

Submission re: City of Moreland Budget 2008-09

Prepared by the Moreland Bicycle Users Group
25/06/08



1. Introduction

Moreland needs a comprehensive network of safe bicycle infrastructure. In order for this to occur, council needs to significantly increase investment in bicycle infrastructure now and well into the future.

Increased bicycle use will deliver three key benefits for Moreland residents:

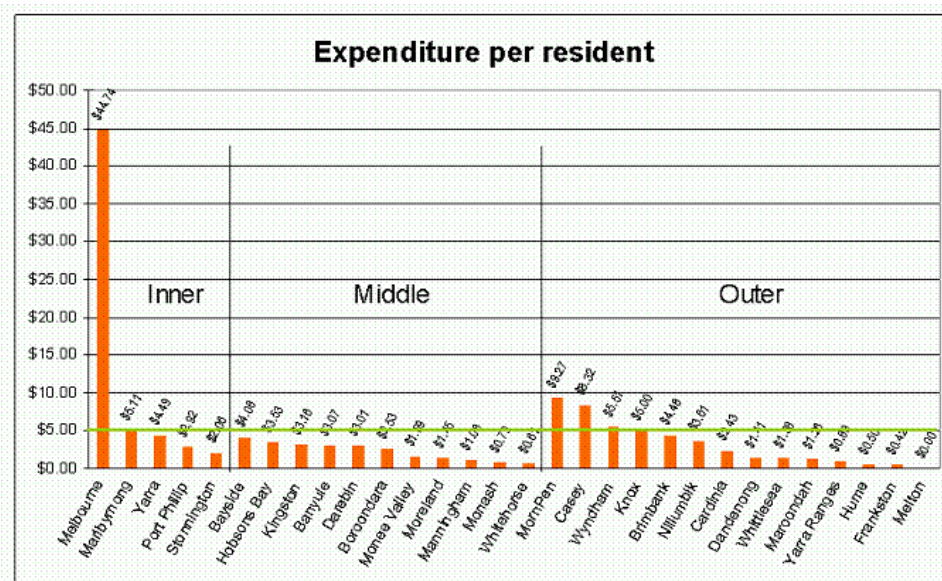
1. Improved health: increased bicycle use for short, routine trips around the municipality will result in improved health and reduce the incidence of obesity and related health problems such as diabetes.
2. Reduced traffic congestion: increased bicycle use will reduce traffic congestion on Moreland's roads.
3. Reduced greenhouse gas emissions: increasing bicycle use is the quickest way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transport.

Cycling will also help many people make ends meet in these times of rising fuel and food prices and adds enjoyment opportunities to our lives.

On the basis of these benefits for residents, Moreland Bicycle Users Group (BUG) believes council should increase investment in cycling infrastructure in line with the recommended benchmark of \$5 per resident set by Victoria's peak cycling organisation, Bicycle Victoria, in the 2008-09 Budget. This equates an increase from \$345,000 in the proposed budget to \$720,075 (based on June 2007 population of 144,015 residents). Failing this, BUG believes a bicycle budget of \$660 000 (\$4.70 per head) would meet minimum requirements for this year, with a view to annual incremental increase.

In 2007 Bicycle Victoria found that Moreland has fallen behind comparable councils in terms of bicycle expenditure. This has occurred after Moreland and its predecessor councils had a history of investment in cycling infrastructure (although still falling short of the funding recommendations of the Moreland Bike Plan), and despite the rapidly increasing number of people using Moreland's paths and infrastructure.

Moreland's last budget allocated just \$1.45 per resident, while the proposed 2008-09 budget provides for around \$2.50 per resident. The chart below illustrates that for the 2007 budget Moreland under-performed compared to other councils. In order to achieve the Bicycle Victoria benchmark and re-establish Council's position as a leader on active transport councillors must support an amendment to allocate a further \$300,000 to cycling infrastructure.



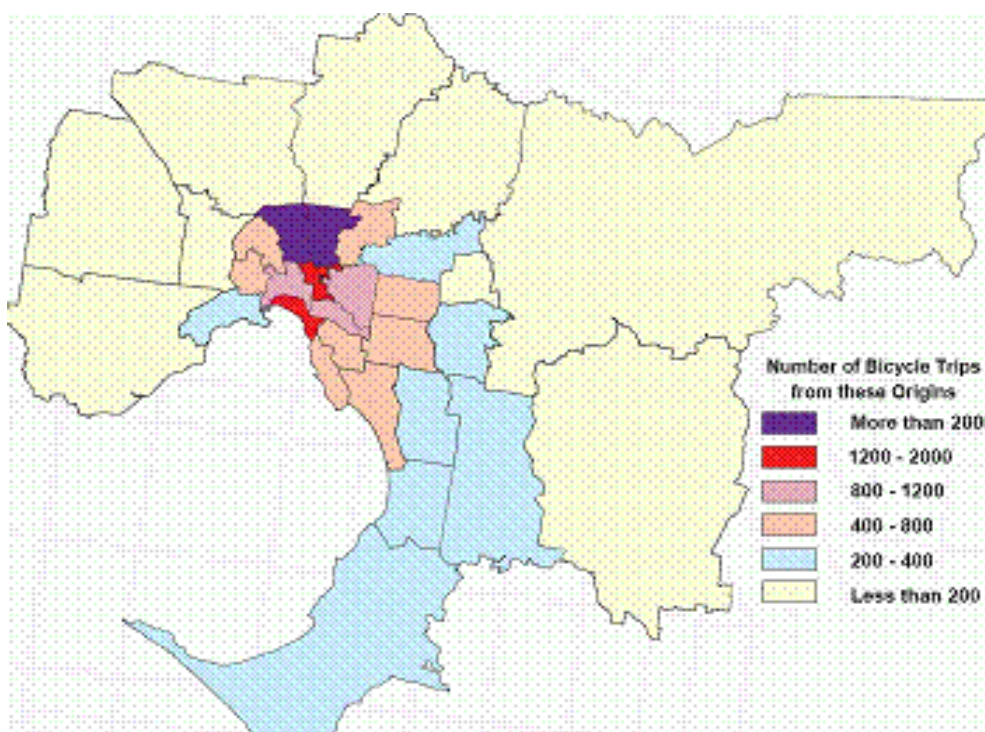
Source: Bicycle Victoria.

2. Cycling in Moreland

There has been a boom in cycling in Melbourne and Moreland is a key growth area. The 2006 Census indicates around 20,500 journeys were made to work each day by bicycle, up from 14,500 in 2001. This is a massive 42.5 percent increase. This is great news as it shows that people across Melbourne are choosing a healthy and sustainable way to travel to work and make local trips.

Moreland has become Melbourne's epicentre of cycling. There was an 80 percent increase in the number of Moreland residents cycling to work between 2001 and 2006: 1132 in 2001 and 2052 in 2006. Bicycle Victoria's 2008 Super Tuesday count, commissioned by Council, indicates nearly 20 percent increase in the past 12 months to April. Council must take a proactive approach to ensure this growth continues and that existing and future cyclists are catered for as the city's key cycling routes reach capacity during peak times.

Number of Bicycle trips to work by origin - 2006



Source: 2006 Census, Bicycle Victoria

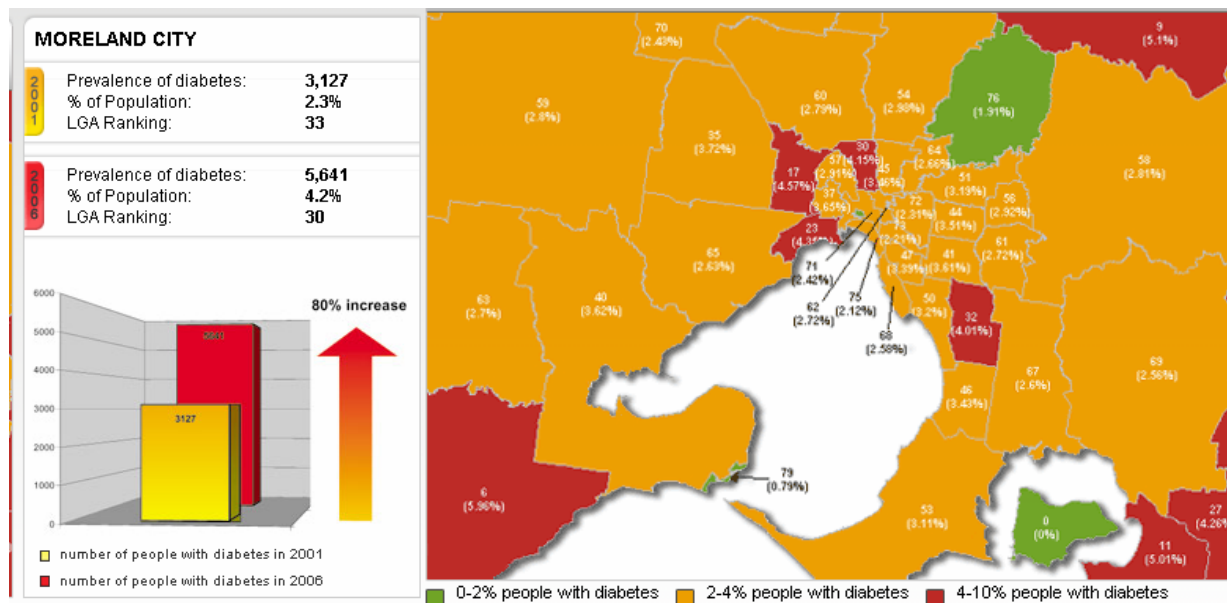
3. Cycling and Health

Inactivity is a key contributor to poor health. Over half the population is overweight or obese and Victorian doctors suggest that 80% of people are insufficiently active. This significantly increases their risk of a range of our most deadly and expensive health issues such as cardiovascular disease, Type 2 Diabetes and obesity, most cancers, muscular skeletal health, mental health and more.

Like the rest of Australia, Moreland is a community suffering from increasing levels of obesity and associated health issues. For example, the prevalence of diabetes in Moreland has grown from 2.3 percent of the population in 2001 to 4.2 percent in 2006. Indeed Moreland has among the highest incidence of Type 2 Diabetes in Victoria (as shown in the figure below) and for most of this decade, more than one Moreland resident per day has been diagnosed with

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Type 2 Diabetes.



Cycling makes a significant contribution to making Moreland a healthier city. A recent report launched by Dr Rob Moodie, Professor of Global Health at the University of Melbourne, found cycling currently saves an estimated \$227.2m per year in health costs alone. Moodie said 'this report demonstrates the considerable benefit offered to individuals and governments by cycling. Addressing the barriers preventing more Australians from cycling will deliver substantial savings to both government and the community' (Bauman et al, 2008).

The report illustrates the need for the following interventions to overcome some of the social/cultural, environmental and safety barriers to further promote regular cycling among adults and unlock cycling capacity to address health issues:

- Mass Marketing Campaigns, Bicycle Education/behavioural change Programs and Cycling Events (To promote cycling)
- Urban Design (Creating a physical environment more conducive to cycling)
- Improved Bicycle Infrastructure (To provide safe, attractive and enjoyable on and off road bicycle routes)
- Funding (To better reflect the role and value of cycling in a range of areas including transport, health and sustainability).

4. Cycling and the environment

In the context of climate change and peak oil it is imperative that Moreland invest in sustainable transport.

The Garnaut Review's Issues Paper on Transport, Planning and the Built Environment (2008) finds approximately 80 percent of adults used private cars for their journey to work and emissions from cars account for 54 percent of Australia's total domestic transport emissions. Garnaut projects these to increase by 40 percent between 1990 and 2020.

The price of petrol has now reached historic highs. The peaking of oil production and the introduction of carbon trading means it will only continue to get more expensive. In this context, it is vital that Council ensures those residents most vulnerable to price increases have the option of cycling to work and for local trips by providing a safe and comprehensive network of on road and off road cycling facilities, as set out in the Bicycle Plan and the Moreland

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Integrated Transport Strategy.

Council's own Climate Action Plan recognises the need for, and recommends, accelerated action. It is clear that improved cycling infrastructure will be a vital element of Moreland's ability to deliver economic, social and environmental sustainability in a future constrained by very high petrol prices and the need to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Moreland Bug agrees that our lives and energy use will need to change drastically over the coming decades. Moreover, we believe that with clever planning, our lives can be better not worse as we tackle climate change. Cycling means we are fitter, richer, have more time and are more vital. Funding cycling is a wonderful way for Council to achieve some of its brave greenhouse ambitions and add to people's lives. What's more, people want to ride their bikes – last year around 9000 bikes were sold to Moreland residents (based on national cycling sales).

5. Recommendations

Moreland Bicycle Users Group (BUG) believes Council should increase investment in cycling infrastructure in the 2008-09 Budget from \$360,000 in the proposed budget to about \$700,000. BUG believes a bicycle budget of \$660,000 (\$4.70 per head) would meet minimum requirements.

There is scope for a minor reassessment of Council's road asset budget to secure additional funds for improved cycling infrastructure. Funds for the resurfacing of quiet residential streets could be diverted to support improvements in the city's bike infrastructure with little impact.

This increased investment will allow Moreland to:

- Improve existing on road routes with green paint, rumble lines and separation
- Establish routes on roads such as Sydney Rd, Lygon St, Nicholson St, Melville Rd, and the Grantham St/Pearson St connection
- Fix up existing paths such as Upfield by implementing the recommendations of the Moreland BUG audits, which have been provided to Council and a small number have been implemented
- Establish new links such as linking the Upfield Shared Path and the Merri Creek Trail to the Ring Road. Extend the O'Hea St project through Pentridge Village to the Merri Creek Trail and west towards the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail to link the two paths
- Investigate and implement improvements to east-west cycling infrastructure, such as the Bike Road proposed by BUG
- Increase bike parking facilities around Moreland
- Complete the recommendations in the Moreland Bike Plan

The BUG looks forward to having the opportunity to discuss this submission with you further.

Contact:

Anna Stempel
Convenor, Moreland BUG
0418 933 774
convenor@morelandbug.org

Moreland BUG c/- MEFL
PO Box 276, Brunswick
3056

References

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Bauman A., Rissel C., Garrard J., Ker I., Speidel R., Fishman E., 2008 *Cycling: Getting Australia Moving: Barriers, facilitators and interventions to get more Australians physically active through cycling*, Cycling Promotion Fund, Melbourne.

Bicycle Victoria www.bv.com.au