

Yarra Bicycle User Group – 2008 Questionnaire to City of Yarra Candidates

Dear City of Yarra Candidate,

You are being contacted by Yarra Bicycle Users Group to ascertain your stance on cycling and related transport issues in City of Yarra, which has the highest level of cycling in any municipality in Victoria.

Councils are responsible for local roads and many urban planning issues, although there are several issues, such as improving awareness, accessibility, road user education and safety that are beyond the scope of local government. These issues call for interagency coordination across many different levels, including government and non-government groups.

A council committed to promoting cycling, walking and greater accessibility for all residents in the long term, can make a huge difference to their personal transport options in the light of rapidly changing economic and environmental factors.

(1). If elected to City of Yarra, will you seek to work with other councils, local government associations and State Government departments to enhance sustainable transport and cycling options within and outside the City of Yarra?

(2). Many more people than ever are taking up utility cycling as a viable method of transport and road use patterns are rapidly changing. What are your ideas to improve sustainable transport and cycling options in the City of Yarra?

(3). Will you support an increase in the City of Yarra's annual bicycle infrastructure expenditure?

(4) Road safety is a high priority for many bicycle riders. Building and promoting separate facilities, such as Copenhagen lanes, on road bicycle lanes and shared paths are not the total solution for improving the road environment or encouraging people to ride. Also from a budgetary perspective, it is simply not feasible for local councils to be expected to fund bicycle infrastructure on such a large level. What ideas do you have to improve the shared road environment for all users?

Individual Candidates

Michael Long - Langridge Ward

I and my partner are both bicycle users (though also car drivers) and are well aware of the safety and other concerns that inhibit greater bike use. I believe Yarra Council has spent some months preparing a bike plan (I hope in consultation with your Group), which is now ready to publish. I am reluctant to comment on what other things I would do until I have seen the Plan. However, I can readily agree with your paragraph numbered

1. And am committed to working on this issue with other councils and other public bodies.

2. I agree that facilities such as Copenhagen lanes are not the total solution, but they are worthwhile in some locations, and need not always cost a huge amount. I have had discussions with several residents in both Noone and Roseneath Streets Clifton Hill, which have become "rat runs" for traffic wanting to connect Hoddle St with the North end of Trenerry Crescent. The traffic in both streets has become both heavy and fast. Those residents are interested in both Copenhagen bike lanes and roundabouts to meet both their local amenity and safety concerns, as well as for cycling purposes. They and marked should attract Government funding to subsidise Council expenditure.

3. While I acknowledge that whatever Council's current bicycle infrastructure spending is unlikely to be enough to do all the things I might like it to do, I cannot responsibly promise to increase it without serious consideration of all the demands on Council's funds. Thanks for the opportunity to interact with your group. I hope to continue this interaction regardless of whether I am elected or not. Yours sincerely, Michael Long

Website: http://better.yarralabor.net/?page_id=7

Tom McFeely - Langridge Ward

Traffic Flow – Push for a change in council policies that at present, actively discourages and prevents a faster flow of city traffic through Yarra. Until there is action by State government in relation to better public transport for the outer suburbs, we HAVE to accept that Yarra is a main thoroughfare for outer-suburban traffic and we have to manage it better. This includes more clearways and parking restrictions on nonshopping strips. The policy of deliberately slowing traffic down to supposedly encourage outer suburban Victorians to use public transport or get on bicycles is NOT the answer at present, and only adds to our congestion and pollution problems.

Bike Permits/ Paths / Motorbike Lanes – Introduce a proposal that would make it mandatory that EVERY bike rider on the streets of YARRA must have a permit – whether they live in YARRA or not. By introducing a permit system, this would assist in the identification of ‘rouge’ riders on footpaths and roads alike, and also assist with the funding of further initiatives that encourage safe bike use. At present bike riders do not directly contribute to any of the infrastructure that is continually being introduced and upgraded, and non bike riders should not have to shoulder this increasing cost burden alone. This permit would also include an insurance component that would help prevent council having any expenditure relating to bike rider incidents. I would further advocate that bike paths are placed in better and safer routes where there is more adequate space for such paths. Do we really need allocated bike lanes in almost every street? I would also push for the abolition of bicycle lanes altogether from main traffic thoroughfares, and change these existing lanes to motorbike / scooter lanes. We have to encourage safe driving and riding practices within YARRA. This includes re-evaluating roads where dangerous lane sharing occurs and councils’ road policies are not in kilter with VIC Roads.

The “Tunnel” – Support the building of any tunnel that takes traffic UNDER suburbs as opposed to THROUGH them. We are congested enough. I also propose that council initiate the building of large scale car parks at the end of the Eastern freeway and encourage commuters to ‘Park & Ride’ into the CBD using the existing rail and tram network. The implementation of a tunnel would also allow for the downgrading of Alexandra Parade and allow for better traffic flow between North Fitzroy; Fitzroy; Clifton Hill & Collingwood. I would also lobby for any tunnel proposal to have a direct connection into the CBD and that the tunnel take into account the carbon trading scheme and be environmentally friendly.

Website: <http://www.changeyarra.net.au>

Suzana Talevski – Melba Ward

1. Yes. Our roads are already suffering from traffic congestion. The more options residents have regarding public transport, the more likely they are to use public transport.
2. We need to look at improving bike paths and lanes within the Yarra municipality, we need to make sure cyclists are safe on our roads. We also need to link transport options so public transport would be an attractive option for those that are currently driving.
3. Yes, as it will go a long way towards reducing the traffic congestion that is choking our roads.
4. I think we need to engage state and federal governments for support on such projects. The issue of safety is vital and needs to be addressed. I think representatives from all tiers of government need to come together and make a concerted effort to improve the safety of cyclists using our roads.

Ian Quick – Melba Ward

1. YES!
2. More and better bike lanes. More bike parking.
3. Yes
4. We have to get the State Government interested in public transport, bikes, and pedestrians instead of tunnels and more roads! The only way of doing that is political pressure, which I will be very happy to work with other councils, residents and bike groups to apply. At the local level, we should do whatever the Council can do including bike lanes, changing parking arrangements, more bike storage.

Website: <http://www.yarra.org/taxonomy/term/18>

Jackie Fristacky - Nicholls Ward

1. Yes and already do as a Councillor, through presentations on cycling and as a member of Victorian Bicycle Advisory Committee, Metropolitan Transport Forum, Municipal Association of Victoria Victorian Local Governance Association, and working with Department of Transport, Department of Planning and Community Development, Cycling Promotion Fund and transport networks etc;
2. More public transport, improved cycle paths on and off road, better lighting, adoption of 300 watt standard for power assisted bikes, mandatory lights on bikes when sold, more bike storage on and off street etc;
3. Yes - but funds need to be spent smarter too - as not the \$ but how spent that counts.
4. Need federal and state funding for cycle infrastructure, developers to include cycle infrastructure in new developments in excess of planning requirements, reduce speed restrictions on urban residential roads to 40km/h; better road design for cyclists and segregated cycle paths for all roads where speeds exceed 40 km/h.

Political Party Candidates

Socialist Party

Thanks for the opportunity to respond to a few questions. See our answers below. All 3 Socialist Party candidates in the Yarra Council election support the good work done by yourself and the Yarra Bicycle Users Group. We hope to work more closely with you in the future.

Regards, Stephen Jolly, Denise Dudley & Anthony Main

1. Yes
2. We need more investment in bike tracks, lanes and racks. We also need to promote cycling more in the City of Yarra. Funding groups like YBUG would be central to this.
3. Yes
4. We would work with other progressive parties and community groups to lobby State and Federal Governments for more funding to solve these problems.

Website: <http://www.socialistpartyaustralia.org>

ALP Candidates

Dear Yarra BUG,

We would welcome the opportunity to work with Yarra BUG to improve Yarra for riders and expand the opportunities for residents to use bike transport. Below are the responses from the Yarra Labor candidates. Please don't hesitate to contact me for further details. Cheers, Josh

1. Yes
2. Improve bike paths e.g. lighting and water fountains
Expand access to bikes for low-income children
Reinforce bike lanes and clearways for bikes
Actively promote bike transport in Yarra
Expand bike storage capacity at and near major train and tram stations
3. Relative spending on bicycle infrastructure will be increased or maintained across the total budget
4. Work with councils and residents in adjacent and upstream councils to encourage bike transit and commuting through Yarra. Work with councils and bicycle destinations within Yarra and beyond Yarra, especially the city, to ensure they are appropriately equipped to welcome bike riders and their bikes. Review speed limits adjacent high usage bike lanes. Resist state government proposals to extend clearways. Enforce existing clearways to reduce bottlenecks in traffic which are especially dangerous to cyclists. Ensure bike and pedestrian users are able to use dedicated bike paths along Yarra. Ensure bike lanes don't "disappear" and are contiguous routes of transport.
Website: <http://better.yarralabor.net/>

The Greens

Please find our responses below. Further details can be found in our policy on <http://www.vic.greens.org.au/vote-green/2008/yarra>

Yours sincerely, Alison Clarke, Davis Clayton (Melba) Amanda Stone, Jenny Farrar (Langridge) Sam Gaylard, Gurm Sekhon (Nicholls), Greens candidates, Yarra Council Elections 2008

1. The Greens are fully committed to working with all levels of government and government associations to enhance sustainable cycling and transport options in Yarra.
2. The Greens in Yarra will promote and improve the use of sustainable transport modes such as bicycle, public transport and walking by:
 - Enlarging the bicycle network and providing multiple bicycle parks, including long stay secure bike lockers
 - Ensuring developers integrate bicycle parking and end of trip facilities within development proposals
 - Developing and implementing a Yarra Bicycle Strategy and a Public Transport Strategy
 - Fully implementing the Encouraging and Increasing Walking Strategy (2005) to improve the amenity and safety of walking routes to key destinations, and maximise pedestrian priority e.g. speed up pedestrian light response times
 - Advocating for at grade tram stops to increase accessibility to trams and slow down traffic.
 - Identifying "black holes" in public transport in Yarra and address these
 - Supporting local and metropolitan community groups campaigning for sustainable transport
 - Doubling (at least) the on-road bicycle budget
3. Yes. Greens on Yarra Council (2002-2004) increased the on road bicycle budget from \$40,000 to \$160,000 - this has paid significant dividends. Nearly 8% of people in the City of Yarra use bicycles as their transport to work according to the latest data from the 2006 Census. This up from 5.7% in 2001, a jump of 38% Investing in bicycle infrastructure works. We would significantly increase this budget, at least doubling it.
4. The Greens policy for Yarra includes Creating safe and continuous bicycle lanes, including the realignment and separation of lanes (e.g. "Copenhagen" bike lanes) where applicable; build Copenhagen lanes (or other forms of separated lanes) in Rathdowne St, Gertrude St, Brunswick St (identified priority routes.) However we are also aware that broader approaches are needed to improve the shared road environment for all users ad these will necessarily include reducing car use. We are committed to exploring all alternatives and implementing those, which are feasible and practical in Yarra at the earliest opportunity.