

**Submission  
No 18**

## **REDUCING TRAUMA ON LOCAL ROADS IN NSW**

**Organisation:** Blacktown City Council

**Date Received:** 3 February 2020

## Submission to Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety (StaySafe) on Reducing Trauma on Local Roads in NSW

### Terms of reference

- **The role of local roads in road safety and trauma**
- **The effectiveness of existing road safety planning requirements, including in other jurisdictions**
- **Opportunities for improving road safety planning and management on local roads, including through the Local Government Road Safety Program and Community Strategic Planning**
- **The role of local communities and their representatives in identifying and delivering road safety initiatives to reduce trauma on local roads**
- **Other relevant matters.**

## Our Submission

### **The role of local roads in road safety and trauma.**

Blacktown is now the largest LGA in NSW with a population of 395,000 people (Feb 2020) according to figures from the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and the Australian Bureau of Statistics Estimated Resident Population (ERP). Our size, by population, is now only exceeded by 3 local government areas in Qld: Brisbane City, City of Gold Coast and Moreton Bay Regional councils.

This LGA also includes a large proportion of the North West Growth Corridor which is a greenfield development area. Along with natural growth in the established areas of the LGA, the new developments are expected to bring the total population of the Blacktown LGA to 550 000 by 2036.

Within our LGA over 80% of all crashes occur on regional and local roads which are under the control of Council. Around 76% of all fatal crashes in the LGA occur on local and regional roads.

Funding remains one of the major challenges to road safety improvements on our road network. Speed control devices and other safety initiatives are currently unfunded as other works take priority. In addition, the location of crashes in this LGA is often widely dispersed making it difficult to target appropriate road safety treatments.

Council participates in the Local Government Road Safety Program (LGRSP) and employs a full time Road Safety Officer as part of that program. The main focus of the LGRSP is education programs aimed at various road user groups.

### **The effectiveness of existing road safety planning requirements, including in other jurisdictions**

There are several issues where decisions and policies in other jurisdictions affect the planning for safe road networks.

- **NSW Planning:** Greenfield developments with narrow road widths increase the difficulties for large vehicles to negotiate the roads. Garbage collection and furniture removals are typical of the vehicles that regularly need access in these areas. Fire and Rescue NSW also advise of difficulties in negotiating some of the narrow streets.
- **NSW Department of Education:** New school sites – Planning for new schools includes smaller footprint with corresponding reduced kerb line length. In addition, recent school development sites do not provide sufficient kerb-line for “kiss and drop” facilities. This is going to lead to increased congestion around the schools. In addition the schools sites are so restricted that there is no opportunity to provide the indented bays needed to allow traffic to pass the kiss and drop facility safely. Often at least one of the bordering streets is 9m or less in width which is not suitable as a Kiss and Drop area or for bus services. [**Specific examples:** Riverbank Public School, Alex Ave Public School and Marsden Park Public School.]
- **Transport for NSW:** We have had great difficulty in getting traffic signals and other traffic facilities such as pedestrian crossings approved by Roads and Maritime Services (now Transport for NSW) in new release areas. The argument has been that the site does not meet the necessary warrants for installation of these facilities however our modelling shows that the warrants will be met within a 3-5 year window. In the meantime these locations are very difficult for motorists and pedestrians to negotiate. [**Specific examples:** Schofields Station traffic signals, Hambledon Road Traffic signals ]
- **NSW Police:** We work closely with our three police commands to identify areas where engineering treatments and education are either not appropriate or have not been effective in addressing road safety concerns. Police are requested to provide enforcement in these areas. In addition we have worked closely with the Mount Druitt Highway Patrol to address concerns about the low levels of child car seat use in that area. This work has included joint presentations to preschool groups, midwives and Aboriginal groups to encourage the use of car seats and promote the free car seat checking program which is funded under the LGRSP. This council has a positive relationship with local highway patrol commands.

### **Opportunities for improving road safety planning and management on local roads, including through the Local Government Road Safety Program (LGRSP) and Community Strategic Planning**

With the largest population of any LGA in the state there are plenty of challenges.

- There are currently 142 schools across the public, independent and Catholic sectors with another 3 planned to be completed within the next 2 years. Parent behaviour remains the biggest challenge around schools with illegal parking and non-use of pedestrian facilities being the main issues. Many parents stop their vehicle anywhere they like to drop off or pick up their student/s and cross the road wherever is most convenient to them. Continuing work with the schools and principals can help but a lack of self-management by parents means that this aspect is a constant challenge.
- This is also a very multicultural LGA with large migrant and refugee groups. As such there is a great need to provide road safety education and resources to assist these groups to understand the road environment and road rules in their new country. This work is currently undertaken by one road safety officer through the Local Government Road Safety Program.

- The current rate of development far exceeds the rate and density that was forecast when planning transport infrastructure projects. Consequently, additional infrastructure will be required to address the transport needs of the higher population realities. Without this infrastructure investment road safety is likely to suffer as drivers increasingly use alternative routes to avoid congestion blackspots.

### **The role of local communities and their representatives in identifying and delivering road safety initiatives to reduce trauma on local roads**

Within Blacktown there are a number of agencies that support our road safety programs by allowing the Road Safety Officer to liaise with the various migrant groups that they work with. In the past this has included promotion of child road safety especially the use of child car seats. We have also addressed driver and pedestrian safety through these sessions. Agencies include Sydwest Multicultural Agency and Mount Druitt Ethnic Communities Agency (MECA).

NSW Family and Community Services (Department of Housing) have invited the Road Safety Officer to participate in community engagement activities on the Prospect Social Housing estate. This has been useful in getting road safety information directly to this community. Similar work is being done in the Lalor Park area.

We also work with community groups such as Blacktown Traffic Offenders Program, Country Women's Association, Older Women's Network, service clubs and retirement villages to provide targeted information to their members.

Council regularly receives requests for measures to address road safety concerns in the community. These concerns are addressed and evaluated based on merit. Unfortunately a lack of funding means many of these worthwhile road safety improvement projects are not able to be funded. In those cases the projects are added to the Council's Works Improvement Program for possible future funding. Unfortunately they often remain unfunded for several years. The lack of funding for these projects is a concern for both the council and the community.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.