

Submission

No 8

INQUIRY INTO SCHOOL ZONE SAFETY

Organisation: Waverley Council
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In response to the current Staysafe (Road Safety) Committee inquiry into the effectiveness of current measures in NSW school zones, **Waverley Council** has pleasure in submitting these comments with regard to the following specific points of reference:

d) The deployment of alternative facilities to reduce reliance on school zones, such as grade separation, traffic lights and fencing.

Grade separated facilities should be the preferred option for the crossing of main, multi-lane roads.

It is appreciated that such facilities require a significant amount of land adjacent to the roadway to install the required ramps or lift towers. Where feasible, steps should be put in place to obtain land to construct the facility through acquisition from a property owner or through dedication of land in any redevelopment.

Installing yellow flashing lights adjacent to crossings on local roads are considered to be a relatively low-cost way of increasing driver awareness of a crossing. The installation of traffic signals involves significant capital expenditure and recurrent maintenance costs compared to flashing lights. It would appear difficult to justify the high cost associated with providing traffic signals at some sites particularly when they may only be used during relatively short periods in the morning and afternoon on school days.

Fencing, although it can be useful in some situations to direct students to a crossing point, does create an added problem in that it has to be erected some 400mm or more away from the kerb and gutter to allow entry to and exit from parked vehicles. This offset from the kerb reduces or removes available width of footpath for pedestrian activity and can lead to people walking on the roadway.

f) The availability and effectiveness of current road safety education programs in NSW schools

There are insufficient DET road safety consultants to adequately service NSW state schools. More funding is required to provide minimally one consultant per DET region. This reduction of human resources has led to road safety education being a neglected area of the PHPDE syllabus.

g) Any other related matters.

- Flashing lights on mast arms wherever possible – particularly in signage-cluttered and tree-dense locations.

- Speeding in school zones remains problematic. The installation of more wombat crossings on suitable roads should ameliorate this issue.
- It seems that many parents rely on school teachers to educate their children on road safety. A large-scale public education campaign could remind parents and carers that they are primarily responsible for their children's road safety education. Sadly children are often driven from A to B and lack the opportunity to practise interacting with traffic when out walking with supervising adults.
- There is also a need for increased parent education regarding
 1. the correct usage of drop-off & pick-up zones
 2. parking signage
 3. awareness of the significance of gazetted school days in relation to school zone legislation.
- More widespread community education is needed regarding
 1. the vulnerability of children in the traffic environment
 2. school zone driving and parking penalties & fines
 3. explanation of commonly occurring signage & the need for parking restrictions & self enforcement.
- Is it possible to create a system whereby an in-vehicle device receives an alarm re remote notification from a chip in school zone signage when the vehicle is about to enter an active school zone? This would protect against driver error and obscured signage, ensuring drivers are aware that they are driving through an active school zone.