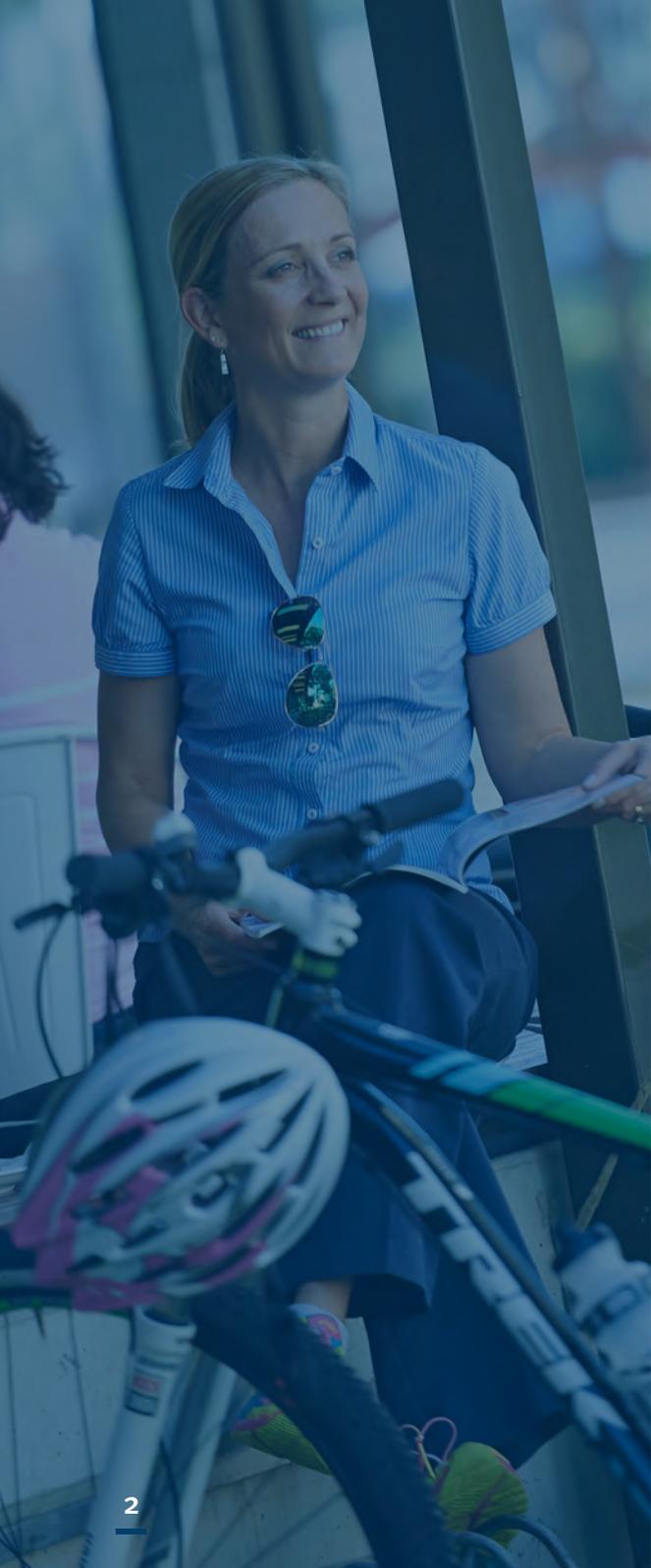




A bicycle fleet guide for your workplace



Queensland
Government



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“The bicycle is the noblest invention of mankind.”

William Saroyan
Nobel Prize Winner

Welcome

Bicycles are a great way to get around. They're convenient, eco-friendly and keep you active. For short trips in congested cities, they're often faster, cheaper and more reliable than cars or taxis. No wonder modern organisations are turning to bicycle fleets as an option for their staff. This is especially true here in Queensland where new facilities, connected infrastructure and modern bikes are making the whole riding experience easier and safer than ever before.

This guide will help you work out whether a bicycle fleet makes sense for your organisation, as well as the logical steps to set one up. There are also tips for bicycle friendly workplaces to encourage more commuting, together with common pitfalls to avoid along the way.

Good luck and happy riding.

A bike what?

A bike fleet is just as the name suggests – a fleet of bicycles owned and maintained by an organisation that staff can use to get from A to B. Every trip comes with the benefits of fresh air and gentle exercise, and unlike car fleets, taxi accounts or other staff travel arrangements, there's no such thing as traffic jams, waiting around, awkward conversations or reimbursement forms.

If you think a bike fleet could be the perfect addition to your staff travel toolkit, there are a few things you need to consider, like type of bikes, office facilities, policy requirements and encouragement programs.

So take a look at the steps in this guide and you will be ready to roll in no time.



Setting up a bike fleet



1. Assess relevance

Here's the first question to ask...

Is a bike fleet right for my organisation?

It's important to assess your organisation before you race out to choose the latest bikes.

So start with this:

- How many trips do your staff do in an average week?
- How many of these trips would be five kilometres or less?
- Would these trips be as quick, or quicker on a bike?
- Do your staff have access to shower facilities?
- Would your staff *really* consider riding bikes?

A few casual chats with staff is a great way to gauge their attitude and interest. Perhaps you could even conduct an online survey. You might be surprised how they feel. If you're still not sure, remember you can always start with a small fleet and expand later if you need to.



2. Assign a team

If a bike fleet feels right for your organisation, there are some important decisions to make. It would be wise to assess both the costs and benefits associated with running a bike fleet, in comparison to more expensive and less environmentally friendly transport alternatives such as motor vehicles.

If possible, gather a team of willing staff to oversee the assessment process and potential set up. This will help to garner the input and support you need to make your bike fleet a success. This success could be saving time and money together with improved health and wellbeing of your people.

Creating a workplace bicycle culture will boost morale and result in happier, healthier employees!

Source: Bicycle Network, *The Cycle-Friendly Workplace: Your step-by-step guide* (July 2009).

50 per cent of Queenslanders who ride a bike consider their physical fitness to be good or very good compared to just 30 per cent of those who do not currently ride but are thinking about it.

Source: State of Queensland (Department of Transport and Main Roads), *More bicycle riding, more often in Queensland: Research summary report 2018.*

3. Choose your bikes

Bike style

Mountain bikes, road bikes, city bikes, e-bikes, custom bikes... there's no shortage of different bikes and price points. You don't have to pick the most expensive, but you do have to choose a type of bike that best suits your needs. In most cases, you will need to consider these things:

- **A range of riders and abilities**
 - Choose easy to mount and easy to ride bikes.
 - Stay away from cleats and complicated gears.
- **Staff will be in work clothing**
 - Consider bikes with mud flaps and chain guards.
- **Need to carry different things**
 - Think about panniers, baskets or custom cargo containers.
- **Looks are always important**
 - Don't laugh, some won't ride a bike if they think it makes them look silly.
- **Puncture resistant tyres**
 - No one wants a flat when they're out and about.

City bikes may not be the quickest option, but they are easy, comfortable and practical to ride. If hills and heat are a major concern, then e-bikes can be a really good choice.

E-bikes

Make sure you do your research before you purchase any e-bikes for your fleet. In particular, check that they are legal to ride on Queensland roads and footpaths. For more information, visit www.qld.gov.au and search for motorised bicycles.

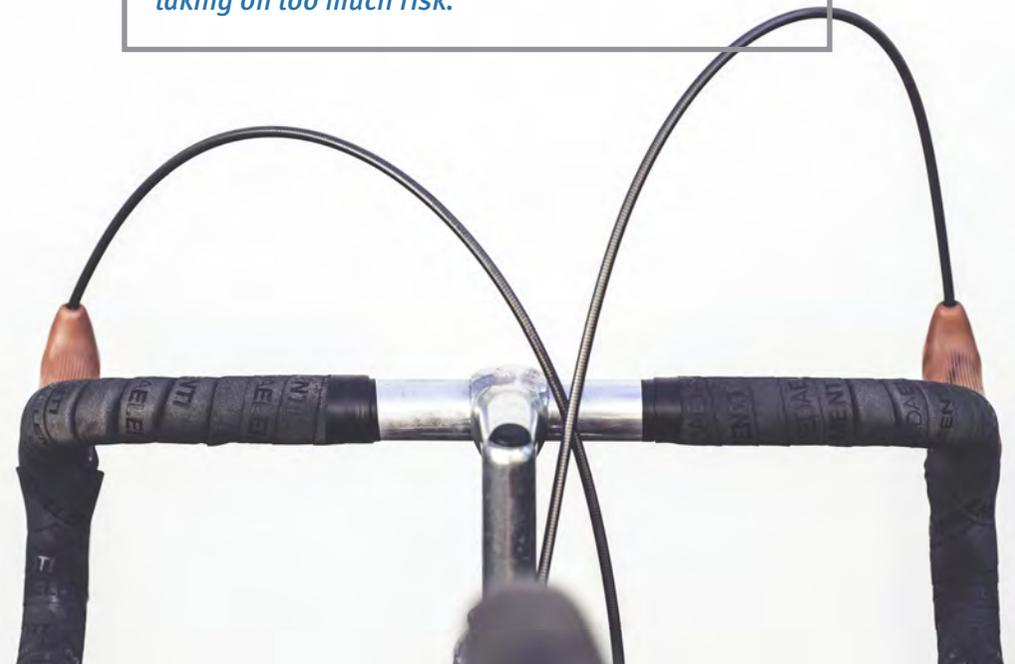
Bike quantity

The purchase of bikes will probably be the largest budget line item and needs to be carefully reviewed. Obviously you will need to take into account the size of your organisation and the number of staff trips that could be done on bike, however you should also ask the following question:

Do you have a peak demand situation where many bikes could be needed at one time?

Too few bikes (when they are most needed) may lead to frustration and negativity. But equally, too many bikes will multiply maintenance and equipment costs, plus a perception that the fleet is not being sufficiently used.

Starting your bike fleet as a small trial program can be a great way to gauge numbers without taking on too much risk.



4. Source equipment

As well as bikes, you will need a range of equipment to ensure safety and usability. The essentials include:



Helmets

Anyone riding a bike in Queensland must wear a helmet that carries the Australian Standards mark – TM AS 2063, AS/NZS 2063. Regular fleet riders should be issued with their own helmet. For casual use, it's also a good idea to have share helmets available. Damaged helmets need to be replaced, however with the right use, they should last many years.



Locks

Fleet bikes should be secure at all times when taken out and about. Locks that attach to the bike, such as U or D-locks, have less chance of being lost or forgotten. It's worthwhile to consider combination locks and avoid key issues. Also check whether your fleet insurance requires a minimum lock strength.



Lights

In Queensland, bike lights must be used in low light situations. These can be flashing, steady or a combination. Ensure your bikes have working front and rear lights that can be clearly seen at night, as well as reflectors on wheels, pedals, handlebars and seat poles. Keep a stock of batteries on hand and encourage users to report dim lights immediately.



Bells

Most bikes come fitted with a bell as having one is a legal requirement in Queensland. It's important for riders to use a bell on shared bike/pedestrian paths.

Depending on your staff and bike use, you may also want to think about the following items:



Water bottle cages

Check if your bikes have cages attached. If not, they are cheap to purchase and easy to fit.



Water bottles

Staff may have their own, but branded water bottles are a nice way to launch your program.



Panniers or baskets

It's important to assess what your staff need to carry and provide the right cargo options.



Bike computers

Not essential, but they can help track bike usage and may be useful for incentive programs.



Bike maps

Phone apps are great, but sometimes folded maps are handier. Check with your local government for available maps and keep some readily available.

Budget

It's important to obtain quotes from local bike shops for your preferred bikes and accessories. Furthermore, you will need to factor in minimal ongoing costs for bike maintenance, such as replacement of inner tubes and an annual service.

5. Review policies

It will be important to check in with your legal team and your insurance provider when considering a workplace bike fleet.

You will need to make sure that your employees and any third parties are covered in case of personal injury or property damage. Having a clear understanding of liability will help everyone feel safe and encourage uptake of your bike fleet. The considerations will be similar to that of a car fleet, but probably much less expensive.

We also recommend you seek independent legal advice to consider and refine some of the finer details for insuring your bike fleet including things like General Liability, WorkCover, Personal Insurance, Bike Fleet Terms and Conditions and internal workplace policies.

With all this in order, your organisation can transition smoothly to using a bike fleet and experiencing all the benefits, without the worry. The inclusion of bike riding within workplace policies will also help to legitimise bike riding as an accepted and mainstream form of transport for work.



6. Prepare your workplace

Ensuring your workplace makes bike riding practical and easy can be as critical to the success of your fleet as the actual bikes! Collectively this can be described as **end-of-trip facilities**. These facilities also help to encourage employees to take advantage of active transport commuting to work alternatives. Some of your staff may actually choose to use their own bikes for work trips, so this also needs to be taken into account.

Things that you will need to consider are:

Bike storage and lockers

The storage you need will be dependent upon the number of bikes. But remember, that an inconvenient location and hard to access space will discourage use. So plan your storage around your bike fleet and your employees. Make sure the area is very safe, well signed and highly secure. Remember that people will also need space to store helmets, clothes, shoes and towels.



Access to showers

A workplace shower is essential for work bike riding in Queensland. If you don't have one, you may be able to come to an arrangement with another organisation nearby. You'll have to stay on top of soap, toiletries, cleanliness and clutter. Company towels can be a really nice touch. Also consider an iron and ironing board, and even some sort of time arrangement for peak showering times.

Other end-of-trip facilities

These include things like bike pumps, sun screen, spare helmets, light batteries and inner tubes. A large wall map of the local area (including bike paths) can also be a good addition.



7. Prepare your staff

Of course, not everyone will embrace a bike fleet. However, you can give your program the best chance of success by providing your staff with the right information and training. Think about the following:

Comprehensive information

Be transparent about your bike fleet as this will reduce assumptions and rumours. Staff will want to know everything: who, what, where, when, why... and especially how it will affect them. It may help to share successful case studies from other organisations and remember to provide regular updates.

Bike fleet champions

Identify people in your workplace who will actively embrace and promote the program. To get things off to a great start, internal advocates will play an important role and will be the early adopters. Always keep your bike fleet champions well informed and seek their advice on engaging other employees.

Training and induction

Every workplace will have a range of bike riding abilities and confidence levels. So providing bike safety education and training will be necessary. An induction on the operating procedures of your bike fleet is also important, ideally with a guide for new staff. This should include specific details about your program such as how to check bikes in and out, how to use lights and locks, etc.

Rules

The same rules that apply to drivers generally apply to bicycle riders too. It's a really good idea to plan your route depending on your skill level. Remember, when you're riding on a footpath you must keep left and give way to all pedestrians. If you're riding on the road, make sure you're aware of the road rules, which are readily available on the Queensland Government website.

Common barriers and pitfalls

Be prepared to deal with some resistance when setting up your bike fleet:

- Why are we doing this?
- How can we afford this?
- Aren't bikes dangerous?
- Will you make us ride bikes?
- Can I be penalised for not riding?
- Who will look after everything?
- What if we turn up all sweaty?

Try to avoid these common mistakes when managing a new bike fleet:

- no staff consultation or transparency
- driven by one senior enthusiast
- overly high expectation of use
- selecting bikes that are complex
- limited operating procedures
- not testing before full launch
- insufficient budget and resources
- lack of tracking and adapting.



8. Encourage and incentivise

The early days of your bike fleet program are critical to its enduring success. Think about how to motivate your staff to try bike riding for transport.

Here are some potential ideas:

Engagement

- internal communications plan
e.g. emails, posters, flyers
- bike-themed merchandise
- introductory bike riding kit
e.g. branded shirt, water bottle, helmet
- surprise and delight factors
e.g. massages for regular riders.

Action

- a bike fleet launch party
- scheduled group bike rides
- delivery of free bike training
- planning of frequent routes
- making the bike fleet visible.

Challenge

- bike riding awards program
- incentives to encourage use
- 'competitive' team challenges
- ongoing tally of kilometres
i.e. financial and environmental savings.

Support

- appointed bike champions
- leading by the right example
e.g. senior management riding
- big brother/sister initiative
i.e. experienced riders help new riders.



“Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance you must keep moving.”

Albert Einstein

9. Track and assess

A bike fleet is an investment, so it's important to review and report on the overall contribution. The way you do this will be dependent upon your organisational size and structure together with resource availability.

It may be worthwhile to evaluate the following factors:

Usage

Based on your upfront program objectives, this may include metrics such as number of staff using bikes, percentage of staff using bikes, number of trips per week and number of kilometres. It may also be worthwhile to track the use of end-of-trip facilities in your workplace.

Cost

The review of cost should take into account the upfront and ongoing bike fleet expenditure together with the savings generated through less use of other forms of staff travel (e.g. cars and taxis). Yes, cost is important but only in the context of everything the bike fleet delivers.



Satisfaction

Hopefully your employees are experiencing the personal benefits of riding a bike more often (even outside of work). That's why it's important to regularly invite staff to contribute thoughts and opinions about the bike fleet program and formally measure satisfaction.

Productivity

Endless research shows that active staff are more productive, take fewer sick days and are happier in their jobs. Although difficult to directly attribute to bike riding, it may be useful to monitor business performance and client feedback relative to your bike fleet program.

10. Adapt and improve

To further grow the success and contribution of the bike fleet program to your organisation, you should regularly evaluate and adapt what is offered.

Consider what is working well and what could be improved. As you evaluate your bike fleet program, the insights will lead to potential changes and enhancements such as:

- **The types of bikes provided**
 - Have employees requested more variety?
 - Are some bike types more popular than others?
- **The number of bikes**
 - Are more needed to meet demand at peak times?
- **End of trip facilities**
 - Have there been requests for more hairdryers, lockers, towels or ventilation in the change rooms?
- **Encouragement initiatives and incentives**
 - What initiatives worked well? Can these be built upon?

The better your fleet becomes, the more it will be used, and the more your workforce will experience the benefits of riding.



“Whenever I see an adult on a bicycle, I have hope for the human race.”

H.G. Wells





To find out even more about bicycle riding
in Queensland, please visit
www.tmr.qld.gov.au/cycling

Enjoy the ride!