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# Bikes can help Sydney to thrive

**I**n the city, bikes make sense for business. “Impressive end-of-trip facilities!” boast real estate agents’ posters for high-end office space in the city centre, talking up bathrooms and bike lockers for prospective tenants.

You wouldn’t know it from tabloid coverage of bike culture, but this is a spiking trend in Sydney. Business tenants increasingly expect their buildings to support and encourage active staff – and they will pay top dollar to be close to bike routes, with in-house changing rooms and bike storage.

It’s no surprise. When I was first elected lord mayor of Sydney, it was the financial services sector and big end of town that lobbied me to build a network of safe, separated cycleways.

About 70 per cent of bike riders in the city centre are in the top two income brackets, and they are most likely to be employed as managers or professionals.

Business people tell us attracting talent is a huge challenge and top priority – and to attract talent, Sydney has to be seen as somewhere the top talent want to live as well as work. Being an easy city to get around on a bike is now a key metric.

Sydney would top city rankings for liveability – except transport

## Clover Moore



consistently drags us down. The gridlock costs greater Sydney \$5 billion a year in lost revenue and productivity, and without action, that’s projected to nearly double by the end of the decade.

Cities such as London, Paris and New York City have experienced similar urban development patterns, and they’re competing in the global marketplace to attract and retain the best talent. They’re not investing in roads, they’re putting their money into public transport, and investing in bicycle networks and public bike share schemes.

The other thing we hear from business is they want options to keep their people moving – to and from work, and during the day. A good bike network is one of them.

Last year more than 4000 Sydney employees of businesses such as Qantas, Hilton, Commonwealth Bank and Apple took part in our Sydney Rides Challenge, making it the biggest in the world.

They logged more than 600,000 kilometres on their bikes, built

morale, got fitter, rediscovered hidden corners of our city, and explored our expanding network of bike routes and cycleways. Thousands of Sydneysiders are planning to get on their bikes again for the 2017 Challenge in March.

Of course not everyone can (or wants to) ride. But there isn’t enough space in our city for everyone to drive either – and the thing is, the more people riding, the more space there is on roads for drivers.

We’re focused on building a network of bike routes. You can now cycle across the Harbour Bridge, through the city to Central Station and as far as Green Square on traffic-free paths. About 30 busloads of people ride their bikes across the bridge every day. And across greater Sydney almost 400,000 daily trips are made by bicycle – more trips than on the harbour ferry network.

For the increasing numbers of residents moving to the inner city and for the thousands of people working in our busy city every day, the bike makes sense. Join them in the 2017 Sydney Rides Challenge and find out – it’s fast, free, and you’re always guaranteed a seat.

Clover Moore is lord mayor of Sydney.

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