

# Western Australian Auditor General's Report



## Viabile Cycling in the Perth Area



**Report 12: 2021-22**

**9 December 2021**

**Office of the Auditor General  
Western Australia**

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***The Office of the Auditor General acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to the land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all members of the Aboriginal communities and their cultures, and to Elders both past and present.***

## WESTERN AUSTRALIAN AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

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### **Viable Cycling in the Perth Area**

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**THE PRESIDENT  
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**THE SPEAKER  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

### **VIABLE CYCLING IN THE PERTH AREA**

This report has been prepared for submission to Parliament under the provisions of section 25 of the *Auditor General Act 2006*.

Performance audits are an integral part of my Office's overall program of audit and assurance for Parliament. They seek to provide Parliament and the people of WA with assessments of the effectiveness and efficiency of public sector programs and activities, and identify opportunities for improved performance.

This audit follows on from our work in 2015 and assesses if State government entities have addressed our previous audit recommendations and if State and local government entities effectively facilitate cycling for the community.

I wish to acknowledge the entities' staff for their cooperation with this audit.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C Spencer'.

CAROLINE SPENCER  
AUDITOR GENERAL  
9 December 2021

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## Auditor General's overview

Cycling is a popular way for people to travel, be active and socialise. It's affordable, fun and provides a host of health, social and environmental benefits. To provide safe and accessible cycling routes, transport planning and activity is required by both State and local government (LG) entities.



It is the second time this Office has audited the viability of cycling. Our first audit in 2015 focussed on State entities and made 9 recommendations to improve cycling in the Perth metropolitan area. This second audit looked at what State entities had done in response to those recommendations, and if State and LG entities were effectively working to facilitate cycling in the community. The inclusion of LG entities reflects our expanded audit mandate and their importance in providing cycling infrastructure.

Since 2015, State entities have continued to promote cycling and safe road use, build paths and plan for the future, including for other forms of active transport, such as scooters and e-bikes. However, it was disappointing to find that almost 6 years after our first audit some recommendations from that audit are still not finished.

We found the State's network of principal paths is still incomplete, little progress has been made to develop a centralised crash and hazard tool to better inform planning, and key guidance documents to support LG entities are not published. Further, the Department of Transport did not document how it would evaluate its 7 year, \$21 million program of innovation projects, until 5 years after it had started, and there is a lack of transparent decision-making in the Department's assessment of cycling grants.

It was encouraging to find that the LG entities we audited all have plans to improve cycling conditions for their communities. However, it was concerning to find that many paths built recently by LG entities are narrower than widths recommended by better practice guidance. Some LG entities could better promote available infrastructure and the benefits of cycling to increase community participation in cycling.

During the audit we received close to 2,000 wide-ranging and passionate responses to our community survey. I thank everyone who took the time to share their experiences and thoughts. This information informed our audit and we have shared in our report a small sample of issues raised by respondents in their own words.

As more people take up active transport options, the challenges increase for State and LG entities to provide our communities with well planned, viable and safe infrastructure. The recommendations in this report can be easily adapted to benefit a range of active transport options.

# Executive summary

## Introduction

In 2015, we tabled a report on *Safe and Viable Cycling in the Perth Metropolitan Area*.<sup>1</sup> The audit found State government entities had been gradually improving cycling infrastructure, but more planning and funding was needed to complete the network and improve safety. In 2018, the Legislative Assembly's Public Accounts Committee found entities had taken positive steps in response to the audit recommendations (listed in Appendix 1), but efforts to improve cycling could benefit from more transparent and detailed planning.<sup>2</sup>

This audit follows on from our work in 2015 and assesses if State government entities have addressed our previous recommendations and if State and local government (LG) entities effectively facilitate cycling for the community. This includes providing well planned cycling infrastructure and education programs.

We audited:

- the Department of Transport (DoT)
- Main Roads Western Australia (MRWA)
- the Road Safety Commission (RSC)
- the cities of Bayswater, Cockburn, Kalamunda and Perth.

Throughout this report we refer to DoT, MRWA and RSC collectively as State entities.

## Background

Cycling provides the community with a range of economic, environmental, social and health benefits (Figure 1). It is a popular activity, with around 3.4 million Australians riding a bike in a typical week and 8.4 million at least once a year.<sup>3</sup> People of all ages and abilities cycle for a variety of reasons including commuting, exercise, and recreation (Figure 1).

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<sup>1</sup> Western Australian Auditor General's *Safe and viable Cycling in the Perth Metropolitan Area* Report 22, 2015-16

<sup>2</sup> Legislative Assembly Public Accounts Committee's *Further along the path: The development and implementation of the Western Australian Bicycle Network Plan*. November 2018 pages i-ii

<sup>3</sup> Austroads *Australian Cycling Participation 2019*





Source: OAG based on information from the RSC and DoT

**Figure 1: Some of the reasons people cycle and the potential benefits**

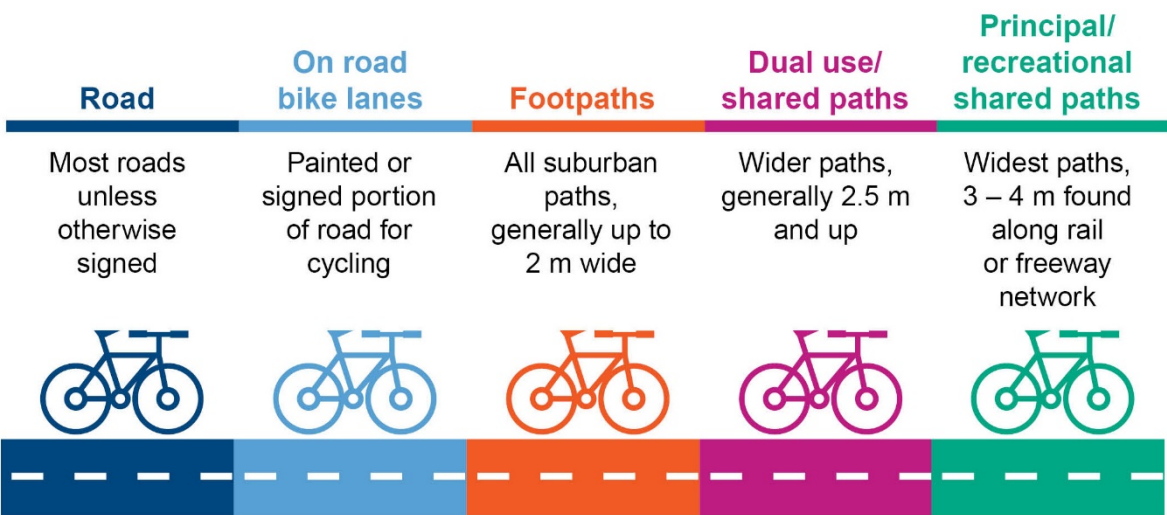
However, participation rates in the Perth area have not substantially changed since 2011. The *National Walking and Cycling Participation Survey* reported a national decline in the number of people who ride a bike each week, from 18% in 2011 to 14% in 2019. In the Perth metropolitan area rates are higher than the national average but decreased from 23% in 2011 to 21% in 2021.

The State Government's primary cycling planning document, the *Western Australian Bicycle Network Plan 2014-2031* (WABN Plan), aims to increase cycle trips in Perth, improve network connectivity within a 15 kilometres radius of the Perth central business district and encourage LG entities to develop bike plans. Improving the connectivity of cycling paths around the metropolitan area may increase the number of people who cycle and improve cycling safety.

No entity is solely responsible for cycling in Western Australia, and both State and LG entities have a role:

- DoT is the lead State entity for cycling and provides guidance and some funding to LG entities
- MRWA constructs principal paths and provides technical guidance on constructing paths
- RSC runs road safety programs
- LG entities plan, construct and maintain cycle paths, and promote cycling within their boundaries.

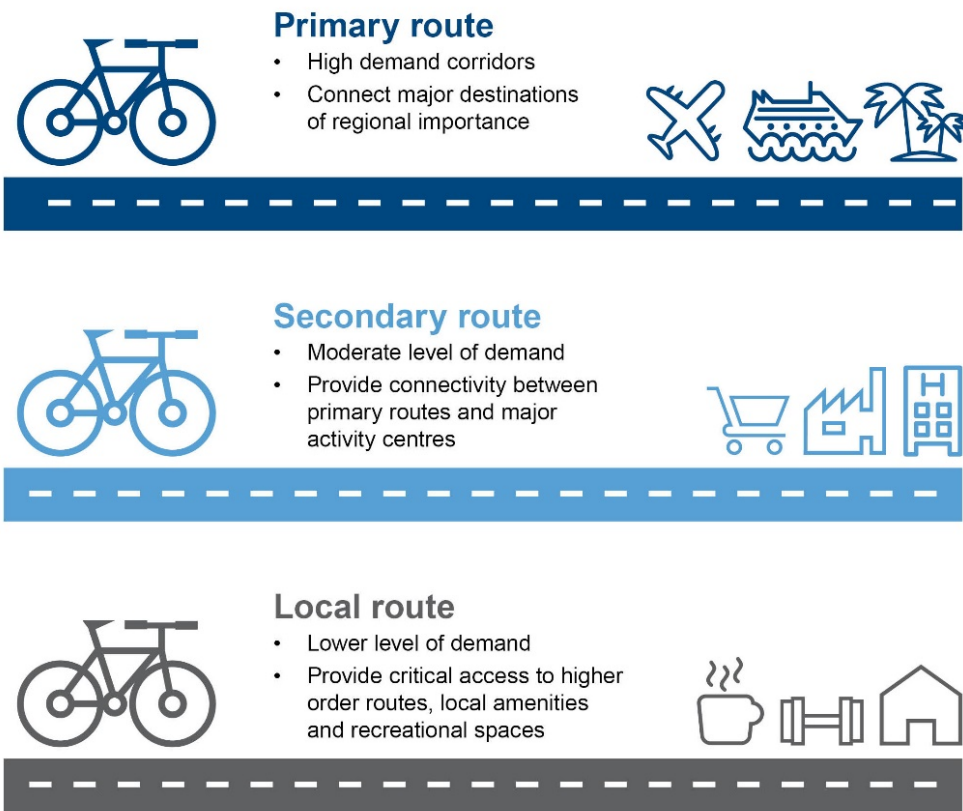
The cycle network in the Perth area includes roads, on road bike lanes and 3 different types of paths (Figure 2). MRWA, with support from DoT, builds and maintains State roads and the majority of the principal paths. LG entities are responsible for a small amount of principal paths, as well as local paths and roads. The State Government invested \$197 million to plan and construct cycling infrastructure from 2016-17 to 2020-21.



Source: OAG using DoT and LG information

Figure 2: Road and path assets used for cycling

DoT has recently developed descriptions for the types of cycle routes people may take within the network, based on use and function (Figure 3).



Source: OAG based on the Western Australian Bicycle Network Plan Annual Progress Report 2019-20

Figure 3: DoT's Western Australian Cycling Network hierarchy of routes

In 2016, the Road Traffic Code 2000 (RTC 2000) was changed to allow anyone to cycle on footpaths. Before this, only people under the age of 12 could cycle on footpaths and LG entities may have designed footpaths accordingly. Under the Austroads<sup>4</sup> better practice guidance, paths used for cycling need to be at least 2 metres wide.

The WABN Plan aims for Perth to have a safe and accessible cycle network, and DoT has explored innovative ways to improve cycling through its Safe Active Streets (SAS) program. The SAS program is a 7 year (2015-2022), \$21 million program to make streets friendlier and safer for all users including cyclists. The program includes 16 pilot projects that change streets in different ways, such as narrowing car access, adding speed bumps and reducing speed limits. SAS objectives align to the WABN plan including increasing the number of people who cycle and reducing vehicle numbers.

While this audit was focussed on examining cycling viability in the community, the findings and recommendations are relevant to all forms of active transport including e-rideable devices, scooters and skateboards. The growth in active transport options has created a complex planning problem that government will need to continue to respond to.

As part of the audit, we conducted a community survey on cycling in the Perth metropolitan area. We received 1,963 responses and have included relevant observations throughout this report.

## Conclusion

State and LG entities have made progress to improve cycling for the community since our 2015 audit.

State entities have progressed our previous recommendations, the Perth area's cycling network has been expanded and a map of cycling routes published. However, not all new paths built by LG entities are wide enough for safe cycling, and while the State has added 85 kilometres to its network of principal paths, completing the remaining 100 kilometres will take time, with only 21 kilometres planned to be built by 2025.

While both State and LG entities intend to build more paths, the planning could be better informed. There is still no centralised collection of cycling hazard and incident data by Government to help prioritise routes and safety initiatives, and key guidance documents to support LG entities planning are still in draft.

There has been an increased focus on safety, with educational programs presented to the public and trials of new approaches to infrastructure. However, data capture issues mean it is unclear if some early trials have been a success.

Further improvements to how paths are planned and delivered, and promotion of the benefits of cycling, will help make cycling more viable for the community.

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<sup>4</sup> Austroads is Australia's peak organisation for road transport and traffic agencies.

# Audit findings

## State entities have improved the cycling network, but need better data to inform efforts

### DoT has planned and built more cycling infrastructure, but gaps remain

#### *DoT has improved connectivity, but the principal paths are incomplete*

DoT has not completed the network of principal paths in the Perth metropolitan area. These are not planned to be delivered until 2035. In 2015, DoT had built 172 kilometres of these paths, and since then has completed roughly 85 kilometres more. DoT data shows these additions are well used (see Case study 1). However, roughly 100 kilometres are yet to be built, of which DoT has a plan to build 21 kilometres by 2025. These principal paths link major destinations, and while they remain incomplete, cyclists and other users will remain unconnected.

#### **Case study 1: Construction of new principal path along Joondalup Railway line**

A new section of principal path opened in July 2020 along the Mitchell Freeway from Glendalough Station to Hutton Street. Since opening, the numbers of cyclists along this route have increased by nearly 50%.

Additionally, DoT data shows that use on routes each side of the new path increased by nearly 30%.



Source: Department of Transport

**Figure 4: New principal path**

#### *Planning to complete the cycling network has continued*

DoT has increased its understanding of the Perth network. In 2018, it published the transport network planning framework for Perth in line with recommendation 3a of our 2015 audit.<sup>5</sup> This framework identifies all transport options, including cycling, and integrates with other transport planning and the wider State planning framework.

Further, within the cycling network, progress has been made to understand cycling routes in Perth.<sup>6</sup> In 2020, DoT published the Long-Term Cycle Network (Appendix 2) which illustrates a map of primary, secondary and local cycling routes in Perth. The map is publicly available and is intended to be useful for cyclists and LG entity planning. This usefulness is borne out by responses to our survey. However, not all paths in the map have been built, and the costs to complete those sections is unknown. DoT has informed us that it intends to identify these gaps in the next phase of the project.

<sup>5</sup> Recommendation 3a: DoT should identify demand for transport options to inform and finalise a transport planning framework for Perth, which integrates all forms of transport.

<sup>6</sup> In line with recommendation 3c from our 2015 audit: DoT should progress the review and development of Local Bicycle Routes in conjunction with LGAs.

### Sample of community survey responses 1

*"The bike path network is well planned and should continue to expand so bikes and cars can be separated."*

*"I think the network is pretty good but hopefully it continues to expand and improve."*

*"Better than it was, but much more to do."*

Source: OAG

MRWA and DoT have not completed their suite of information materials to help LG entities plan and improve cycling. In September 2021, DoT published key planning and design guidance, the *Shared and Separated Paths*. However, other documents are still in draft, including guidance for Cycling Local Area Traffic Management Schemes, Local Bike Plans and Wayfinding. Completing the guidance suite will assist LG entities to plan and deliver cycling infrastructure in a consistent and connected way and will address recommendation 3b from our 2015 audit.<sup>7</sup>

#### *DoT can improve its data capture to better inform planning*

DoT has not developed an improved strategy to guide collection and use of cycling data. In 2015, we identified gaps in the entity's understanding of how people cycle and recommended it improve its data strategy. This has not been done. Updating the overall approach to data collection would ensure State entities have the right data to inform route prioritisation and safety initiatives.

DoT has increased the amount of data it collects, doubling the number of bike counting locations to 64, and gathering more qualitative survey data. DoT told us it is working on a new strategic cycling plan for WA, which will include the development of a new data strategy.

State entities still do not have a central reporting tool to capture cycling hazard and incident data. Our previous audit raised this issue and we recommended State entities establish a centralised tool to collect information on cycling incidents in Perth. Responses to our survey conducted as part of this audit highlighted the potential benefits of such a tool, both to coordinate information and to gain an understanding of incidents currently not reported. Of the 222 people who told us they had had an accident while cycling, 3 quarters had not reported it to Police. The information gathered in such a tool would help State entities target public awareness strategies and safety initiatives.

Efforts to create a reporting tool are still in the early planning and feasibility stages. In 2019, RSC provided DoT with \$240,000 from the Road Trauma Trust Account to develop the tool. DoT contributed a further \$60,000. By July 2021, DoT had spent \$59,000 on planning and feasibility studies and employed a staff member to lead the project. Completion of the reporting tool is intended to give State entities a valuable insight into the incidence of crashes and hazards for cyclists and provide information for planning purposes.

#### **DoT did not fully consider how it would know the SAS program and trials were successful before they began**

When the SAS program began, DoT did not have a clear view of how it would assess its overall success. The program started in 2015, but DoT did not have a documented evaluation plan until 2020. In considering the program's success, DoT has identified the need for a cost benefit tool, but this has not been developed. Moving forward LG entities that

<sup>7</sup> Recommendation 3b: DoT and Main Roads should provide detailed construction and maintenance guidelines for cycling infrastructure to local government.

choose to implement SAS approaches are required to fund 50% of the projects. Without clear evidence that the projects work and are cost effective, LG entities may be hesitant to do so.

Additionally, DoT did not collect appropriate data to easily tell if early SAS projects changed road use. At 3 projects, DoT captured limited baseline data on how cyclists and vehicles used the roads. These projects had a range of aims, including reducing the amount of vehicle traffic and increasing the number of cyclists. However, the lack of baseline data makes direct comparison difficult. DoT will now need to identify other methods to determine if the trial changed how the streets are used. These projects were fully funded by DoT and cost between \$900,000 and \$2.5 million each. DoT told us that they are confident they will be able to determine the success of each project when they evaluate the SAS program in 2022.

In addressing recommendations from our 2015 report, DoT and MRWA have supported and trialled several new cycling treatments outside of SAS, including cyclist priority at intersections and cyclist speed bumps.<sup>8</sup> While trialling innovative infrastructure is important, accurately evaluating its effectiveness will help improve the safety and accessibility of cycling in Perth.

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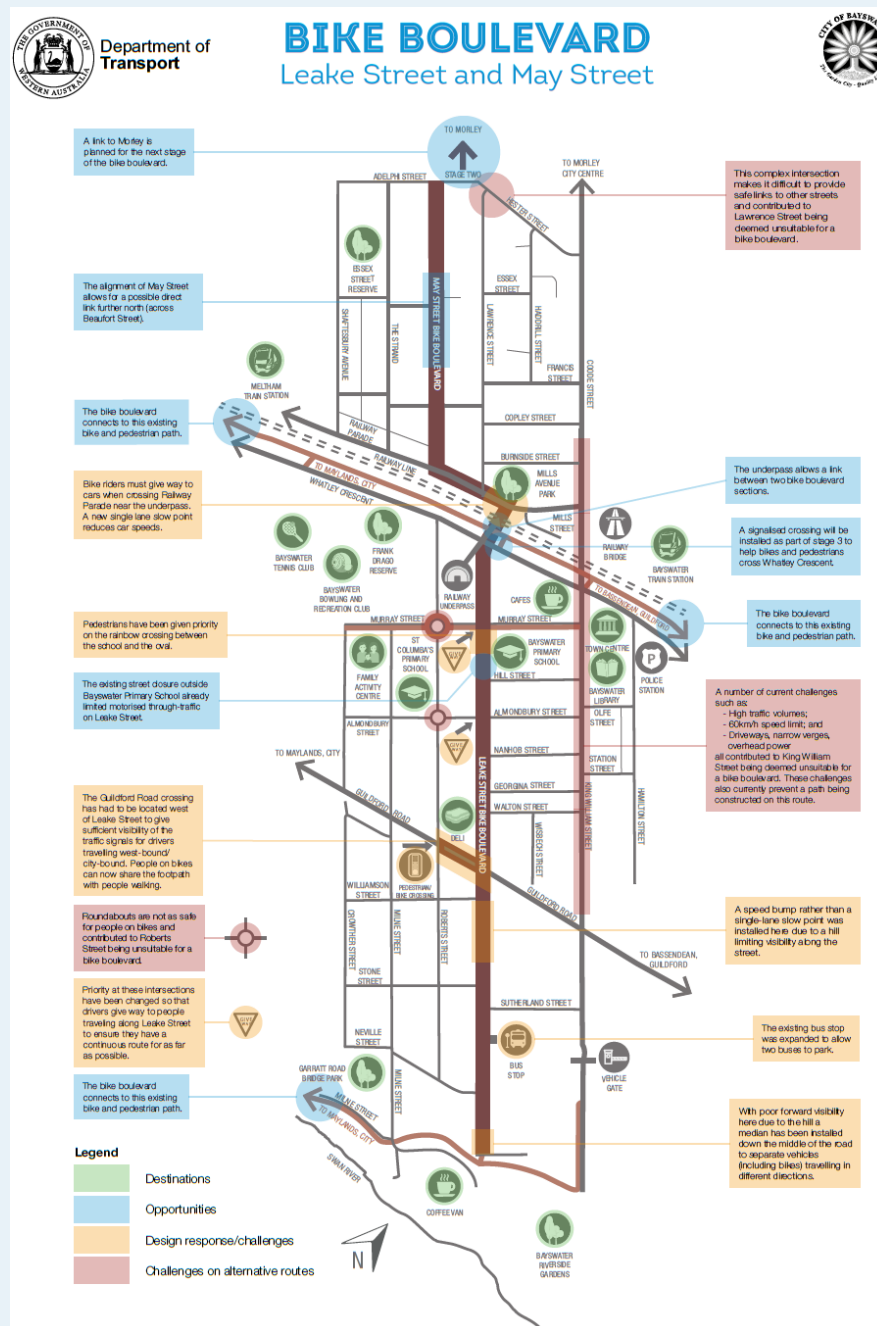
<sup>8</sup> Recommendation 4: DoT and Main Roads should support and promote existing and new cycling infrastructure, including innovations being trialled by local government, to improve participation in cycling.



## Case study 2: Evaluation of a Safe Active Streets project in Bayswater

The only post project evaluation we could obtain was for a Bike Boulevard in Bayswater (Figure 5). This \$970,000 project remodelled Leake and May Streets and lowered vehicle speed limits, to make it easier for people to walk or cycle.

Data collection for this project was inconsistent. The project design intended to measure the number of riders at 7 locations, and the number of vehicles at 8 across the area. However, at only 2 of these locations were counts recorded of the number of riders both before and after it was built. As a result, the post project review could not fully assess whether the changes encouraged more people to cycle on the road.



Source: City of Bayswater

Figure 5: Map of the Leake and May Streets Bike Boulevard

## Basis for DoT decision-making on WABN grants is not fully documented

DoT did not fully capture its reasons for WABN funding decisions. DoT supports LG entities cycling projects through WABN grants. These grants provide \$5 million each year to the LG sector to design and construct paths, or review and update their bike plans. During the 2021-22 funding round, DoT recommended funding 5 LG projects that were assessed against the eligibility criteria as a lower priority than others. DoT informed us the lower ranked projects were recommended to spread funding fairly across LG entities but did not document this rationale or provide its assessors with guidance on when to do this. Without appropriate guidance and transparent processes, WABN grants may be allocated to projects that do not deliver the best outcomes to the community.

DoT does not document conflicts of interests of panel members and any mitigations during the WABN grants assessments. During our 2021 annual audit of DoT's financial statements, controls and KPIs, we identified that members of the assessment panel were not required to declare any conflicts in writing. Ensuring the assessment process is consistent and transparent is vital to maintaining LG entity trust and engagement.

Each year State entities publicly report their progress against the WABN Plan key actions in the annual progress report. This is in line with our previous audit recommendations 1a and 1b.<sup>9</sup> We reviewed the 2018-19 report, and found it included timeframes and budgets for the WABN Plan's 12 high level key actions. Regular reporting helps inform the public on progress against the actions and provides information about upcoming projects that may affect them.

## State entities promoted safe cycling through public awareness strategies

State entities have developed public awareness and safety campaigns in line with our previous audit recommendation.<sup>10</sup> These campaigns help to promote a culture of safe cycling and mutual respect amongst all road users. Almost half of the respondents to our survey noted they did not feel safe riding on roads.

### Sample of community survey responses 2

*"It could be safe... but you need to give the right education to drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians."*

*"Perth needs an advertising campaign to change attitudes as much as it needs infrastructure."*

*"Attitudes of both riders and drivers need to change."*

Source: OAG

RSC produced 2 safety campaigns in 2017:

- ***Might Be a Mate*** aimed to increase awareness of cyclist safety, including safe passing distances targeted at both cyclists and motorists
- ***Must Be a Metre*** educated the public on a legislative change mandating a minimum 1 metre distance for vehicles when passing cyclists.

<sup>9</sup> Recommendation 1a and 1b: DoT should prepare and publish a) WABN Plan implementation schedule and funding requirements, and b) progress report on WABN Plan actions.

<sup>10</sup> Recommendation 3e: DoT and RSC should work together to develop public awareness strategies to target safe cycling and mutual respect among all road users.



These campaigns were re-run for a total of 7 weeks between 2018 and 2021 and received favourable feedback. In 2020, RSC ran a further campaign, *Kindness Travels*, (Figure 6) to promote courtesy and mutual respect amongst all road users. DoT continues to promote the benefits of cycling through Bike Month and the Your Move programs. DoT and RSC also participate in wider stakeholder groups which aim to create and promote a culture of safe bike riding. Raising awareness and fostering cooperation between all road users is vital to increasing safety and making cycling more appealing.



Source: RSC website

**Figure 6: RSC campaign image for Kindness Travels**

## LG entities have worked to facilitate cycling, but improved paths and more promotion is needed

### All the LG entities we audited have bike plans

The 4 LG entities we audited all have bike plans that show how they will improve cycling for their communities. All the bike plans:

- used cycling data, including from counters and community interaction (see Case study 3). Only Perth and Cockburn have continued to collect this data to understand cycling changes in their communities and adjust their priorities as needed
- included consideration of likely destinations and links to primary routes
- evaluated existing paths
- included cycling projects to be built.

However, some plans are at risk of being out of date:

- Perth has not updated its plan, despite identifying the need in 2016. The plan does not include changes to its LG boundaries, or align with other State actions, such as the WABN plan.
- Bayswater's bike plan has not been reviewed since it was developed in 2014 and does not consider changes to legislation allowing cycling on footpaths. In 2021, Bayswater received WABN funding to review its bike plan in the near future.

If plans are not periodically reviewed, they may not reflect changes in road and path networks or meet community needs.

### Case study 3: Use of innovative engagement methods to develop the City of Cockburn bike plan

Cockburn used an interactive online engagement tool to help inform its bike plan (Figure 7). The tool allowed the public to mark a spot on an online map and provide information on any issues encountered, what they liked or what they would like improved.

Over the 2 months it was available, 448 participants made 1,254 submissions. Cockburn outline in their bike plan that the insights gained, including understanding of the infrastructure and network, would not have been possible without this engagement method.



Source: City of Cockburn

Figure 7: Advertisement for Cockburn online engagement tool

### Not all new paths meet internal standards or better practice

All LG entities build paths (dual use and footpaths) in their communities for cycling. However, many new paths are not wide enough and LG entity standards do not always meet better practice. Paths offer potential safety advantages over riding on the road but if they are too narrow, accidents with pedestrians or other cyclists are more likely.

#### *Dual use paths*

All audited LG entities have their own standards for the width of dual use paths (Table 1). We found Bayswater and Kalamunda's widths were substantially narrower than the Austroads better practice of 2.5 metre desirable minimum width. In addition, we found LG entities were often not meeting their own standard. We assessed the width of dual use paths using the LG entities' asset registers and found 10% of Cockburn's and 77% of Kalamunda's dual use paths were too narrow.

We could not assess all LG entities, as Bayswater's register did not identify dual use paths and Perth did not include path widths.

	Austrroads better practice	Bayswater	Cockburn	Kalamunda	Perth
<b>Standard for minimum width for dual use paths</b>	2.5 m	2 m	2.5 m	2.1 m	2.5 m
<b>Proportion of paths less than LG entity standard</b>		Could not be assessed	10.3%	77%	Could not be assessed

Source: OAG using LG entity information

**Table 1: LG entity internal standard widths for dual use paths**

### Footpaths

Since the 2016 law change allowing cyclists to ride on footpaths, LG entities have not always built appropriately wide paths. To allow for safe overtaking, Austrroads recommends paths used for cycling to be at least 2 metres wide. All 3 LG entities we could assess had built paths less than 2 metres wide (Table 2). Many of these were much less, with nearly a third of paths at Bayswater and Cockburn 1.5 metres or less. Cyclists are highly likely to encounter pedestrians or other users on footpaths and ensuring paths are wide enough makes for safer passing. We could not assess Perth's paths as widths are not recorded in their asset registers.

Not all footpaths can be 2 metres wide. In some areas existing infrastructure or trees may prevent new paths from meeting the standard. However, if LG entities do not appropriately consider path widths, footpaths may not be fit for purpose, reducing cycling as a transport or recreational option, or increasing accidents.

### Sample of community survey responses 3

*"Opening up to allow footpath riding made a huge positive contribution to the adequacy of the network."*

*"I have a good bike path to my workplace but if I am going anywhere else, I mostly ride on the footpath to avoid busy roads."*

Source: OAG

	Bayswater		Cockburn		Kalamunda	
	Length (m)	%	Length (m)	%	Length (m)	%
less than 1.0m	423	1.6%	108	0.3%	95	0.5%
>1.0 to 1.2 m	426	1.6%	252	0.6%	285	1.6%
>1.2 to 1.5 m	8,102	29.7%	13,774	33.4%	881	5.0%
>1.5 to 1.8 m	3,608	13.2% <sup>sss</sup>	9,919	24.1%	16,525	92.9%*
>1.8 to <2.0 m	5	0.0%	1,256	3.0%	0	0.0%
2.0 m or wider (meeting better practice)	14,699	53.9%	15,921	38.6%	0	0.0%

Source: OAG using LG entity information

\* 92.6% of City of Kalamunda's paths were 1.8 metres wide

**Table 2 : Width of LG entity footpaths built since 2016**

### Path maintenance

LG entity records show paths were regularly inspected and maintained. The Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia's (IPWEA) good practice guidance suggests that paths are inspected every 3 years. LG entity records show inspections are taking place in line with better practice, at least 93% of paths were inspected within 3 years. These inspections found that on average 96% of paths did not need to be replaced.

## Two LG entities can do more to encourage cycling

Bayswater and Perth did not actively promote cycling to their communities despite identifying the need to do so in their bike plans. LG entities are in a unique position to directly communicate with their communities and a lack of campaigns or promotion may limit the growth of cycling.

Both Cockburn and Kalamunda regularly promoted cycling including encouraging cycling to local events and running cycling campaigns (Case study 4). Cockburn has also developed an online tool to help people plan how to cycle around their community easily and efficiently.

## Case study 4: Examples of how Cockburn and Kalamunda promoted cycling

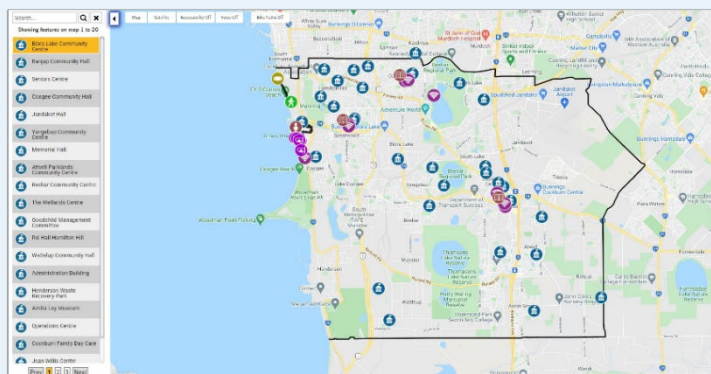
Both Cockburn and Kalamunda regularly promoted cycling to their communities. Below are some examples of how this was achieved.



**1) A poster from a community event in Cockburn highlighting cycling**



2) Kalamunda social media post linking to educational information



### 3) Cockburn's online mapping tool

Source: OAG using LG entity information

**Figures 8: Examples of cycling promotions from Cockburn and Kalamunda**

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## Recommendations

State government entities should:

1. develop and implement a central reporting tool to capture cycling hazard and incident data to better understand the risks impacting cyclists

### **DoT response:**

The Department of Transport (DoT) and numerous stakeholders agree that there are benefits to capturing such data and will continue the work conducted over recent years to try to achieve a practical solution. There is no comparable tool in existence across Australia at this time. DoT does not have the legislative authority to collect incident data for transport planning or road safety purposes. DoT is continuing to explore with other agencies how to achieve the necessary authorisations. If the necessary authorisations can be achieved, it is intended to pilot an online 'incident reporting facility'.

DoT does not own any active transport network assets. However, DoT does currently host an online tool for users to identify hazards on a map which notifies the relevant asset owner. The ongoing challenge with the existing and proposed tool is ensuring incidents and hazards are reported.

### **MRWA response:**

MRWA supports this recommendation.

### **RSC response:**

Agreed

**Implementation timeframe:** December 2022

2. finalise and publish guidance materials to help LG entities to plan, build and promote cycling.

### **DoT response:**

The Department of Transport, with support from WALGA, recently released the *Shared and Separated Paths Guidelines*. The *Local Area Traffic Management Guidelines for Cycling* are currently in the final stages of approval. Guidelines for *Developing Local Bike Plans* and *Safe Active Streets* will follow. It is anticipated the above design suite will be complete by 30 June 2023.

### **MRWA response:**

MRWA has documents available through its website on Local Area Traffic Management and wayfinding.

The *Supplement to Austroads Guide to Road Design – Part 6A; Paths for Walking and Cycling* is also published on the MRWA website.

MRWA will approach WALGA to identify any gaps in existing processes and guidelines and discuss options to address.

### **RSC response:**

Agreed

**Implementation timeframe:** June 2022



The Department of Transport should:

3. review and improve its processes for assessing WABN grant applications to ensure all parts of the assessment and decision are fully documented and transparent

**Dot Response**

During 2021-22 DoT commenced a review of the WABN local government grant management processes and procedures as part of the whole-of-program review supported by the Minister for Transport and WA Local Government Association. DoT is developing new WABN Grants Guidelines and Procedures documentation and will consider how to address and incorporate the audit findings.

**Implementation timeframe:** June 2022

4. develop an improved strategy for the collection and use of cycling data to inform planning.

**DoT response:**

Since 2019, DoT has significantly improved its evaluation capabilities and capacity. It has developed comprehensive evaluation plans for all cycling infrastructure programs and collects qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate program and project outcomes. DoT also funds cycling participation surveys and the cycling data counter network expansion. DoT is currently developing a whole-of-state active mobility strategy which will include a monitoring and evaluation plan, incorporating the collection of cycling data. The work we do seeks to continuously improve both process and outcomes.

**Implementation timeframe:** June 2022

Local government entities should:

5. regularly review and update their bike plans, to ensure they meet community needs

**City of Bayswater response:**

The City agrees with the report recommendations and views them as an improvement opportunity.

**City of Cockburn response:**

Agreed

**City of Kalamunda response:**

The City is supportive of this finding. Furthermore, matters that may give rise to a need to review a Bike Plan include:

- a) Original intent and time focus of the plan,
- b) Progress in the delivery of actions identified in the plan,
- c) Significant changes being experienced in the road and path networks,
- d) Changing community needs,
- e) Performance measures identified by the plan, and
- f) Other significant changes to cycling needs and infrastructure needs.

The City intends to formally review the Bike Plan in the 2022/2023 Financial Year

**City of Perth response:**

In 2018 DoT initiated the Greater CBD Transport Plan initiative which aimed to provide a multimodal plan for City streets. The City of Perth supports the multi modal approach given the width of the streets can only support a certain number of modes. The Greater CBD Transport plan was endorsed by Council September 2020 and the Perth City Deal has been developed on this basis. This includes several cycle network initiatives to be delivered over the next few years. The City has also endorsed the Long Term Cycle Network Plan, which supersedes the 2016 Cycle Plan.

The City of Perth acknowledges that the 2016 Cycle Plan should have been updated through Council while the Greater CBD Transport Plan was under development and later rescinded when the CBD Plan was approved.

We are currently updating the City of Perth's Transport Strategy in recognition of the need for a multi modal approach. This will inform a new cycle plan for the City of Perth.

**Implementation timeframe:** ongoing

6. [incorporate national better practice construction guidance regarding path widths whenever practicable, to maximise the extent to which paths can safely be used for cycling](#)

**City of Bayswater response:**

The City agrees with the report recommendations and views them as an improvement opportunity.

**City of Cockburn response:**

Agreed

**City of Kalamunda response:**

The City is supportive of this finding, noting that 'whenever practicable' will guide decisions regarding new and reconstructed footpaths going forward.

**City of Perth response:**

The City supports best practice construction guidance on path widths, however the historic nature of the City's road reserves is a considerable constraint in meeting the various State Government standards and community expectations in the urban realm. The City recognises the need to ensure traffic efficiency, bus priority, cycling safety and the necessary footpath widths for safe pedestrian passage and amenity to support the local economy in what are historically narrow road reserves. The City would welcome the establishment of best practice guidance for constrained CBD environments where road reserves are limited and where there are complex, varied and competing demands.

Critically it is important that State Government agencies recognise the constraints within some environments to understand where compromises need to be made, particularly between State Government Agency requirements.

**Implementation timeframe:** ongoing

7. [develop public awareness strategies to target safe cycling and mutual respect among all road users.](#)

**City of Bayswater response:**

The City agrees with the report recommendations and views them as an improvement opportunity.

**City of Cockburn response:**

Agreed

**City of Kalamunda response:**

The City is supportive of this finding.

The City is also currently delivering a road safety awareness program with support funding from the Commonwealth, with elements that include sharing the road environment between cyclists and vehicle drivers.

**City of Perth response:**

The City supports public awareness strategies to encourage safe cycling to and within the city, however the issues of safe cycling and mutual respect are much wider than the City of Perth boundaries.

The City contributes \$17 million a year to the Perth Parking Management Fund which has one of its primary purposes of encourage cycling as a means of accessing the city. The city believes it is through this mechanism that cycling public awareness strategies should be delivered. Duplication of this role is unlikely to be in the best interest of government. The City has requested an audit of the PPMA to clarify roles and responsibilities in terms of funding these types of initiatives. The City would support initiatives to raise awareness funded through the PPMA if determined appropriate by the Auditor General.

**Implementation timeframe:** ongoing



## Response from audited entities

### Transport portfolio (Department of Transport and Main Roads WA)

The Department of Transport and Main Roads support the recommendations and have made significant progress since the release of the 2015 report with the majority of the 2015 report recommendations have been completed, with others advanced or nearing completion.

DoT uses an evidence-based, consultative approach to program delivery and network development that results in a high level of stakeholder engagement supported by a robust governance structure. This skill and capability have grown since 2015.

The development of the Long Term Cycle Network Plan for Perth and Peel following a two year engagement process with local government authorities, now underpins all planning and investment decisions associated with delivery of the network.

Recent record levels of funding for active transport infrastructure has enabled the planning and construction of technically complex projects and structures including the new Principal Shared Path on Mitchell Freeway between Glendalough Station and Hutton Street, as well as the pedestrian and cycling bridge adjacent the Causeway (to be delivered in 2023).

With current funding levels, DoT is confident the other actions associated with the *WA Bicycle Network Plan 2014-2031* will be delivered within anticipated timeframes.

Looking forward and recognising the cycling network has multiple users, the development of an active mobility strategy, in partnership with multiple government agencies and transport portfolio partners, will set the future direction for cycling, walking and other micro-mobility modes in WA.

DoT and Main Roads will use the findings within this report to further guide their work.

### Road Safety Commission

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the summary findings of this important report.

The Road Safety Commission accepts the findings of the report and will continue to work collaboratively with other State Agencies to support the goal of safer and more viable cycling in Western Australia.

The Road Safety Commission agrees with the recommendations of the report, in particular recommendations 1 and 4 dealing with the development and implementation of a central reporting tool to capture cycling hazard and incident data and applying better strategies for the collection and use of cycling data to inform planning.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the Office of the Auditor General, for working in a cooperative and efficient manner with the Road Safety Commission throughout the audit.

### Response from City of Bayswater

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback. The City has considered the contents and has provided comment around 6 broad themes in the report as follows:

Path Standards - Austroads best practice guidelines may recommend that cycle paths need to be a minimum 2m wide in an ideal setting, however local government is constrained within the road reserve by the available space and competing interests of

transport, utility, environmental, and aesthetic needs of users. The City believes that paths widths are better matched to the needs of users, the relative density of the residential catchment, and based on a hierarchy of interconnectivity between transport destinations, community facilities (recreation and education) and shopping precincts rather than a one size fits all approach.

**Safety** - The City agrees that a central hazard and incident data collection, similar to that reported by Police Services and maintained by Main Roads on Crash Map, would assist in quantifying and identifying safety and hazardous locations rather than anecdotal reports of incidents. The issue is having a robust and uniform reporting and incident identification system, and who will maintain that system.

**Performance** - The City would agree that a uniform and reliable performance measurement and data collection method, other than field based manual collection, would be preferable however this would be better coordinated by a central authority across all local governments rather than a piecemeal approach dependent upon local available resources.

**Review** - Bike plans should be reviewed every five years and/or following legislative changes to ensure standards remain compliant.

**Promotion** - The City agrees that defining and identifying Local, Shared-Use, and Cycle only paths, and publishing and promoting routes will benefit the community and provide local government the impetus to completing a contiguous network of pathways. The City agrees that more can be done to promote cycling within the City, but also recognises that this would be more effective through a centralised metropolitan publicity campaign, with a focus on awareness of safe cycling strategies by one authority rather than 30 individual metropolitan LGAs.

**Maintenance** - Triannual inspections are generally undertaken to ensure the pathways are in good order, that cracking has not deteriorated, and that condition is recorded so that ultimately footpath replacement is done in accordance with asset management plans. Reported damage is promptly prioritised so that pathways remain safe.

The City is currently finalising the brief and scope of a review into the City's Local Bike Plan, to be undertaken by an independent expert consultant, and it would be our intention to have the recommendations of the OAG findings when released, to be included. The City appreciates that your process may still have some time to run before public release, however has included the 6 broad title themes to be addressed in the review.

## **Response from City of Cockburn**

Thank you for conducting the audit.

The City appreciates the recommendations and areas for improvement for the safe and viable cycling and will continue to:

- Plan and develop improved walking and cycling infrastructure
- Collect data to monitor and understand cycling changes
- Continue to plan a long term cycle network and update the bike and walk plan
- Work with the community and state agencies to enable mode shift.

The City of Cockburn is working hard to facilitate safe, efficient and sustainable movement around the City, managing traffic congestion, advocating for improved public transport and supporting alternative means of transport.

Transitioning to more sustainable modes like cycling, walking and public transport creates a more resilient and future proof transport network, and minimises the negative externalities of excessive private vehicle reliance.

While the City's Footpath Asset Management Plan sets a minimum width for dual use paths of 2.5m there are significant obstacles with the reduced verges in new areas and existing infrastructure in older areas. Western Power overhead poles and lighting poles are the most common obstacle to overcome usually 1m to 1.5m behind kerb.

Within parks, paving areas and pedestrian paths are a minimum width of 1.5m. Designated dual-use (pedestrian and cyclist) paths area a shall be a minimum width of 2m.

Liveable Neighbourhoods is the document that most developments use as a guide and IPWEA subdivisional guidelines both have 1.5m as a minimum path width. It would be difficult to influence developers to make any changes that contradicted the local government subdivision guidelines and below documents.

- There is a stark difference between the 2009 adopted version of Liveable Neighbourhoods, the 2015 draft and the current draft being updated now by Design WA. At a minimum it should carry through the 2009 shared path widths 2 to 2.5m.
- The local government subdivisional guidelines need to be updated to include the latest standards as some of them are quite old. Design WA are updating the planning documents so this may be updated along with Liveable Neighbourhoods

### Response from City of Kalamunda

On behalf of the Chief Executive Officer, we thank you for the opportunity to provide overall comments on the OAG report – “Viable Cycling in the Perth Area – Summary of Findings”

As was discussed with the OAG, we feel that perhaps the report does not place sufficient weight or recognition that in Districts such as Kalamunda with significant topography issues, relatively low urban density and a substantive peri-urban footprint may not require the scale of paths that are suitable for both cyclists and pedestrians compared to urbanised areas. It is noted that one of the objectives of the WABN Plan was to improve connectivity within a 15km radius of Perth CBD which only reaches a very small fraction of the City of Kalamunda's footprint.

However it was pleasing to note that the Audit recommendations in essence recognise that construction of new or replacement paths to a 2.5m width suitable for cycling and pedestrians is to be achieved where practicable. We consider the current and forecast demand for cycle routes beyond what has been set out in the City's Cycle Plan to be one of the key determinants of 'practicable'

The City (as is common practice across WA) references the Austroads and Australian Standards guidelines when designing civil infrastructure. With the change in the Road Traffic Code (2016), whereby adult cyclists are permitted to cycle on pedestrian paths, local governments are now left in an unclear position as to their obligation when constructing new and rebuilt paths as shared paths for both pedestrians and cyclists (rather than just for pedestrians). Presently, paths being designed for pedestrians (at nominal 1.8m width as per the standards) do not meet the minimum standard for a shared path, being a path designed for both cyclists and pedestrians at minimum 2.5m width. The implication of having to design all paths for both pedestrians and cyclists is:

- a) an increase in every path width from existing (typically 1.8m) to 2.5m or more,
- b) higher standards for gradients and access ramps,

- c) more stringent road safety considerations, and
- d) increasing costs.

We also feel that this change to the Road Traffic Code in itself should not be used as the yardstick that determines the future of all footpaths in any District given the substantial impacts upon the capacity within existing funding constraints to then meet community expectations.

The report uses incorrect terminology referring to “dual use paths” when the contemporary standard and phrase is “shared paths”. The City objects to the observation that “77% of Kalamunda’s dual use paths were too narrow”, as most of the paths being commented on are not “dual use” paths, they are pedestrian paths.

The audit has reported on the quantity of paths provided, however has not identified the extent of all cycling infrastructure that has been provided by LGs. Due to technical interpretation of what is a cycling path in terms of the audit, it is unclear from the audit report, the extent of infrastructure provided (and designed) for cycling. In a similar view, the audit report has identified funding provided by the State for cycling infrastructure, but has not identified:

- a) The funding provided by LGs for cycling infrastructure,
- b) The funding provided by LGs for maintaining cycling infrastructure, and
- c) Whether the above amounts would demonstrate improvement or decline in achievement relative to the previous audit (or other expectations).

In closing, it is hoped that the State Government in receiving this audit and comments note that increased State Government funding for WABN and other cycling initiatives would go a long way to increase the coverage of cycling paths which would facilitate the extra take up of cycling by the community

### **Response from City of Perth**

The City of Perth generally supports the findings of the recent Office of Auditor General's performance audit of Viable Cycling in the Perth Area.

The City recognises the importance of cycling as a sustainable mode of transport and is committed to providing measures that help increase future numbers. This commitment is demonstrated in the recent significant investment of new cycling infrastructure through the enhancement of Roe Street and upgraded facilities with the addition of lighting and landscaping along the foreshore at Trinity, East Perth. Both projects provide important links in the overall cycling network and will be completed in 2022.

The City's updated Transport Strategy which is scheduled for release in early 2022, will inform a new cycle plan which will address some of the current shortfalls identified in the audit including soft infrastructure.

The City also welcomes the opportunity to work with State Agencies to raise public awareness around cycling safety and help facilitate behaviour change across the transport modes.

## Audit focus and scope

The objective of the audit was to assess if State government entities have addressed our recommendations from our 2015 audit *Safe and Viable Cycling in the Perth Metropolitan Area*, and if State and LG entities effectively facilitate cycling for the community.

The criteria were:

- Have the relevant State government entities completed the recommendations from our 2015 audit *Safe and Viable Cycling in the Perth Metropolitan Area*?
- Do State and LG entities provide well planned cycling infrastructure and education aligned with community needs?

In undertaking the audit, we:

- reviewed plans, policies, strategies, guidelines, asset registers, bicycle count data, meeting minutes and project documents
- interviewed staff from DoT, MRWA, RSC and the cities of Bayswater, Cockburn, Kalamunda and Perth
- conducted a survey from March to April 2021 to gather community opinion on cycling infrastructure and safety in the metropolitan Perth area. This received 1,963 responses.
- reviewed submissions from stakeholders
- engaged with WestCycle, the peak body for cycling in WA
- reviewed national and international literature and standards for cycling.

Our audit did not include cycling outside of the metropolitan Perth area, cycle racing, mountain biking or off-road and off-path infrastructure such as trails.

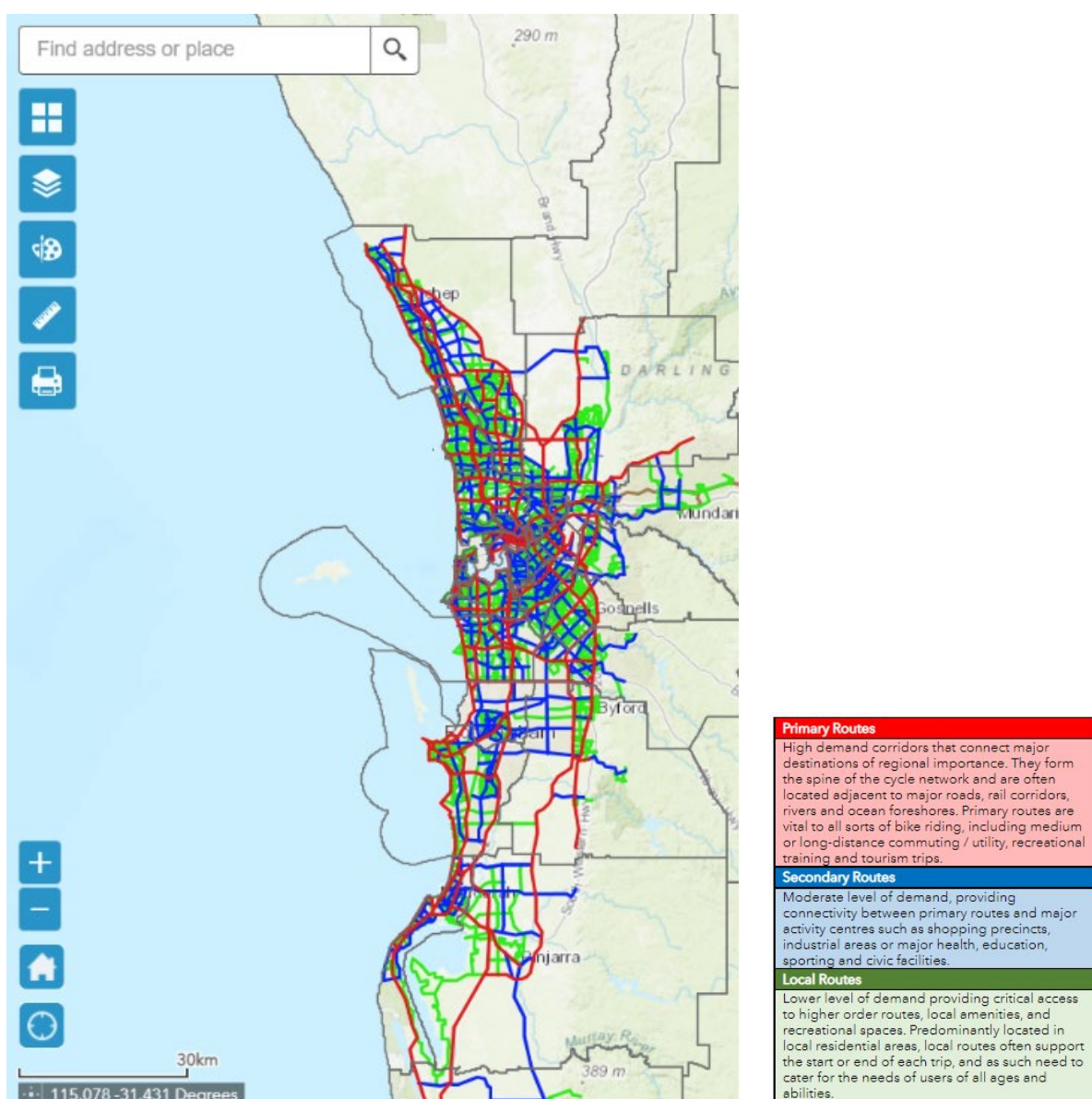
This was an independent performance audit, conducted under Section 18 of the *Auditor General Act 2006*, in accordance with Australian Standard on Assurance Engagements ASAE 3500 *Performance Engagements*. We complied with the independence and other ethical requirements related to assurance engagements. Performance audits focus primarily on the effective management and operations of entity programs and activities. The approximate cost of undertaking the audit and reporting was \$482,000.

## **Appendix 1: Recommendations from our 2015 report *Safe and Viable Cycling in the Perth Metropolitan Area***

1. In the next 6 months DoT should prepare and publish a:
  - a. WABN Plan implementation schedule and funding requirements
  - b. progress report on WABN Plan actions.
2. In the next 12 months, DoT should implement an improved strategy to collect, monitor and analyse data on cycling participation to inform planning and safety.
3. In the next 2 years:
  - a. DoT should identify demand for transport options to inform and finalise a transport planning framework for Perth, which integrates all forms of transport
  - b. DoT and Main Roads should provide detailed construction and maintenance guidelines for cycling infrastructure to local government
  - c. DoT should progress the review and development of Local Bicycle Routes in conjunction with LGAs
  - d. the State Government should consider developing a central crash and hazard reporting facility for the public to record safety concerns that relate to cycling infrastructure
  - e. DoT and RSC should work together to develop public awareness strategies to target safe cycling and mutual respect among all road users.
4. In the next 5 years, DoT and Main Roads should support and promote existing and new cycling infrastructure, including innovations being trialled by local government, to improve participation in cycling.



## Appendix 2: The Long-Term Cycle Network map



Source: Department of Transport website<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> <https://dot-wa.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=1e739953bbbee461f81ffe3a8157894b5>

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## Auditor General's 2021-22 reports

Number	Title	Date tabled
11	Forensic Audit Report – Establishment Phase	8 December 2021
10	Audit Results Report – Annual 2020-21 Financial Audits of State Government Entities	24 November 2021
9	Cyber Security in Local Government	24 November 2021
8	WA's COVID-19 Vaccine Roll-out	18 November 2021
7	Water Corporation: Management of Water Pipes – Follow-Up	17 November 2021
6	Roll-out of State COVID-19 Stimulus Initiatives: July 2020 – March 2021	20 October 2021
5	Local Government COVID-19 Financial Hardship Support	15 October 2021
4	Public Building Maintenance	24 August 2021
3	Staff Exit Controls	5 August 2021
2	SafeWA – Application Audit	2 August 2021
1	Opinion on Ministerial Notification – FPC Arbitration Outcome	29 July 2021

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