BICYCLE NETWORK®

Bicycle Network submission to the 2023 Victorian Government's Parliamentary Inquiry into the impact of road safety behaviours on vulnerable road users.

From the CEO Bicycle Network

Bicycle Network welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Victorian Parliamentary *Inquiry into the impact of road safety behaviours on vulnerable road users* for consideration by the Economy and Infrastructure Standing Committee and looks forward to the report no later than 31 March 2024.

Bicycle Network is Victoria's peak bike riding body and has almost 50,000 members.

In response to this parliamentary inquiry, Bicycle Network undertook a survey of 70,000-plus people from its membership and subscription database and asked them about road safety pre and post COVID. Of the more than 3000 respondents to our survey, 29% of the 2352 who answered the question "generally speaking, do you feel safe riding on the roads?' responded that they did not feel safe. Our survey shows that 58% of people disagreed or strongly disagreed that bike riding had become safer since the pandemic.

We also held discussions with members of Bicycle Users Groups, who advocate on behalf of local bike riders in their local municipalities and received survey responses from eight local government authorities across diverse areas of the state to develop our submission.

The statistics in Victoria and nationally show an increase in road deaths and injuries for all road users, including vulnerable road users post-COVID. However, not all the increases in road death and injury for vulnerable road users are due to post-COVID road rage or loss of driving awareness skills among motorists. Some of it is due to the poor management of infrastructure for vulnerable road users.

Our recommendations aim to make bike riding safer for all Victorians. This will lead to a healthier population, reduce strain on the health system from illnesses related to a sedentary lifestyle and reduce pressure on roads and public transport infrastructure. More people using bikes for transport will also contribute to the Victorian Government's achievement of its greenhouse gas target of net zero by 2050.

Bicycle Network would like to partner with the Victorian Government to:

- quantify the value of avoiding death and injury of vulnerable road users to the state economy
- cost the implementation of our recommendations and have them included in the State Budget
- identify the barriers to implementing our recommendations and determine how they can be overcome
- develop a timeframe for the implementation of our recommendations.

A rough estimate of the proportional cost of cycling deaths and injury to the Victorian economy by Bicycle Network is $240 million per annum.

Spending this money on improving cycling infrastructure would be a much better investment than spending it on funerals, coroners' reports and managing the care needs (mental and physical health) of the families and communities affected by the death and injury.

Alison McCormack

CEO, Bicycle Network

Summary of recommendations

1. Recommendation
Enforce rule 144A of the Road Safety Road Rules 2017, known as the “metre matters” rule (1.0 metres on roads to 60 km/h, 1.5 metres on roads > than 60 km/h).

2. Recommendation
Improve cycling infrastructure by progressively:

2.1 Linking bike paths to create a safe, connected network of bike riding routes throughout Melbourne and regional centres.

2.2 Providing more separated bicycle lanes, separated bike paths, separate pedestrians from bike riders.

2.3 Constructing safe shoulders on all major Victorian roads.

2.4 Allocate 10 per cent of the state’s transport budget for active transport projects and commit to increasing this amount each year.

2.5 Prepare a five-year update of the Victorian Cycling Strategy, with clear and focused action plans for rolling out critical bike projects and getting Victoria back on track.

3. Recommendation
Continue to fund local governments to implement their cycling strategies.

4.1 Introduce a liveable neighbourhoods fund that communities can access for local traffic calming and placemaking projects.

4.2 Support local governments to implement 30km/h speed limits in built-up areas and town centres.

4.3 Review and promote safety rules for shared paths.

4. Recommendation
Initiate and implement a state-wide campaign to improve driver attitudes and behaviours towards vulnerable road users.

5. Recommendation
Require development and implementation of risk management plans for building sites, which consider safety measures for vulnerable road users.

5.1 Enforce speed and parking restrictions and the installation of bike lane detours around all state, commercial and domestic infrastructure development.

5.2 Enforce safety measures requiring all road surfaces around infrastructure projects to be safe and visible for use by vulnerable road users.

6. Recommendation
Require the State Government to make a public response that considers all recommendations made by the Coroner in response to the death of a bike rider or pedestrian across all roads and road/traffic infrastructure and building works in Victoria within 12 months.

7. Recommendation

Work with the Commonwealth to fast-track requirements for driver-assist technology for all light vehicles.

8. Recommendation

Work with the Commonwealth to fast-track requirements for driver-assist technology for all heavy vehicles.

8.1 Mandate equipment and standards that include blind-spot reduction design for all heavy vehicles.

8.2 Mandate side under-run protection rails for heavy vehicles.

8.3 Implement compulsory driver training program of all heavy vehicle drivers for the safety of vulnerable road users.

Introduction

Bicycle Network thanks the Legislative Assembly for initiating the parliamentary *Inquiry into the impact of road safety behaviours on vulnerable road users* and referring it to the Economy and Infrastructure Standing Committee for consideration and report no later than 31 March 2024.

Bike riders are vulnerable road users and Bicycle Network is the peak body for bike riders in Victoria, with almost 50,000 members.

Bicycle Network's mission is to get more people cycling more often. This position aligns with and supports Victorian Government policies, including:

- The VicHealth Physical Activity Strategy 2019-2023, which supports increased exercise for all.
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions in line with the Government's policy of net zero emissions by 2050 by getting cars off roads.
- Reducing pressure to build more infrastructure for cars.
- Reducing pressure for more public transport by reducing over-crowding now and in future.

A total of 54 bike riders lost their lives on Victorian roads between 1 January 2019 and 15 May 2023. Below is a summary of the number of fatalities in the last decade.

BIKE RIDER DEATHS 2012-2023		
2012	7	}
2013	6	}
2014	10	}
2015	10	} Pre-COVID
2016	8	}
2017	12	}
2018	7	}
2019	11	}
2020	14	} COVID
2021	12	}
2022	12	} Post-COVID
2023 (to 31 May)	5	}

Source: Transport Accident Commission

According to a 2022 Report for the Bureau of Infrastructure and Transport Research Economics, road trauma in Victoria costs between $3 billion to $4 billion every year.

Approximately 5% of these crashes involve bike riders, and Bicycle Network calculates the costs of these accidents to the Victorian economy at approximately $175 million to each year. Data supplied to Bicycle Network by the Monash University Accident Research Centre (pers comm) shows on-road injuries involving vehicles have increased by 12% since 2018, peaking in 2021. However, hospital admissions for on-road injuries involving vehicles did not increase over time, and showed a decrease of 10% from 2019-2020. A breakdown of the data shows that there was a big increase in injuries to children (5-10 and 10-14) implying that more children were cycling than previously and that more attention needs to be paid developing cycling skills in this cohort.

Approach

Bicycle Network worked proactively with a number of stakeholders to develop this submission. It surveyed its membership and subscribers, surveyed Victorian councils, had discussions with members of Bicycle User Groups (May 2023), interrogated the Bicycle Network insurance data base and the Traffic Accident Corporation database, and reviewed Coroner's recommendations.

Bicycle Network surveyed our 70,000-plus members and subscribers and asked them whether they felt more or less safe on Victorian roads before, during and after COVID, what they thought were mechanisms to make Victoria's roads and cycling infrastructure safer, and what they saw as the highest priority for investment to make roads safer for bike riders.

A selection of 40 Victorian local government authorities were asked similar questions, eight responded. The surveys of the Bicycle Network members and subscribers and local government are given in *Appendices 1* and *2* respectively.

Bicycle Network insurance data for the last five years was interrogated for details on bike rider crash reports. This revealed that despite changed road use during COVID, vehicles have been, and continue to be, the largest contributor to bike riding accidents in Victoria for the last seven years. (*Appendix 3*)

The Victorian Government departmental responses in February 2022 to the recommendations from the inquest into Arzu Karakoc were reviewed and also informed Bicycle Network's recommendations.

Summary of survey results

People's riding behaviours

Comparing post-pandemic to pre-pandemic

Using a Likert scale of strongly disagree, disagree, no change, agree, strongly agree the survey of Bicycle Network's database found:

About 5% less people are riding daily

- more people are riding every couple of days
- less people riding very infrequently (every couple of months to yearly).

About 6% less people riding to work

- slightly more people riding for transport,
- more people solo riding (this number was higher during the pandemic).

Where people ride is similar

- slightly less people on the roads (inner city) and
- slightly more people on shared paths, rail trails and separated bicycle lanes.
- people's ride distance appeared to be slightly longer post-pandemic.

Safety

"Has riding become safer since the pandemic?"

- 58% strongly disagreed or disagreed (17% strongly)
- Inner city riders (16%) and young people (18%) think riding has become safer, which is more than other age groups.

"Generally speaking, do you feel safe riding on the roads?"

- 29% of people said No
- 37% sometimes and 25% Yes
- Female / Gender Diverse / Non-binary people were less like to feel safe (18% "Yes" and 35% "No")
- as were young people (13% "Yes")

Driver behaviour

"Driver behaviour has improved since the pandemic."

- 62% say driver behaviour either strongly disagreed or disagreed (24% strongly)
- 6% agreed it has improved.
- Younger people were more likely to disagree driver behaviour has improved (68% combined disagree, 40% strongly).
- People from regional Victoria were less likely to think driver behaviour has gotten worse (56%) than those from the city.

Passing distance

"Drivers give riders more space when overtaking than pre-pandemic."

- 54% of respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed (17% strongly)
- 11% agreed.
- Female/Gender Diverse/Non-binary people disagreed 57%.
- 15% of respondents from outside of Melbourne (regional Victoria) agreed that passing distance has improved (85% thought it had not improved).

Legal protections

"There are adequate legal protections for bike riders."

- 57% of respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed (24% strongly)
- 7% agreed.

Changes in road safety

"Select as many as you like from: More cars on the road/ More bikes on the road/ More micro-mobility devices (e.g. e-scooters) on the road, New/improved infrastructure for bike riders/ Driver attitudes/behaviour/ Rider attitudes/behaviour/ Other (please specify)."
The most common influences on the changes in road safety are perceived to be:

- more cars on road (51% of respondents)
- driver attitudes (54% of respondents).

(For further detail see Appendix 1)

Recommendations

ENFORCE EXISTING LEGISLATION

The Victorian *Road Safety (Vehicles) Regulations* under the *Road Safety Act 1986* were revised in 2021 to ensure safe passing distances were mandated as 1 metre on roads to 60 km/h and 1.5 metres on roads greater than 60 km/h. (Rule 144A commenced in **April 2021** pursuant to the Road Safety Road Rules Amendment (Minimum Passing Distance) Rules 2021).

There is some adherence to these regulations, but our survey data shows there is room for improvement in understanding and adoption of the regulations by Victorian vehicle drivers.

To inform our submission, we also contacted the Crime Statistics Agency to determine whether there have been any fines or reported incidents relating to the *minimum passing distance offence* under the above-named act. The CSA confirmed it did not have that data.

We also sought and answer to the same question from the Victoria Police Corporate Statistics Unit. No response was received in time to include it in this submission.

1. Recommendation

Enforce rule 144A of the Road Safety Road Rules 2017, known as the "metre matters" rule (1.0 metres on roads to 60 km/h, 1.5 metres on roads > than 60 km/h)

Source: Bicycle Network Survey May 2023
75 respondents
"Actual enforcement of the 1 metre rules so that driver behaviour will change."
Communication campaign about the improved distance drivers have to allow when passing cyclists on the road."

PRIORITY: URGENT

IMPLEMENTATION
Who: Victoria Police and Bicycle Network (promotional and advisory)
Barriers: Enforcement difficulty of measuring, recording and proving when the distance is breached by vehicles.
How: Police blitzes, Bicycle Network and other authority education campaigns (Vic Roads, TAC, Victoria Police) and research and funding for technology development.

DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR THE SAFETY OF VULNERABLE ROAD USERS

Responses to our survey indicated that 29% people felt unsafe on Victorian roads and did not think the Victorian Government supported them to ride bikes safely. 27% of respondents said they only felt safe sometimes. Respondents identified that improving cycling infrastructure was key to improving bike riding safety and would lead to more people cycling more often, more parents riding with their children, and more women riding bikes.

Respondents identified major roads in a number of suburbs without any lane marking for bike riders as a significant road safety problem. In response to the question "What would be the single best value for money investment that would improve cycling safety?", almost 50% of respondents identified bike lanes and network improvements to cycle paths as their top issue for rectification.

Dedicated or separated bike lanes are highly successful in preventing bike crashes. 40% of respondents to our survey called for separated or dedicated bike lanes as a priority. Another 9% identified network improvement as the issue they would most like addressed. Network improvement would include continuing bike lanes through intersections.

Victorian towns and regions have myriad bike trails. The trails are popular with locals and tourists alike, but it is easy to get lost. Location and distances between points are often poorly marked, which is a safety issue, and contributes to inexperienced people not riding bikes. A state-wide connected network of bike riding routes would have benefits for tourism in regional centres.

2. Recommendation

Improve cycling infrastructure by progressively:

2.1 Linking bike paths to create a safe, connected network of bike riding routes throughout Melbourne and regional centres.

2.2 Constructing safe shoulders on all major Victorian roads.

2.2 Allocate 10 per cent of the state's transport budget for active transport projects and commit to increasing this amount each year.

2.4 Prepare a five-year update of the Victorian Cycling Strategy, with clear and focused action plans for rolling out critical bike projects and getting Victoria back on track.

Source: Bicycle Network Survey May 2023
614 respondents
231 respondents mentioned more bikes lanes
230 respondents mentioned network improvements
"Separated and protected bike lanes. Keeps riders and drivers separate and happy."
"More pop-up bike lanes that let people safely and easily get to and from work, school, shopping, and other common destinations."

PRIORITY: HIGH

IMPLEMENTATION
Who: State and Federal governments, Bicycle Network (advisory and promotional).
Barriers: Timings, costs, commercial interests.
How: Long-term planning and funding

LOCAL BIKE INFRASTRUCTURE

Local government areas across Victoria are working to meet the needs of all vulnerable road users in their municipalities. Bicycle Network contacted 40 out of 79 local councils across rural and metropolitan Victoria for their views on road safety, particularly for bike riders. Our goal was to seek a spread of views across the state in a short timeframe. Six councils across regional and urban areas responded to a survey issued by Bicycle Network, which covered some of the questions that we asked our members. The councils provided a representative snapshot of pre- and post-pandemic bike rider habits and concerns. Two councils advised that they would prepare their own submissions, one as part of the wider Municipal Association of Victoria submission and did not respond directly to our survey. *(Appendix 2)*

Although we gained a small snapshot of responses from local government areas across the state, based on Bicycle Network's member survey data, and our knowledge of the Victorian bike riding demographic, we believe these comments and observations were representative.

Key areas of concern:

- 30km/h speed limits in local government areas where vulnerable road users are most active.
- 30km/h speed limits in local government areas where children and families walk and ride to school.
- Statewide support for local government areas working to embed cycling corridors into their local infrastructure.
- Improvements to state-owned regional roads and national highways.

3. Recommendation

Continue to fund local governments to implement their cycling strategies.

4.1 Introduce a liveable neighbourhoods fund that communities can access for local traffic calming and placemaking projects.

4.2 Support local governments to implement 30km/h speed limits in built-up areas and town centres.

4.3 Review and promote safety rules for shared paths.

Source: Bicycle Network local government survey May 2023

"…a lack of safe, direct cycling infrastructure, particularly connecting to key local trip destinations including schools, local shops, employment and recreational centres and public transport hubs, are barriers to increasing bike riding within the community."
Banyule City Council

IMPLEMENTATION
Who: Victorian Government/local governments, Bicycle Network (promotional and advisory).
Barriers: Budgets, timing, building and planning rules and regulations, community attitudes.
How: Implementing and continuing the $210 million Safe Local Roads and Streets program and rolling it out across all 79 Victorian local governments.

DRIVER ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS

Bicycle Network's Survey data shows that many bike riders feel threatened by vehicles when riding their bikes. People who have cycled in Europe report a very different attitude to bike riders. Evidence suggests a number of reasons for this, including a much greater respect for bike riders than exists in Australia. Research by Delbosc et al (2019) of Monash University shows that terminology is important. Using "People who ride bikes" instead of cyclists emphasises that people on bikes are human and has been shown to improve the care taken by drivers when passing bike riders.

4. Recommendation

Initiate and implement a state-wide campaign to improve driver attitudes and behaviours towards vulnerable road users.

Source: Bicycle Network Survey May 2023
1270 respondents
"Good ad campaign, humanising bike riders and making car drivers aware of our vulnerability."

PRIORITY: HIGH

IMPLEMENTATION
Who: Victorian Government and Bicycle Network (promotional and advisory)
Barriers: Community acceptance of poor driver behaviour, driver attitudes
How: Campaigns and education programs that promote road sharing and humanise bike riders.

BUILDING WORKS AND BIKE RIDERS

Public and private infrastructure projects and developments across Melbourne and rural and regional Victoria pose a significant risk to bike riders, particularly in high-traffic areas and at peak times of the day.
Issues include:

- large trucks on usually truck-free suburban roads
- road closures preventing bike riders from travelling along normally safe routes (either with a bike lane or with markings indicating to drivers they are a preferred route for bike riders)
- risks to bike riders from tradespersons' vehicles caused by:
  - "dooring"
  - people exiting vehicles in front of bike riders
  - narrowed roads forcing bike riders into heavy traffic because the bike lane is blocked by parked cars.

It is vital to ensure road works are safe for bike riders and this could be achieved by requiring all infrastructure development to include a risk management plan that considers bike rider and pedestrian safety, identifying the risks associated with a building project and proposing solutions that are budgeted for, implemented by the project manager and independently evaluated.

5. Recommendation

Require development and implementation of risk management plans for building sites, which consider safety measures for vulnerable road users.

5.1 Enforce speed and parking restrictions and the installation of bike lane detours around all state, commercial and domestic infrastructure development.

5.2 Enforce safety measures requiring all road surfaces around infrastructure projects to be safe and visible for use by vulnerable road users.

Source: Bicycle Network Survey May 2023
975 respondents expressed concerns about major works projects.
"Where building works and deliveries etc use bike lanes etc often there is no consideration of cyclist safety if we need to detour."
"Major works frequently don't cater for bikes and have appalling signage."
"Major works are everywhere making it very dangerous as cyclists often pushed into shared motorways in heavy traffic."

PRIORITY: URGENT

IMPLEMENTATION
Who: Victorian Government and building industry/unions, Bicycle Network (advisory)
Barriers: Cost of implementation, safety requirements, commercial impost to business.
How: Implementation and enforcement of new safety measures.

CORONERS' RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the most recent Coroner's reports into the death of a bike rider was released in November 2021. It made nine recommendations to state and federal government departments, which responded to the recommendations in February 2022. All except one recommendation was supported by the relevant government agencies.

The recommendations directed at the Victorian Government departments were only adopted at the specific intersection where Arzu Karakoc was killed.

The Coroner recommended*: "*that Secretary, Department of Transport (Victoria) review the risk and therefore appropriateness of the two sets of electronic messaging systems at the intersection of Whitehall Street and Somerville Road, which apply to pedestrians/people riding bikes and other traffic, given that if both are simultaneously green, the risk for accidents is increased.*"*

The death of Angus Collins in February 2023 could have been avoided if the recommendation supported by the Victorian Department of Transport had been adopted.

6. Recommendation

Require the State Government to make a public response that considers all recommendations made by the Coroner in response to the death of a bike rider or pedestrian across all roads and road/traffic infrastructure and building works in Victoria within 12 months.

Source: Coroner's Report November 2021
Supporting case: Department of Transport and Planning

PRIORITY: URGENT

IMPLEMENTATION
Who: Victorian Government/ Department of Transport and Planning and other road authorities.
Barriers: Cost and logistics
How: Establish processes for immediate safety responses to 'quick fixes' such as light sequences, rapid pop-up bike lanes in areas identified as dangerous until more permanent measures can be implemented.

REFORM VEHICLE DESIGN

Light vehicle reform

Recent advances in car information and communications technology have shown great promise as an aid to drivers in recognising and reacting appropriately towards vulnerable road users. These technological advances are already in vehicles, with luxury models usually the first adopters.

Australia has sought to speed up the inclusion of these safety features in the national car fleet by including them in the ANCAP 5-star rating system. 5-star rated vehicles are usually the vehicle of choice for corporate fleets (including governments). There is a strong case for accelerating the adoption of safety-enhancing technology in all vehicles.

Evidence that excessive speed is a causal factor in many of the fatal and serious injury crashes that have plagued Victoria's roads since COVID is compelling.

Intelligent speed assistance is a proven, technologically mature solution fitted in many vehicles around the world. GPS navigation has advanced to the point it can now economically enable vehicles, and drivers, to adhere to speed restrictions in place on roads, even as they vary throughout the day.

Adoption of more appropriate and safer speed limits, and compulsory fitting of ISA to all motorised vehicles, will reduce speeding markedly, benefitting all road users, but especially those more vulnerable— pedestrians and bike riders.

There has been a major improvement in vehicle detection technologies recently — principally due to the advent of autonomous cars and trucks. However, bike and pedestrian detection and recognition is not yet developed to the same standard for motor vehicles.

Already, rear-facing radars are fitted in many vehicles, alerting drivers to the presence of approaching road users, including bike riders and pedestrians and this technology is particularly helpful in reducing “dooring' incidents”.

7. Recommendation

Work with the Commonwealth to fast-track requirements for driver-assist technology for all light vehicles.

Source: Coroner’s Report November 2021
Supporting case: Department of Transport and Planning

PRIORITY: URGENT

IMPLEMENTATION
Who: Commonwealth Government, Victorian Government, Vic Roads, TAC.
Barriers: Cost and compliance.
How: Review and extend existing standards, law reform.

Heavy vehicle reform

In Australia, 23 per cent of bike rider fatalities in an average year involve a heavy vehicle, a statistic that has not changed for 20 years. In many cases, a collision occurs where bike riders are travelling through an intersection and are struck by turning heavy vehicles.

Drivers of freight vehicles remain susceptible to blind spots and people walking and riding are often not aware of where they are.

Requiring compulsory fitting of devices for indirect vision and monitoring/detecting other road users (additive safety devices) on vehicles over 4.5 tonnes is essential to reducing deaths of vulnerable road users by trucks. Australian Design Rules (ADR) already cover some of these devices for new vehicles, but there is room for further improvement.

Side underrun protection rails were recommended by the Coroner in 2021 in response to the 2017 death of cyclist Arzu Karakok. Their implementation was supported in the Discussion Paper for the National Road Safety Strategy (2021-2030) but to date they have not been included in the regulations governing heavy-vehicle design.

Design standards and equipment available for reducing blind spots include: lowering heavy vehicle driver cabin, more windows and mirrors and reconfiguring passenger and driver doors, driver-assist technology that takes out human error such as left turn warning systems, brake assist and lane keep technology, side under-run protection rails.

The implementation of a driver training program for all heavy vehicle drivers in Victoria would ensure their knowledge and awareness about safely sharing the roads with bike riders, motor cyclists and pedestrians. The Amy Gillet Foundation states that heavy vehicles represent 4% of all vehicles on the road but are involved in 50% of fatal cyclist and pedestrian crashes that occur in urban areas.

The course should include an on-road component to increase drivers’ understanding and empathy for vulnerable road users. This course is mandatory for all heavy vehicle drivers in the UK eg. The Construction Logistics and Community Safety Program has led to a

significant reduction in accidents between heavy vehicles and vulnerable road users. The Amy Gillet Foundation has developed a successful program for 'Sharing Roads Safely'.

In June 2022, VicRoads issued Best Practice Guidance "Safety Essentials: Accommodating Pedestrians and Bicycle Riders at Temporary Road Works" and suggested that companies involved in construction provide further training for drivers regarding vulnerable road users.

The VicRoads website suggests trainee truck drivers read the Victorian Bus and Truck Drivers Handbook to understand what is required to drive these vehicles. The handbook mentions bike riders once and motorcyclists three times.

8. Recommendation

Work with the Commonwealth to fast-track requirements for driver-assist technology for all heavy vehicles

8.1 Mandate equipment and standards that include blind-spot reduction design for all heavy vehicles.

8.2 Mandate side under-run protection rails for heavy vehicles.

8.3 Implement compulsory driver training program of all heavy vehicle drivers for the safety of vulnerable road users.

Source: Coroner's Report November 2021
Supporting case: Department of Transport and Planning

PRIORITY: URGENT

IMPLEMENTATION
Who: Commonwealth Government, Victorian Government, Vic Roads, TAC
Barriers: Cost and compliance
How: Review and extend existing standards, law reform

Appendix 1

Bicycle Network member and friend advocacy survey, May 2023

We surveyed our database of 70,000+ members and friends to gather views for our submission to the Victorian Parliamentary *Inquiry into road safety behaviours for vulnerable road users*.

We received 3059 responses.

Our request for their support read:

> At Bicycle Network, we believe that physical activity is vital for a happy, healthy life. It's our mission to make it easier for everyone to ride a bike regularly.
>
> To help our advocacy efforts in Victoria in 2023, we'd love it if you could please take the time to complete this members' survey, which we will use to inform our submission to the *Victorian Parliamentary inquiry into the impact of road safety behaviours on vulnerable road users*. The Parliamentary committee will investigate how road safety behaviours have changed during and after the pandemic, and consider the impact these changes have had on vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists, motorcycle riders, children 7 and under, older people and mobility device users.
>
> We want to hear what's most important to you so we can create the best possible submission and maximise our impact on the improvement of bike riding conditions.
>
> Thank you.
> **Bicycle Network**

We asked respondents to consider their pre, during and post-pandemic responses to the survey based on the below timelines:

1. Pre COVID - prior to March 2020
2. During COVID March 2020 to December 2021
3. Post COVID - Jan 22 –May 2023

Definitions

Young people: 30 years old and under

Inner City: respondents from the following LGAs: Yarra, Melbourne and Port Phillip

Regional: respondents from the following LGAs: Alpine, Ararat, Ballarat, Bass Coast, Baw Baw, Benalla, Buloke, Campaspe, Central Goldfields, Colac-Otway, East Gippsland, Gannawarra, Glenelg, Golden Plains, Greater Bendigo, Greater Geelong, Greater Shepparton, Hepburn, Hindmarsh, Horsham, Indigo, Latrobe, Macedon Ranges, Mansfield, Melton, Mildura, Mitchell, Moira, Mornington Peninsula, Mount Alexander, Moyne, Murrindindi, Nillumbik, Northern Grampians, South Gippsland, Surf Coast, Wangaratta, Wellington, Yarra Ranges.

Rider safety (and perception of)

Table 1 – Responses to the prompt "riding has gotten safer since the pandemic."

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree or disagree	Agree or Strongly Agree
Total (2348 responses)	17%	41%	58%	12%
Males (1662)	15%	41%	56%	12%
Female / Gender Diverse / Non-Binary (664)	21%	41%	62%	10%
Inner City (531)	17%	35%	52%	16%
Regional (388)	16%	43%	59%	8%
≤30yo (97)	22%	37%	59%	18%
31-50yo (743)	19%	38%	57%	13%
51+yo (1522)	15%	41%	56%	10%

Table 2 - Responses to the prompt "Generally speaking, do you feel safe riding on the roads?"

	No	Sometimes	Yes	Other
Total (2352 responses)	29%	37%	25%	9%
Male (1663)	27%	36%	28%	9%
Female / Gender Diverse / Non-Binary (668)	35%	38%	18%	9%
Inner City (537)	26%	40%	25%	9%
Regional (388)	27%	37%	26%	11%
≤30yo (100)	23%	53%	13%	11%
30-50yo (732)	31%	39%	22%	7%
50+ (1513)	29%	35%	27%	10%

Causes of changes to people's perceptions of rider safety

Table 3 - Responses to the prompt "Driver behaviour has improved since the pandemic"

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Combined disagree	Agree or Strongly Agree
Total (2349 responses)	24%	38%	62%	6%
Male (1662)	23%	38%	61%	6%
Female / Gender Diverse / Non-Binary (665)	28%	36%	64%	4%
Inner City (534)	27%	37%	64%	5%
Regional (387)	20%	36%	56%	7%
≤30yo (98)	40%	28%	68%	7%
30-50yo (741)	29%	37%	66%	4%
50+ (1524)	21%	38%	59%	6%

Table 4 - Responses to the prompt "Drivers give riders more space when overtaking than pre-pandemic"

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree or disagree	Agree or Strongly Agree
Total (2349 responses)	17%	37%	54%	11%
Male (1661)	16%	37%	53%	12%
Female / Gender Diverse / Non-Binary (665)	20%	37%	57%	8%
Inner City (533)	17%	37%	54%	9%
Regional (388)	14%	35%	49%	15%
≤30yo (98)	24%	30%	54%	10%
31-50yo (743)	19%	36%	55%	8%
50+ (1522)	16%	37%	53%	12%

Table 5 - Responses to the prompt "There are adequate legal protections for bike riders"

	Strongly Disagree	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree or disagree**	**Agree or Strongly Agree**
Total (2350)	24%	33%	57%	7%
Male (1654)	22%	34%	56%	8%
Female / Gender Diverse / Non-Binary (663)	28%	32%	60%	5%
Inner City (530)	27%	33%	60%	5%
Regional (385)	22%	33%	55%	8%
≤30yo (98)	34%	25%	59%	5%
30-50yo (729)	30%	31%	61%	5%
50+ (1502)	20%	35%	55%	7%

Table 6 – Responses to the prompt "Which of the following have contributed to changes in road safety you've observed?" (2352 responses)

More cars on the road	More bikes on the road	More micro-mobility devices (e.g. e-scooters) on the road	New/improved infrastructure for bike riders	Driver attitudes/ behaviour	Rider attitudes/ behaviour
51%	34%	36%	28%	54%	20%

Changes to improve cycling safety

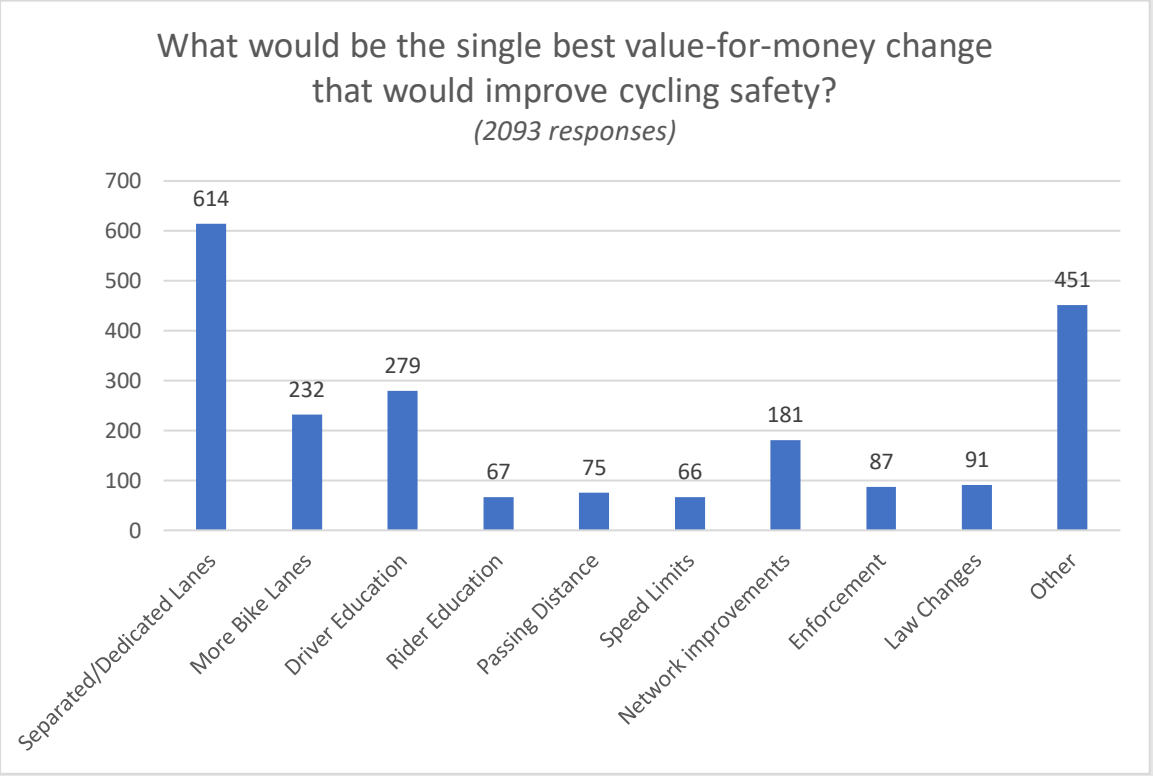

Figure 1 – Categorised responses from the question "What would be the single best value-for-money change that would improve cycling safety?"

Note – many answers prescribed multiple changes, we took their first answer.

Category definitions

Separated/dedicated lanes – More and improved protected lanes/Off-road paths separated paths, "dedicated" cycling infrastructure.

More bike lanes – more routes to ride bikes but don't mention separation, i.e. painted lanes or more lines.

Driver education – education of drivers, such as in license tests, with ad campaigns, including campaigns to improve attitudes and humanise riders.

Rider education – education of bike riders around road rules and safety.

Passing distance – both enforcement of the actual rule and education of its existence and how to abide by it.

Sample answers:

- **"***Actual enforcement of the 1 metre rule so that driver behaviour will change."*
- *"Communication campaign about the improved distance drivers have to allow when passing cyclists on a road."*

Speed limits – reduction of limits and slowing drivers.

Network improvements – better planned bike network, bike lanes not ending suddenly, better connections between suburbs/places.

Enforcement – enforcement of existing road and traffic laws, other than passing distance which has been kept separate.

Law changes - Changes to laws & higher penalties to drivers. Implied liability for larger vehicle in incident accounted for 44 of these responses. changes to other laws such as give way.

Sample answers:

- *"Presumed Liability laws - its a must - there is no argument."*
- *"Changing legislation to make vehicle drivers liable until proven otherwise for any collision with vulnerable road users."*

Other – popular responses included:

- removing on street parking
- separate green lights for bike riders
- disabling mobile phone access in vehicles
- riding on footpaths becoming legal
- cheaper/free bike lights and camera to put on bikes
- improved path/road surface and maintenance for bike lanes
- more spend on public transport/integration with bikes
- rider visibility (bright clothing/lights)
- making driving more expensive (taxes, road charges)
- limits and restrictions to e-scooters and non-pedalling motorised e-bikes.

Significant differences were identified in responses from regional respondents.

There were many comments about wider shoulders/verges on roads, better maintained roads and sides of roads.

Sample answers:

- *"On regional roads wider and clearly marked shoulders with bicycle lane markers and signposts."*
- *"Dedicated bike lanes and/or widening shoulders on regional roads."*

Appendix 2

SUMMARY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

Bicycle Network contacted 40 local councils across rural and metropolitan Victoria. Our goal was to seek a spread of views across the state in a short timeframe. Six councils across regional and urban areas responded to a survey issued by Bicycle Network, which covered some of the questions that we asked our members. The councils provided a representative snapshot of pre- and post-pandemic bike rider habits and concerns. Two councils advised that they would prepare their own submissions, one as part of the wider Municipal Association of Victoria submission and did not respond directly to our survey.

Banyule City Council

Most bike riders in the north-eastern metropolitan municipality ride for recreation, many of them on trails. Bicycle Networks Super Counts conducted pre-pandemic — 2010 (1154) to 2017 (1719) — showed an increase in commuter bike riders. Commuter bike rider numbers counted on Super Tuesday in 2020 reached 1576, a post-COVID decline, which was likely attributed to work from home arrangements. Daily bike riders in the municipality during the pandemic numbered 767 in 2000 and 612 in 2021. The 2022 Banyule Household Survey shows that 48.4% of the municipality owns a bike; 88.5% of these are children.
Driver attitudes and behaviours are of increasing concern in the area post-pandemic.

Key comments: *"Around primary schools ... instances of speeding; driving through pedestrian crossings against red lights/stop signs and conflict over car parking have increased markedly. These changes are being observed by school-crossing supervisors and are also the basis of community complaints."*
"Banyule is a key location for the North East Link Project, the largest transport infrastructure project in Victoria ... Crashes are already occurring on arterial roads with narrow carriageways (ie Rosanna Road, Heidelberg) where traffic and cyclists are forced to share space. Heavy vehicle volumes will continue to increase as tunnelling and construction gets underway, with 60 trucks per hour expected to exit the works site at the peak of construction. The project is not expected to be complete until 2030."

Road and traffic conditions are considered major impediments to safe cycling in the community.

"Respondents to the BikeSpot 2020 engagement project (a council-led survey) nominated 182 locations within Banyule, of which only nine were considered to be 'safe spots'. Of those considered unsafe, key issues included poor surfaces (18%); dangerous intersections (16%), no bicycle lanes (14%) and cycle lane ending (6%). Other nominated issues included poor driver behaviour, traffic speed and too much traffic. These results were reinforced by feedback gathered during the Banyule Bicycle Strategy community engagement process that saw safe cycling paths/connections, safe cycling lanes on road, safe intersections and crossing points as key areas for improvement."
"The 2022 Banyule Household survey asked respondents to nominate factors that may encourage additional cycling. The most nominated factors were more bike paths/lanes (30.3%); improved safety (20.8%); improved connectivity (13.9%) and better lighting on paths (13.9%).
Infrastructure is considered by the community to be key to encouraging increased bike riding.
"*The Banyule Bicycle Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2027 acknowledges that a lack of safe, direct cycling infrastructure particularly connecting to key local trip destinations including*

schools, local shops, employment and recreational centres and public transport hubs are barriers to increasing bike riding within the community. The action plan includes initiatives to assess the feasibility of the existing local bicycle network and undertake safe access audits to all of the primary and secondary schools within the municipality."

Key actions:
In the immediate term Banyule City Council is prioritizing improving the wayfinding and line-marking for key sections of the Banyule local bicycle network.
Long-term, the Council's strategic ambitions are to embed walking and cycling as key elements of sustainable neighbourhoods. The Banyule Bicycle Strategy action plan also includes initiatives to advocate for greater State Government support to deliver Strategic Cycling Corridors (C1 – primary – and C2 – main – routes) within the municipality. However, Council acknowledges that there is significant work to be done improving conditions for safe cycling and walking within local areas. A challenge for us will be to undertake this work in a low-funding environment with the major projects as a backdrop.

Kingston City Council
The large municipality in Melbourne's southeastern suburbs reports that more recreational and commuter bike riders are active in the community since the end of the pandemic. The City reports a greater demand for non-motorised travel and an elevation in speed and aggressive driver behaviour post-pandemic.

Key comments:
"Speeds - Speed and aggressive impatient driving have elevated."
"Traffic conditions – congestion and lack of sharing the road from the drivers."

Key actions:
The City of Kingston Walking and Cycling Plan promotes active travel modes such as bike riding and behavior change from cycling as a leisure option to a transport mode. Its goals are to encourage people to cycle to work, provide education within schools to encourage children to ride to school and to "allocate more road space to walking and cycling". Longer-term goals include upgraded cycling infrastructure, a focus on bike routes, safe bike paths, that are connected and accessible; provision of more cycle parking on-street, at stations, and workplaces; and improved wayfinding and signage.

Bass Coast Shire Council
Most bike riders in the regional south-eastern municipality ride for recreation. The numbers of these riders increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, but have returned to pre-pandemic levels. The Council says bike riders report road conditions as being their main concern in the area. Drivers often fail to, or are unable to leave one metre of space beside bike riders when passing.

Driver attitudes are of increasing concern in the area, post pandemic.

Key comments: *"With an increase in population post-pandemic, we are seeing more motorists who are not driving to the conditions, and are unfamiliar with our road network."*

Key actions: Council has recently adopted an active transport strategy, which includes a $44 million investment in a Tracks and Trails network. The Council's integrated transport Strategy is due to commence in 2023/24 and will focus on road safety outcomes

Shire of Macedon Ranges
The central Victorian regional town reports that it did not experience any major changes in bike riding activities pre, during or post-pandemic. Driver speeds, traffic conditions and road conditions are the main reported barriers to bike riding in the area.

The Shire is constructing a $11.24 million, 24km Shared Trail Project for walking, running, low-volume cycling, and commuting. The project is expected to take approximately two years to build and is supported by the Victorian Government through the Crisis Committee of Cabinet – Infrastructure Stimulus Fund.

Key actions:
Council officers are investigating new potential cycling routes as part ofdelivering key actions within the 2017-2027 Council Plan to plan, renew and build new footpaths and cycling paths to improve access and community connections and respond to community's desire for safer walking and cycling opportunities.

As part of the draft Mobility and Road Safety Strategy and its 10-year action plan, Council will continue to invest in safer cycling and walking facilities as well as looking into opportunities to reduce speed limits in areas of high pedestrian and cycling usage.

Golden Plains Shire Council
The council in Bannockburn, 88km southwest of Melbourne, reports that due to the municipality's geographical make up and the distances between townships, commuting is not a common practice for adults, only children to and from local schools. Increased bike riding during the COVID-19 pandemic was largely comprised of families, but there has been a marked decline since adults returned to work.

Key comments:
Local townships report concerns about driver speeds along VicRoads roads that children and families use to commute to school.
"*This is a concern given these townships are small and schools are located on these main roads. Families are not able to access the school through any other direction. This feedback also relates to the roads not being wide enough to allow for a 'safe' bike or walking lane.*"

Key actions:
Council now has an awareness of the need and want of the local community for outdoor riding infrastructure. Council is also completing a Tracks and Trails strategy to identify existing and missing trail infrastructure and assess the needs and wants of the community. This strategy will inform the next 10 years for infrastructure and development priorities.

Gippsland Shire Council
This large municipality in the state's southeast is a popular tourist region. The Council says bike riding is predominantly undertaken along rail trails but did not discuss bike riding on its major tourist roads, either pre or post pandemic. The Council says its rail trails were particularly popular with people during the COVID pandemic for their daily exercise. Driver behaviour is of some concern in the region, but the council has discussed this within its own submission to the inquiry.

Key comments:
"With greater access and promotion of cycling on Rail Trails, for example the opening of the extension of the Great Southern Rail Trail between Nyora and Leongatha, linking some of our

highest populated towns and proximity to southeast Melbourne, it is likely that there has been an increase in bike riding within our communities."
"Most behaviours are anecdotally perceived relate to driver behaviour, rather than rider behaviour. Council made a separate submission into the inquiry which references this."
"Safety issues are provided by the community in general regarding specific locations. They reference things such as road conditions and maintenance, road crossing points, speed zones, etc."

Key actions:
South Gippsland has invested in the extension of the Great Southern Rail Trail as a shared trail that links its communities through the Shire. This extension has seen the GSRT section now open post pandemic between Nyora and Leongatha. (35km). The whole GSRT links Nyora through to Port Welshpool. It is currently being extended in the east from Welshpool to Yarram and will 135km long once completed.

Mornington Peninsula Shire
While the Shire did not respond directly to our survey, it advised that it was making its own submission as part of the MAV's submission.

Key comments:
"Most significant observation is that even through the COVID19 lockdown periods over 2020 and 2021 when traffic volumes for considerable periods were lower, the number of VR (vulnerable road) user casualties remained consistently similar over 2020 and 2021 to before COVID19 when traffic volumes were higher."

"Based on available data for 2022 the number of VR user casualties appear to be consistent to what occurred during COVID19 period."

"The Shire facilitated the State's outdoor dining program in response to COVID19 and found it 'necessary' to introduce 'speed limit reductions for vehicles to safely travel close to outdoor dining at the edge of roads'."

Key recommendations:
There may be a need to improve the road network through investigating in more detail the VR crash types and locations during the COVID-19 period.

Department of Transport and Planning make 30 km/h a regulatory speed limit for supporting safer places for active transport and outdoor dining.

Mildura Rural City Council.
The Council, a regional municipality in northwestern Victoria, advised that it was preparing a submission to the Inquiry and had reached out to its relevant stakeholder groups requesting feedback. Responses from the municipality's Disability Access Advisory Committee reported post-pandemic driver impatience at peak times at busy intersections.

Key comments:
The Council reported comments about poor driver behaviour.

"*Non-compliance of some drivers to the 40km/h school zone, some tailgating and even flashing lights to push the compliant driver to a higher speed*."

Drivers were reported as "*not stopping at the pedestrian crossing*" and "*driving the wrong way in lanes*".

Key actions:

The council has improved safety in its CBD with a 30km/h speed limit that has been well received by disability advocates.

CONCLUSIONS:
Although this is a small snapshot of local government areas across the state, based on Bicycle Network's member survey data, and our knowledge of the Victorian bike riding demographic, we believe these comments and observations are representative.
Key recommendations:

- 30km/h speed limits in local government areas where vulnerable road users are most active.
- 30km/h speed limits in local government areas where children and families walk and ride to school.
- State-wide support for local government areas working to embed cycling corridors into their local infrastructure.

Appendix 3

BICYCLE NETWORK INSURANCE REPORT
2016-2023

Bicycle Network offers its members premium bike riding insurance. Our membership fees include medical coverage, income protection and third-party damages.

Other insurance benefits include non-Medicare costs, home-help expenses, replacement bike hire and a chauffeur plan. We also support our members by providing riders' rights advice and help recovering costs from a third party.

To inform our submission to the *Parliamentary Inquiry into road safety behaviours for vulnerable road users* (May 3023) we analysed the insurance data collected from all claims between 1 July 2016 to 30 April 2023, to gain a picture of road safety behaviours as they affected bike riders.

Bicycle Network insurance data report
1 July 2017 – 30 April 2023

SUMMARY

Of all the claims on Victorian Roads in the above period:

- 53% resulted in broken/fractured bones (12% of these injuries were to the head/neck region)
- 11% resulted in muscular injuries
- 5% resulted in cuts/grazes and contusions

TOTAL CLAIMS	
2016-2017	47
2017-2018	97
2018-2019	81
2019-2020	90
2020-2021	74
2021-2022	79
2022-2023 (30 April)	85

Bicycle Network Online Crash reporter
Bicycle Network introduced an online bike crash reporting tool for its members in November 2019.

The tool, established on the Bicycle Network website, aimed to address lack of data about the nature and causes of bike rider crashes in Australia.
Bicycle Network members report crashes for insurance and medical purposes, but if a crash doesn't result in an injury, often it is not reported.

In the years since this tool was launched, we have used it to:

- Build a map of hotspots
- Assess types and causes of crashes
- Understand injuries caused to cyclists

Ultimately, our goal has been to inform our advice to infrastructure authorities, policy makers and other organisations working with us to see more people riding bikes safely on our roads.
Bicyclenetwork.com.au/crashreporter

Data gathered since the tool was established shows that most bike riding accidents occur within 10km of people's homes, most bike riders who reported accidents rode their bikes "a few times per week" and most were on "road bikes".

Prior to the launch of the tool, between July 2018 to June 2019, 290 bike rider crashes were reported to Bicycle Network by members.

This included:
169 injuries, equalling 58 per cent of cases

- 30% torso fractures
- 21% limb fractures
- 15% skin injuries
- 15% head injuries

92% of all crashes were in Victoria (most Bicycle Network members live in Victoria)
61% cent of people who reported crashes were male
47% of crashes involved a motor vehicle
38% per cent were rider only
9% of crashes reported were car "doorings"

Data collated for inquiry
To meet the parameters of the *Parliamentary Inquiry into road safety behaviours for vulnerable road users,* Bicycle Network viewed its crash report and insurance data with reference to the following timelines
For reporting purposes and to align data with our Bicycle Network Member and Friends Advocacy Survey May 2023 (See Appendix 1) we have used the following dates in the collation of insurance data from Bicycle Network's Online Crash Reporter:

Pre-pandemic – prior to February 2020
During pandemic – March 2020 to December 2021
Post-pandemic – January 2022 to current

PRE-PANDEMIC
Between January 2019 and March 2020 (15 months), **243** bike riders reported crashes on our website.
<u>Distance from home:</u>

- 76 riders reported being less than 3km from home
- 59 reported being 3-5km from home
- 43 said they were 5-10km from home
- 54 reported being 10km or more from home

<u>Gender:</u>

- A total of 69% of these riders were male

<u>Parties involved:</u>

- 35% reported that a vehicle was involved in their crash
- 24% reported a near-miss with a vehicle
- 40% said no motor vehicle was involved and the crashes involved falls, collisions with other bikes, pedestrians and stationary objects.

Purpose of travel:

- 56% reported that they were commuting to school, work or university
- 2% were participating in an event or organised ride
- 16% were bike riding for exercise/sport/recreation
- 4.3% were running errands

DURING THE PANDEMIC

Between March 2020 and December 2021 (17 months), **244** bike riders reported crashes on our website.

Distance from home:

- 86 riders reported being less than 3km from home
- 51 reported being 3-5km from home
- 53 said they were 5-10km from home
- 53 reported being 10km or more from home

Gender:

- A total of 69.7% of these riders were male

Parties involved:

- 41% reported that a vehicle was involved in their crash
- 18% reported a near-miss with a vehicle
- 40.5% said no motor vehicle was involved and the crashes involved falls, collisions with other bikes, pedestrians and stationary objects.

Purpose of travel:

- 33.6% reported that they were commuting to school, work or university
- 0% were participating in an event or organised ride
- 54% were bike riding for exercise/sport/recreation
- 2.4% were running errands

POST-PANDEMIC

Between January 2022 and May 2023 (16 months), **139** bike riders reported crashes on our website.

Distance from home:

- 55 riders reported being less than 3km from home
- 24 reported being 3-5km from home
- 28 said they were 5-10km from home
- 32 reported being 10km or more from home

Gender:

- A total of 74% of these riders were male

Parties involved:

- 35.9% reported that a vehicle was involved in their crash
- 21.58% reported a near-miss with a vehicle
- 35% said no motor vehicle was involved and the crashes involved falls, collisions with other bikes, pedestrians and stationary objects.

Purpose of travel:

- 50.3% reported that they were commuting to school, work or university
- 2% were participating in an event or organised ride
- 33.6% were bike riding for exercise/sport/recreation
- 6% were running errands

CONCLUSION:
Bicycle Network's Online Crash Reporter found similar numbers of bike riding crashes occurred pre- and during the COVID-19 pandemic and that bike riders who reported crashes were a similar distance from home when their accidents occurred.
The obvious, and most significant, change was to the numbers of people commuting to work. The unexpected element was that similar numbers of crashes with vehicles were reported at a time when there were less vehicles on the road.

Additional references

2023 Report by the Bureau of Infrastructure and Transport Research Economics

Recommendations from the inquest into Arzu Karakoc

Article 185 of the *Wegenverkeerswet* (Road Law))
Duurzaam veilig