

# Totally Renewable Phillip Island **TRPI** calls for priority funding for cycling for Active Transport on Phillip Island

**In consultation with the two user groups and local bicycle business owner, we have reviewed the current state of cycling and existing road/pathway infrastructure, and the existing plans for improvements. There are inaccuracies in the data presented as 'existing' cycle 'on road' and 'off-road' capacity of two roads, Ventnor to Rhyll, and Settlement Rd, and overall not enough dedicated infrastructure for cyclists.**

## **Key observations:**

Council has four bodies of work which can be used to attract funding for Active Transport and Sustainable Tourism. Each has had extensive community consultation, plus Vic Roads Bicycle Network Planning.

- 1 The Pathways Assessment Tool: Results/ this has been accepted by Council as the working document from the Aspirational Pathways Network Plan 2016 (whole of Bass Coast Shire).
- 2 Three plans (PIITS, CAC & VES) have been adopted by Council since 2014 which all call for increased cycle and pedestrian infrastructure to make cycling safe and facilitate the greater uptake of cycling.
- 3 Bass Coast has an impressive publication of Walks & Trails in Bass Coast. There are 32 of which 18 are nominated cycle & walk, 15 walk only. Phillip Island has 9 reserves of which only 5 are suitable/ available for cyclists.
- 4 Bicycle network planning, Vicroads Phillip Island. Map E11 it gives priority to offroad bicycle path on Settlement Rd from Silverleaves to Justice road

## **Observation & Recommendation**

Currently there are reserves and trails for recreation cycling. What is missing is the cycling for purpose, to link townships then around towns, to destinations for everyday needs and for the major tourist destinations. **A clear Bicycle Strategy for Phillip Island (& Bass Coast) needs to be extracted from the broader, more complex Aspirational Pathways Networks Plan with reference to the 4 plans cited above.**

Connecting Ventnor/Nobbies, Cowes and Rhyll are key, as is increasing safety & utility of Settlement Rd; repositioning the angled parking and bike lanes in Thompson Ave and an alternative to a path along Coghlan Rd to link Silverleaves and 5 Ways.



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## Background

Key messages from Victorian Cycling Strategy 2018 -2028

- 1 60% population – interested but concerned
- 2 Cycling needs investment to make it safer & lower stress, to increase cycling participation
- 3 Children- single most effective way to reduce childhood obesity is for Active Transport; also more likely to continue cycling in adult life
- 4 Simple strategy for Melb & Regional cities: ‘being able to meet most of their everyday needs through a 20 minute walk, cycle or PT trip from their home = ‘ 20 minute neighbourhood concept’
- 5 Cycling is more efficient than cars & trams in areas of high congestion
- 6 Need to create safer / lower stress journeys (separate from motor vehicles)
- 7 Need integrated network- feel safe/ remove barriers & hot spots
- 8 Cycling for commuting- not on shared paths
- 9 Integrate cycling with PT more: Increase end of trip facilities & parking; carry bikes on PT
- 10 Recreational routes- encourage investment & growth of services for cyclists

TRPI sees opportunity for local business development, to grow the business of cycling and eco based tourism.

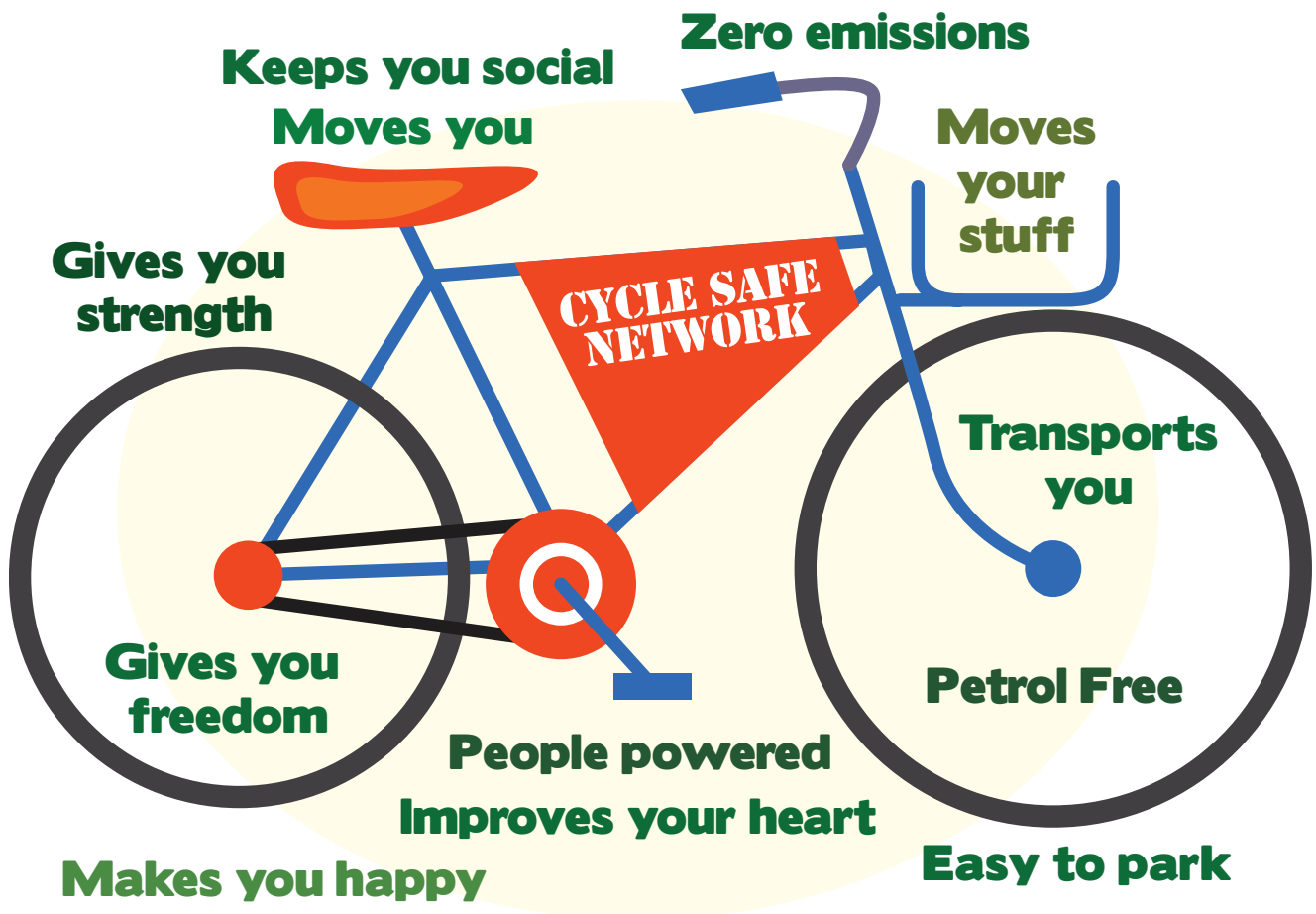


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Health benefits of cycling:  
A systematic review - main findings

Article: Literature Review (PDF Available) in Scandinavian Journal of Medicine and Science in Sports 21(4):496-509

...the strength of this evidence was strong for fitness benefits, moderate for benefits in cardiovascular risk factors, and inconclusive for all-cause mortality, coronary heart disease morbidity and mortality, cancer risk, and overweight and obesity. While more intervention research is needed to build a solid knowledge base of the health benefits of cycling, **the existing evidence reinforces the current efforts to promote cycling as an important contributor for better population health.**



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## Current state for those wishing to cycle on Phillip Island

The Vic Roads **Strategic Cycling Corridor**, is an 'off-road' Shared Path, highly used, along the Phillip Island Rd, from San Remo to Thompson Ave Cowes. The stretch along Surf Beach, as many have said has significant safety issues due to multiple driveways crossing the path. Some riders move onto the road shoulder along that stretch, or go up to The Esplanade and return to the path near Forest Caves. There is a dedicated cycle lane along each side of Thompson Ave from Cowes Rhyll Rd to the Esplanade. The problem with this is that the lanes are behind angled parked cars, making it very unsafe with high levels of car traffic in Cowes, and the speed limit is 60kph.

People also ride on Phillip Island Rd and Back Beach Rd with a good road shoulder and white lane each side/ no bicycle marking.

Along Gap Rd there is a separate off-road and signed 'Shared Path' from Ventnor Beach Rd to Back Beach Rd. Low usage currently. Narrower than usual shared paths.

Cyclists often choose to ride in groups, on less busy roads and at quieter times to stay safe.

## Accurate data must be the basis of all planning

The map used in the BCSC Aspirational Pathways Network Plan is **not accurate in the representation of bicycle infrastructure (represented by PBN Network) on Phillip Island** ( Pg 4 Phillip Island/ Aspirational Pathways Network Plan). If this was used as the basis for planning future infrastructure it might explain why there appears to be facilities for cyclists 'on paper' but the reality is seen above, with very few safe routes for cyclists. See the two crucial examples below.

### Re 'off road' / existing

Along Settlement Rd from Thompson Ave all the way to Red Rocks Rd then the foreshore as / existing/ 'off road'.

There is a footpath along Settlement Rd but no signed Bikeway or Shared Path. After Justice Rd Settlement Rd narrows and there is no continuous footpath, or for part of the previous block due to a property boundary being planted and fenced for part of the length.

### Re 'on road' existing

Capacity on Ventnor Rd from the Nobbies all the way to Rhyll, along the Cowes Rhyll Rd.

This is not accurate. There is minimal road shoulder on many parts of these roads so cyclists effectively ride on the side of the road, or in gravel at the edge. Even experienced riders avoid this road, and inexperienced riders consider it unsafe.

### The PIITS map on page 5 of this report is more accurate

An accurate map is seen in the PIITS document Fig 5.1 Proposed Pedestrian and Cycle Priority Networks (Map fig 5.1). This shows the 'off road' for Settlement Rd and the 'on road' Rhyll to Ventnor as **Proposed not Existing**.



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## Three significant reports to Council & their recommendations

### Cowes Activity Centre Plan (CAC) 2015

#### 4.4 Summary

**Minimal bike culture;** school children request improved bike path on Thompson Ave; shared path on Settlement Rd; bike path to Ventnor on foreshore

#### Recommendations

- 1 Remove angle parking in Thompson Ave and create new bikeway either side b/w kerb and carpark, from Settlement Rd to Chapel St.
- 2 Shared path along Settlement Rd b/w Seagrove & Coghlan Rd
- 3 Build Ventnor/Cowes/Rhyll northern shore bike trail
- 4 An Esplanade shared walk/bikeway to allow east/west bike movement across Cowes
- 5 Reduce speed limit to 40 kph

#### Promote walking & off-street parking

Numerous recommendations about improving pedestrian safety (including school children) & activity including more walking paths; removal of roundabouts at Settlement /Thompson and Chapel & Thompson and replacement with traffic signals; no cars on Thompson Ave b/w Chapel & the Esplanade, no parking on Esplanade replace with double width footpaths, create a Promenade Walk – allow 2 m path between stone wall from Thompson Ave to Erehwon Point.

The Jetty Triangle has been successfully completed as part of the CAC plan, removing cars & parking from the area in front of the Jetty. It is now a popular high pedestrian and community activity space.



# Phillip Island Integrated Transport Study (PIITS) 2014.

This is the community vision for a year-round integrated transport system which has a core objective to reduce the use of private cars and increase PT, walking & cycle.

## Recommended Actions /Short & Medium Term

### Cycling /Short Term

- Creation of on & off-road bicycle network within 5kms of each township
- Provide end of trip facilities in townships & at key destinations
- Plan/begin implementation of key recreational routes- access to major attractors & townships
- Develop wayfinding system /support peds & cycle networks

### Cycle/Medium Term

- Completion of PBN through creation of on & off-road bicycle paths

## Networks between townships/ support commuter & recreational cycling

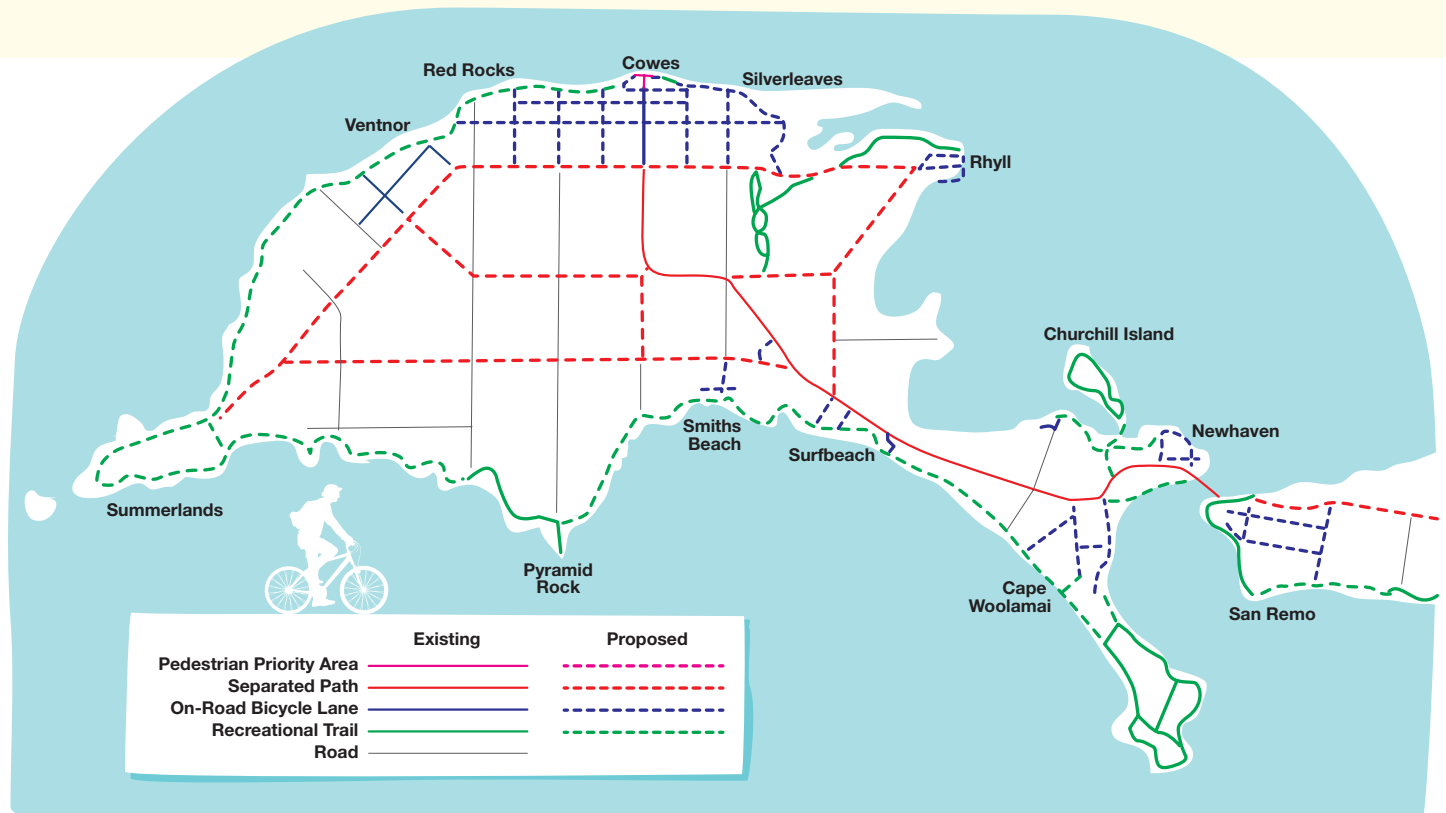
- New developments need to provide suitable on & off-road bicycle facilities / see guidelines & overall PBN

### Pedestrian /Short Term

- Introduce shared zones: Thompson Ave b/w Chapel & The Esplanade in Cowes; The Esplanade b/w Warley Ave & Bass Ave Cowes; (see recommendations for SR)
- Decreased speed limits in Cowes (and San Remo) town centre (changed to 40km in San Remo 2019)
- Improve pedestrian access & amenity in town centres; Develop Pedestrian Priority Network

### Pedestrian /Medium Term

- Extend treatments to secondary urban areas: Rhyll, Cape Woolamai, Surf Beach, Sunderland Bay, Smiths Beach, Ventnor, Newhaven



Pathways existing and proposed information from PIITS 2014 report adopted by Bass Coast Shire Council

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Visitor Economy Strategy (VES) 2016

## Game Changer Project 8

- Develop an "Iconic Walk" – coastal, shared trail & dedicated new walking trail infrastructure
- Improved connectivity b/w visitor nodes by bicycle is the key to both achieving the goals of PIITS and being recognised as a sustainable destination

## Bicycle riders recommendations

Phillip Island Cyclists FB Group

**Owen Bentley leader of the group tells us, "the group ride most days, more experienced, faster group, 50 + riders in holiday times"**

### 1 Place Making

- Prioritise people not vehicles, eg Olive Justice Place

### 2 Active Transport/ priority for walking & riding

- Crossing at intersections/protected bike lanes
- Safe routes to schools (? Coghlan Rd) to encourage kids to walk & ride. Discourage vehicles, eg disabled only parking near schools
- Safe & connected paths from new estates to shops & schools
- Systems Safety/ Protection of Vulnerable Road Users – design of intersections, roundabouts, parking, reducing congestion, reducing speed limits, protecting wildlife
- Improve existing paths which are unsafe (eg Surf Beach)
- Tourism Potential- around the island bike/walk track. Link existing paths, Extend the George Bass trail & improve it for riders

Enhance Phillip Island's eco tourism potential with safe paths for cycling





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## Members of the Bicycle Users Group (BUGS)

50 + members, mature & less experienced riders,  
Wednesday & Sunday rides

**Don Turner, Ken Ball, Ruth Scott sent these comments.**

### Current situation

**Good for cycling** ✓

#### **2 good roads with wide shoulders:**

Phillip Island Rd & Back Beach Rd

**Problems with Pathways** ✗

**San Remo to Anderson pathway**, one steep section,  
poor design, heavily criticised by cyclists.

**San Remo to Cowes**- offshoots that don't go anywhere

### Recommendations:

- 1 Roads to Ventnor & Rhyll need wider shoulders
- 2 Reduce speed limits less than 100kph (80 or 75 better),  
no roads are good enough for 100kph
- 3 More signage- speed limits, cyclists, wildlife-  
enforce speed limits
- 4 Join existing pathways eg at The Maze to the PINP trail  
through reserve at Five Ways/Phillip Island Rd ( which then  
can link to Smiths Beach Rd)
- 5 Increase safe travel to schools- path to Catholic Primary  
School in Cowes Rhyll Rd
- 6 Complete the path from Shearwater Estate  
to Cowes Primary School
- 7 Complete the Cowes to Rhyll off road path
- 8 Look for solution to pathway on Coghlan Rd  
(significant vegetation)



“ Since Covid 19, we have had 50% increase in business! ”

BICYCLE REPAIRMAN / Wayne Foster, Cowes responded to TRPI Survey of Businesses hiring & selling Electric Bikes on Phillip Island, *plus general comments.*

**Wayne Foster** sells new bikes, including E Bikes, also repairs and will assemble bikes purchased elsewhere. He rides his own bike for transport, sport and recreation. In business for 5 years.

**Locals:** Low level of interest in E Bikes: Older, ride for recreation and vacation; Younger, transit around the Island.

**What gives a good experience for an E Bike rider?**

Reliable, easy to use, light weight (cheaper ones are heavy), good battery range of 100kms

**Do they get this on Phillip Island?**

Bike path network on the east, also Churchill Island, Surf Beach -Esplanade when quiet; nothing to the west of Cowes. Need a path to Penguins. Not safe on Coghlan Rd.

**What is needed to increase E Bike uptake?**

Acceptable entry point price. Improved conditions for bikes generally. \$1,000 Price Point- shorter trips/ ½ way to Wonthaggi. \$3,000 better motor, battery & quality.

**IMPROVED CONDITIONS for CYCLISTS**

- 1 **Road is for Sharing**- message to all in the community, start in schools
- 2 **Improved infrastructure**, & focus on danger points
- 3 **Don't impose things**/ mandatory eg' if there is a bike path, don't ride on road'
- 4 **Needs to be a shift in % spent on bike infrastructure:** day & age of renewables /sustainability; short trips – mode of transport. Prepare for the uptake of E Bikes/ great as commuter bike and need to be able to be used as a standard bike as well if battery goes flat
- 5 **'Park your bike'** facilities, eg build into new buildings, more at bus interchange, make it **obvious**/ make it a **priority**
- 6 **Multimode transport**/ bike racks on front of buses/great idea

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## Call to action

TRPI is calling on Council: to show the community there is a clear bicycle strategy for Phillip Island.

To significantly increase funding for safe cycling on Phillip Island.

To advocate for state and federal funding for major infrastructure upgrades for dedicated cycling paths.

### Report contact

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### References:

Aspirational Pathways Network Plan  
<https://d2n3eh1td3vwdm.cloudfront.net/general-downloads/Plans/Aspirational-Network-Pathways-Plan-2016.pdf>

Cowes Activity Centre Plan  
<https://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/services/projects/cowes-revitalisation-projects>

Phillip Island Integrated Transport Study  
<https://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/services/roads-footpaths/phillip-island-road-users>

Visitor Economy Strategy  
<https://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/about-council/strategies-and-policies/strategies>

Vic Roads Planning for Phillip Island Bicycle Network  
<https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/traffic-and-road-use/cycling/bicycle-network-planning>

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