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Green is go for cyclists

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GREEN bike lanes are starting to feature on Perth roads, a move lauded by WA's peak cycling body but questioned by others as not enough to protect cyclists.

Recently, the City of Perth started painting sections of bike lanes green to signify potential areas of conflict with other traffic, particularly at intersections.

Cycle head start facilities, where bikes are able to move ahead of vehicles at traffic lights, have been painted.

Bicycling WA chief executive Jeremy Murray said the green bike lanes throughout the city were a great step forward in improving cycling infrastructure.

"It is the perfect place to put them, as painting the whole lane green would take away the impact," he said.

By 2015, green bike lanes will feature on Barrack Street, Murray Street, Aberdeen Street and Mill Street.

A Main Roads spokeswoman said the green bike lanes highlighted potential areas of conflict with other vehicles.

"It is considered that the use of green paint along the entire length of bike lanes would reduce the effectiveness of the treatment in highlighting potential conflict areas and would thus be counterproductive to safety," she said.

But ECU senior planning lecturer and avid cyclist Tim Perkins said simply marking cycle lanes did not necessarily make roads safer for bikes, particularly where there was a lot of traffic travelling at high speeds.

"Having separated bike paths, and you see it all over the world, is the safest method of separating

bikes from cars," he said.

Vincent Mayor John Carey said he was concerned that white lines or red asphalt did not stand out to car drivers.

He wants to see the entire length of bike lanes painted green, with officers expected to meet with Main Roads this week to discuss the City's bike plan.

"I really want these bike lanes to stand out because it would send a clear message to drivers that they are not the only ones that use the road," he said.

Another option is introducing a safe passing distance for cyclists riding on roads, as outlined in a Greens Bill introduced last week establishing a one-metre safe passing distance for cyclists on roads up to 60km/h and 1.5 metres on other roads, which will be debated in State Parliament.

Perth Lord Mayor Lisa Scaffidi said the cycling lanes were a part of the City's Cycle Plan 2029.

"By 2029, we see Perth as having a more robust cycle network including on-road cycle lanes, shared paths, cycle routes, directional signage and bike parking making bicycle use easier and safer for all cyclists," she said.

Mr Murray said the next important cyclist service needed in the city was end of trip facilities, such as bike storage and showers.



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