering it, to trying it, to enjoying it, to doing it regularly and even to encouraging others to do it.

It’s important to understand that different people are at different stages – with different barriers and enablers. Some might skip a stage, some might go back before going forward, but generally behaviour change is about nudging people from one stage to the next.

Stages of bike riding behaviour change



Based on Prochaska and DiClemente Stages of Behaviour Change Model, 1983

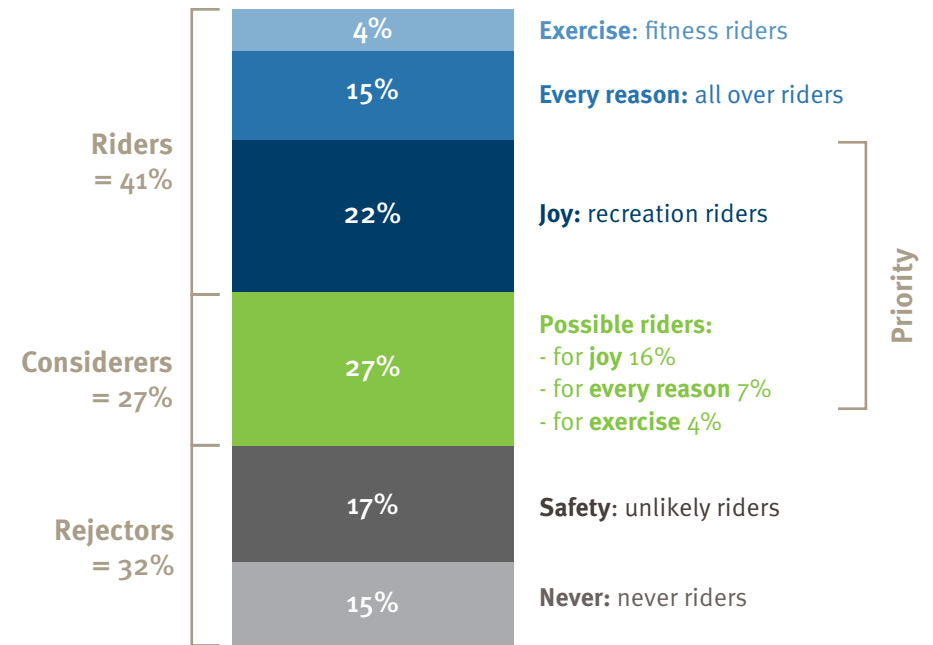
2. Who to target using typologies

No one has the resources to target *everyone*. What's more, you won't get much behaviour change from those who will *never* ever ride a bike... or those who already ride every day.

That means it's important to decide who you should focus your time, money and effort on to most effectively grow bike riding in your community... to understand what makes them tick.

Based on research conducted in Queensland, the most significant opportunity is encouraging bike riding for recreation, so the recreation typologies should be the priority for nudging (re)trial and more riding. However, you might also choose to encourage commuting trips if these are obvious trips people might make using your particular infrastructure.

Bike riding typologies in Queensland



It can be useful to narrow down your target typologies even further depending on the specific demographics the cycling infrastructure best serves in your community. For example, children and parents going to school, young families on the weekend, young CBD workers who live within 5 kilometres. To make this even more relevant, it's important to overlay the stages of behaviour change.

Language is important

Yes, it's true. Depending on the words we use, this activity can be viewed as either cold and impersonal or warm and inviting. For example, 'cycling' may be interpreted as serious and competitive whereas 'bike riding' may come across as friendly and accessible. To help make bike riding feel more mainstream, the language we choose is incredibly important. When we talk bike riders like us rather than cyclists like them, the mental picture can be completely different!



3. Barriers to bike riding in your area

Some barriers are universal and apply to people everywhere. Some are specific to your target typologies. Some are specific to your local community. It's important to list the barriers and consider which ones have the most impact on your potential bike riders moving through the stages of behaviour change.

Some common barriers to more bike riding are:

- don't have a bike
- no bike accessories
- safety concerns
- fear of traffic
- fear of hostility
- travel distance
- weather conditions
- hilly topography
- limited access to paths
- bike security issues
- no facilities (e.g. showers)
- need to carry things
- don't know the rules
- risk of embarrassment
- lack personal fitness
- too much effort
- lack bike riding skills
- not confident enough
- no one to ride with
- intimidated by cyclists
- it's for 'other' people
- just don't think about it.





4. Enablers for bike riding in your area

Like the barriers, the reasons why different people ride a bike will vary based on who they are, where they live and what motivates them. Once again, it's a worthwhile exercise to list the enablers and consider which ones will have the biggest impact on bike riding behaviour change for your target typologies.

Some common enablers for more bike riding are:

- access to a bike
- easy bike hire
- confidence on two wheels
- childhood memories
- fun and freedom
- feel good factor
- the great outdoors
- dedicated bike paths
- online route information
- wayfinding signage
- knowledge of rules
- bike riding culture
- positive influencers
- someone to ride with
- supportive workplace
- bike riding events
- trial of an e-bike.
- health and fitness
- de-stress/alone time
- family/social time
- cheaper than driving
- faster than driving
- good for environment

Learn from the Active Towns pilot program

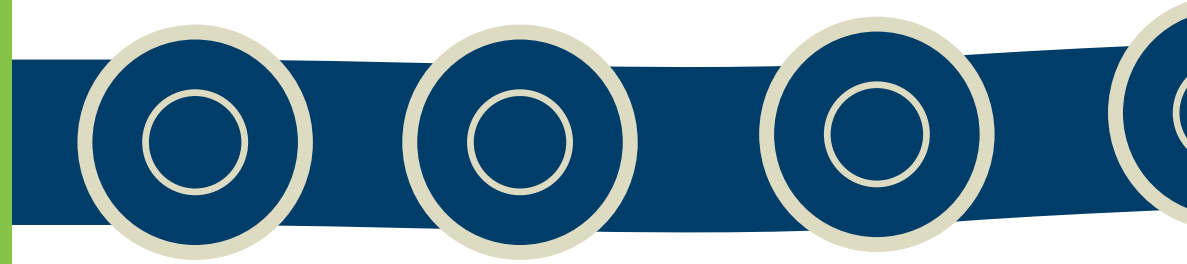
Active Towns was an active transport (i.e. walking and cycling) pilot program run in Cairns, Mackay and the Gold Coast (Robina) between 2013 and 2015. It was designed to test whether investment in new infrastructure combined with encouragement initiatives would a) increase active transport usage; and b) improve perceptions within targeted communities.

A total of 24 kilometres of new paths were built, with an emphasis on connecting communities to destination hubs such as schools, shops or the CBD. With a different approach in each market, a range of different initiatives were undertaken, from social media to cinema advertising, along with over 60 events focused on promotion, education and participation.

The Active Towns pilot program delivered a range of successful outcomes based on new infrastructure in conjunction with positive promotion. In particular, there was evidence of an increase in active transport participation and a friendlier cycling and walking culture.

Important learnings to help with the development of future initiatives:

- Every town is unique and as such requires a tailored bike riding encouragement program.
- New infrastructure should be connected directly to key destinations in populated areas.
- Community attitudes toward bike riding and investment in infrastructure are generally positive.
- It sounds obvious, but positive awareness of bike riding infrastructure is important to growing its use. Maps and wayfinding signs can help.
- It's beneficial to focus efforts and evaluation on particular typologies and particular outcomes.
- Changes in attitudes and behaviours tend to be slow and small, hence the need for a prolonged program.
- A focus on new or lapsed riders may provide more opportunity for growth than those already converted.



5. Know what you want to achieve

It's essential to understand 'what success looks like' for your program right from the start. The process of setting upfront objectives helps not just for the final evaluation, but for developing the program components. By zoning in on specific typologies you can focus on specific outcomes. For example, this may be 'number of children and parents using the path to travel to school' or 'awareness of the CBD path amongst young CBD workers who don't ride.'

Whatever your ideal outcomes, it's vital to measure and report against the objectives both before and after your program. You can find out more about this process by referring to the Evaluation section of this guide.

What next?

You know exactly who you're targeting. You know the relevant stages of behaviour change. You know the specific barriers and enablers. You know your local area inside out. You know what you want to achieve. Now it's time to develop your bike riding encouragement program components.

6. Understand your infrastructure

Access to safe and practical cycling infrastructure is the single most important enabler to growth. In fact, research shows that these three major factors would encourage more Queenslanders to ride a bike more often:

- **more access to off-road infrastructure (69 per cent)**
- **good directional signage on bikeways (69 per cent)**
- **more access to on-road infrastructure (66 per cent).**

So, if you have or are planning new separated and dedicated bike riding paths and facilities, you are at a massive advantage. However, it's important that you don't stop there.

Whether you have new or existing cycling infrastructure, you need to work out who it best serves. This will be based on the population hubs with easy access and the destinations it connects. Use this to inform your target typologies and program components. Also, consider infrastructure beyond just bike paths. For example, this includes wayfinding signage, end-of-trip facilities (such as bike racks and showers) and learn to ride areas.



7. Raise awareness of infrastructure

The use of cycling infrastructure in a community is directly driven by positive awareness of the infrastructure. This means actively promoting the benefits of new bike paths and facilities, not just relying on word of mouth or 'glimpses' of the construction.

Our primary research highlights that the most desired information for existing (43 per cent) and potential (41 per cent) bike riders is where to find safe paths and places to ride. The preferred channels are online (71 per cent) followed by social media (43 per cent) and mobile apps (42 per cent).

Feedback from the Active Towns pilot program indicates that while events, PR and social media have the potential to build awareness, traditional local area marketing activities such as cinema, outdoor and letterbox drops can also play a powerful role.

It's also important to promote the 'utility' of your cycling infrastructure by focusing on the convenience and connections together with the immediate personal benefits. This can also be used as a way to bring 'new news' to existing infrastructure.

8. Design your components

Through the Active Towns pilot, plus other state, national and international encouragement programs, there is no shortage of ideas to grow bicycle riding. Or you may choose to develop your own. Either way, it's important to focus on the specific outcomes you want to achieve while taking into consideration the cycling infrastructure, target typologies and barriers/enablers.

Our intention is to continue to develop useful resources, publish a list of potential encouragement initiatives and share ideas from right across Queensland. Based on the Active Towns pilot together with extensive primary and secondary research, here are some tips that you may find useful:



Language

- Change the language you use from cycling to bicycle riding, as this shifts perception from faceless cyclists to human riders.

Relevance

- Focus on both new and existing infrastructure that connects population hubs with popular destinations.
- Acknowledge that safety is the major bike riding hurdle, but a negative and instructional approach won't work.

Benefits

- Increase emphasis on the more immediate personal benefits of bike riding (e.g. fun, freedom, me time, family time).
- Recognise that people are less driven by the long term environmental or cost saving aspects of bike riding.

Priorities

- Develop initiatives to progressively build the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to ride a bike (again).
- Be careful about 'preaching to the converted'... you may get positive feedback but not more people riding.
- Start with recreation as the big reason so people have a safe, comfortable and enjoyable bike riding experience.

Advocates

- Consider ways to harness the enthusiasm of existing bike riders... the influence of family and friends is strong.
- Work closely with one or more of the many bicycle user groups and advocacy organisations around Queensland.

Levers

- Tap into nostalgia as a driver of trial and retrial... most people rode bikes as kids and have very fond memories.
- Remember our beautiful weather and scenery... there's no better way to experience things than on a bike.
- Leverage e-bikes... they are new and interesting and help lower barriers to bike riding such as hills and heat.*

**Make sure you check the e-bike model is legal and can be ridden on Queensland roads and footpaths.*

Nudging

- Show patience (and passion) as changes in bike riding attitudes and behaviours can be small and take time.
- Focus on *nudging*, be realistic about what you hope to achieve and continue to test, learn and refine.

A significant 92 per cent of Queenslanders rode a bike as a child and 81 per cent have positive memories!



9. Evaluation of your program

Before you launch your bicycle riding encouragement program, it's critical that you consider how to evaluate the relative impact. To do this, you will ideally need to benchmark qualitative and quantitative data from before the program commences, together with follow up analysis post implementation.

Here are some of the things you will need to consider:

- What do you need to measure (e.g. awareness of paths, number of bike riders, perceptions of safety)?
- Based on the objectives, do you require quantitative data or qualitative analysis or a combination of both?
- What tracking and reporting methodology will you use (e.g. automatic trackers, online questionnaire)?
- For what period of time do you intend to run the program before collecting and collating the follow up data?
- Who will manage and deliver the evaluation process (e.g. internal resources and/or external partners)?





More support and inspiration

A bike riding encouragement program can be a big undertaking. Ideally, you should assemble a team that will be able to see the work through from start to finish.

If you're able to, consider outsourcing aspects such as marketing and evaluation. Remember that local Bicycle User Groups, advocacy organisations, bike shops, training providers and schools can also be an excellent resource to help with rolling out components of the program.

You can find even more information, resources and case studies at www.tmr.qld.gov.au/cycling

Good luck and have fun!