



PO Box M59 | Missenden Rd | Camperdown NSW 2050

www.bikesydney.org | ABN 95939852367

Tel +61 2 8213 2437

To:

The General Manager

Leichhardt Municipal Council
7-15 Wetheril St
Leichhardt NSW 2040

by email: leichhardt@lmc.nsw.gov.au

20 June 2013

**BIKESYDNEY'S RESPONSE TO
LEICHHARDT'S DRAFT 2013/14 BUDGET**

Introduction

BIKESydney is an incorporated not-for-profit community organisation.

We want to live in a city:

- Where riding a bicycle is part of everyday life
- That is vibrant, healthy, productive, creative and robust
- That values community, mobility, health, wellbeing social equity and sustainability
- Where people of all ages can make easy choices to ride a bicycle, walk and take public transport.

We advocate on behalf of our members and people who ride bicycles who live and work in the inner Sydney area.

At its extraordinary meeting on 21 May 2013 Leichhardt Council resolved to cut its cycling funding in 2013/14 to zero (from \$400,000 per annum). We strongly oppose this measure.

We are urging Council to retain bike funding of \$400,000 in the 2013/14 Budget.

The proposal to delete this funding was completely unannounced to either BIKESydney or Bike Leichhardt who sit on Council's Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC). This hardly represents "open governance".

This decision to delete bike funding conflicts directly with Council's **2025+ Strategic Plan** (Council's Vision) which presents cycling as a pillar of its transport and environment policies. We've included at the foot of this letter references to cycling contained in the 2025+ Strategic Plan. The difference in Council's messaging and its action here is stark and unsupportable.

Furthermore, Cr John Jobling has indicated that Council will not guarantee bike funding beyond 2013/14.

Council's Bicycle Advisory Committee was next looking to develop no less than the **family- and kid-friendly, off-road** and regionally-significant Whites Creek, Bay Run and Greenway paths.

Those who ride – and moreover, those who don't but would – know too well that **the biggest barrier to cycling is the fear of having to ride on roads with fast traffic**. The proportion of female riders on Lilyfield Rd in the morning peak is less than 15%; and there are almost no (zero) young or elderly riders. This is a poor reflection on the perceived safety of our internal network. What is needed most are **meaningful, connected off-road cycling paths** like the White's Creek path and the City West Cycle Link.

How do we know this? BIKESydney attends every session of the BAC and we consult directly and regularly with Council staff on strategy and planning. Sadly, the BAC was in no way consulted about the budget cut. To our knowledge, neither Mayor Byrne or Cr John Jobling have ever attended the BAC. We warmly invite both to attend to discuss matters, rather than enacting decisions without consultation.

The budget cut also undermines the **Inner Sydney Regional Bicycle Network**, an initiative of the 15 inner city councils - including Leichhardt - to provide a standardised, connected and integrated bicycle network for inner Sydney. Leichhardt Council stands to benefit greatly from this given its location and the great number of high-quality trip attractors contained in the local government area. The lack of spending on bike infrastructure in Leichhardt will undermine the Federal Government's propensity to support and fund the Network.

Just across the Anzac Bridge, the City of Sydney have committed \$17 million (of NEW funds) on bicycle programs in 2013/14 while over the Iron Cove Bridge, Canada Bay Council will spend around \$1million to complete its section of the Bay Run shared path.

In entirely deleting its forward bike budget, Leichhardt Council forgoes leveraging the investments of its neighbouring councils. The recently-completed Johnstons Canal Shared Path is a project for which Leichhardt Council created cost efficiencies by working in unison with the City of Sydney.

Council has sought to justify its deletion of the bike funding in the 2013/14 Budget with reference to "budget carryovers", a very normal aspect of Council business. Indeed, carryovers are referred to and (by implication) considered acceptable in other section of the draft Budget. Notably, Council has not proposed any measures to manage future carryovers. As we have several times previously, BIKESydney calls on Council to employ an Active Transport Officer (potentially shared among other divisions such as traffic engineering to defray costs if required) so to properly actuate budgets and avoid carryovers by managing projects more efficiently. In any case, it is unreasonable to expect that the active transport goals of 2025+ will be achieved in the absence of an Active Transport Officer.

As discussed above, we list below references to the importance of cycling in Council's **2025+ Strategic Plan** - the community's mandate. Included are references that underline how Council's decision to re-direct funds to the introduction of 30-minute free parking directly conflict with the principles of the Plan.

It is unconscionable and a clear affront of its duty to the community that Council would decide to delete bike funding in its 2013/14 Budget.

We are calling on you to fully reinstate the \$400,000 funding for bike programs in the 2013/14 Budget.

References to cycling or matters to which cycling contributes in Leichhardt Council's 2025+ Strategic Plan:

[page 4] The importance of Leichhardt's future is based on creating a **"sustainable and liveable community"**;

[page 6] The 0-14 year olds will experience the most growth within our LGA over the next 20 plus years;

[page 7] Our Integrated Transport Plan is driven by a primary resolve to **...reduce private car dependency for all travel"**;

[page 8] Sustainability – shared passion and commitment to consistently do all the things required to enhance and preserve the **social, environmental, economic and civic leadership** factors that are important to the lives of future generations and life on our planet;

[page 8] Develops the commitment, systems and practices for Leichhardt to be **a role model in social, environmental, economic and governance** [and] sustainability;

[page 12] Easy access for people, services, information and facilities that promotes the amenity, health and safety of the community and **that reduces private car dependency for all travel** [this statement accompanied by a picture of youths on bikes];

[page 13] Environmental conditions are improved - **a reduced dependency on private motor vehicles Car ownership**;

[page 13] Health and wellbeing is promoted by **providing choices for moving around**;

[page 13] **A legible, direct and safe pedestrian and cycling environment is created**;

[page 13] **Promote cycling by developing a comprehensive bicycle network that makes cycling safe, useable and attractive**;

[page 13] advocating for public transport systems that are fully integrated, suitable for the inner City and efficiently respond [to] changing demands (eg The Cooks River to Leichhardt Greenway corridor incorporating **active** and public **transport initiatives**);

[page 13] **Travel modes within, to and from the LGA resulting in decrease of private vehicle usage;**

[page 15] **Maximise the community's access to sustainable transport;**

[page 15] **Facilitate development that encourages walking and cycling, increases use of public transport and reduces dependency on private motor vehicles;**

[page 16] A sustainable environment created by inspiring, leading and guiding our social, environmental and economic activities [statement accompanied by a picture of the Whites Creek corridor - which the 2013/14 cycling budget would have been directed to improving];

[page 17] **Our impacts on the natural environment and heritage are minimised - reduce car dependency;**

[page 17] **Increase the proportion of commuter trips that use public transport or active transport (walking, cycling);**

[page 17] **Measures of Success: [a reduction in the] Number of reported motor vehicle accidents in the Leichhardt LGA area involving pedestrians or cyclists;**

[page 19] Places ...that attract and connect people [Editorial Note: does increasing traffic by offering free parking serve this goal?];

[page 21] **consistently** apply sustainability principles to our service systems, decision making, and management structures;

[page 22] The NSW government has the following vision for the Inner West: [that it be] Well connected, with reliable transport services and **reduced road congestion;**

...and the winner....

[page 24] Indicates how **the Budget has a direct responsibility to Council's 2025+ Vision document.**

We look forward to having Councilors join us at the next Bicycle Advisory Committee.

Please feel free to contact us should you require any clarification or wish to discuss other matters.

Yours sincerely

David Borella

BIKESydney

President

david.borella@bikesydney.org