CycleSafe Network Proposal

An opportunity to transform transport, health and urban growth

The *CycleSafe Network* is a system of safe, easy-to-follow cycle routes connecting destinations across Newcastle and Lake Macquarie.

The *CycleSafe Network* overcomes the key barriers to cycling: it provides convenience, connectivity and an environment in which people feel safe cycling. It can make cycling a viable transport option for our region and deliver major economic, social and health benefits.

The *CycleSafe Network* includes approximately 90km of existing paths and 160km of new routes concentrated in areas where the most people live, with connecting links to outlying suburbs.

CycleSafe Network is based on a system of nodes connected by links, creating routes that enable people to cycle safely from anywhere to anywhere. The nodes are familiar, easily identified destinations. The links between nodes can be located along whatever route offers the safest, most direct, cost-effective option.

Busy destinations, such as schools and shops, that are a short distance off the main network routes, can be accessed by secondary routes linking the destination to the network.

The network integrates cycling with other transport modes. Most locations in Newcastle are within a 20 minute (5km) bike ride of public transport hubs.

This CycleSafe Network Proposal has been developed and endorsed by:

newcastle cycleways movement inc. bike for a better city

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE AUSTRALIA

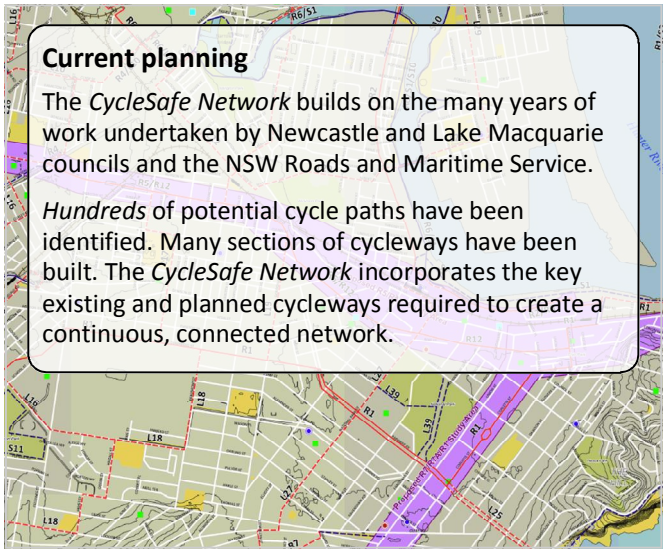
THE TOM FARRELL INSTITUTE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Heart Foundation

PROPERTY COUNCIL of Australia

medicare local HUNTER Connecting health to meet local needs

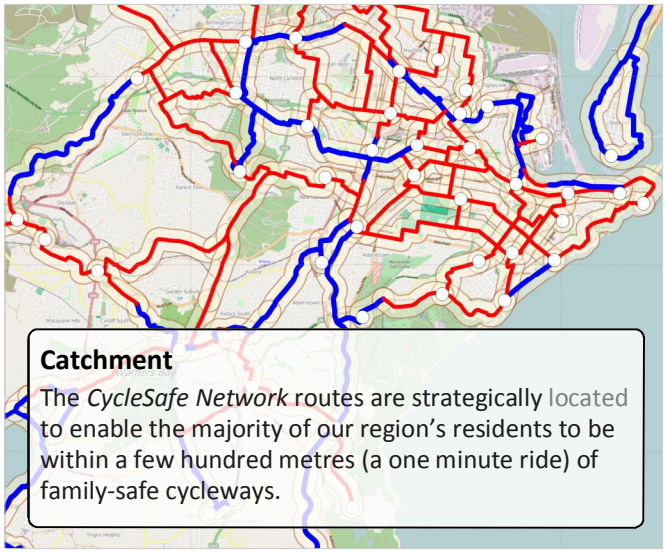
V2.02 28.08.14



Current planning

The *CycleSafe Network* builds on the many years of work undertaken by Newcastle and Lake Macquarie councils and the NSW Roads and Maritime Service.

Hundreds of potential cycle paths have been identified. Many sections of cycleways have been built. The *CycleSafe Network* incorporates the key existing and planned cycleways required to create a continuous, connected network.



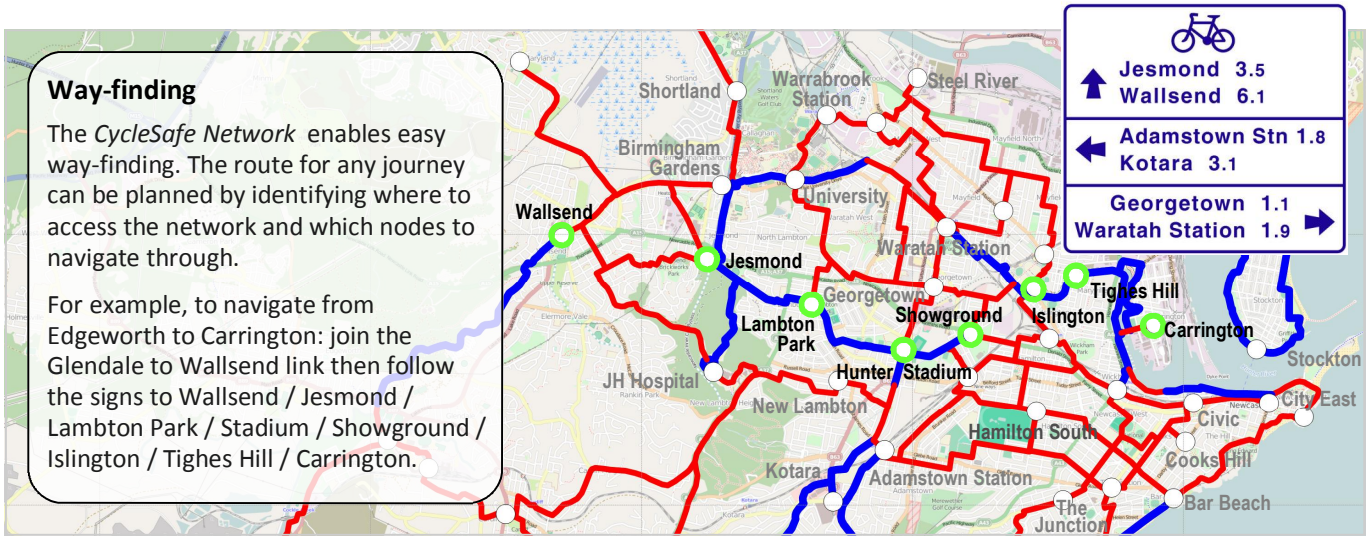
Catchment

The *CycleSafe Network* routes are strategically located to enable the majority of our region's residents to be within a few hundred metres (a one minute ride) of family-safe cycleways.

Way-finding

The *CycleSafe Network* enables easy way-finding. The route for any journey can be planned by identifying where to access the network and which nodes to navigate through.

For example, to navigate from Edgeworth to Carrington: join the Glendale to Wallsend link then follow the signs to Wallsend / Jesmond / Lambton Park / Stadium / Showground / Islington / Tighes Hill / Carrington.



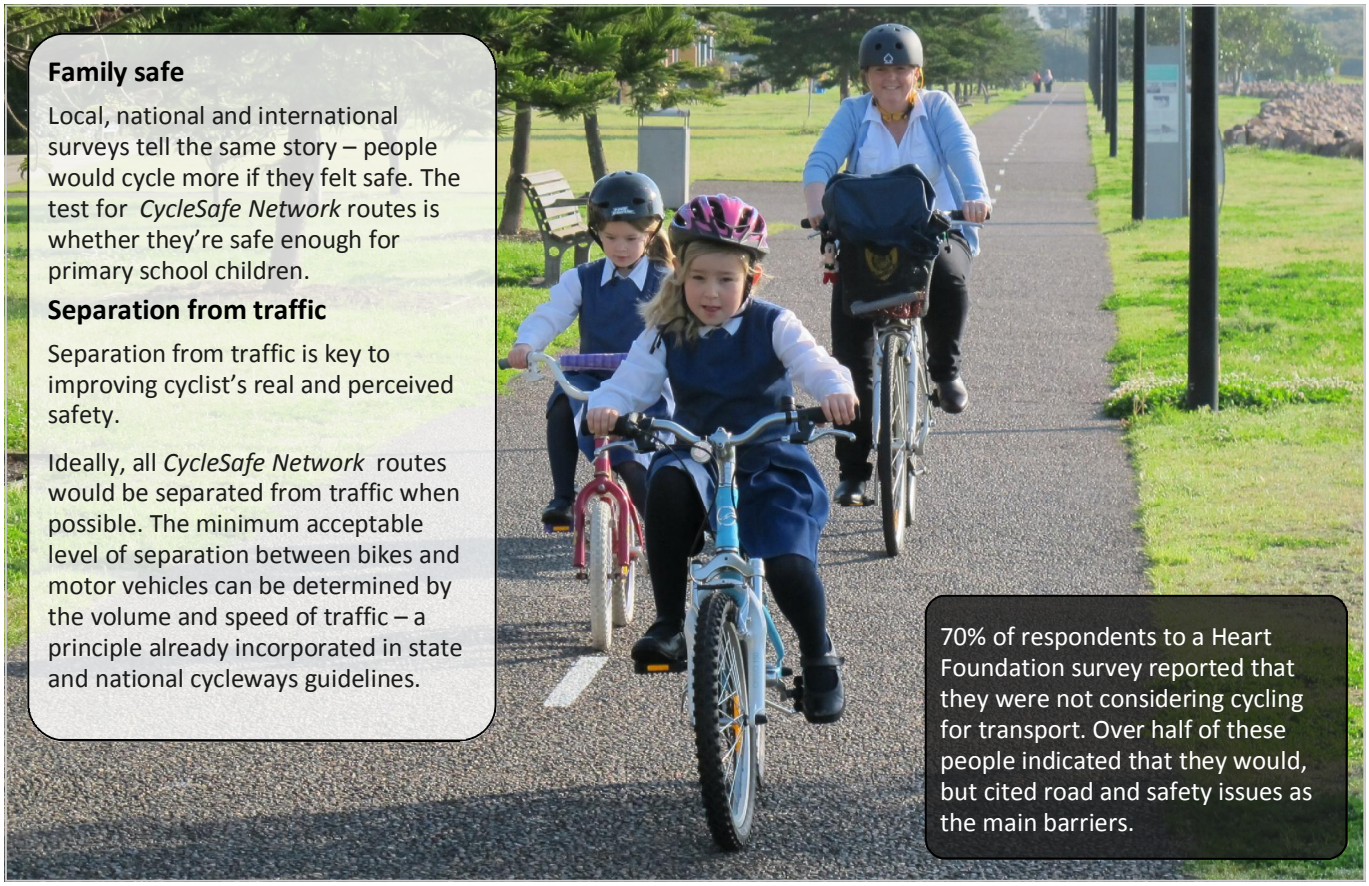
Family safe

Local, national and international surveys tell the same story – people would cycle more if they felt safe. The test for *CycleSafe Network* routes is whether they're safe enough for primary school children.

Separation from traffic

Separation from traffic is key to improving cyclist's real and perceived safety.

Ideally, all *CycleSafe Network* routes would be separated from traffic when possible. The minimum acceptable level of separation between bikes and motor vehicles can be determined by the volume and speed of traffic – a principle already incorporated in state and national cycleways guidelines.



70% of respondents to a Heart Foundation survey reported that they were not considering cycling for transport. Over half of these people indicated that they would, but cited road and safety issues as the main barriers.

Design solutions

The *CycleSafe Network* routes can include a range of solutions:

- cycle paths protected from fast moving traffic by separation or barriers;
- on-road cycle lanes on low speed streets that have enough space to enable bikes to have adequate clearance form traffic and parked cars;
- shared roads used by bikes and low numbers of slow moving motor vehicles.

Where possible, cycle paths should be separated from pedestrian paths to avoid potential conflict as cycling numbers increase.

Connectivity and amenity

Cycle paths need to provide continuous links. 100km of high quality motorway would not suddenly turn into a single lane dirt road – the same design principles should apply to cycle paths.

Direct, attractive paths with end-of-trip facilities and secure interchanges with public transport can help make cycling a more convenient, enjoyable activity.

A transport infrastructure project

Cycling infrastructure in our region has, to date, been built piece by piece as time and funding permits. This offers obvious improvements but can fall short of delivering safe, connected cycle paths that are essential to encouraging large numbers of people to cycle.

The *CycleSafe Network* presents a unified system of cycleways that can be planned and delivered as a single, integrated transport infrastructure project.

Mode share

Local, State and Federal governments all recognise cycling's benefits and have ambitious targets for increasing trips made by bike. The *CycleSafe Network* offers a viable, cost-effective strategy for rapidly achieving and exceeding these targets.

Cities around the world that have invested in safe cycle networks have rapidly achieved 5 to 10% of all trips being made by bike. Our own experience shows that safe cycle paths deliver results. Fernleigh Track has proven the success of quality cycleways becoming a popular recreational and commuter cycling route. Suburbs close to the Throsby Creek cycleway have 6% of trips to work by bike compared to 2% across the Newcastle LGA. The installation of a signalised crossing at Hannell St caused an immediate increase[1].

Our region offers great conditions for cycling – a mild climate and gentle topography. Most trip distances are short: 40% are less than 2km; 80% are less than 10km[1].

"Cycling has transitioned from being a recreational activity reserved solely for the weekend to being an important mode of transport to be considered in planning decisions alongside walking, driving, and catching public transport."

National Cycling Strategy 2011-16, Implementation report 2013

CycleSafe Network benefits

The *CycleSafe Network* could be built in 5 years for $75m. That's the same cost as 1km of the proposed Lookout Rd bypass motorway. The entire *CycleSafe Network* would cost less than one fifth of the amount of the proposed 2.5km inner city light rail but could transport 20 times more people.

Cycling saves money for individuals and communities on infrastructure, parking, fuel, vehicle and health costs. Independent studies show that cycling can save the economy over $1 for each kilometre ridden and return nearly $4 for every $1 invested.

The *CycleSafe Network* benefits public transport users and motorists, providing a cost-effective option to reduce congestion on our roads, trains and buses. Cycling is good for business, enabling better access to commercial precincts and encouraging shoppers to explore more and stay longer.

The *CycleSafe Network* will attract interstate and overseas visitors to our cycle-friendly region. Cycle tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors of the industry, and has been targeted by governments and tourism authorities worldwide.

"The estimated total expenditure of cycle tourists in Australia is approximately $2.4 billion (including domestic overnight, daytrip and international overnight visitors that participated in cycling as an activity).
Victoria's Cycle Tourism Action Plan 2011-2015

Physical inactivity has been identified as the greatest public health challenge of the 21st century. Making cycling an everyday part of active lifestyles can help prevent cardiovascular disease and cancers, the two biggest causes of death in Australia. It also benefits diabetes, osteoporosis, depression, arthritis and obesity. The value of health benefits of increasing the trips to work by bike to just 5% in Newcastle alone, would be $6.4 million every year according to The World Health Organisation's Health Economic Assessment Tool.

57% of Newcastle LGA are overweight or obese. 72% don't get the recommended amount of physical activity.
Research by Hunter Medicare Local 2012.

Encouraging cycling reduces pollution and consumption of non-renewable resources. Riding bikes is an affordable, accessible recreational activity and form of transport.

Opportunity

The sale of the Newcastle Port presents a unique opportunity for the NSW Government to invest in a community asset that will transform our region's transport, health and urban renewal. The *CycleSafe Network* is an opportunity for all levels of government to contribute to building an asset that will deliver widespread benefits that can be enjoyed by current and future generations.

The *CycleSafe Network* proposal has already generated an unprecedented level of unity and enthusiasm with support from key organisations in diverse sectors including health, environment, development and transport. A broad communications campaign is being undertaken to inform and engage planners, stakeholders and community members. Planned events include producing web and printed resources, public forums and gathering endorsements from an extensive list of organisations.

If you're able to help or would like more information or to offer your support, please

visit: **www.cyclesafenetwork.org.au**
or email: **info@cyclesafenetwork.org.au**

1. NSW Household Traffic Survey, 2011 census, *Bikescount* Newcastle quarterly bike counts.

2. The current CBD heavy has an average of 2250 passenger trips per day. Residents in the Newcastle LGA make over 600,000 trips each week day. 2013 Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure and Transport report calculated that a simple 20 minute journey to work and back by bike instead of car provides $14.30 of benefits to the economy: $1.68/km health benefit, 35c/km vehicle operating costs, 6.8c/km infrastructure savings and 5.9c/km environmental benefit. AECOM analysis of the inner Sydney bicycle network they found a benefit to cost ratio of 3.88 (a $3.88 return for each $1 invested) compared to benefit to cost ratios of less than 2 for other transport infrastructure projects.