

WA BUDGET SUBMISSION 2024-2025

MORE PEOPLE RIDING BIKES MORE OFTEN

westcycle.org.au





373,300

WESTERN AUSTRALIANS
RIDE A BIKE EVERY WEEK

WHY BIKE RIDING COUNTS

Western Australians love bike riding, with 37% of WA adults hopping on a bike in 2022. Bike riding is important for WA's economy too, supporting 6,847 jobs and \$1.985 billion a year in economic activity¹.

WestCycle commends the Western Australian Government for its welcome investment in bike riding, including record spending on active transport and ongoing commitment to expanding the State's world-class network of off-road trails.

To support this ongoing investment, WestCycle is pleased to present a series of strategic budget recommendations aimed at enhancing Western Australia's transport and recreational bike riding infrastructure. Our focus is on promoting sustainable, healthy, and efficient travel options that align with the growing needs and desires of the community, as well as expanding the tourism opportunities presented by the

explosion of interest in gravel riding.

These recommendations are grounded in extensive research and align with the State Government's goals for environmental sustainability, public health, and economic development.

Our recommendations propose a series of investments that can continue the positive evolution in the way Western Australians travel, engage in leisure activities, and interact with their environment.

BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. \$80 million a year for active transport**
- 2. \$2 million for E-bike subsidies**
- 3. \$25 million to complete the Wadandi Track**
- 4. \$1 million for trail maintenance**
- 5. Help maintain mass participation events**

¹ "How Cycling Is Saving Australia: Economic Report Reveals the Figures" Micromobility Report, Scott Green, 16 November 2023.

BUDGET RECOMMENDATION #1

\$80 MILLION FOR ACTIVE TRANSPORT

WestCycle strongly supports Infrastructure WA's recommendation 63:

"...allocating a greater portion of state funding to local government cycling projects that deliver strategic, continuous cross-suburban linkages, based on Perth Long Term Cycling Network priorities and equivalent regional plans, including higher state co-funding contributions"².

To meet community needs, and support State Government objectives related to road trauma, climate action and METRONET, WestCycle recommends increasing investment in active transport to a baseline of \$80 million per year, excluding major projects .

What people want

We know there is widespread community support for increasing investment in active transport in WA. In a typical week, 373,300 Western Australians ride a bike, with more than a million riding a bike each year. A massive 43% of these riders do so for transport³.

There is huge scope to increase these numbers by boosting investment in active transport, to provide the 47% of WA residents who are keen to ride a bike but feel unsafe using streets and roads with motorised vehicles with quality, safe infrastructure on which to take up bike riding, and support a further 16.4% who already ride but avoid heavily trafficked areas to ride more often⁴. These findings are supported by national data, which says 62% of people who currently ride a bike at least once per month

6,847

THE NUMBER OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT JOBS CREATED IN WA BY THE CYCLING ECONOMY IN 2022



² "State Infrastructure Strategy - Transport July 2022" Infrastructure WA

³ www.cwanz.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/NWCPS-WA-2023-revC.pdf

⁴ www.cwanz.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/NWCPS-WA-2023-revC.pdf



Under 5km

THE LENGTH OF
TWO THIRDS OF ALL
CAR TRIPS IN PERTH

would ride more frequently if there were safer places for them to do so⁵.

The vast majority of people also want to live in places where they can walk and ride to public transport, local shops, and places for recreation and leisure⁶.

What can be achieved

Two thirds of all car trips in Perth less than 5km⁷, meaning most of these trips could be done by walking or riding a bike if people had safe places to do so. Increasing investment in active transport to \$80 million a year gives people more options for how they get around each day, and supports the development of a flexible, resilient, low carbon transport system.

How we get there

- Invest a minimum of \$80 million a year in active transport projects to:
 - Increase Western Australian Bicycle Network (WABN) funding to accelerate the delivery of the Long Term Cycle Network.
- Incentivise local governments to co-invest in active transport infrastructure by revising the proportion of funding for projects provided through WABN Grants to align with funding for road projects. In the new scenario, the financial contribution would change from an equal 1:1 split to a 2:1 ratio, with the state government providing the larger share as per road funding.
- Enhance the utility and accessibility of METRONET by prioritising WABN Grant applications that provide connections to stations.
- Continue to implement the Active Travel to School Roadmap 2023–2030, so all children again have the opportunity to walk and ride to school.
- Maintain the path network to a high standard, and implement a program for renewal and upgrades to realise the potential of the network to truly serve “all ages and abilities”.

⁵ www.weride.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/The-Australian-Cycling-Economy_October-2021-Updated.pdf

⁶ “What Australia Wants Report” National Heart Foundation of Australia, page 91, November 2020

⁷ www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/map/perth-active-transport-improvements





BUDGET RECOMMENDATION #2

\$2 MILLION FOR E-BIKE SUBSIDIES

What people want

E-bikes recorded the greatest sales growth, from 54,000 sold in 2020 to 193,000 last year, and now account for 12% of all Australian bike sales⁸. The increasing interest in e-bikes amongst a broad cross-section of WA residents reflects community perceptions of e-bikes as affordable, accessible, healthy, low-carbon and joyful transport options. A recent WA study, however, found the upfront cost to be a major barrier to wider uptake of e-bikes, suggesting that a subsidy or rebate for purchase would drastically increase uptake, resulting in immediate benefits to household transport budgets, and more people making use of the PSP network.

What can be achieved

The Tasmanian Government recently announced rebates to support individuals to purchase e-bikes, e-cargo bikes for transport as part of Tasmania's Climate Change Action Plan 2023-25. The maximum rebates will be \$500 for e-bikes and \$1,000 for e-cargo bikes.

⁸ https://www.weride.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/The_Australian_Cycling_and_e-scooter_Economy_in_2022_WeRide_and_EY_2023_Report_Final_web.pdf

With a \$2 million investment in an e-bike subsidy trial using the above figures as a guide, the WA Government could support 4000 households to purchase an e-bike. Benefits include:

- Increasing the quality of the e-bike fleet to prevent fires and accidents.⁹
- Households saving thousands of dollars each year, even just on fuel and parking, by not needing that second car.¹⁰
- More people easily connecting to METRONET, reducing demand for station parking and adding more flexibility to the public transport network.

Oslo's e-bike subsidy program was assessed for its impact and found the subsidy was the most significant influence on people's willingness to buy an e-bike¹¹.

9 <https://techcrunch.com/2023/03/22/how-a-proposed-federal-e-bike-incentive-could-lead-to-fewer-battery-fires/>

10 <https://rac.com.au/car-motoring/info/buying-a-car/running-costs>

11 www.toi.no/publications/effect-of-subvention-program-for-electric-bicycle-in-oslo-on-bicycle-usetransport-distribution-and-co2-emissions-article33886-29.html

How we get there

WA has one of the most generous subsidy schemes for zero emissions vehicles in Australia. As a significantly cheaper transport alternative to a new electric vehicle, e-bikes can be made accessible to a broader segment of the electric mobility market.

The inclusion of e-bikes in subsidies for electric vehicles, or as a stand-alone trial program, supports a new cohort of commuters to be part of climate action in WA while helping to address state targets related to road safety, health and traffic congestion.

88%

RESPONDENTS SAID THE E-BIKE SUBSIDY SIGNIFICANTLY INFLUENCED THEIR DECISION TO BUY AN E- BIKE



156,000

TONNES OF CO2 EMISSIONS AVOIDED IF 1 MILLION OF THE 2.8 MILLION TRIPS UNDER 5KM IN PERTH WERE BY BIKE

*Calculated by converting 1 million of the 2.8 million daily car trips in Perth to bike trips, with each trip averaging 2.5km and using the 171g/km of CO2 emissions produced from a 2013 Toyota Corolla it's possible to avoid approximately 156,037.5 tonnes of CO2 emissions each year.



BUDGET RECOMMENDATION #3

\$25 MILLION TO COMPLETE THE WADANDI TRACK

The Wadandi Track is currently two disconnected sections of trail, each near the major tourism towns of Margaret River and Busselton. On flat or gently sloping land, and traversing beautiful landscapes, the Wadandi Track is ideal for novice and adaptive road riders as well as experienced road riders and mountain bikers taking it easy.

With investment of \$25 million from the State Government, the full potential of the track can be realised, and provide bike riders and hikers with the opportunity to enjoy 110km of uninterrupted trail from Busselton and Augusta through the heart of the stunning Margaret River Region.

What people want

We know people are eager for more opportunities to explore WA by bike. In 2022, tourists spent a massive \$97.1 million on cycle touring in regional WA¹². A suite of popular events, including Nannup's SEVEN Gravel

Race (with the upcoming 2026 Gravel World Championships), Chapman Valley's BackRoads Gravel, and WestCycle's recent success, Bike it to Ballidu Gravel, in the Shire of Wongan Hills, are testament to the explosion of enthusiasm for gravel riding in WA, and the accessibility of gravel riding to everyday road riders and mountain bikers.

What can be achieved

As identified in the WA Strategic Trails Blueprint 2022-2027, the Wadandi Track has the potential to become an iconic trail, to be developed and promoted as one of the best in Australia - an iconic destination for gravel riders, nature lovers and national and international tourists seeking novel experiences in regional WA.

The *Trails Reference Group* and the *Mountain Bike Strategy Steering Group*, tasked with coordinating implementation of the *WA Mountain Biking Strategy 2022-2032*¹³, have identified the completion of the Wadandi Track is critical to establishing the Margaret River region as an off-road cycling destination.

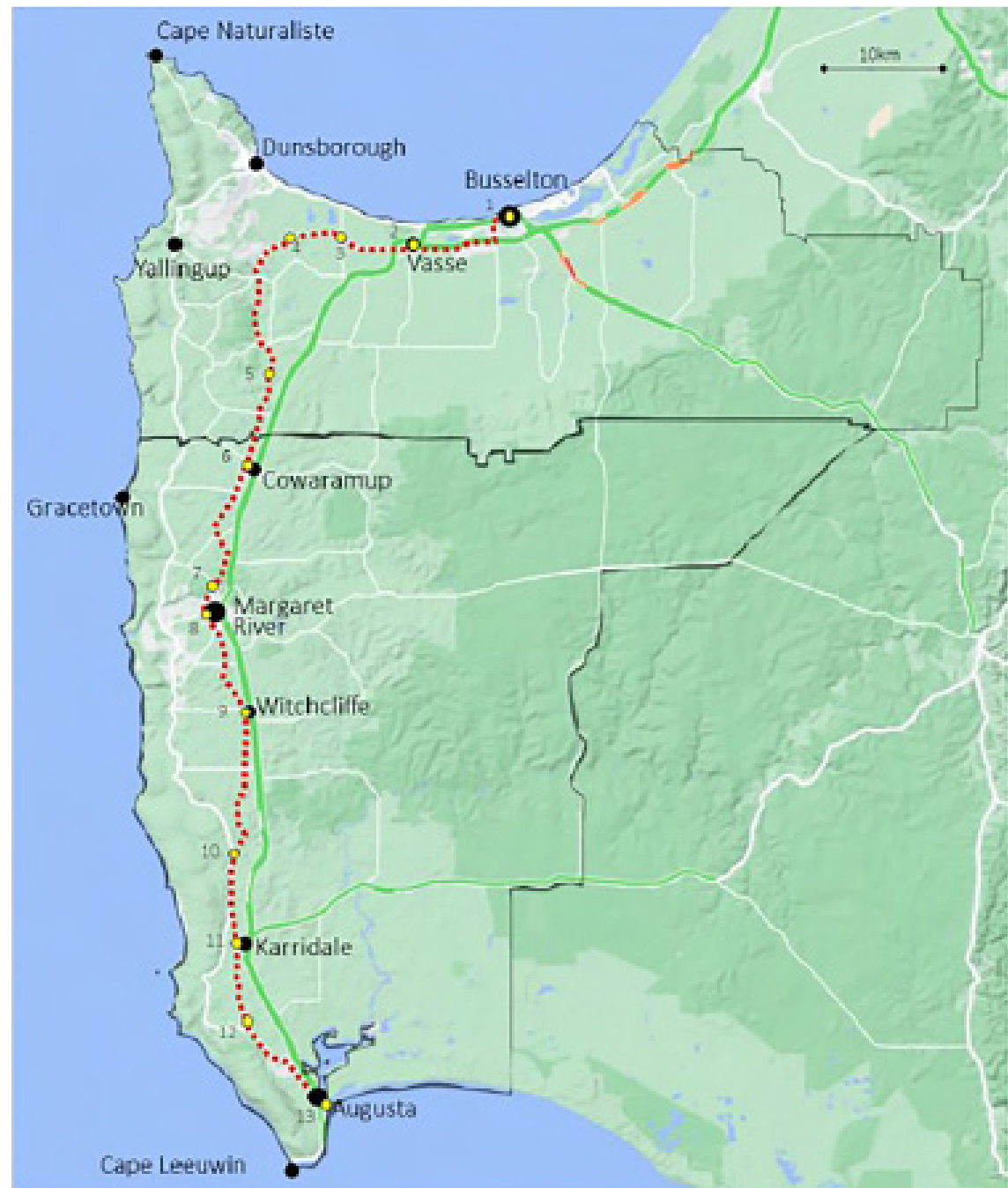
¹² The Australian Cycling and E-Scooter Economy in 2022, commissioned by WeRide Australia: www.weride.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/The_Australian_Cycling_and_e-scooter_Economy_in_2022_WeRide_and_EY_2023_Report_Final_web.pdf

¹³ <https://westcycle.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/WA-Mountain-Bike-Strategy-2022-2032.pdf>



image credit: Trails WA

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| 1: Busselton Trailhead | 10.45 km |
| 2: Vasse Trailhead | 5.92 km |
| 3: Marybrook Siding Trailhead | 4.43 km |
| 4: Quindalup Siding Trailhead | 15.64 km |
| 5: Metricup Siding Trailhead | 9.68 km |
| 6: Cowaramup Trailhead | 10.98 km |
| 7: Carters Road Trailhead | 3.41 km |
| 8: Margaret River Trailhead | 8.64 km |
| 9: Witchcliffe Trailhead | 14.27 km |
| 10: Vlam Road Trailhead | 7.71 km |
| 11: Karridale Siding Trailhead | 7.93 km |
| 12: Kudardup Siding Trailhead | 10.19 km |
| 13: Flinders Bay Trailhead | |



The completed Wadandi Track will be one of the longest rail trails in the world, providing visitors with 110km of world-class uninterrupted travel by bike or foot through forests, plantations, vineyards, agricultural land and granite outcrops. Adventurers will be treated to flora and fauna in one of the world's 34 biodiversity hotspots, and an intimate experience of the rich diversity of the Margaret River Region, including Aboriginal culture and local artisanal and agricultural industries¹⁴.

The economic benefits of completing the Track are further supported in the detailed business case for delivery of the remaining sections of Wadandi Track, commissioned by the Margaret River-Busselton Tourism Association and Tourism WA. It found the project will enable further tourism, residential, visitor and business investment growth across the region¹⁵.

How we get there

State Government investment of \$25 million in the completion of the Wadandi Track builds on the work facilitated by the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River and City of Busselton, with local and state partners, to establish and promote the existing sections, and capitalises on the wave of enthusiasm for gravel riding and the international renown of the Margaret River Region, adding a potent element to WA's status as a premier cycling tourism destination.

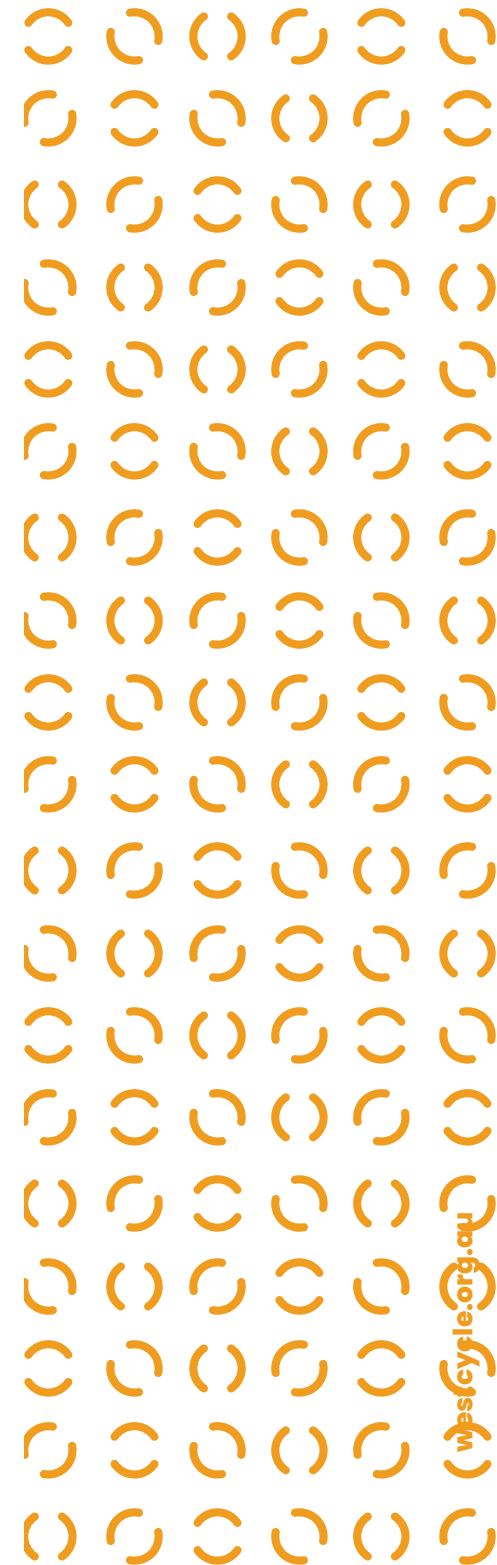
The completion of the Wadandi Track aligns with the *WA Strategic Trails Blueprint 2022-2027*, developed and supported by Tourism WA, The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, WA Indigenous Tourism Operators Council, The Department of Transport, WALGA, Trails WA and the Department of Health¹⁶.

In delivering this project, WestCycle supports the collaborative and practical approach outlined in the *WA Strategic Trails Blueprint 2022-2027* for the development and delivery of iconic trails.

¹⁴ www.railtrails.org.au/trails/wadandi-track-busselton-flinders-bay-rail-trail/

¹⁵ Business Case (2023/24) Wadandi Track Enhancements & Completion Project. 2023 Keston Economics Pty Ltd.

¹⁶ Trails Blueprint 2022-2027 Department of Local Government Sport and Cultural Industries





BUDGET RECOMMENDATION #4

\$1 MILLION FOR TRAIL MAINTENANCE

Significant investment has been made in mountain bike trails over recent years, including the \$10 million Collie Adventure Trails initiative and funding for local trail development projects through the Trail Planning Grants Program, administered by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries.

The *WA Strategic Trails Blueprint 2022-2027* identifies the “need for a sustainable and consistent approach to asset maintenance, including available funding and resources”, and the *WA State Mountain Bike Strategy 2022-2032* highlights a need to improve the capacity of the mountain bike trails industry and workforce.

What people want

A 2021 community survey conducted by WestCycle found 84% of respondents rated well-maintained trails as either *Extremely Important* or *Very Important*, highlighting the

importance of the issue for influencing where and how often people engage in mountain biking and off-road cycling¹⁷.

What can be achieved

Currently, off-road cycling and mountain biking trails are maintained through provision of an ad hoc mix of funding and resources from the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, local governments, community clubs and volunteers.

How we get there

Expanding the baseline budget for trail maintenance by \$1 million will ensure trail managers have the resources and skills required to ensure trails meet best practice standards, use of these community assets continues to grow, trail users are kept safe, and the environment is protected.

¹⁷ WA State Mountain Bike Strategy 2022-2032



BUDGET RECOMMENDATION #5

HELP MAINTAIN MASS PARTICIPATION CYCLING EVENTS

Rising costs associated with running major events has significantly impacted all sectors. For organisers of mass participation sporting events, the significant increase in traffic management costs, including road closures, diversions and personnel, have made road cycling events particularly expensive to run.

The addition of inflationary pressure on other operational costs such as logistics, equipment, amenities and staff has created a level of financial burden and risk for event organisers – many of whom are not-for-profit organisations and sporting clubs – that mean large scale cycling participation events are increasingly unviable.

The Dams Challenge, for example, has run for over 20 years with over 1000 people taking part each year. Between 2021 and 2023 there was a 19.6% increase in cost of traffic management costs and a 50% increase in cost of food and drink for participants. These cost increases presented an unacceptable level of financial risk for running an event of this complexity and scale, and the 2024 event was subsequently cancelled indefinitely.

The Department of Local Government, Sport, and Cultural Industries provided \$276,000 in grants for nine cycling events in 2022 and 2023¹⁸.

¹⁸ www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/funding/sport-and-recreation-funding/sport-and-recreation-events-funding-program and via email

What people want

Cycling events are popular among people who want to get fit and active through a low impact sport with multiple entry levels. Transferring rising event costs to participants through registration fees will make events unaffordable for many suffering cost-of-living pressures. They would miss out on the health, wellbeing and social inclusion benefits of mass participation events. A decrease in registrations will further jeopardise the financial feasibility of Western Australia as an attractive place for major events.

Surveys from past Dams participants show that many people are new to cycling or cycling events. They register for the Dams Challenge to improve their fitness, connect with others and achieve a significant personal goal. It is important that these events remain accessible and affordable to those wishing to participate.

“I did Two Dams and came 33rd and loved it, back on my bike every day since!”

Survey comment from event participant.

What can be achieved

The physical and mental health benefits of participating in sport and physical activity are widely documented. From reduced risk of chronic disease to improved sleep, feeling more energetic, improved brain and cognitive function and improved state of mind,

the benefits of being active are evident. In WA, only 35.8% of adults meeting Australia’s physical activity guidelines¹⁹.

Mass participation events are an opportunity for people to set goals and increase their physical activity levels. One in five Australians experience a mental or behavioural condition every year¹⁹, with suicide being the leading cause of death among young Australians²⁰. Physical exercise, socialising and spending time in nature are evidence-driven complementary and preventative treatments for mental health conditions.

As an individual or team activity, cycling has been found to increase community cohesion and social connection. People who participate in large cycling events state they experience a sense of enjoyment, pride, and satisfaction for completing the event. This positive experience often motivates participants to continue riding bikes for recreation and/or transport as a long-term activity, leading to long-term health benefits.

Mass participation cycling events generate economic benefit in the communities where they are held. For example, the post-event evaluation of the 2023 Perth City Criterium found 66% of attendees visited a local business on the day of the event and 50% of attendees spent more than \$30. Feedback from venues said there was on average a 40% increase on daily takings directly attributable to the event²⁰.

¹⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2020-21)

²⁰ “Perth City Criterium, Post Event Impact Report” WestCycle 2023

How we get there

Increasing State Government investment in the Sport and Recreation Events Funding Program will ensure that events remain affordable for participants while reducing the risk to event organisers. This additional funding would also contribute positively to the local community where events are held, growing the already significant \$1.985 billion a year contribution of cycling to WA's economy²¹.

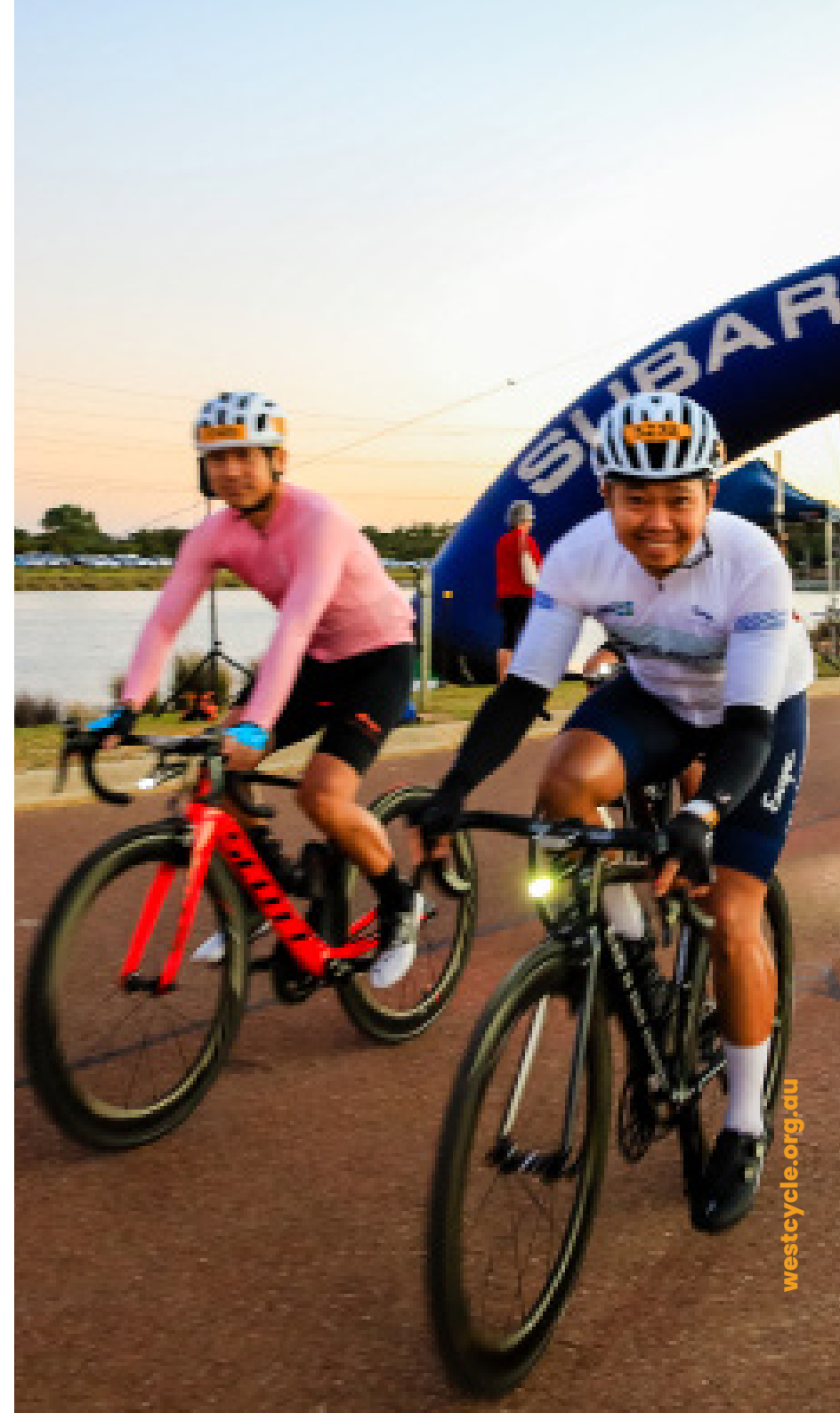
CONCLUSION

WestCycle's budget recommendations offer a robust roadmap for further enhancing Western Australia's bike riding infrastructure and participation levels. These proposals build upon the substantial progress already made in the sector.

The implementation of these measures will significantly augment the existing infrastructure, elevating Western Australia's status as a premier destination for bike riding enthusiasts and event participants.

This strategic investment is not just an enhancement of travel and leisure activities; it represents a commitment to the holistic improvement of the quality of life for Western Australians, ensuring a sustainable, economically vibrant, and healthy future.

²¹ The Australian Cycling and E-Scooter Economy in 2022, commissioned by WeRide Australia: www.weride.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/The_Australian_Cycling_and_e-scooter_Economy_in_2022_WeRide_and_EY_2023_Report_Final_web.pdf





ABOUT WESTCYCLE

MORE PEOPLE RIDING BIKES MORE OFTEN

WestCycle is the not-for-profit peak body for bike riding in Western Australia, representing anyone who rides or wants to ride a bike whether it be for recreation or transport.

Our community includes off-road riders, recreational road riders, bike commuters, and people who use a bike for their daily journeys.

We're a community of bike enthusiasts and change-makers. Our mission? To develop, promote and enact positive change state-wide. We're here for every type of ride – from long rides to short ones, riding to work or school, the weekend breakaway rides, bunch rides, on road or off road.

When it comes to bike riding infrastructure, participation, safety and community attitudes, we are changing the game while providing a vital link between cyclists and the government. You can rely on us to do our part when it comes to leading and coordinating the growth and development of bike riding in Western Australia.

WestCycle Membership supports our advocacy to government for safer and more connected paths and facilities, and the promotion of bike riding as a healthy, safe and climate friendly way for everyone to get around.

westcycle.org.au