Premier's Council for Active Living

Regional Bike Planning Study: Port Macquarie

Final Report
This report takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our client. It is not intended for and should not be relied upon by any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revision</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Filename</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Draft 1</td>
<td>25/05/09</td>
<td>0001Port Macquarie Draft Report.doc</td>
<td>First draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
<td>08/07/09</td>
<td>0005Port Macquarie Final Report.doc</td>
<td>Issue incorporating PCAL comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Prepared by**
- John Hanlon / Josh Milston

**Checked by**
- Colin Henson

**Approved by**
- Colin Henson
Contents

Executive Summary i

1 Introduction 1
   1.1 Project Background 1
   1.2 Objectives 1
   1.3 Study Area 1
   1.4 Study Methodology 5
   1.5 Data Collection 5

2 Consultation 7
   2.1 Stakeholder Workshops 7
   2.2 Other Consultation 8

3 Cycling in Port Macquarie – Current Status 11
   3.1 Current Cycling Levels 11
   3.2 Crash and Theft Data 12
   3.3 Current Status of Cycling Infrastructure 13

4 Opportunities and Constraints Analysis 17
   4.1 Constraints and Issues 17
   4.2 Opportunities 20

5 Package of Actions 22
   5.1 Infrastructure Improvements 22
   5.2 Non-infrastructure Initiatives 33
   5.3 Suggested Changes to How to Prepare a Bike Plan – An Easy 3 Stage Guide 42

6 Conclusions 44

Tables

Table 1 Cycling Crash Data (2004 – 2008)
Table 2 Port Macquarie Bike Theft Data (2005 – 2008)
Table 3 Infrastructure Improvements - Summary
Table 4 Infrastructure Improvements - Priorities
Table 5 Non-infrastructure Initiatives - Summary
Table 6 Non-infrastructure Initiatives - Priorities

Figures

Figure 1 Port Macquarie – Regional Location
Figure 2 Port Macquarie – Town Map
Figure 3 Journey to Work Mode Split – Port Macquarie
Figure 4 Journey to Work – Comparison with Similar Towns
Figure 5 Port Macquarie Administrative Road Hierarchy
Figure 6 15 and 30 Minute Cycling Catchment
Figure 7  Infrastructure Improvements – Location Map
Figure 8  Port Macquarie Urban Mountain Bike Park – Staging Plan
Figure 9  Sovereign Hills Masterplan
Figure 10 Googik Heritage Track – Port Macquarie Section
Figure 11 One Car Less Site Audit Checklist

**Photographs**

Photograph 1  Examples of Cycling Infrastructure  
Photograph 2  Example of Incomplete Cycling Infrastructure  
Photograph 3  Examples of Off-road Paths  
Photograph 4  Examples of Coastal Walkway  
Photograph 5  Examples of Bike Parking
Executive Summary

Arup was appointed by the NSW Bike Plan project team jointly lead by the RTA and the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) under the leadership of the Premier’s Council for Active Living (PCAL) to undertake a regional bike planning study for Port Macquarie, a major regional centre on the mid north coast of NSW.

The outcomes of the study involve a combination of specific initiatives for the Port Macquarie area, as well as generic and transferable initiatives for inclusion in the new NSW BikePlan. The overall aim of these initiatives is to enhance cycling levels, both in Port Macquarie and other regional centres, and promote cycling as a more accepted form of transport.

Port Macquarie has a population of approximately 39,000 people. Most of the commercial activity occurs in the town centre, supplemented by a number of small neighbourhood shopping centres. The town is set in an attractive coastal location and as a consequence is a significant domestic tourism destination. It is also a place for lifestyle change or retirement and has a significant function in tertiary education and healthcare.

The current level of bicycle journey to work in Port Macquarie is on par with the NSW state average of 0.9%. This is significantly lower than all other Australian states and territories except Tasmania and also lower than most similar regional towns in NSW such as Ballina and Forster.

Extensive consultation with a number of different parties and individuals occurred throughout the study (refer to Section 2). Two stakeholder workshops were held in Port Macquarie to identify key issues surrounding the existing cycling network and barriers discouraging people from cycling. The workshops also generated a wide range of ideas on how to increase cycling levels.

The following constraints and issues, specific to Port Macquarie, were identified as a basis for developing specific actions (refer to Section 4.1 for more detailed discussion):

- no disincentive to drive
- lack of visible cycling presence
- incomplete cycling infrastructure
- small population
- nowhere for tourists to cycle
- sharp decline in cycling to school

A number of opportunities, specific to Port Macquarie, were also identified including (refer to Section 4.2 for more detailed discussion):

- short trip distances
- employer programs
- tourism and cycle tourism
- high number of sporting cyclists
- governance arrangement
The study identified a number of relatively low cost infrastructure actions that can be implemented in the short term, with potentially significant benefits in terms of increasing cycling usage:

### Table ES.1 High Priority Infrastructure Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Report Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1 Install new bike parking in Port Macquarie CBD</td>
<td>Section 5.1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2 Designate appropriate existing footpaths as shared paths</td>
<td>Section 5.1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3 Complete high priority ‘missing links’ on existing cycle routes</td>
<td>Section 5.1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4 Port Macquarie Urban Mountain Bike Park – feasibility study</td>
<td>Section 5.1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A6 Coastal Walkway – improvements to permit cyclists on existing sections</td>
<td>Section 5.1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study identified a number of relatively low cost non-infrastructure actions that can be implemented in the short term, with potentially significant benefits in terms of increasing cycling usage. These have been ranked in order of priority in the following table:

### Table ES.2 High Priority Non-Infrastructure Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Report Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B3 Development of Port Macquarie Cycling Map</td>
<td>Section 5.2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5 Extension of NCAHS ‘One Car Less’ program to other employers</td>
<td>Section 5.2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2 Review of local planning policies</td>
<td>Section 5.2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B8 Formation of Local Bicycle User Group (BUG)</td>
<td>Section 5.2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4 Survey of National Ride to Work Day participants</td>
<td>Section 5.2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B6 Community bike ride during Ironman week</td>
<td>Section 5.2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1 Local Sustainable Transport Co-ordinator / Transport Working Group</td>
<td>Section 5.2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B7 Extension of school bicycle training programs</td>
<td>Section 5.2.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many of these cross-sectoral non-infrastructure actions are transferable to other areas of NSW for inclusion in the new NSW BikePlan.

In addition to these infrastructure and non-infrastructure actions, Section 5.3 contains recommendations for improvements to the RTA guidelines “How to Prepare a Bike Plan – An Easy 3 Stage Guide” (2002).
1 Introduction

Arup was appointed by the NSW Bike Plan project team jointly lead by the RTA and the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) under the leadership of the Premier’s Council for Active Living (PCAL) to undertake a regional bike planning study for Port Macquarie, a major regional centre on the mid north coast of NSW. The objective of the study is to develop a range of actions to increase cycling levels in the town. The actions presented in this report are a combination of infrastructure improvements and non-infrastructure initiatives, with responsibility for implementation across a range of stakeholders.

1.1 Project Background

PCAL is currently preparing a new plan for cycling in NSW. It will replace the 1999 NSW Government document Action for Bikes: BikePlan 2010. The plan will encourage more people across the state to use bicycles as a clean and healthy transport choice, particularly for short trips.

The BikePlan is a whole-of-government initiative led by a joint project team of the RTA and the Department of the Environment & Climate Change. The project team is assisted by representatives from a number of NSW Government agencies who form the steering group for the BikePlan: PCAL, Department of Education & Training, Ministry of Transport, NSW Health, Department of Planning, RTA NSW Centre for Road Safety, Department of the Arts, Sport & Recreation, Department of Local Government, and Department of Premier & Cabinet.

Six similar sub-regional studies are being conducted concurrently across NSW as part of the PCAL NSW BikePlan – five in Sydney and the other in Dubbo.

The outcome of this study is a combination of specific initiatives for the Port Macquarie area and also generic initiatives for inclusion in the new NSW BikePlan. The latter will assist the continuous improvement of NSW Government bicycle planning, as well as assisting local councils.

Recommendations will be given on governance arrangements for partnerships able to implement initiatives with limited direct government support, and complement (rather than override) existing whole-of-LGA local bike plans.

1.2 Objectives

The three broad objectives of the study are to:

- Identify specific cycling encouragement initiatives for the Port Macquarie area;
- Generate transferable ideas for the wider promotion of bicycle use in country centres via the NSW BikePlan; and
- Highlight required improvements and updates to the RTA guidelines “How to Prepare a Bike Plan – An Easy 3 Stage Guide” (2002).

1.3 Study Area

Port Macquarie is a major regional centre on the mid north coast of NSW with a population of approximately 39,000 people (refer to Figure 1). Port Macquarie lies completely within one local government area – Port Macquarie-Hastings Council (“Council”).
The study area for this project covers the town of Port Macquarie as shown on Figure 2 (Note: existing cycling infrastructure is not shown on the map - ‘Regional cycleways’ and ‘S94 Cycleways’ - because there are few continuous cycling facilities). The town centre is located at the estuary of the Hastings River. The Pacific Ocean forms the eastern boundary of the town and the Hastings River forms the northern boundary. The outermost suburbs are approximately 6km from the town centre.
Most of the commercial activity occurs in the town centre, supplemented by a number of small neighbourhood shopping centres. There is one major regional shopping centre, Settlement City, approximately 1km to the west of the town centre. Tourist accommodation is concentrated in the town centre and along the coastal strip. Industrial zones are located on Lake Road between Ocean Drive and Oxley Highway, and on Hastings River Drive. Port Macquarie Base Hospital is located off the Oxley Highway 4km to the southwest of the town centre. The southern suburbs are primarily residential in nature.

Port Macquarie is set in an attractive coastal location and as a consequence is a significant domestic tourism destination (660,000 overnight visitors p.a.). It is also a place for lifestyle change or retirement.

Port Macquarie has a significant function in tertiary education and healthcare. The Port Macquarie - Hastings Council Community Profile states that, according to the 2006 Census, the three most popular occupation sectors for the entire LGA are:

- Retail Trade (4,865 persons or 19%)
- Health & Community Services (3,430 persons or 14%)
- Construction (2,375 persons or 9%)

Port Macquarie has experienced a significant population increase over the last 25 years due to migration into the area. According to the recently released Mid North Coast Regional Strategy, the median age for the region is expected to increase from 44 years in 2006 to 55 years in 2031. At the same time the proportion of children under 15 years will decline from 19% to 14% of the regional population. For the whole of NSW, the median age is 38 years while 20% of the population is under the age of 15.

A major new town, to be known as Sovereign Hills, has been planned for an area immediately to the east of the Oxley Highway / Pacific Highway junction, some 8km from Port Macquarie town centre. The first release of residential land is expected to occur in 2009. It is the main urban release area designated under the Mid North Coast Regional Strategy.

\[\text{1 Data based on 2006 Census Community Profile (ABS)}\]
1.4 Study Methodology

The project has involved the following tasks:

- data collection and background review
- assessment of existing cycling usage in Port Macquarie
- assessment of existing cycling infrastructure in Port Macquarie
- consultation via two stakeholder workshops supplemented by other meetings and communications
- ideas exchange workshop with PCAL and consultants undertaking parallel bike planning access studies
- opportunities and constraints analysis
- development of a package of actions aimed at increasing cycling levels in Port Macquarie
- assessment and prioritisation of these actions based on criteria including the relative effects in increasing cycle usage, cost, indicative availability of funding, ease of implementation
- suggested improvements to the RTA document - How to Prepare a Bike Plan – An Easy 3 Stage Guide
- completion of this report detailing the findings

1.5 Data Collection

Relevant data has been collated and reviewed including:

- ABS Census data – Journey to work data from 2006 is further discussed in Section 3.1.
- Arup Worldwide Bicycle User Group – This worldwide user group, containing over 600 members, has provided suggestions for initiatives that could be investigated for Port Macquarie.
- Construction program of Council and RTA – A list of planned roadworks, shared paths etc related to cycling.
- Council’s planning documents and instruments – Relevant documents such as Local Environment Plan, Development Control Plans etc.
- Country Energy Powerful Health Program Overview.
- Cycle Tourism in the Hunter Region – Prepared by Arup in 2005 for the Hunter Cycling Network. It contains recommendations for increasing the level of cycle tourism in the Greater Hunter region.
- Googik Heritage Track Route Feasibility Study – Plan for a 7km major walking/cycling loop track developed by NPWS. The route would link to key destinations such as the Lake Road industrial area, some schools, sporting facilities, Port Macquarie Base Hospital and housing areas.
- Greater Port Macquarie Tourism Development Plan – This plan was prepared by Port Macquarie-Hastings Council and the Greater Port Macquarie Tourism Association in 2006. The plan contains no reference to cycling.
- Hastings Valley Mountain Bike Riders – November 2008 submission to NSW BikePlan. The submission describes the current status of cycling in Port Macquarie, programs, groups etc, and recommendations for infrastructure, education, promotion etc.
- Manly Bike Tours - An example of a successful bike tour operation in Sydney with a website and video clips.
- Mid North Coast Regional Strategy – The strategic planning document was released by the Department of Planning in March 2009.
- North Coast Area Health Service (NCAHS) Staff Travel to Work Survey - Results of October 2008 survey including detailed results for Port Macquarie. Refer to Appendix A for NCAHS documents.
- NSW Coastline Cycleway – Long terms plans for the completion of this cycleway in the Port Macquarie region and current status of implementation. Refer to Appendix A for a map of the cycleway.
- One Car Less Program – Information regarding the program introduced by the NCAHS. This is a program whereby area health staff pledge to travel to work by a mode other than car at least once a week, including cycling. The program will commence sometime in 2009. The background information contains useful base data, incentives for cycling, recommendations etc. Refer to Appendix A for NCAHS documents.
- Port Macquarie Bike Plan – Prepared by Arup for Port Macquarie-Hastings Council in 1999. Many of the works have been implemented although funding constraints appear to be hindering implementation of the complete plan. Council are considering updating the plan in the near future.
- Port Macquarie Chamber of Commerce CBD Policy – This short plan, three pages in length, discusses parking and traffic congestion in the CBD but contains no reference to cycling.
- Ride to Work Day – Information on Port Macquarie participation in this national event.
- RTA Coffs Harbour NSW Bikeplan Workshop Notes and Mudgee Workshop Notes – Notes from two workshops held in regional centres in late 2008 including issues such as infrastructure, education, promotion etc.
- Social and demographic information about Port Macquarie – Various information sources such as the ABS Census, Port Macquarie-Hastings Council Area Community Profile and Mid North Coast Regional Strategy.

Research of nationwide and worldwide initiatives that may have relevance to the project has also been undertaken as part of this project.
2 Consultation

Community and stakeholder consultation is a key component of developing the PCAL NSW BikePlan. For this study, a stakeholder group was established that included representatives from the following organisations:

- RTA
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
- North Coast Area Health Service
- National Parks and Wildlife Service
- Tourism NSW
- NSW Coastline Cycleway (Department of Planning)
- NSW Police
- Country Energy
- Developers
- Shopping centres
- Cycling/sporting clubs
- High schools
- Bike shops
- Port Macquarie Chamber of Commerce

2.1 Stakeholder Workshops

The full list of attendees and summary notes from the two workshops are included as Appendix A.

2.1.1 Workshop 1 – March 2009

The first stakeholder workshop was held at Port Macquarie-Hastings Council on 19th March 2009.

The workshop agenda was as follows:

- Introduction to project and PCAL NSW Bikeplan
- Outline of consultation process and stakeholder workshops
- Presentation of background information such as strategic overview of cycling in Port Macquarie, current status of infrastructure and current encouragement initiatives
- Discussion session addressing:
  - barriers and opportunities
  - what is the realistic potential increase in cycling in Port Macquarie?
  - what should be the primary target groups?
  - suggested actions both infrastructure and non/infrastructure

Relevant suggestions arising from the workshop (refer to Appendix A) are further developed in the subsequent sections of this report.

2.1.2 Workshop 2 – May 2009

The second stakeholder workshop was held at Port Macquarie-Hastings Council on 8th May 2009.

The purpose of the workshop was to discuss a list of possible actions developed by Arup. The feedback from the workshop was used to refine the actions to develop the Package of Actions presented in Section 5.
2.2 Other Consultation

In addition to the two formal workshops, Arup has undertaken further consultation with other relevant stakeholders throughout the course of the project. The following highlights some of the key issues discussed and these issues are further developed in the subsequent sections of the report.

2.2.1 Port Macquarie Hastings Council

Extensive consultation was held with Port Macquarie-Hastings Council throughout the study and key issues include:

- Council is continuing to implement the shire-wide bike plan prepared in 1998-99 but implementation will take at least a further 20 years based on current Council/RTA funding levels. Available funding must be spread across the urban areas of Port Macquarie, Wauchope, Camden Haven and Kew-Kendall. The 50/50 funding arrangement constrains implementation when local councils cannot match available state government funding.

- Council are planning to conduct an audit of existing cycling routes with a view to producing a cycling map.

- A community survey of 600 residents was conducted in late 2008. It found that, “maintenance of sealed roads, car parking and providing value for ratepayers dollars” were the three highest ranking, with “footpaths and cycleways” receiving a moderate ranking.

- Council is a regional council with limited staff resources for pursuing integrated transport planning. There is currently no single staff member with overall responsibility for bicycle planning. The engineering department is responsible for constructing and maintaining cycling infrastructure whilst the road safety officer is responsible for encouragement and education programs.

- Cycling does not appear to be a significant component of Council’s approach to promoting tourism.

- Road Safety Officers are not permitted to conduct training in schools. This can only be undertaken by Department of Education consultants.

- Council sponsors the Ironman (April) and Half Ironman (November) by having staff available to prepare traffic management plans, implement road closures etc.

- Council organises various encouragement campaigns such as Wear Your Helmet Rewards program, annual Ride to Work Day and Share the Road campaign. The cost of media advertising for campaigns is generally prohibitive.

2.2.2 North Coast Area Health Service

Consultation with the North Coast Area Health Service was mainly focused on the One Car Less program as described in subsequent sections of this report. Various other initiatives for promoting a healthy lifestyle were also discussed, particularly the need to promote the health benefits of physical exercise and the consequences of a sedentary lifestyle.

2.2.3 Country Energy

Country Energy was involved in the process because the organisation is a good example of an employer with an established and supportive cycling culture.

Approximately 15 workers ride to the main Port Macquarie office each day. The building has secure bike parking in an underground car park and also showers and lockers etc. Management is supportive of expanding these facilities as demand requires.
Country Energy does not have a formal bicycle user group but there are a number of people who actively promote cycling and support new cyclists. The organisation participated in Ride to Work day in 2008 with approximately 90 cyclists.

Country Energy, with 8,000 employees across NSW, has a Powerful Health Program to promote healthy living including an annual $99 subsidy to each employee for spending on health (gym membership, bike, quit smoking program etc). The program is popular among staff and appears to be a successful means of encouraging a health lifestyle.

2.2.4 Port Macquarie TAFE
Port Macquarie TAFE is a significant generator of trips in the Port Macquarie area with a student population of approximately 4,000. Information was provided regarding current active transport initiatives at the TAFE, which include:

- One staff member is trained as an AustCycle Instructor, who conducts staff cycling training sessions at Port Macquarie TAFE.
- NCAHS is planning to assist the TAFE in conducting a travel to work survey to identify current barriers to sustainable forms of transport. The survey used for health facilities will be modified for use at the TAFE. The findings of the survey will be used to develop appropriate actions to encourage students to increase their active travel choices.
- Only a minimal amount of bicycle parking is available on site, in contrast to the substantial amount of car parking, and the TAFE is investigating ways to make this bicycle parking more visible and available.
- Port Macquarie TAFE is aiming to participate in Ride to Work day in 2009.

2.2.5 NSW Department of Education
The NSW Department of Education (DET) was contacted to gain an understanding of cycling levels in schools on the NSW mid north coast. It is currently a DET policy that children below 10 years old are strongly advised not to travel to school alone, whether it be by walking or cycling. This policy is currently under review, and may be relaxed in the near future to allow children of younger ages to travel to school alone.

The DET runs road safety programs for schools in the mid north coast area. It was advised that these programs are well received by students and parents at schools – however due to funding constraints the demand for these programs cannot be met. A component of these programs is safely riding to school.

2.2.6 Bicycle NSW
In the order of 300 schools across NSW participate in the Ride2School program, run by Bicycle NSW. The program is an initiative to encourage more students to walk, ride, skate or scoot to and from school safely and responsibly. In Port Macquarie, both Westport High School and Port Macquarie High School are involved in the program.

Currently Bicycle NSW provides training programs for schools that are members of the Ride2School program. These programs involve a qualified instructor teaching both children and parents about road safety rules and also about being aware on the road. The various health benefits of cycling are also promoted to both students and parents.

These programs have been popular within schools, with a high participation rate from both students and parents. Bicycle NSW is a non governmental organisation and can only conduct the program at five NSW schools per term. On a few occasions corporate sponsorship has allowed more schools to be visited (NRMA sponsorship allowed Bicycle NSW to conduct programs at 10 schools in one term).

2.2.7 Hastings Valley Mountain Bike Riders
Hastings Valley Mountain Bike Riders provided considerable input to the study, including a formal submission following the Coffs Harbour NSW BikePlan Workshop in late 2008 and a proposal for the establishment of a mountain biking facility at Wayne Richards Park.
2.2.8 Local NSW Member of Parliament

Peter Besseling, the Independent State MP for Port Macquarie, was consulted as part of the study. His view is that there are two main barriers to cycling in Port Macquarie:

- Lack of planning – A token/piecemeal approach has been taken to cycling planning in Port Macquarie
- Lack of infrastructure – There are a number of bike paths in Port Macquarie but they are not well connected and are not in a planned environment.

The acceptance of a bicycle as a mainstream form of transport is a key issue. It is his view that shared paths, with clear separation of vehicles and cyclists, is the most effective way of achieving this. While facilities for sporting cyclists should still be provided, this should not be the focus of cycling planning in Port Macquarie.

The future redevelopment of the Port Macquarie foreshore could potentially accommodate the development of new cycling infrastructure. Holding cycling events such as twilight criteriums could act as a source of revenue to install cycling facilities.
3 Cycling in Port Macquarie – Current Status

3.1 Current Cycling Levels

There is typically little data available on cycling patterns with the only reliable source of data being mode split of the journey to work which is recorded as part of the national census conducted every five years\(^1\).

2006 ABS Census journey to work data for Port Macquarie was analysed. Of 13,479 journey to work trips on the census day, only 119 or 0.9% were by bicycle (refer to Figure 3). Figure 4 compares the journey to work mode split for Port Macquarie with other similar towns in NSW.

Figure 3 Journey to Work Mode Split – Port Macquarie

![Figure 3](image1)

Figure 4 Journey to Work – Comparison with Similar Towns

![Figure 4](image2)
The current level of bicycle journey to work trips in Port Macquarie is on par with the NSW state average of 0.9%, but significantly lower than all other Australian states and territories except Tasmania. The Port Macquarie figure is also lower than most similar towns in NSW such as Ballina and Forster.

Further analysis of the data reveals that approximately 72% of people who work in the town of Port Macquarie actually live in the town – a high proportion by NSW standards. In contrast, a considerable proportion of people who work in Lismore actually live on the coast at locations such as Ballina and Lennox Head. The implication of this for cycling in Port Macquarie is that the majority of journeys to work are relatively short and can easily be undertaken by bike.

Anecdotal surveys suggest that less children are currently cycling to school than did so a decade ago. Surveys conducted in 1998 as part of the Port Macquarie Bike Plan revealed that at some primary and high schools up to 30 children rode bikes to school. A recent informal survey conducted as part of this project revealed that no school had more than 10 children cycling to school.

However, in contrast to school cycling, anecdotal information suggests that the number of sporting cyclists has increased significantly in recent times. Port Macquarie has a number of cycling clubs and large groups of training cyclists are regularly observed, particularly before and after work and on weekends. Cyclists from elsewhere also come to Port Macquarie specifically to train and this is partly attributable to the Ironman event held in the town each year.

3.2 Crash and Theft Data

3.2.1 Cycling Crash Data

Data relating to reported crashes involving cyclists is presented in Table 1. There are currently, on average, 9 crashes per year in Port Macquarie involving cyclists. No fatalities have been reported in the five year period between 2004 – 2008 but almost all cyclist crashes result in some form of injury. It should also be noted that cycling crashes are significantly under-reported, particularly cyclist-only crashes, and the number of actual crashes involving cyclists would be considerably higher than the values shown in the table.

The data suggests that cycling crash levels in Port Macquarie are consistent with state averages for similar-sized towns.

Table 1 Cycling Crash Data (2004 – 2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crash Severity</th>
<th>Total Crashes</th>
<th>Crash Type</th>
<th>Total Crashes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fatal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Cyclist only</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injury</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Cyclist / car</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-injury</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Cyclist / truck</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Cyclist / bus</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cyclist / pedestrian</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Data relates to town of Port Macquarie and not the entire LGA

\[1\] The Cycling in New South Wales - What the data tells us report, recently prepared by PCAL, identifies a lack of data on cycling in NSW as a problem and recommends that more and better data collection is needed
3.2.2 Bike Theft Data
Data relating to the theft of bikes and bike accessories was obtained from Port Macquarie Police and summarised in Table 2.

Table 2 Port Macquarie Bike Theft Data (2005 – 2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bike – mountain bike</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bike – racing</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bike – BMX</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bike – standard</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bike - other</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle accessory</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helmet</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total incidents</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Data relates to town of Port Macquarie and not the entire LGA

The data suggests that the incidences of bike theft is decreasing, although this is difficult to assert because under-reporting may occur. The police advised that most of the incidents occurred at private homes, e.g. from carports/garages, rather than in public spaces. The police also advised that theft of bikes securely locked in public spaces rarely occurs in Port Macquarie.

3.3 Current Status of Cycling Infrastructure

A cycling network consists of on-road and off-road facilities. Apart from for recreation purposes, most cycling occurs on the road network. Physical and cost constraints generally prevent the development of large area off-road cycling networks.

Port Macquarie has a well-developed road system with a clear hierarchy of main roads including:

- Oxley Highway
- Hastings River Drive
- Ocean Drive
- Pacific Drive
- Kennedy Drive
- Lake Road

The Port Macquarie administrative road hierarchy is shown on Figure 5. Classified roads are SH11 Oxley Highway and MR600 Hastings River Drive – Gordon Street – Ocean Drive. All other roads are the responsibility of Port Macquarie Hastings Council.

The main roads listed above are generally the most direct roads to/from the town centre and follow the contours of the land. They are therefore the most suitable cycling routes for a significant proportion of cycling trips, particularly those over 1 or 2 km in length. Within the older, more established areas of Port Macquarie, a grid road network provides alternative routes to busy roads. However, in the newer residential areas, roads are generally circuitous and the main roads are the only direct routes for trips of any great length.
Figure 5  Port Macquarie Administrative Road Hierarchy

Note: Oxley Hwy is SH11 and Hastings River Drive – Gordon Street – Ocean Drive is MR600
The significant increase in Port Macquarie’s population has led to number of roads being upgraded over the last decade, e.g. Ocean Drive, Oxley Highway. Most of these upgrades have incorporated cycling facilities, such as bike lanes, wide sealed shoulders and bike lanes through signalised intersections (refer to Photograph 1). However, these cycling facilities generally only occur on new or upgraded sections of the main road network, which are mainly in the outer areas, and there is little evidence of cycling infrastructure on roads that have not been upgraded. For example, Hastings River Drive has a section of sealed shoulder marked as a bike lane that ends abruptly with cyclists suddenly forced to share the available road space with motorists. In addition, there are critical sections where cycling infrastructure is incomplete. Ocean Drive, between Lake Road and Pacific Drive (80 km/h speed limit), has good standard bicycle shoulder lanes except for two northbound pinch points as shown on Photograph 2.

Photograph 1  Examples of Cycling Infrastructure

Lake Road

Pacific Drive

Photograph 2  Example of Incomplete Cycling Infrastructure

Ocean Drive – good bicycle shoulder lane in northbound direction (looking south)

Ocean Drive – bicycle shoulder lane disappears in northbound direction (looking north)

Port Macquarie does not have a significant off-road path network. Short sections of shared path exist in some locations (see examples in Photograph 3). Most of the foreshore and coastal paths are for walking only and not signposted as shared paths (see examples in Photograph 4).
Port Macquarie does, however, have a good environment for cycling with relatively low volume roads in comparison to major cities. Traffic volumes generally only exceed 15,000 vehicles per day in the town centre. Heavy vehicle volumes are also relatively low and there is a lack of a major barrier through the town such as the Pacific Highway.

The *How to Prepare a Bike Plan* guide categorises the wide spectrum of cyclist ability and trip purpose is into five groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerable</td>
<td>inexperienced adults, elderly and children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commuter adults</td>
<td>confident, value directness of routes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racing adults</td>
<td>high speed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>away from traffic, pleasant scenery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local errands</td>
<td>short trips for shopping, visiting etc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, the cycling infrastructure in Port Macquarie caters reasonably well for the groups of commuter adults, racing adults and local errands although there are obvious improvements that could be made. The infrastructure does not, however, cater well for vulnerable cyclists and there are no obvious recreational routes away from traffic. The infrastructure does not cater well for tourists seeking a safe, pleasant ride away from traffic.
4 Opportunities and Constraints Analysis

The purpose of this project is to identify a combination of infrastructure improvements and non-infrastructure initiatives, with responsibility for implementation across a range of stakeholders.

The following section contains a general discussion on existing conditions and issues, constraints to increasing cycling levels, and identified opportunities that can form the basis of initiatives in Port Macquarie. Section 5 of this report builds on the opportunities and constraints analysis to identify a package of specific actions that constitute the recommendations arising from this project.

4.1 Constraints and Issues

4.1.1 No disincentive to drive

Port Macquarie is a reasonably compact regional town. There is little traffic congestion, even during peak hours. Parking is easy, readily available and free. The public transport system consists of buses and is limited in terms of frequency and routes.

These characteristics of Port Macquarie are somewhat different to a major city where driving is usually constrained by traffic congestion and limited, expensive parking, supplemented by the presence of a good public transport system. In such cities cycling can actually be faster and more convenient than other forms of transport for short to medium trips.

Most households in Port Macquarie own at least one car and people tend to use them once they have been purchased. Much of the cost of driving is unrelated to the distance travelled – initial purchase, registration, insurance and regular maintenance. Cycling may have financial benefits when compared to driving, but these benefits primarily relate to those who choose not to own a car in the first place, rather than to those who own a car but drive less. Due to the relatively short trip lengths in Port Macquarie, the increase in petrol prices over the last few years has not been a major factor in influencing driving habits.

Driving in Port Macquarie is perceived as very convenient with little organisation involved. People perceive cycling as something you have to organise your life around. Commuter cycling in particular is regarded as a hassle. People have to be organised enough to cart everything around and this is seen as being too inconvenient, and are reluctant to spend money on something they might not use.

In summary, there is no major disincentive to driving in Port Macquarie and actions promoting cycling as more convenient and cheaper than driving are unlikely to be successful. Therefore, initiatives to increase cycling need to be linked to other reasons such as enjoyment, health/fitness, bicycle tourism and environmental concerns.

4.1.2 Lack of visible cycling presence

For cycling to be accepted as a mainstream form of transport, there needs to be a visible cycling presence. This presence comes from cycling infrastructure, reasonable bicycle traffic volumes, end-of-trip facilities and information on cycling.

In contrast to the highly visible cycling environment that characterises some Australian towns and cities, e.g. Melbourne, Canberra and Dubbo, Port Macquarie does not have a highly visible cycling presence.

Most of the on-road cycling facilities in Port Macquarie are on upgraded sections of main roads in outer areas. They do not serve most existing or potential cycling trips which occur in and around the town centre. There is a lack of directional cycle route signage and few off-road paths are actually signposted as shared paths.

Port Macquarie has a lack of either public or private end of trip facilities for cycling, e.g. secure bike parking, showers, lockers etc. In particular, the town centre has only a limited supply of bike parking and most of this does not meet current standards (existing parking is
mainly toast-rack style which is not in accordance with current standards that require both
wheels and frame to be securely locked). Furthermore, considerable road space and land is
dedicated to motor vehicle parking highlighting the imbalance in planning for motor vehicles
versus bicycles.

Port Macquarie does not have an off-road cycling facility that acts as a magnet for families
to enjoy and a place where people can improve their cycling skills and become more
confident in cycling on the road.

The town does not have a cycling map displaying suitable cycling routes – either in hard
copy form or on an appropriate web site. It is noted, however, that one reason why such a
map has not been produced is because it should not occur until a reasonable network of
bike routes is in place.

Tourism promotional material does not include much information on cycling. The coastal
walkway is heavily promoted as a tourist attraction but it appears to have been constructed
for walkers only and not cyclists. Although this is identified as a constraint it also represents
an opportunity as discussed in Section 4.2.3.

4.1.3 Incomplete cycling infrastructure

Section 3.3 discusses the current status of cycling infrastructure in Port Macquarie.
Although there is some infrastructure it is generally incomplete or not well connected.
Planning guidelines for cycling emphasises the need for continuous cycling routes rather
than a series of disjointed sections.

Port Macquarie has a good climate, relatively flat topography in most places, gentle breezes
rather than strong winds, and is a scenic environment with pleasant cycling routes. It has
reasonably low traffic volumes without much regional through traffic and many wide roads
suitable for cycling.

There is little in the way of off-road infrastructure in Port Macquarie and therefore people
who will only cycle on off-road paths or on quiet streets are limited in the type and length of
trip they can undertake by bike. These trips would generally be limited to local errands such
as to the local shops. Longer cycling trips such as to the town centre, regional shopping
centres and the beaches would generally not be considered.

The on-road infrastructure along the main road network contains a number of incomplete
‘pinch point’ sections that act as a disincentive to cycling, e.g:

- Ocean Drive has bicycle shoulder lanes in both directions except for two northbound
  sections.
- The upgraded sections of the Oxley Highway have bicycle facilities but the older section
  between Lake Road and Gordon Street does not have any dedicated bicycle
  infrastructure.
- Hastings River Drive and Pacific Drive have intermittent sections of bicycle shoulder
  lanes.
- The town centre, with relatively high traffic volumes and on-street parking, does not
  contain any dedicated on-road cycling facilities.

On the basis of Figure 3.2 of the NSW Bicycle Guidelines (separation of bicycles and motor
vehicles according to traffic speed and volume), many busy roads should have bicycle lanes
or separate paths yet these are generally not provided. Therefore, an issue that needs to be
addressed is that it is difficult to promote cycling in Port Macquarie when the existing cycling
infrastructure does not really constitute a bike network.
4.1.4 Small population

Many of the non-infrastructure initiatives to be considered for Port Macquarie would take the form of programs. Due to economies of scale, these type of programs are often more suited to cities with large populations rather than smaller towns.

Port Macquarie Chamber of Commerce identified that the town has only a handful of employers with more than 50 employees. Major employers include Port Macquarie Base Hospital, Port Macquarie Private Hospital, Country Energy, Coles, Woolworths and Port Macquarie Hastings Council.

The Cycling in the City program in Sydney is an example of a successful program in encouraging non-cyclists to become regular cyclists. Much of its success, however, could be attributed to its participation by major organisations such as City of Sydney, Lend Lease and Macquarie Bank.

An advantage of the NCAHS One Car Less program, further described in Section 5, is that it can be efficiently implemented because it is a regional initiative rather than a local initiative. It is being implemented across an organisation with approximately 8000 employees. The actions contained in the program have been carefully targeted on the basis of a survey that involved 1200 respondents. NCAHS has a number of full-time health promotion officers and one of their responsibilities is the implementation of One Car Less. If such a program was introduced to small organisations, they may have difficulty in finding someone to assume responsibility for implementation.

The importance of a critical mass of population for implementing programs is demonstrated by the Cycling England, Cycling City and Towns project. This project aims to establish 17 cycling towns in England. Only one of these towns has a population similar to Port Macquarie – the remainder have a population greater than 65,000.

In addition, it is well documented that regional councils struggle to maintain extensive infrastructure networks – let alone have funding available to augment these networks. Regional councils generally have a higher length of road network per capita than metropolitan councils. The relatively small population of Port Macquarie also means that, in terms of benefit-cost ratios, cycling infrastructure is generally not as cost-effective to construct in comparison to metropolitan areas.

One of the objectives of the bike planning access studies, to generate transferable ideas for the wider promotion of bicycle use in country centres, is particularly appropriate for overcoming the issues associated with small populations. Country Energy and NCAHS are identified as opportunities for bike programs as discussed in Section 4.2.2.

4.1.5 Nowhere for tourists to cycle

In the order of 666,000 overnight visitors travel to the Greater Port Macquarie area every year, with an average length of stay of 3 nights. Many people like to cycle when on holidays, either using their own bikes or hiring them. It would only take a small proportion of these visitors to cycle during their stay for cycling levels to increase significantly.

In recent years, cycling has generally featured more heavily in Australian tourism promotional material. Cycling is now recognised as a popular activity for tourists to complement other activities such as bushwalking, beach going, boating, horse riding etc. The Discover Port Macquarie brochure (Discover Media) lists “Picnics, Parks and Cycling” as one if the key headings. However, when it comes to cycling there are just a few words, “hire a bike and set off on an adventure”. This is not supported by any advice on where to cycle.

The lack of information for tourists on where to cycle is probably indicative of the current state of cycling in Port Macquarie. The benefits of cycle tourism appear to be recognised but accommodation providers and tourist operators are unwilling to promote cycling when the necessary cycling infrastructure does not exist.
4.1.6 Sharp decline in cycling to school
The sharp decline in the level of cycling to school described in Section 3.1 is probably indicative of a wider issue. Many regard society as more unsafe than it was a generation ago. Parents are now more reluctant to allow their children to cycle – it does not matter whether cycling is actually more unsafe now than it used to be, the fact is this perception must be addressed. Cycling is considered by some to be an unsafe activity and this represents a barrier to increasing cycling levels, particularly by attracting new cyclists.

Other reasons suggested for the decline in cycling to school include heavy backpacks that now must be carried, higher levels of vandalism/theft of bikes parked at school and that cycling to school is seen as ‘uncool’. It has been reported that the schools are reluctant to provide good quality bike parking facilities because this would encourage higher cycling levels exposing schools to liability for bike thefts.

Lifelong travel patterns can often be established by children. Those who cycle to school are more likely to continue cycling as an adult than those who are not exposed to cycling at a young age. Therefore, any attempt to increase the level of cycling should seek to arrest the decline in cycling to school.

4.2 Opportunities

4.2.1 Short trip distances
Cycling is most suited to trips under about 5 km in length, or trips of no more than 30 minutes in duration. Most trips in Port Macquarie fall into this category. In particular, a relatively high number of people work within 5 km of their workplace.

Port Macquarie’s 15 and 30 minute cycling catchment, presented in Figure 6, shows that almost all trips within Port Macquarie can be easily cycled by people of average fitness.

Figure 6 15 and 30 Minute Cycling Catchment
4.2.2 Employer programs
The NCAHS One Car Less program and the cycling culture at Country Energy supported by their Powerful Health Program represent opportunities for increasing cycling levels within these two organisations, and for transferring the programs to other organisations. More details regarding these employer programs, as well as the opportunities for actions and initiatives, are presented in Section 5.

4.2.3 Tourism and cycle tourism
Port Macquarie is a significant domestic tourism destination. As stated previously in this report the annual total number of overnight visitors to the Greater Port Macquarie area is approximately 666,000, with an average length of stay of 3 nights.

Research undertaken as part of the Cycle Tourism in the Hunter Region study revealed that there is great potential for growth in NSW of cycle tourism, from both domestic and international visitors. It appears that NSW is lagging behind the other states in planning, promotion and the provision of infrastructure to support this form of tourism. Successful examples of cycle tourism in Australia include the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail in Victoria, the Munda Biddi Trail in Western Australia and events associated with the Tour Down Under in South Australia.

Port Macquarie is an ideal location for developing cycle tourism in NSW. It already has a sizeable tourism market with established accommodation and support services. It has attractive scenery that, with the appropriate infrastructure, could attract cycle tourists. A range of actions could be developed to increase cycle tourism and would generally involve partnerships between NSW government agencies, tourism operators, industry groups, retail operators and local councils.

4.2.4 High number of sporting cyclists
Port Macquarie has a high number of sporting cyclists. Some, but not all, are members of sporting clubs. Non-residents also spend time in Port Macquarie for training purposes, particularly in the lead-up to the Ironman event in April. Port Macquarie Triathlon Club has about 200 members who on average cycle over 100km a week and there is also Port Macquarie Cycling Club and the Hastings Valley Mountain Bike Club. The town’s bike shops also conduct events such as organised rides and bike maintenance workshops.

Of the cyclist types described in Section 3.3, racing adult cyclists can also be commuter adults, recreational cyclists and cyclists for local errands. In other words, racing adult cyclists can also use cycling as a mode of transport to replace trips that would normally be undertaken by car.

Every effort should be made to continue to support Port Macquarie as a place for sporting cyclists. The presence of sporting cyclists can encourage people to take up cycling. Sporting cyclists can help vulnerable cyclists to become commuter cyclists.

It should be noted, however, that the presence of sporting cyclists is perceived by some to be a discouragement to taking up cycling. People may feel inferior to sporting cyclists and prefer not to be compared with them. In addition, a minority of sporting cyclists disregard road rules, e.g. riding more than two abreast, disobeying red signals, etc., and can give cycling a ‘bad name’ and unnecessarily anger motorists.

In summary, the high number of sporting cyclists represents a good base to increase the numbers in the other categories of cyclists. However, planning for cycling in Port Macquarie should not focus only on sporting cyclists at the expense of other types of cyclists.

4.2.5 Governance arrangement
Port Macquarie lies completely within one local government area – Port Macquarie Hastings Council. Whilst this may appear to be an insignificant fact it will make the implementation of non-infrastructure initiatives much easier than if multiple local councils had jurisdiction over the town.
5 Package of Actions

The aim of this study has been to generate cost-effective short, medium and long-term initiatives to enable and encourage low-stress cycling trips within the Port Macquarie area. In developing these initiatives, there is a particular emphasis on the conversion of car trips to bike trips.

A range of actions have been developed and categorised into either infrastructure improvements (section 5.1) or non-infrastructure initiatives (section 5.2).

5.1 Infrastructure Improvements

The infrastructure improvements are listed in Table 3, located on Figure 7, and described in detail below. It should be noted that the infrastructure improvements include both physical bicycle infrastructure (on-road and off-road treatments) and end of trip facilities (bike parking, lockers, showers etc). Currently, physical bicycle infrastructure is largely funded by a combination of the state government (e.g. RTA) and local councils, while end of trip facilities are funded from a variety of sources such as local councils, employers and various government bodies. It is recommended, however, that these funding arrangements be reviewed as part of the new PCAL NSW BikePlan.

Priorities for the actions presented in Table 3 are given in Section 5.1.8.

Table 3 Infrastructure Improvements - Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Lead Agency; Implementation Partners</th>
<th>Likely Relative Impact on Cycling Levels (high, medium or low)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1 Install new bike parking in Port Macquarie CBD</td>
<td>Council; Private shopping centres</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2 Designate appropriate existing footpaths as shared paths</td>
<td>Council</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3 Complete high priority ‘missing links’ on existing cycle routes</td>
<td>Council, RTA</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4 Port Macquarie Urban Mountain Bike Park</td>
<td>Council; Hastings Valley Mountain Bike Riders Inc</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5 Sovereign Hills development</td>
<td>Lewislands, Council</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A6 Coastal Walkway</td>
<td>Council; NSW Tourism</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A7 Googik Heritage Track</td>
<td>NSW Department of Environment and Conservation; Council /</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 7  Infrastructure Improvements – Location Map

Legend
A1 Install new bike parking in Port Macquarie CBD
A2 Designate appropriate existing footpaths as shared paths
A3 Complete high priority ‘missing links’ on existing cycle routes (various locations)
A4 Port Macquarie Urban Mountain Bike Park
A5 Sovereign Hills development
A6 Coastal Walkway
A7 Googik Heritage Track

5.1.1  A1 - Install new bike parking in Port Macquarie CBD

The earlier sections of this report have highlighted the fact that Port Macquarie has a lack of end of trip facilities for cycling, e.g. secure bike parking, showers, lockers etc. In particular, the town centre has only a limited supply of bike parking and most of this does not meet current standards where the frame and both wheels must be able to be locked.

Most of the limited bike parking appears to be provided by the private shopping centres (refer to Photograph 5) rather than by Council in the public domain.

For cycling to be accepted as a mainstream form of transport, there needs to be a visible cycling presence. Whilst providing showers and lockers in either public or private buildings may be difficult to achieve, installing secure bike parking is a very simple and cost-effective means of improving the cycling presence.
Council would be the lead agency with this initiative, and should also work with other implementation partners such as Port Central shopping centre, Settlement City shopping centre, Woolworths, Port Macquarie Chamber of Commerce and tourism authorities.

**Estimated Cost:**

There are many highly visible, convenient locations where bike parking could be installed. It is recommended that Council identify up to ten suitable locations across the CBD to install bike parking. At a cost of approximately $2,000 per set of four U-rails (including delivery and installation), 10 locations by 4 rails each would cost in the order of $20,000 to install.

**5.1.2 A2 - Designate appropriate existing footpaths as shared paths**

The NSW road regulations currently state that cycling on the footpath is permitted if the cyclist is less than 12 years old. An adult, who is riding in a supervisory capacity of a cyclist less than 12 years old, may also ride on the footpath. Footpaths, therefore, do not really constitute part of the bicycle network unless they are designated as shared paths.

Footpaths can be designated as shared paths, through signage and pavement markings, to facilitate cycle use. This should only occur where warranted by a sufficient level of bicycle traffic, where sufficient footpath width is available, and where conflict between cyclists, pedestrians and motor vehicles is not likely to be a problem.

Footpath cycling has many benefits particularly in providing safe cycling routes in busy, highly-trafficked environments such as Port Macquarie CBD. It allows cyclists separation from on-road traffic and thus a greater perception of safety. It provides an alternative to those people who are normally fearful of riding next to motor vehicles.

It is recommended that Council – as the lead government agency, undertake an audit of existing footpaths along key CBD roads and those that meet stated criteria be designated as shared paths. In particular, designated shared paths should seek to continue the existing and proposed bike routes that tend to end at the periphery of the CBD. The success of this initiative could be monitored, and then rolled out to other regional centres across NSW.

**Estimated Cost:**

This initiative refers to footpaths that can be signposted as shared paths without the need for footpath widening or surface improvements. The current cost of providing pavement markings and regulatory signage may be in the order of $500 per 100 metres. Assuming...
2000m of footpath could be signposted as shared paths then the total cost would be in the order of $10,000.

**5.1.3 A3 - Complete high priority ‘missing links’ sections on existing cycle routes**

Council allocate funds each year for the ongoing implementation of the Port Macquarie Bike Plan which was adopted in 1999. However, at current funding levels implementation will take a further twenty years. Whilst implementation of the bike plan should continue as funding permits, a high priority should be given to completing critical missing links. Such an action would greatly improve the safety and useability of the town’s cycling infrastructure.

Section 3.3 highlighted a number of missing links such as on Ocean Drive and Hastings River Drive. Ocean Drive (MR600), between Lake Road and Pacific Drive (80 km/h speed limit), has good standard bicycle shoulder lanes except for two northbound pinch points as shown on Photograph 2.

It is recommended that RTA and Council work together as the lead government agencies to address critical links of the cycling network. A more detailed audit of existing infrastructure should be conducted to identify any other critical sections of deficient infrastructure. The RTA would generally be responsible for bicycle infrastructure on the state road network and Council on local roads and most off-road facilities.

It is acknowledged that completing these missing links will not be easy due to both funding and physical constraints. For example the previously described section on Ocean Drive may require a culvert to be extended to allow for a continuous bicycle shoulder lane.

For cycling levels to increase, the non-infrastructure initiatives described in Section 5.1.8 need to be complemented by infrastructure actions. The relevant levels of government need to demonstrate a clear commitment to all elements of the traditional 4 E’s of bike planning – Engineering, Encouragement, Education and Enforcement. Completing missing links will send a clear message that cycling is accepted as a mainstream form of transport.

**Estimated Cost:**

Council’s ongoing implementation of the Port Macquarie Bike Plan is focused on new links or long sections of road rather than shorter sections of missing links. The Ocean Drive and Hastings River Drive missing link sections are not included in any current funding program. The estimated cost of these two sections are:

- Ocean Drive: completion of bicycle shoulder lanes at two northbound pinch points between Lake Road and Pacific Drive - $300,000 (includes culvert extension)
- Hastings River Drive: completion of bicycle shoulder lanes between Boundary Street and Oxley Highway - $200,000

There are also other missing links that are not included in current funding programs.

**5.1.4 A4 - Port Macquarie Urban Mountain Bike Park**

The study has identified that there are no off-road cycling facilities that can act as a popular attraction and a place where people can improve their cycling skills and become more confident in cycling on the road.

Hastings Valley Mountain Bike Riders Inc has proposed the construction of a mountain biking facility at Wayne Richards Park. This would involve narrow trails, not wide fire trails, that typically wind through the understory of closed canopy vegetation. It would complement the existing sporting facilities at the park. The park could be co-located with the northern end of the Googik Heritage Track (see Section 5.1.7).

The aim of the project would be to provide a facility specifically for mountain biking, noting that in Port Macquarie road cyclists have the Ironman and the road network, and BMX cyclists have the skate park near Town Beach. Such a facility aims to develop cycling as a lifelong activity and increase opportunities for families, youth and women to participate.
The development of the park is divided into three stages (see Figure 8). The first stage covers the terraced area and hillside immediately south west of the proposed Australian Rules Football oval. Stage two includes the area south and east of the soccer fields, while the final stage covers areas currently occupied by the Council depot and materials storage dumps.

![Figure 8 Port Macquarie Urban Mountain Bike Park – Staging Plan](image)

Source: Hastings Valley Mountain Bike Riders Inc

Wayne Richards Park is one of the main sporting hubs of Port Macquarie and an ideal location for a cycling facility. It already has significant infrastructure to complement the sporting facilities, e.g. car parking, change rooms, lighting, picnic facilities, maintenance equipment.

The park is located to the east of primary and secondary schools, and could provide an opportunity where students of all levels could benefit through education, cycling skills and competitions with other schools in the area. The park could facilitate the introduction of cycling as a sport program offered by schools in Port Macquarie.

Planning for the facility is in the early stages and it is recommended that further consultation occurs with Council (as the lead agency) and other key stakeholders, including Hastings Valley Mountain Bike Riders Inc, as implementation partners. A three stage approach has been proposed (refer to Figure 8) by Hastings Valley Mountain Bike Riders Inc, although a cost estimate of the facility has not been prepared at this stage. Land ownership and environmental issues need to be addressed.

Examples of similar mountain biking facilities include Mount Stromlo near Canberra and Manly Dam in Sydney, and Sydney Olympic Park is an example of a popular recreational cycling venue.

Wayne Richards Park, as a major sporting hub with available space, is also a suitable location for an off-road cycling track to train children in cycling skills. This could be a loop track, of no more than 500m in length, where children could learn to cycle under the supervision of older children and/or adults.
Estimated Cost:

The cost of the Port Macquarie Urban Mountain Bike Park is highly dependent on the level of complementary infrastructure, required land acquisition or easements, type of path surface and environmental issues. Establishment of a basic mounting biking track, involving minimal land clearing and earthworks, is estimated to cost in the order of $0.5 million.

5.1.5 A5 - Sovereign Hills development

The majority of Port Macquarie’s urban development in the future will occur at Sovereign Hills, located along the Oxley Highway to the east of the Pacific Highway (refer to Figure 2). Therefore, it is the primary location in Port Macquarie where cycling facilities can be constructed as part of new development on a greenfield site. In contrast, improving cycling infrastructure for the rest of Port Macquarie is mainly in the form of retrofitting within existing areas.

Sovereign Hills is being planned as a self-contained new town and construction is likely to continue for the next decade (refer to Figure 9). Cycleways are a major part of the master plan with the intention that people will be able to safely and easily ride to shops, schools, ovals etc. Lewislands, the developers of Sovereign Hills, are responsible for the design of the new area. Council, as the consent authority, should ensure that these proposed cycleways are actually built.

The Oxley Highway is the main connection from Sovereign Hills to Port Macquarie town centre and the beaches. Whilst the current upgrading of the Oxley Highway includes provision for cycling infrastructure, i.e. west of Wrights Road, the lack of cycling infrastructure on the highway to the east of this point needs to be addressed. Upgrading of cycling infrastructure on the Oxley Highway east of Sovereign Hills also represents an opportunity to improve the regional link between Port Macquarie and Wauchope.

Estimated Cost:

The masterplan for Sovereign Hills includes cycleways, primarily at the developer’s cost and therefore a separate cost estimate is not included in this report.
Figure 9  Sovereign Hills Masterplan

Source: Lewislands
5.1.6 A6 - Coastal Walkway

The Port Macquarie Coastal Walkway is heavily promoted as a major tourist attraction. It stretches from Westport Park in the town centre to Tacking Point Lighthouse and is divided into the following sections:

- Westport Park to Town Beach: 2 km
- Town Beach to Flynns Beach: 2.2 km
- Flynns Beach to Shelley Beach: 2.2 km
- Shelley Beach to Tacking Point Lighthouse: 2.7 km

The final section between Tacking Point and Little Bay is currently under construction.

The off-road walk (refer to Figure 7 for alignment) provides access to a beautiful stretch of coastline, taking in beaches, headlands, historic sites and subtropical rainforest.

It appears that the coastal walkway has been planned for walking only and most of the sections are not signposted for bicycle use (see examples in Photograph 4). Some sections are wide concrete paths that are suitable for cycling whilst other sections that involve steps to the beaches are obviously not suitable for cycling.

The coastal walkway should be promoted as a cycling route. It would primarily be used for recreation, i.e. cyclists at low speeds thus minimising conflict with pedestrians, and would not be heavily used by high speed commuters because it would be an indirect route. Cyclists would use the path for the same reasons as pedestrians – to explore the beaches and coastal scenery and to enjoy outdoor exercise. It is likely to be a popular path for recreational cycling.

The coastal walkway coincides with the proposed alignment of the NSW Coastline Cycleway. The only section of NSW Coastline Cycleway that has been constructed in Port Macquarie is a short section of path that forms part of the Coastal Walkway. It is understood that funding from this program has contributed to the construction of some sections, adding further weight to the recommendation that the path be provided for use by both pedestrians and cyclists.

It is recommended that an audit of the coastal walkway be conducted, aiming to identify:

- sections that can be immediately signposted to permit legal use by cyclists
- short term alternative routes for cyclists where necessary, e.g. use of roads to avoid steps to beaches
- long term works needed to create a continuous, safe 9km cycling route from Westport Park in the town centre to Tacking Point Lighthouse

Council is the lead government agency primarily responsible for the coastal walkway, but NSW Tourism should also be included as an implementation partner.

In addition to these measures, at the appropriate time the name of the walkway should be changed to reflect its status as providing for both pedestrians and cyclists, and it should also be promoted as a cycling facility.

Estimated Cost:

The Coastal Walkway follows difficult terrain and involves earthworks and small structures in some sections. Construction of new sections is therefore a costly exercise. The estimated cost of the various types of works identified above are:

- signposting of existing sections - $100,000
- short term alternative routes - $200,000
- new sections - $2 million
5.1.7 **A7 - Googik Heritage Track**

The Googik Heritage Track is a proposal to link the Port Macquarie town centre to the township of Lake Cathie via a network of inland off-road cycling and walking tracks. The Port Macquarie section is shown in Figure 10 and could be linked to Lake Cathie to the south.

The Port Macquarie section would also be an important commuter route linking to key destinations such as the industrial area, some schools, sporting facilities, Port Macquarie Base Hospital and the proposed Port Macquarie Urban Mountain Bike Park (Action A4). It would also form an attractive recreational cycling and walking track.

This track could become the prime off-road destination in Port Macquarie and form a half-day cycling experience. The track would serve both residents and tourists. Much of the track is located within Lake Innes Nature Reserve, a flat expanse of coastal heaths and banksia shrubland between Port Macquarie and Lake Cathie. The northern section of the track takes in Kooloonbung Creek which flows northwards to the Hastings River at Port Macquarie CBD.

It is understood that only preliminary planning has occurred at this stage and no funding has been committed to construction. For the concept to come to fruition, a partnership would need to occur between different state government departments and Council. NSW Department of Environment and Conservation and Council and the could be the lead agencies to drive this project.

**Estimated Cost:**

The Googik Heritage Track is currently a ‘concept’ rather than a ‘project’. A preliminary study, limited in scope, was undertaken in 2007 although the concept has been discussed since the early 1990s. The first stage in developing this into a possible project is conducting a detailed feasibility study. An indicative estimated cost is:

- Feasibility study - $100,000
- Port Macquarie Section - as shown in Figure 10 incorporating Preferred Option and Potential Loop. 8km of path (sealed path in commuter cycling areas, unsealed track in nature reserve areas) including some bridges and boardwalk sections - $4 million
Figure 10 Googik Heritage Track – Port Macquarie Section
5.1.8 Infrastructure Improvements - Priorities

The infrastructure improvements discussed in the preceding sections have been prioritised as short, medium and long term actions based on the likely relative impact on cycling levels, cost and likely availability of funding (refer to Table 4). Some overall actions, such as the Googik Heritage Track, have been divided into a number of specific actions, e.g. a feasibility study in the short term and construction in the longer term.

Table 4 Infrastructure Improvements - Priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Overall Action</th>
<th>Specific Action (if applicable)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short Term</td>
<td>A1 Install new bike parking in Port Macquarie CBD</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A2 Designate appropriate existing footpaths as shared paths</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A3 Complete high priority ‘missing links’ on existing cycle routes</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A4 Port Macquarie Urban Mountain Bike Park Feasibility study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A5 Sovereign Hills development</td>
<td>Masterplanning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A6 Coastal Walkway</td>
<td>Signposting of existing sections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A7 Googik Heritage Track</td>
<td>Feasibility study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Term</td>
<td>A4 Port Macquarie Urban Mountain Bike Park Construction – Stage 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A5 Sovereign Hills development</td>
<td>Construction - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A7 Googik Heritage Track</td>
<td>Construction - Port Macquarie section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Term</td>
<td>A4 Port Macquarie Urban Mountain Bike Park Construction - Stages 2 and 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A5 Sovereign Hills development</td>
<td>Construction - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A7 Googik Heritage Track</td>
<td>Construction - Lake Cathie extension</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2 Non-infrastructure Initiatives

The non-infrastructure initiatives identified as part of this study are listed in Table 5 and described in detail below. Priorities for the actions are given in Section 5.2.9 although it is noted that the actions have been developed with an emphasis on immediate or short term implementation.

Table 5 Non-infrastructure Initiatives - Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Lead Agency; Implementation Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>Local Sustainable Transport Co-ordinator / Transport Working Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Council; NSW government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>Review of local planning policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Council; Department of Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>Development of Port Macquarie Cycling Map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Council; RTA, Tourism NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4</td>
<td>Survey of National Ride to Work Day participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RTA; Bicycle NSW, Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5</td>
<td>Extension of NCAHS ‘One Car Less’ program to other employers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NCAHS; Key employers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B6</td>
<td>Community bike ride during Ironman week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Council; Corporate sponsors, local sporting clubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B7</td>
<td>Extension of school bicycle training programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NSW Department of Education; Bicycle NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B8</td>
<td>Formation of Local Bicycle User Group (BUG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bicycle NSW, Local cyclists</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.1 B1 - Local Sustainable Transport Co-ordinator / Transport Working Group

In regional areas, including Port Macquarie, local councils are the primary authorities that shape planning and policy and Council can lead the community in planning for and promoting cycling. Through the course of this study it became apparent that Port Macquarie-Hastings Council currently has no real ‘champion’ promoting cycling.

Ongoing implementation of the Port Macquarie, Wauchope and Camden Haven Bike Plans occurs under the responsibility of the technical services department. However, the lack of bike parking, bike maps, bike signage, support for cycle tourism etc, suggests that more could be done to make cycling a mainstream form of transport in Port Macquarie. Many regional councils traditionally have a ‘traffic engineer’ responsible for vehicular traffic but do not have a ‘transport planner’ with overall responsibility for transport planning.

Consideration should be given for Council to create a position for a Sustainable Transport Co-ordinator. This could be either a new position or a new responsibility as part of an existing position such as the Road Safety Officer (RSO). Research conducted by the Australian Bicycle Council (Cycling Survey of Australian Local Governments, July 2007) revealed than many metropolitan councils have such a position but few regional councils do so.

The Sustainable Transport Co-ordinator would be responsible for coordinating provision for all forms of sustainable transport – walking, cycling, public transport, community buses etc. A state-wide program with state government support, similar to the 50/50 funded Road Safety Officer program, could be implemented. However, for such a role to be worthwhile, it needs to be supported by a funding commitment to support both infrastructure and non-infrastructure initiatives.

Discussions with Port Macquarie-Hastings Council suggest the role of the RSO is an important position. It is also a demanding position in terms of responsibilities and associated deadlines. It is understood that the current 50/50 funding arrangement between the RTA
and each council for RSOs may be reviewed in the near future. The RSO in Council is responsible for community safety initiatives and conducting special event activities. In Port Macquarie the RSO acts as a key interface between Council and the community – the general community, schools, community groups, media etc. The skills of RSOs make them ideal people to be more heavily utilised in an active sustainable transport way to deliver and co-ordinate change within the community, such as driving some of the non-infrastructure actions contained in this report. However, for this to occur some of the other responsibilities of RSOs would need to be transferred to other staff.

The position of a Sustainable Transport Coordinator could be supported by a Transport Working Group. A number of regional councils in NSW, e.g. Coffs Harbour, Clarence Valley, have such groups that aim to develop a co-ordinated approach for different transport modes and can be used to support collaborative active travel/sustainable transport initiatives. Transport planning in Port Macquarie appears to be mainly focused on providing for the motor vehicle via roads and parking. Port Macquarie does not currently have such a working group but one could be formed to include:

- Ministry of Transport
- RTA
- Motoring groups
- Walking / cycling / sporting groups
- Port Macquarie bicycle user group
- Major local employers / Chamber of Commerce
- Local health groups
- Buses / taxi groups

Such a transport working group, which would be coordinated by a Council officer, could make recommendations regarding council policy, programs, transport services, transport infrastructure etc.

The lead agency for both the Sustainable Transport Coordinators and the Transport Working Group would be Council, supported by various NSW government departments as implementation partners.

These working groups and Sustainable Transport Coordinators are easily transferable initiatives that can be implemented in other local government areas.

**Estimated Cost:**

- Sustainable Transport Coordinator - $50,000 p.a. for part-time Council position
- Transport Working Group - $20,000 to fund meetings, travel, general expenses etc

5.2.2 **B2 - Review of local planning policies**

Council is responsible for a range of planning policies such as Development Control Plans, Local Environment Plans, vision statement, community plans, long term strategic plans, sustainability and environmental policies.

A review of local planning policies for Port Macquarie suggests that they could be improved with more emphasis on sustainable transport. For example, the existing DCP does not require bike parking to be included in new developments nor is there a requirement for workplace travel plans to be produced.

It is understood that all councils will soon be required to produce a 2030 strategic plan. This is an ideal medium to ensure that sustainable transport is at the forefront of all planning policies and documents.

A review of planning policies can be undertaken gradually over time by Council and the process would be assisted by the presence of relevant similar policies from both regional and metropolitan councils.
The lead agency for this initiative would be Council, supported by various NSW government departments including the Department of Planning.

**Estimated Cost:**

Council and the state government should continually be reviewing local planning policies. To kick-start the review process, an external review of Council’s current policies relating to cycling/sustainable transport could be conducted by consultants at an estimated cost of $20,000.

5.2.3 **B3 - Development of Port Macquarie Cycling Map**

There was strong feedback during the consultation phase of the study that Port Macquarie currently suffers from a lack of information on cycling. In particular, there is a lack of public information regarding suitable routes to cycle in Port Macquarie. This could be improved by the following actions:

- Detailed map of cycling routes in Port Macquarie
- Directional signage of cycling routes and also of available bike parking
- Cycling information on appropriate websites such as Council, RTA and tourism authorities
- Development of “A guide to cycling in Port Macquarie” including cycling maps, bike hire information, suggested rides etc. It would be available at tourist agencies, local hotels, bike shops etc.

A short term action that can be easily implemented is the development of cycling map for Port Macquarie. The map, which would be produced by Council, could be promoted in a number of different ways, such as:

- Distributing it to residents with their next rates notice
- Placing it on display at Council Chambers and on Council website
- Providing copies to local tourist offices, accommodation agencies and bike shops

There are many examples of regional towns that have cycling maps (e.g. Dubbo, Coffs Harbour). The maps are generally simple and would be easy to produce.

Council would be the lead agency driving the development of this map, with possible assistance from the RTA to ensure standardisation of such maps in NSW and Tourism NSW so the map is suitable for tourists.

In producing a cycling map for Port Macquarie and other regional and metropolitan areas, there may be benefit in adopting a centralised state government approach to formatting and definitions. Bike routes can be described by a range of terms such as on-road, off-road, low stress, high stress, path, cycleway, shoulder lane, bike/parking lane etc. There is a need for standardised definitions to overcome a range of terms that have the potential to confuse cyclists.

**Estimated Cost:**

- Map development - $10,000 in Council staff time
- Printing - $10,000 for production and distribution of 1000 folded colour A5-sized maps

The development of the cycling map could provide an opportunity for local corporate sponsorship and advertising to meet production costs.

5.2.4 **B4 - Survey of National Ride to Work Day participants**

National ride to work day is a major event for the promotion of cycling as a means of day-to-day travel. The promoters of the day (Bicycle Victoria) give a warning: “riding to work could become a habit!”. It has been a successful event in Port Macquarie over the last few years.
Port Macquarie-Hastings Council promotes ride to work day and conducts a community breakfast in the town centre. Over 40 Council staff and 90 Country Energy staff rode to work on the 2008 day. A number of other organisations have indicated a desire to participate in 2009.

Ride to work day is a highly visible event in a regional town the size of Port Macquarie and can be used as a simple catalyst for increasing cycling levels. Of the Council participants in 2008, 5% ride to work on a regular basis, whilst Country Energy is much higher at 18%. The challenge is to make riding to work a habit rather than a one-off event.

Consultation with NCAHS during this study highlighted the need for appropriate research before non-infrastructure initiatives can be successfully implemented. In particular, the NCAHS Travel to Work Survey was an essential precursor to the One Car Less program. A tailored travel to work survey has been developed for other organisations and it is understood that this will shortly be used by Port Macquarie TAFE. Drawing on this experience, it is important to identify the reasons why people will cycle to work on one day each year but will not cycle more regularly.

As part of this study a short survey of Council participants in Ride to Work Day 2008 was conducted. Based on a 60% response rate, it was found that:

- many people participated in the event for the social, community aspect rather than for environmental, sustainable transport or health reasons
- most people live within 8km of their workplace, i.e. within easy cycling distance
- key reasons for not cycling regularly were that cycling is not safe, driving is very convenient and that they need their car for work

It is recommended that the RTA or an appropriate state government organisation take a more active role in Ride to Work day and partner with non-governmental organisations such as Bicycle NSW and Bicycle Victoria, and also with local councils. Participation in the event is high in many locations in NSW and all participants should be surveyed to understand why they don’t cycle more regularly and what sorts of actions are needed to bring about change. This would build on an existing event and would target those more likely to cycle regularly – those that cycle at least occasionally.

This initiative is both low cost and can be conducted on a state-wide basis utilising the existing on-line registration system for Ride to Work day.

**Estimated Cost:**

- On-line survey of all NSW participants - $5,000
- Survey analysis and dissemination of Port Macquarie-Hastings Council LGA results to Council - $5,000

### 5.2.5 B5 - Extension of NCAHS ‘One Car Less’ program to other employers

**NCAHS One Car Less Program**

The first stage of the North Coast Area Health Service (NCAHS) One Car Less program was to identify the potential for a mode split away from driving via a Staff Travel to Work Survey.

1200 staff out of a total workforce of approximately 8000 responded to the survey regarding travel to work, although the response rate for the main Port Macquarie health facilities was significantly higher. It was found that (all respondents):

- 65% are interested in car pooling
- 25% are interested in cycling
Incentives for cycling were identified and included:

- better cycle lanes
- showers, lockers
- anti-theft tagging (use of an electronic sensor to monitor location of the bike)
- cycling route information

The second stage of the program is to get staff to pledge to leave the car at home one day a week in favour of an alternative means of travel to work such as car pooling, walking or cycling. The pledge format of the program means that all staff are accountable to their fellow workers as well as themselves, and are more likely to carry through with their pledge.

As part of the program, NCAHS is working with each health facility to improve conditions for cyclists in terms of end of trip facilities. Staff can audit their workplace for facilities such as showers, bike racks/secure storage and personal lockers, and then liaise and work with management to undertake necessary improvements (refer to Figure 11). The program can also help potential cyclists to link up with existing cyclists or other potential cyclists.

The NCAHS One Car Less program has the potential to significantly increase cycling levels in not only Port Macquarie but across the entire North Coast.

**Example of Country Energy**

As described in Section 2.2.3, Country Energy is an example of a workplace with a good ride to work culture. Approximately 15 employees cycle to work in Port Macquarie each day – a figure that has increased by 300% over the last decade. The Buller Street office has secure bike parking and associated end of trip facilities.

The cycling culture in Port Macquarie is supported by the Powerful Health Program that highlights the importance of healthy living and active transport.
Recommended Action

NCAHS has already been proactive in transferring their program to other organisations and is ideally placed to continue this approach. A web-based generic staff travel to work survey has been developed for use by other organisations, with Port Macquarie TAFE planning to use it in the near future. NCAHS would then work with organisations to develop tailored versions of the One Car Less program.

The aim of the initiative would be to increase cycling and walking to work. It involves a pledge from staff to change their travel habits, but also a pledge from management to improve end of trip facilities and also to take other necessary supportive measures. Therefore, both employers and employees have ownership of the program – programs with a broad-based support are more likely to be successful than top-down programs.
Some large employers, such as Country Energy, Coles, Woolworths, Port Macquarie-Hastings Council and Port Macquarie Private Hospital could be invited to join the program by NCAHS. Port Macquarie Chamber of Commerce could be the conduit for inviting other employers to join the program.

Programs need to be monitored over time to ensure that they are cost-effective and worth continuing. The staff travel to work survey provides baseline cycling mode split data. Cycling mode split targets could be set, such as increasing the Country Energy rate of 5% to 10% and the Council rate of 2% to 10%.

**Estimated Cost:**

It would be expected that participating employers absorb the internal costs of the program into their operating budgets. The state government, through NCAHS, would bear most of the cost associated with the program. Consideration could be given to providing small government grants for employers to improve end-of-trip facilities if the demand for the use of such facilities can be justified.

### 5.2.6 B6 - Community bike ride during Ironman week

Port Macquarie’s reputation for tourism and elite sport has been enhanced with the town hosting the Australia Ironman event since 2006. The event, held in April each year, involves a swim-cycle-run course. The impact of the Ironman is felt throughout the year, particularly in terms of athletes coming to Port Macquarie to train for the event.

The Ironman is a showcase of running, swimming and cycling and can encourage people to lead a more active lifestyle. A demonstration of this is that membership in Port Macquarie’s cycling clubs has increased significantly over the last few years and this has largely been attributed to the Ironman. The cumulative impacts of cycling are also important – the more cyclists that people see, the more people are likely to take up cycling.

The Ironman event should be leveraged to promote cycling as a mainstream form of transport and not just an activity for elite sports people. It is an event that has many simultaneous benefits – increases tourism, adds to the local economy, allows the community to band together, promotes elite sport and promotes an active lifestyle.

An immediate event that is recommended is a community bike ride on the Sunday before the Ironman. The route would take in the sites of Port Macquarie and surrounding areas, and could be either a day ride or twilight criterium event. The event would be targeted at cyclists of all age groups and abilities – an opportunity for families to cycle together as a group. It would not be a race, but rather a social ride suitable for all cyclists.

The event could be organised by Council with local sporting clubs, Port Macquarie Chamber of Commerce and corporate sponsors acting as implementation partners. The aim of the event would be to use the festive atmosphere of the Ironman event to conduct an event that all people can participate in and not just elite sports people. There are many examples of similar community events across Australia such as the MS Sydney to the Gong ride and Tour Down Under Mutual Community Challenge.

A constraint to the staging of on-road funs runs and bike rides is the need for road closures and traffic management. Road closures are essential to alleviate participant’s safety concerns. To overcome this potentially disruptive and costly issue, the community ride could use logistical procedures already developed for the main event.

The community ride could be further leveraged to connect interested people to the local bicycle user group, training courses, bike shop events etc.

**Estimated Cost:**

The organisation and administration costs of the ride could be made up through a combination of a donation of Council’s staff time, corporate sponsorship and participant entrance fee. The event could therefore be operated on a cost-neutral basis.
5.2.7  B7 - Extension of school bicycle training programs

This report has highlighted the perception that cycling to school is less safe than it used to be. It has also highlighted that travel habits, such as cycling, are established at an early age. Cycling levels to Port Macquarie’s schools have dropped since surveys were conducted in the late 1990s.

The Bicycle NSW Ride2School program appears to be popular with students, parents and teachers. However, at current coverage levels with long waiting lists, it is unlikely to be effective in significantly increasing cycling levels. For such a program to be effective, every student should have the opportunity to participate in the program at least once during their time at primary school.

The Bicycle NSW Ride2School and the Department of Education’s road safety programs could provide the basis for a significantly expanded school cycling training program. Responsibility for an expanded program could lie with a number of organisations:

- Bicycle NSW
- Department of Education
- External training provider similar to the AustCycle program

An expanded program should be funded by the state government as part of the school curriculum. This would be part of an overall policy encouraging a healthy lifestyle and use of active transport.

This initiative should be supported by other measures to increase the level of cycling to school such as:

- improved bike parking facilities at schools
- provision of safe cycling routes to schools
- bike-buses where a group of children can cycle together with an older child or adult
- use of the proposed urban mountain bike park (see Section 5.1.4) as a location to conduct school training and sport programs

**Estimated Cost:**

There are in the order of 30 primary and secondary schools in Port Macquarie-Hastings LGA. An annual one day training course at each of these schools, conducted by an external training provider, is estimated to cost $2,000 per school. This cost assumes the training provider has previously purchased a number of bicycles that can be easily transported from school to school. The cost of the program should be borne by the NSW government and not paid for by parents as an additional student fee.

5.2.8  B8 - Formation of Local Bicycle User Group (BUG)

Port Macquarie has a number of sporting cyclist groups but does not have a bicycle user group. A bicycle user group (BUG) would be an advocacy group representing all types of cyclists in the Port Macquarie area. They would be responsible for promoting cycling within the town by advocating for better cycling facilities, connecting cyclists with each other, organising social rides, bike workshops and other events. They could be involved in a future Transport Working Group (refer to Action B1).

Bicycle user groups are independent local groups affiliated with Bicycle NSW. Successful groups include Coffs Harbour BUG and Dubbo BUG in regional NSW and Bike North, Bike East and MASSBUG in Sydney. Whilst not the direct responsibility of PCAL or the state government, Bicycle NSW should encourage the establishment of such a group in Port Macquarie.
Estimated Cost:
Bicycle user groups are voluntary community groups with minimal running costs. Bicycle NSW supports the establishment and operation of such groups.

5.2.9 Non-infrastructure Initiatives - Priorities
The non-infrastructure initiatives identified as part of this study have been developed for immediate or short term implementation. The initiatives have been ranked in order of priority based on the likely relative impact on cycling levels, cost and likely availability of funding as presented in Table 6.

Table 6 Non-infrastructure Initiatives - Priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highest Priority</td>
<td>B3 Development of Port Macquarie Cycling Map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B5 Extension of NCAHS ‘One Car Less’ program to other employers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B2 Review of local planning policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B8 Formation of Local Bicycle User Group (BUG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B4 Survey of National Ride to Work Day participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B6 Community bike ride during Ironman week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowest Priority</td>
<td>B1 Local Sustainable Transport Co-ordinator / Transport Working Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B7 Extension of school bicycle training programs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This report has focused on investigating and developing a select number of key initiatives. Other initiatives that could be considered for Port Macquarie include:

- programs for employers to help with bike purchase and maintenance costs
- workplace and school travel plans
- bike hire scheme
- allocating some car parking for bike parking
- establishing bicycle user groups at schools, hospitals, major employers etc
- appointing cycling ‘ambassadors’ or ‘champions’ to promote cycling
- developing a bike-bus program whereby groups of commuter cyclists with a similar origin/destination cycle together during peak hours
- investigate cycling tourism initiatives targeting visitors to Port Macquarie
5.3 Suggested Changes to How to Prepare a Bike Plan – An Easy 3 Stage Guide

The How to Prepare a Bike Plan – An Easy 3 Stage Guide was published in 2002. It is understood that the aim of the guide is to identify the relevant issues and suggests useful resources that can simplify the task for preparing a local Council Bike Plan. We have reviewed the overall content and format of the guide and have the following comments:

- The term ‘bike plan’ is widely used but is often not clearly defined. A bike plan may relate to a plan that is solely focused on physical infrastructure. Alternatively, a plan may also include non-infrastructure initiatives such as encouragement, education and enforcement. There is a recent trend amongst local councils for the physical bicycle infrastructure to be addressed in a bike plan and the non-infrastructure initiatives to be addressed in a holistic sustainable transport plan. This trend is reinforced by the 50/50 RTA/council funding arrangements which mainly only applies to infrastructure. There is a need to move towards integration of both infrastructure and non-infrastructure at all levels of planning and government.

- The guide and bike planning in general needs to have more synergies with pedestrian planning. In regional areas, bike plans and pedestrian plans (PAMPs) are often undertaken in parallel.

- Preparation of local area bike plans in NSW involves various organisations – the local council, state government (primarily RTA) and occasionally consultants. The overall objective of the guide is unclear. Is it intended to be used by all of these organisations or just the local council? In what circumstances should it be used? In addition, local councils often have different objectives in preparing a bike plan. The objectives of metropolitan bikes plans are often different to regional bike plans.

- Constraints in the bike plan process, such as resourcing, funding etc need to be acknowledged and addressed in the guide.

- Although the guide is divided into three sections – Stage 1 Research, Stage 2 Preparation and Stage 3 Follow-up, the guide could benefit from a flowchart showing all of the tasks involved in one simple diagram.

- There is a need for consistency between bike plans prepared by different councils. The report structure does not need to be identical but there should be some common sections, particularly the physical works schedules. The guidelines could include a suggested outline table of contents for a bike plan report.

- Councils that are unfamiliar with the bike plan process often have difficulty preparing a brief for preparation of a plan by external consultants. The guidelines could include a standard brief with sections that could be included/excluded as required.

- One of the main difficulties associated with the implementation of local council bike plans is the interface between the transport planner/consultant prepared plan and the engineers subsequently responsible for implementation. The guide should devote more attention to suggesting a way that infrastructure actions are presented in a bike plan. It should cover items such as engineering schedules, mapping, sketches, cost estimates and prioritisation.

- Bike planning is a reasonably mature discipline in NSW. Most local councils have prepared at least one bike plan. Many plans have been subsequently reviewed and new plans prepared. The current guide tends to focus more on the preparation of new plans rather than revisions to existing plans. More guidance needs to be given to revising existing plans, particularly when the ‘easy’ measures have been implemented and other measures have been left in the ‘too hard basket’.
• The guidelines briefly touch on the issue of 50/50 funding of cycle routes. The concept of regional routes, i.e. routes that are sometimes assumed to be 100% the RTA’s responsibility, is a ‘grey’ area with apparently no clear policy. The RTA’s policy on responsibility and funding for regional and local routes needs to be clearly stated. The RTA’s policy may regularly change and therefore the guidelines may not be the most appropriate place for them to be described. Instead a link to the appropriate section of the RTA website could be included. Similarly, the guidelines should not include items that may continually change such as funding of a bike plan (current section 19) and in such cases a link to the appropriate website is more appropriate.

• The highly respected RTA NSW Bicycle Guidelines have been published since the How to Prepare a Bike Plan guide was produced. Any update to the guide needs to be integrated with the content of the Bicycle Guidelines.

In summary, it is suggested that the How to Prepare a Bike Plan guide be completely re-written rather than making minor changes to the existing document. The objectives and intended audience would need to be clearly defined.
6 Conclusions

This study has identified a range of actions to increase cycling levels in the town of Port Macquarie. These actions are a combination of infrastructure improvements and non-infrastructure initiatives, with responsibility for implementation across a range of stakeholders.

The actions have been prioritised on the basis of relative effect in increasing cycling usage, cost and likely availability of funding. A number of actions have been identified as relatively low cost with significant benefits that can be implemented in the short term.

The report highlights that there are a range of actions that can be implemented to increase cycling usage apart from the traditional focus on on-road and off-road bicycle infrastructure. The report also highlights that there are a range of stakeholders needed to cooperate and implement these actions – increasing cycling usage is unlikely to be achieved by the work of a single government department, local council or other organisation.
Appendix A

Stakeholder Workshop Notes
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job title</th>
<th>NSW Bikeplan: Port Macquarie Cycling Study</th>
<th>Job number</th>
<th>206241</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting name &amp; number</td>
<td>Stakeholder Workshop No.1</td>
<td>File reference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Hastings Council</td>
<td>Time &amp; date</td>
<td>3pm - 5pm 19 March 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of meeting</td>
<td>Stakeholder Feedback - Issues and Ideas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>John Hanlon (JH) - Arup</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Josh Milston (JM) - Arup</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daryl Ninham (DN) - RTA Sydney</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sherry Toms (ST) - RTA Northern Region</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cliff Toms (CT) - Port Macquarie-Hastings Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ross Henderson (RH) - Port Macquarie-Hastings Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Karen Thompson (KT) - Port Macquarie-Hastings Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greg Every (GE) - Port Macquarie-Hastings Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jacob Harty (JH(2)) - Port Macquarie-Hastings Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dean Fisher (DF) - Port Macquarie-Hastings Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Richard Griffiths (RG) - Coastline Cycleway</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pam Johnson (PJ) - North Coast Area Health Service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brett Johnson (BJ) - North Coast Area Health Service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Steve Cherry (SC) - NSW Police</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harry Creamer (HC) - National Parks and Wildlife Service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mandy Johnson (MJ) - National Parks and Wildlife Service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greg Croft (GC) - National Parks and Wildlife Service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bill Mabey (BM) - Tourism NSW</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Richard Bryce (RB) - Westport High School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hadyn Oriti (HO) - Port Macquarie Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ian Oliver (IO) - Settlement City Shopping Centre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tony Berry (TB) - Lewislands (Sovereign Hills)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jai Cooper (JC) - Hastings Valley Mountain Bike Club</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>David Leigh (DL) - Port Macquarie Cycle Club</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greg Laws (GL) - Port Macquarie Ironman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Tracey (JT) - Port Macquarie Triathlon Club</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trevor Nicholson (TN) - Graham Seers Cyclery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apologies</td>
<td>Matt Faber - RTA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tim Atherton - Port Macquarie Ironman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greg Miers - Busways</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circulation</td>
<td>Those attending</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prepared by                | John Hanlon / Josh Milston                  |       |
Date of circulation         | 23 March 2009                               |       |
Date of next meeting        | TBA                                        |       |
1. Introduction

1.1 Welcome and introduction of participants

1.2 PCAL NSW Bikeplan

- What are the best opportunities in my region to promote and facilitate increased cycling?
- How can I involve others and deal with barriers and constraints?
- What can I contribute to the promotion of cycling as a daily mode of transport, serving traffic flow, road safety, air quality, personal health, urban design and sustainable development?

See attached pdf of RTA presentation and Action for Bikes

1.3 Aim of the Port Macquarie cycling study

- Identify specific cycling encouragement initiatives for the Port Macquarie area – focus is on non-infrastructure initiatives rather than infrastructure improvements
- Generate transferable ideas for the wider promotion of bicycle use in country centres via the NSW BikePlan
- Highlight required improvements and updates to the Roads & Traffic Authority (RTA) guidelines “How to Prepare a Bike Plan – An Easy 3 Stage Guide” (2002)

See attached pdf of Arup presentation and How to Prepare a Bike Plan

2. Outline of Consultation Process

- Stakeholder workshops – second workshop planned for mid-May
- Other stakeholders not present – please give us the names of any other people that should be involved
- Ongoing communication with Arup/RTA throughout the study – keep the ideas coming

3. Background Information

- Strategic overview of cycling in Port Macquarie, e.g. mode split, age, gender, trip type, trip length etc (See pdf of presentation)

- Current status of infrastructure, e.g. implementation of 1999 bike plan, coastline cycleway, desired future works, bike parking facilities (See pdf of presentation)

- Current encouragement initiatives – either in Port Macquarie or elsewhere covering educational, personal, companies, government, e.g. NCAHS One Car Less program, maps, Port Macquarie Ironman, Arup BUG, Council participation in ride to work day (See pdf of presentation)
4. **Brainstorming Session**

4.1 **Barriers and Constraints**

- Why don’t more people cycle in Port Macquarie?

Suggested barriers to cycling:

- lack of appropriate on-road/off-road facilities, speed differential between cars and cyclists, people are not confident cycling, particularly on the road
- driving so easy with no traffic congestion, free parking etc
- people get too hot and sweaty
- riding home from work in the dark
- people have too much stuff to carry
- cost of owning a decent bike is prohibitive (TN stated that the cheapest bike he sells is $450)
- riding to school has become less safe, perhaps uncool, also kids must carry heavy backpacks, bicycles left at school are vandalised/stolen (See Westport High School survey by RB)
- lack of visible bicycle parking
- some people feel council inactive and not interested in developing cycling

4.2 **Cycling Potential**

- What is the realistic potential increase in cycling in Port Macquarie?
- What should be the primary target groups? e.g. vulnerable, commuter adults, racing adults, recreational, local errands

- There was much discussion regarding this issue. Some thought that planning and provision of infrastructure facilities should focus on experienced, confident cyclists – others thought exactly the opposite that resources should be directed towards vulnerable cyclists or people that currently do not cycle
- It is noted that PM has reasonably good facilities for racing adults but poor facilities for vulnerable cyclists, particularly a lack of a useful off-road network
- The recent upgrades of sections of roads such as Lake Road, Ocean Drive extension, Hastings River Drive has resulted in the provision of good quality bike facilities. This should continue as road improvements occur, particularly the Oxley Highway to the Pacific Highway. However, these facilities are still on high speed, high volume roads and generally are not suitable for vulnerable cyclists. For example the Oxley Hwy upgrade should include a separate shared path like the M7 path in Sydney

4.3 **Suggested Actions**

Suggested actions were discussed, both infrastructure and non/infrastructure, with consideration of the following:
Suggestions raised at the workshop included:

4.3.1 Infrastructure
- Lack of secure bike parking in town. People forced to chain bikes to poles or leave them unlocked against a shopfront. Suggestion: install secure bike parking (e.g. O-rings in Sydney CBD), convert some car parking bays to bike parking – not only provides parking but highly visible, generate publicity etc
- There is a lack of publicly available places in town where you can have a shower, particularly important for commuters. Could people be allowed into PM pool free of charge to have a shower? (JC does this at Kempsey pool)
- Why is the coastal cycleway not designated as a shared path? Why does it appear that cyclists are not encouraged to use it at all?
- There appears to be no directional signage for bike routes
- Endeavour Park, Lake Cathie is a good example of an off-road bike path where kids can cycle
- Council will shortly be doing an audit of cycling routes and preparing a map of cycling routes
- Suggest construction of two or three designated off-road cycle paths where families can take their children and safely ride the route (similar to coastal path in Wollongong). This would teach people to cycle, giving them more confidence to ride in other locations. Possible location could be Rosendahl Reserve

4.3.2 Planning
- Port Macquarie Bike Plan – no one seems to know it exists and it should be promoted
- Routes to the beaches are vital; major attractors, parking overflows in summer when really busy > routes should not just be to town and/or major employment destinations
- Similarly routes need to cater for all types of cyclists. For example beginners need somewhere where they can go and learn to cycle, e.g. parents take the bikes in the car, cycle, then drive home. Such locations could also cater for school rides
- Sovereign Hills is being planned as a self-contained new town. Cycleways are a major part of planning. The intention is that people will be able to safely and easily ride to shops, schools, ovals etc. A problem is that residents will also want to ride to PM CBD and the beaches but at this stage there are no safe routes.
- Settlement Point is a popular cycling route. Important that bikes continue to be taken on the ferry free of charge
- See Googik Heritage Track investigated by NPWS. Could be the prime off-road destination in PM. A half-day cycling experience. Also would
link to key destinations such as industrial area, some schools, sporting facilities, PM Base Hospital, housing areas

- See NPWS for plans for a bike path through Macquarie Nature Reserve.
- Ballina is a good example of a coastal town with good cycling facilities especially off-road paths along the foreshore. Perhaps Ballina’s topography has made it easy to build this network but PM has lots of challenges
- RG stated that according to research conducted in the UK people cycling to shopping centres spend more money than non-cyclists

4.3.3 Policy

- There is a lack of a coordinated approach to planning for cycling in NSW. No one body has responsibility. No one profession has responsibility, e.g. planners, engineers, health professionals etc
- Council has no cycling champion, no cycling coordinator, no cycle group. Perhaps a local transport committee could be established.
- Driving tests should include testing of bike knowledge and even a partial test that you can ride a bike so that you will know how to treat cyclists when you come across them on the road
- Permit everyone to cycle on the footpath rather than just those under 12 or adults accompanying children (adult footpath cycling permitted in ACT and QLD). PM could be used for a pilot study
- Need to promote safe routes to schools and also safe routes to other attractors such as shopping centres. Note the Ride2School program (Bicycle NSW contact James Adams). Arup to research current status of safe routes to school programs in NSW and also overseas
- Current NSW education policy prevents children under 10 from riding to school alone?? (Arup to research)

4.3.4 Programs

- Cycling NSW has been giving out vouchers for McDonalds etc to bike shops etc to provide training > however cost of signing up to the program is about $100/month and not worth the while of shop owners in PM
- Build a mountain biking course in town (JC has been investigating this). A good way to get people safely cycling and they can then progress to cycling on the road
- Introduce more bike hire schemes in addition to the one currently run by Graham Seers Cyclery. Possibly a scheme such as the ones run in Paris, Copenhagen etc
- NCAHS is hosting a PCAL Healthy Planning Workshop in Port Macquarie on April 30th for professionals interested in applying healthy planning principles to the built environment. Importance of getting this right in the first place
- Gordon Street Cycles holds afternoon/evening rides most nights of the week. People all come back afterwards for a drink at the in-store coffee shop
- Bike recycling schemes should be encouraged
4.3.5 **Information**

- There is currently a lack of cycling information available in PM. People need maps, general information on cycling, bike hire, bike shops, signboards in town etc. Both large maps, booklets and small pocket maps that people can take when cycling. Note that Council hope to prepare a map this year.
- Cycling information should be on the website, whether Council, RTA or other body.
- Information provided for tourists needs to be communicated differently to information for commuters. Perhaps two separate maps are required.
- Cycling should be promoted as a fun thing to do, particularly when cycling in groups.
- Where infrastructure is available, it is not always promoted, e.g. two bike racks at Settlement City Shopping Centre, but no signage around the centre indicating its presence.

4.3.6 **Training and Education**

- Children should receive cycle education at school. This would be both cycle proficiency and also education about the risk.
- Could run a few pilot programs.
- Start cycling groups at school.
- Identify key, safe cycling routes and use these as a starting point to getting people cycling.
- Include information about cycling in school newsletter, e.g. cycle routes to school, bike parking available within school grounds.
- Qualified cycling instructors should be available to conduct cycle proficiency training in schools and the wider community. Important to involve the parents in this dialogue as well.
- Ride2School program has potential to address all the above, but need schools to come on board - check schools already signed up in Port area, encourage coaching schools as per R2S program model.
- Gordon Street Cycles conduct training rides many afternoons.
- DECC currently has free cycling vouchers available for organisations/groups to run cycle training. (NCAHS promoting these and supporting AusCycle trainer to provide course in Port Macquarie).

4.3.7 **Events**

- The Ironman event has led to people coming to PM for a weekend to train.
- Conduct bike breakfasts in town centre to create a culture of high visibility cycling, get people involved – people will see others cycling and want to do it themselves. Coffs Community rides as an example here - see Coffs Harbour City Council website for further info.
- The triathlon group has found that peer pressure has led to more people joining and hence more people cycling.

4.3.8 **Tourism**

- Bike hire is popular at Graham Seers Cyclery. However, when people ask where is it safe to ride, TN says that cycling into town is not safe.
but they should head north to Settlement Point.

- Hotels and other accommodation establishments should promote cycling as an activity for tourists, particularly if they are located on a bike route
- PM should be promoted as a scenic, beautiful location – perfect for exploring on a bike
- Development of “A guide to cycling in Port Macquarie”. This would include cycling maps, hiring information, suggested rides etc. Available at tourist agencies, local hotels etc

4.3.9 Advocacy

- PM has never had a bicycle user group and this should be promoted (JC is currently trying to form one). Note that these groups are powerful lobbying groups elsewhere

5. Conclusion

- Where to from here – Arup will further research the ideas and issues discussed at the workshop. A draft list of possible actions will be sent to each stakeholder before the next workshop

- Keep the ideas coming, contact details:

  Arup
  John Hanlon
  Associate
  Level 10, 201 Kent Street
  Sydney NSW 2000
  Tel: 9320 9387
  Fax: 9320 9321
  E: john.hanlon@arup.com

  Arup
  Josh Milston
  Transport Planner
  Level 10, 201 Kent Street
  Sydney NSW 2000
  Tel: 9320 9647
  Fax: 9320 9321
  E: joshua.milston@arup.com

  RTA
  Daryl Ninham
  Senior Project Officer
  PCAL NSW Bike Plan
  L16, 101 Miller Street
  North Sydney NSW 2060
  Tel: 8588 5632
  Fax: 8588 4164
  E: Daryl_NINHAM@rta.nsw.gov.au

- Next workshop – proposed for Thursday 7 May 2009, 10am-12pm (to be confirmed)
Notes of Meeting

Prepared by: John Hanlon
Date of circulation: 15 May 2009
Date of next meeting: No further meetings

Job title: NSW Bikeplan: Port Macquarie Cycling Study
Job number: 206241

Meeting name & number: Stakeholder Workshop No.2
File reference:

Location: Port Macquarie - Hastings Council
Time & date: 10am - 12.30pm 8 May 2009

Purpose of meeting: Stakeholder Feedback - Suggested Actions

Present:
- John Hanlon (JH) - Arup
- Josh Milston (JM) - Arup
- Matt Faber (MF) - PCAL NSW Bike Plan
- Sherry Toms (ST) - RTA Northern Region
- Ross Henderson (RH) - Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
- Karen Thompson (KT) - Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
- Greg Every (GE) - Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
- Jacob Harty (JH(2)) - Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
- Pam Johnson (PJ) - North Coast Area Health
- Steve Cherry (SC) - NSW Police
- Harry Creamer (HC) - National Parks and Wildlife Service
- Ian Oliver (IO) - Settlement City Shopping Centre
- Jai Cooper (JC) - Hastings Valley Mountain Bike Club
- Trevor Whitehouse (TW) - Country Energy
- Phil Rout (PR) - Country Energy
- Andrew Mitchell (AM) - Country Energy

Apologies:
- Daryl Ninham - PCAL Bike Plan
- Richard Griffiths - Coastline Cycleway
- Brett Johnson - North Coast Area Health Service
- Bill Mabey - Tourism NSW
- Greg Laws - Port Macquarie Ironman
- John Tracey - Port Macquarie Triathlon Club

Circulation:
- Those attending
1. Introduction and Welcome

1.1 Summary of Process to Date

- Workshop 1 - 19th March (notes issued to all participants)
- Workshop 2 - 8th May
- Progress report issued to PCAL – 19 April
- Other meetings with stakeholders
- Consultant’s workshop – 30 April

1.2 Review of 1st Stakeholder Workshop

- Cycling infrastructure is inadequate – only appropriate for confident cyclists
- No disincentive not to drive – no traffic congestion, free/easy parking etc
- Need somewhere for tourists/vulnerable cyclists to cycle
- High participation in Ride to Work Day but low regular cycling levels
- Similarly, high number of sporting cyclists but these people do not cycle for everyday trips. PM as a hub for sporting cyclists can encourage more people to cycle but can also deter people
- Lack of information on cycling – no directional signage, maps, minimal bike parking, no mention in tourist brochures
- Schools have great potential for increasing cycling levels
- Lack of bicycle user group and/or ‘champion’ at Council has hindered cycling development

1.3 Barriers to Cycling in NSW (research by amrinteractive)

- To continue cycling after gaining a licence, particularly in country areas, was ‘not cool’
- Commuter cyclists do not belong anywhere - non-cyclists don’t perceive cyclists to have a place on the road or footpath
- Despite fond memories of cycling themselves as children, many parents are now too scared to let their own children cycle
- “I tried to get my kids to cycle to school, and then we got told off by the principal because there’s nowhere to put the bike and they’re not going to check that the bike is going to be there.” (Parramatta)
- Cycling is perceived as something you have to organise your life around
- There is uncertainty about how much bicycles cost – and fear of spending money on something they won’t use
- Bike lock-up facilities are a visible reminder that cycling is a viable and acceptable form of transport
2. Discussion of Suggested Actions

2.1 Introduction – Actions Suggested by Arup

2.1.1 Infrastructure
- Ongoing implementation of Port Macquarie Bike Plan
- Specific projects:
  - Coastal Walkway and NSW Coastline Cycleway
  - Googik Heritage Track
  - Sovereign Hills Development

2.1.2 Non-infrastructure
- Extension of North Coast Area Health Service ‘One Car Less’ program to other organisations.
- Local Sustainable Transport Co-ordinator
- Formation of Local Bicycle User Group (BUG)
- Visible, high-quality bicycle parking in Port Macquarie CBD
- Development of Port Macquarie Cycling Map
- Extension of school bicycle training programs such as Ride2School
- Actions to encourage participants in National Ride to Work Day to become regular cyclists.
- ‘Community Ride’ during Ironman week (annual event)
- Construction of a CARES facility

2.2 Infrastructure

2.2.1 On-Road Infrastructure
- TW commented that there are two short pinch point sections in the northbound direction of Ocean Drive (see photo) that force cyclists into the main traffic stream on an 80kph road.

2.2.2 Off-Road Infrastructure
- The signage on the shared paths in Town Green (see photo) is confusing in terms of whether cyclists are legally permitted to use the paths. Their appears to be no regulatory signage in accordance
Action with RTA standards.

- The level of cycling to school could be greatly increased if shared paths could be provided to all schools.
- Footpath cycling has many benefits and should be further investigated. There may be some locations where footpaths could be designated as shared paths, particularly in and around the CBD.
- Macquarie Park is a good place for children to learn to cycle. Westport Park is also a good place for children although the paths are narrow and not designated as shared paths (see photo).

- JC commented that the proposed Coastal walkway/cycleway should extend from Settlement Point to Lighthouse Beach, not just from the town centre. This cycle path could be incorporated in the annual community ride.
- JC presented a proposal for an urban mountain bike park at Wayne Richards Park. This would act as a venue where families can go and
cycle together in a safe environment, close to the town centre. The mountain bike track would also act as a ‘go between’ for road cyclists and BMX riders.

2.2.3 Bicycle Parking

- IO expressed interest in increasing the availability of quality bicycle parking at Settlement City Shopping Centre. This was reliant on funding from external sources and subject to approval from their developers. As part of the parallel Dee Why study Warringah Mall is planning to improve their level of bike parking. Also, bike parking at Settlement City needs to be supported by a better network of bike paths in the area.
- Arup suggested that installing bike parking at various locations in the CBD, preferably under cover, is a low-cost measure with significant benefits.

2.3 Planning

- The site for the new Woolworths store (cnr Gordon St/Horton St) represents a good opportunity to provide better cycling facilities such as bike parking, lockers and showers. It also represents an opportunity for Woolworths to encourage sustainable transport for staff and customers (e.g. home delivery service).
- The council pool on Gordon St was considered as a location for a bike hub with parking, showers etc but is probably too far from the CBD to be highly utilised.

2.3.1 Transport Working Group

- A number of regional councils in NSW (e.g. Coffs Harbour, Clarence Valley) have transport working groups which aim to develop a co-ordinated approach for different transport modes and can be used to support collaborative active travel/sustainable transport initiatives.
- These groups are driven by Council and contain representatives from a wide range of groups, e.g.
• Ministry of Transport
• Motoring groups
• Walking/cycling groups
• Port Macquarie BUG representative
• Major local employers
• Local health groups
• Buses/taxi groups
• The transport working group could make recommendations regarding new council DCP’s and other planning and environmental policies.
• A sustainable transport officer from Council could co-ordinate this group.

2.3.2 Port Macquarie-Hastings Council 2030 Strategic Plan
• It is soon to be legislated that all Council’s are to produce a 2030 strategic plan.
• Active/sustainable travel could be a potential major focus in the development of these 10 year Community Strategic Plans. It was noted that of the five major themes contained in the plan for Coffs Harbour, one is ‘Moving Around’.
• This would further promote active and sustainable travel within Port Macquarie.

2.4 Policy
• Council DCP, LEP and other planning and environmental policies should be reviewed to provide more support for sustainable transport.
• There is an apparent contradiction in that cycling is often included as a school sport, yet the same schools do not allow or discourage cycling to school.

2.5 Programs

2.5.1 One Car Less
• It was noted that this program is only just getting underway in NCAHS. Focus on Port Macquarie could build on interest generated by this Cycling Study. Web based Commuter active travel survey for other organisations currently under development by NCAHS. Survey should precede One Car Less program.

2.5.2 Country Energy
• The participants from Country Energy outlined the measures that are taken to promote healthy living including an annual $99 subsidy to each employee for spending on health (gym membership, bike, quit smoking etc), promoting the benefits of physical exercise, support for end of trip cycling facilities.

2.5.3 Ride to Work Day
• Ride to Work day should be only one initiative of a broader workplace Active Travel program e.g. One Car less
2.5.4 Ride to School Program
- PJ commented that the Bicycle NSW Ride to School program has brought about a positive response within schools.
- If children cycle at an early age, it becomes a way of life later on.
- Extension of these programs could be promoted/supported by the sustainable transport officer at Council and NCAHS.

2.5.5 ‘Active and Older’ Group in Port Macquarie
- Active and Older is a community group promoting physical activity to Port Macquarie residents.
- PJ noted that they already have walking groups and may also be interested in starting some cycling groups.

2.5.6 Active After School Sports Programs
- The Australian Sports Commission currently runs after school programs in a number of sports to keep children active.
- JC suggests to extend this program to mountain bike riding for students. He is already planning to run some mountain bike after school programs later in 2009 and fleet of bikes is available.

2.6 Information
- Development of a Port Macquarie Cycling Map was supported.

2.7 Training and Education
- Education relating to cycling has tended to focus on the responsibilities of cyclists to obey the road rules. Motorists all need to be educated to safely share the road with cyclists.
- Sporting road cyclists, both local PM cyclists and those that come to the area to train, need to be educated to obey the road rules and ride responsibly. For example they should not ride two abreast just for the sake of it. It was felt that their attitude can sometimes give cycling a ‘bad name’ in the wider community and unnecessarily anger motorists.
- The proposed mountain bike course at Wayne Richards Park could also include a type of CARES facility for the bike training of children.

2.7.1 Cycling Proficiency Courses
- DECC has provided free cycling training vouchers for public and private companies.
- NCAHS is supporting an Aus Cycle trainer and promoting vouchers within the Area health service and to other organisations. Aim of these courses is to promote confidence in cycling and encourage new cyclists.
- A nominated Council officer could co-ordinate these programs whereby a qualified Aus Cycle trainer visits major employers in Port Macquarie to conduct proficiency courses.
2.8 Events

- A Community Ride during Ironman week was seen as a good idea. It could be held on the Sunday prior to the main event and be supported by corporate sponsorship. A 5km fun run already occurs on the day before the main event.
- It was suggested that the high participation National Ride to Work Day is because people embrace the event rather than the actual cycling aspect of the day. People embrace the camaraderie with fellow workers, the breakfast and the festive spirit.

2.9 Tourism

2.10 Advocacy

- Formation of a local bicycle user group (BUG) was supported and it is understood that a number of people are trying to establish a Bicycle NSW affiliated group.

3. Conclusions

- Draft report to be produced
- Keep the ideas coming
- Contact details:

  **Arup**
  
  John Hanlon  
  Level 10, 201 Kent Street  
  Sydney NSW 2000  
  PO Box 76, Millers Point NSW 2000  
  Tel: 9320 9387  
  Fax: 9320 9321  
  E: john.hanlon@arup.com

  Josh Milston  
  Level 10, 201 Kent Street  
  Sydney NSW 2000  
  PO Box 76, Millers Point NSW 2000  
  Tel: 9320 9647  
  Fax: 9320 9321  
  E: joshua.milston@arup.com

  **RTA**
  
  Daryl Ninham  
  Senior Project Officer  
  PCAL NSW Bike Plan  
  L16, 101 Miller Street  
  North Sydney NSW 2060  
  Tel: 8588 5632  
  Fax: 8588 4164  
  E: Daryl_NINHAM@rta.nsw.gov.au