



STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY
MARISA PATERSON MLA (CHAIR), ANDREW BRADDOCK MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), LEANNE CASTLEY MLA

Inquiry into referred 2019–20 Annual and Financial Reports and Budget Estimates 2020-21
ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE
4 March 2021

Asked by MS CASTLEY:

In relation to: Canberra Electric Bike Library breakdown

MS CASTLEY: I have questions about the e-bike library program.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes?

MS CASTLEY: So SEE-Change funded the electric bike library. So how much money has been allocated to this scheme?

Mr Rattenbury: Let me just get the details on that for you.

Mr McGlynn: So if I might, minister, the total allocation for the 19-20 financial year was \$100,000, of which 89,000 was spent. And then this year, we are looking at up to the same amount, but so far about 19,000. And the bulk of that has gone to SEE-Change for two purposes.

One is to purchase bikes, although we actually own those bikes. And then the other amount, about \$55,000, \$60,000 has been for them to run that program. And that is, again, we think an extremely efficient use of that funding in that SEE-Change does an amazing range of activities.

So they talk to the community, they arrange the leases, they arrange insurance, they told try it days where people can come and try out the bikes, as well as managing all the processes, including insurance and delivery and things for the bikes that are working.

And so far, about 450 people or families have requested bike loan, so there is quite an excess demand for that. And so we have worked with SEE-Change for them to arrange to lease another three bikes so that they can increase the scope of that program.

Most of the feedback that we get from people is that once they try the bikes, they enjoy the experience. They find it quite useful. And that is exactly the experience we are looking for, is to make sure that people get that experience and see how positive it is. And now we are looking at making sure that we collect some data on how many of those positive experiences translate into purchasing or permanent use experiences.

MS CASTLEY: And what—when did it start and how long do we anticipate this will run?



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FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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Mr McGlynn: It started last year and we would anticipate it to run for a year and a half, two years probably. Yes. And then we will, I guess—before we get to the end of that time, we will do an evaluation and see whether it is a program that is worth continuing or whether it ...(indistinct)... [4.08.33]

MS CASTLEY: And is the goal to get that conversion? Obviously if the 450 people have had a go, obviously we want more people to then actually go and purchase a bike?

Mr McGlynn: Yes. That is the intent of it. They make a permanent change.

MS CASTLEY: Yes. And what sort of—can you just tell me what sort of people are getting involved?

Mr McGlynn: I do not have specific detail on those, but I mean, they—you know, they seem to represent the community fairly widely. So there is families, there is individuals, there is people looking for work experiences.

We have—in the bike library, there are a number of different types of bikes. There is what one of my colleagues refer to as bike bikes, which is just electric bikes that look like any other bike. And they are often used for, you know, commuting to work or commuting around town.

And then there are also cargo bikes which have—I do not know if you have seen them, but they have a kind of cargo bit on the front where you can carry children, as long as you do all the right things with that, or groceries or those sorts of things, so that the electric bike can be not just a personal commuter device, but actually something they can use for deliveries or picking up things or sort of more activities.

MS CASTLEY: Okay. And just so I am understanding, do the SEE-Change people have the money to purchase the bikes or do the government purchase the bikes and lease them to SEE-Change? Just clear that up for me.

Mr McGlynn: The exact transaction path, I am not actually familiar with. But we effectively gave the money to SEE-Change to purchase the bikes, but we retain ownership of the bikes at the end of the program.

MS CASTLEY: And do you know how many bikes they have?

Mr McGlynn: They have seven that are owned and then three leased ones. Yes.

MS CASTLEY: Seven owned and three leased.

Mr Rutledge: I think the purpose of the program—and this is where I think a “come and try” day is really working, hardcore cyclists will be hardcore cyclists forever, but we know that e-bikes are for people who are not hardcore cyclists, but believe that the reason that they do not undertake active travel or an alternative travel method is because they have to pick up—they pick up kids, they go to the shops on the way home, and so we are trying to displace private car use with e-bikes.



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And what we see is that once people ride an e-bike, people who have not ridden a bike for a long time, so not your hardcore cyclists, but the occasional cyclist or the non-cyclist, the e-bike is easier to use and can do some of those other things.

But when you go to the shop and you see an e-bike costs \$1,500, \$4,500, that is too much of a barrier. What we think the library shows is that—or even just the “come and try” day works, but if you borrow the bike for a week or two weeks, at the end of that period of time you have worked out how to integrate that into your travel, your daily travel commutes, and then actually you displace—you go on to purchase an e-bike because you displace a vehicle. And that is what we are trying to do through this program.

And that is what it is delivering, and so it is not—yes, it is not for cyclists, it is for people that that barrier of that e-bike is just—that cost barrier, and not knowing how they can use it in their everyday, we are just trying to get over that hump, and that seems to be working.

MS CASTLEY: I understand. And so you—and so that is—I guess what I am trying to find out is who is signing up to this process? What sort of people? You must have figures. Are they from mainly the city? Are they from Tuggeranong? Or can—

Mr Rutledge: Yes. So yes, we will get you an update on that, yes.

MINISTER RATTENBURY: The answer to the Member’s question is as follows:—

People that have requested a loan from the Canberra Electric Bike Library (Library) are from the following areas:

District	Percentage
North Canberra	26%
Belconnen	22%
Inner South	11%
Tuggeranong	11%
Gungahlin	9%
Woden/Weston Ck	21%

E-bikes have been available to the public since September 2020. The conversion from bicycle loan to purchase can take some time: the research on available models and local suppliers through to making the final commitment to an asset which is still relatively expensive.



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Additionally, COVID-19 has seen the availability of bicycles include e-bikes drop significantly as people seek alternative ways to exercise. The suppliers contracted to maintain the Canberra Bike Library fleet have indicated what would normally take three months from placement of order to delivery has been pushed out to beyond six months.

Expenditure on Library up to 10/03/2021 (Ex. GST):

Financial Year	Expenditure (ex GST)
2019 - 20	\$89,067
1 July 2020 to 10 March 2021	\$26,651

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity

Signature:

Date:

16/3/21

By the Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction, Shane Rattenbury MLA