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By FATIMA MRAD

BICYCLES have outsold cars for the past eight years, and people should "absolutely" look to cycling, Kevin Young from Cycling NSW says, but what safe paths are there to use in Canterbury?

Fourteen councils including Marrickville and Canterbury were recently shun from a proposal to build off-road interconnecting cycleways, and Paul Johnson who rides from Riverwood to Mascot everyday says even if they were to erect the bike-only lanes he can see "limited uses for them."

"You tend to get pedestrians walk all over them anyway," he said. It's known that cyclists have to battle with traffic and parked cars, but even pedestrians are a cause for concern.

The M5 East underpass, the only RTA-owned bike path in the Canterbury area, is used as a shared path for pedestrians and cyclists, and one of the many problems cyclists such as Paul face is not only making it through traffic, but also through pedestrians. Paul likened the M5 East underpass to the Cooks River cycleway, where "you get a lot of pedestrians, you've got to keep your speed down."

Mr Young said when packs of cyclists ride together on motorways they use the breakdown lanes.

"It's dangerous on occasion, and we've seen accidents occur," he said. "You get a lot of rubbish, debris and glass. It's not good."

Mr Young recently met with the RTA and discussed the problems cyclists face, and said if the Government had the money to put out, they would.

Greens MP Lee Rhiannon has said five per cent of the RTA's budget should be allocated to cleaning up bicycle blackspots and expanding cycling facilities.

"For too long the RTA has ignored bike riders by concentrating on sub-standard bike lanes that risk lives and foster road rage," she said.

The current government allocation for cycling is \$7.6 million, and Ms Rhiannon said the Greens want at least five per cent or \$160 million of the RTA budget to be allocated to cycling programs in NSW.

"The bulk of the money is going to road shoulder lanes that are cheaper and easier to construct but more dangerous for bike riders," she said.

Canterbury Greens Councillor Linda Eisler agrees, and says roads need to be decongested.

"Yet we do not educate our road-using community as to how to travel together harmoniously and safely. Neither do we provide safe bicycle connections throughout our city," she said.

"Instead young and old have to battle with traffic and parked cars. They risk life and limb with impatient drivers and opening of parked cars."