



## 3 ways to build a healthy future for NSW

### Healthy cities – Healthy lifestyle – Healthy children

Dear Treasurer,

As you prepare for the 2016-2017 Budget there are 3 key programs the Heart Foundation NSW asks you to fund this year and across the next 3 Budget cycles to 2019. We have developed this submission in consultation with key stakeholders and have briefed the relevant Ministerial and Departmental staff.

The programs we have chosen to focus on have been well developed, are evidence based, build on current State and Local Government activities, and have the support of a broad range of community, government and business stakeholders who are committed to their success.

These 3 programs – if funded to a sufficient level to achieve community behaviour change – will all contribute to achieving the Premier's Priority to reduce childhood overweight and obesity by 5% over the next 10 years.

	Budget commitment over 4 years to 2019	Source of funding	Outcomes
<b>Cyclesafe Network</b>	\$31 million	\$1.5 billion from infrastructure funding committed from lease of Port of Newcastle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monetised benefit of 5% of employed population riding to work using CSN is \$50 million per year</li> </ul>
<b>Make Healthy Normal</b>	\$36.4 million	NSW Health Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A 5% reduction in overweight and obesity would reduce diabetes costs by \$3 – 8 million per year.</li> </ul>
<b>Active Travel Charter for Children</b>	\$12.5 million	Shared between 5 Departments (\$2.5 million each)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monetised benefit of 5% of children riding to school using the CSN is \$8.8 million per year</li> </ul>

## 1. Healthy cities – build the *Cyclesafe Network*

### **What are we asking for? \$31 million over 4 years**

The Cyclesafe Network (CSN) is a system of family safe, easily navigated and usefully connected cycling, walking and shared paths across the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie local government areas. The plan is to connect 90kms of existing paths with 140kms of new construction to deliver an active transport network which will encourage local residents to cycle or walk for every day short trips to work, school, university, shops and other locations.

We are asking for a commitment of \$31 million to complete Phase 1 of the project by 2019, with a further commitment of \$129.2 million to complete the whole project in 2 additional phases by 2024.

We believe funding for the CSN should be made available from the \$1.5 billion of infrastructure funding committed by the Premier from the lease of the Port of Newcastle. To date \$340 million has been committed to the revitalisation of Newcastle but the *Plan for Growing Hunter City* signals a need for additional funding to build infrastructure to meet the increased transport demands of future population growth.

### **Why is this needed?**

The area covered by the CSN has one of the highest rates of overweight and obesity in NSW with 62.5% of the population overweight or obese compared to the NSW average of 52.3% and the area with the lowest rate (Sydney LHD) of 39.9%. There are substantial health benefits to be gained by increasing every day physical activity through increasing daily active travel.

In addition, the 'Hunter City' area has a greater reliance on car travel than other major cities with 90% of the workforce travelling to work by car. With new State Government plans to increase the population of 'Hunter City' to 750,000 it is essential that active transport infrastructure – cycling and walking paths – be built to accommodate the increased travel demands of the growing population to prevent future traffic congestion.

### **What will it deliver by 2019?**

The aim of the CSN is to make walking and cycling for short trips – less than 2kms for walking and less than 10 kms for cycling – a viable alternative to car travel.

An economic appraisal of the CSN using Transport for NSW Bike Facility Tool was undertaken by consultants to the CSN Steering Committee. They used 4 scenarios which provide an indication of the benefits which could be derived from increasing cycling mode share. These include infrastructure savings, health benefits, traffic congestion savings, environmental impacts and reduction in vehicle operation costs.

Using a conservative estimate of 5% of the employed people aged 15 years and over using the CSN for travel to and from work (less than 10kms) the total monetised benefits per year are around \$50 million. At a total cost for the building the full CSN of \$163 million the benefits would 'repay' the construction cost in just over 3 years.

## **2. Healthy habits – scale up the *Make Healthy Normal* program**

### **What are we asking for? \$36.4 million over 4 years**

In July 2015, the NSW Minister for Health launched the *Make Healthy Normal* campaign to encourage people to make small lifestyle changes which deliver large health benefits.

To date \$4.5 million has been allocated to the *Make Healthy Normal* campaign. While this is a good start, we know from NSW success in reducing smoking rates and road fatalities that a higher social marketing spend is needed to change behaviours and deliver positive health outcomes.

The reported advertising spend for NSW Health's *Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL)* Strategy from July 2015 to Dec 2015 (6 months) was \$1.3 million. This is well below the levels of media advertising of other successful behaviour change campaigns. For example, in 2014-2015 (12 months) \$7.1 million was spent on quit smoking advertising and \$16 million on road safety campaigns.

Research into successful quit smoking campaigns indicates that a spend of around \$3 per capita is needed to produce sufficient weight of messaging for effective behaviour change. Based on a current overweight/obesity rate in NSW adults of 52%, an appropriate level of spending would be \$9.1 million per year (\$36.4 million over 4 years).

### **Why is this needed?**

Our modern lifestyle continues to be the biggest preventable cause of illness and death in Australia. The latest Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) burden of disease figures show that after tobacco smoking (which is declining), the lifestyle related risk factors of insufficient physical activity and being overweight or obese contribute the greatest burden of disease.

These costs are substantial both in direct costs to the health system and indirect social costs to individuals and the economy. NSW Health estimates overweight and obesity costs NSW around \$19 billion annually, of which \$2.7 billion are direct financial costs

### **What will it deliver by 2019?**

NSW Health's *HEAL* Strategy has comprehensive and evidence based targets against which it reports regularly. Modelling on some specific disease types and risk factors undertaken by University of Sydney shows the potential for significant benefit if those targets are achieved. The monetised benefits would more than 'repay' the additional costs to the campaign.

A 5% reduction in overweight, for example, would prevent 266 cases of Type 2 diabetes in men per year and 200 cases per year in women with a further 185 cases per year in men and 186 cases per year in women prevented by a 5% reduction in obesity. As diabetes costs the health system between \$4,000 and \$9,600 per person, a 5% reduction in both overweight and obesity would save between \$3.3 million and \$8 million per year in diabetes costs alone.

### **3. Healthy children – action the *Active Travel Charter for Children***

#### **What are we asking for? \$12.5 million over 4 years**

The *NSW Active Travel Charter for Children* was launched in October 2014. It was supported by 15 Government Agencies and NGOs with an interest in children's health and well-being - including NSW Health, Transport for NSW, the Department of Education and the Office of Environment and Heritage. However it has never been funded.

NSW Health's Office of Preventive Health has drafted an Active Travel to School Program and developed resources for parents, schools and communities who want to increase their children's walking and cycling as everyday transport choices.

The Heart Foundation believes a commitment of \$12.5 million over 4 years – shared between the following 5 Government Agencies – will help address any local community concerns and increase the number of children who walk or cycle each day.

- NSW Health through the Office of Preventive Health
- Transport for NSW
- Department of Education
- Department of Planning
- Office of Local Government

Each department has an important role to play - from improving physical infrastructure around schools, sports fields and other places where children travel, to providing skills building workshops and information sessions for parents and children.

#### **Why is this needed?**

Declining physical activity in children has contributed to the increase in overweight and obesity seen in NSW children over the last 10 years. The NSW Premier, Mike Baird, has recognised the importance of addressing overweight and obesity in children through his commitment to reduce overweight and obesity by 5% over the next 10 years.

Compared to previous generations, the distance children travel by active transport – walking, cycling or catching public transport is rapidly declining. There was a 42% decline between 1971 and 2013. However, 57% of parents report their children go to a school less than 3 kms away, well within cycling distance for many children.

#### **What will it deliver by 2019?**

It is difficult to 'monetise' the benefits of health improvements to children as they don't contribute financially to the economy. However, modelling done on the economic impact of increasing children's use of the CSN to travel to and from school (with the accompanying reduction in car use by parents) indicates the benefits in health and reduced traffic congestion could be substantial.

There are 63,000 children located within the catchment area of the CSN and 93 of the region's 125 schools are located within 500m of the proposed paths. If only 5% of those children began using the CSN for trips to and from school the 'monetised' benefits (using Transport for NSW figures) would be \$8.8 million per year.

## **About the Heart Foundation**

The Heart Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation committed to improving the heart health of all Australians.

Through its research, health promotion programs and policy development, the Heart Foundation promotes healthy public policy to prevent heart disease and improve the lives of people living with heart disease. Because modifiable risk factors - including overweight/obesity and insufficient physical activity - account for 69% of the burden of cardiovascular disease the Heart Foundation has a particular focus on building healthy environments which allow people to live healthy lives.

## **Contact for further information**

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