

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

**Organisation:** Lake Macquarie City Council

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4 February 2020

The Hon. Lou Amato MLC  
Chair, Staysafe (Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety)  
NSW Parliament  
[lou.amato@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:lou.amato@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Chairman

**Subject: Staff submission - Reducing trauma on local roads in NSW**

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the NSW Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety's inquiry into reducing trauma on local roads in NSW. This submission has been prepared by staff from Lake Macquarie City Council.

Projections show that Lake Macquarie City's population and economy will continue to grow, which will place demand upon our existing infrastructure. This growth means that our local road network and infrastructure will need to be expanded, increasing possible future road safety issues. Increased vehicle traffic may make it more difficult for Council to manage trauma risks for vulnerable road users, particularly in urban centres and around schools.

We recognise road safety is a shared initiative. As a result, we are refreshing our approach to infrastructure planning and delivery, and removing red tape by developing 'living' planning frameworks that respond to changes in the City year on year. We are hopeful that State-plans could do the same. We are also advocating for a shift away from 'single issue' infrastructure grant funding towards integrated and collaborative approaches that see funding distributed consistently across the State.

Should you have any questions in relation to enclosed information, please contact

[Redacted contact information]

Yours sincerely

[Redacted signature]

Morven Cameron  
Chief Executive Officer

## Attachment 1

Lake Macquarie City Council staff submission: *Reducing road trauma on local roads in NSW*

### Lake Macquarie statistics

From 2014-2018, Lake Macquarie City experienced 50 fatalities, 606 serious injuries, 984 moderate injuries and 587 minor/other injuries.<sup>1</sup> This places the City in the top 10 in the State for the 'most number of casualties for combined fatalities and injuries'.

Lake Macquarie City has a higher proportion of driver and motorcyclist casualties (1,715) relative to passenger (332), pedestrian and cyclist (180) casualties<sup>2</sup>. This is indicative of our City's dominant use of private vehicles, which can be linked to the City's geographic dispersity and the availability of alternative transport options.

Council is responsible for an extensive local and regional road network, servicing urban and rural living areas. In 2018-19, Council budgeted \$44.9 million towards maintaining, upgrading and constructing new roads across the City. Council also received \$7.4 million in new roads from developers during the same period. Approximately 70 per cent of the total value of Council's assets relate to roads.

Table 1 - Lake Macquarie City Road Assets

Asset	Approximate length
Local roads – sealed and unsealed	1,360km
Regional roads and major intersections	40km
State roads	156km
Footpaths and shared paths	270km

### Local government strategies for addressing road safety

#### Road transport planning

Coordinating the planning and delivery of infrastructure in response to new and existing demand and road safety issues is an ongoing and complex task. The following provides an overview of how this task is typically managed:

1. Councils prepare strategies to identify infrastructure needs and priorities based on:
  - o substantial community consultation
  - o advice received from technical experts
  - o stakeholder engagement with key organisations and State-level partners (e.g. NSW Police)
  - o the agenda and priorities set by the elected council.
2. Councils prepare Development Contribution Plans to levy for certain infrastructure needs (typically only a proportion of the cost of individual new infrastructure facilities can be levied, with remaining costs historically covered by Council's general fund and grants).
3. Councils implement strategies and plans based on balancing priorities (typically risk driven) with available funding.

<sup>1</sup> Transport for NSW Centre for Road Safety

<sup>2</sup> Note: the proportion of casualties that occurred on State version regional versus local roads could not be calculated using publicly available data



Aligning plans and strategies between the State Government and councils would be of benefit. For example, network and corridor studies prepared by the former RMS should be shared with councils to help them with their planning.

#### Vehicle speeds

Research, such as the work of the UNSW Sydney Emeritus Professor Raphael Grzebieta and UNSW's Professor Jake Olivier, continues to highlight the benefits of 40km/hr and 30km/hr speed limits (and associated road design), particularly in urban-residential areas.

Councils can manage vehicle speeds through the provision and design of new infrastructure; however, requests to lower speed limits are subject to Transport for NSW (TfNSW) determination.

Councils should be able to make this determination on local roads, particularly in areas of high-pedestrian activity. Alternatively, TfNSW could investigate business improvement initiatives to streamline investigation processes, simplify assessment criteria and speed up the processing of requests to lower speed limits.

#### Walking, cycling, public transport and land use considerations

The proportion of pedestrians and cyclists in economic centres is expected to increase across the State as development densities increase. While pedestrian and cyclists represent a smaller proportion of road casualties, they are more susceptible to serious injury than vehicle occupants. Increasing the number of public transport options (including their frequency and accessibility) as well as segregated footpaths and cycleways can significantly contribute to the reduction of trauma on local roads.

To maximise walking, cycling and public transport use, infrastructure will likely need to precede or be delivered in parallel with new development. Developer contributions play an important role in helping fund new infrastructure, however councils can only levy for the portion of costs attributable to new demand and not legacy demand (councils rely on general fund income and grant funding to make up this short-fall, which is often insufficient to meet demand).

We would welcome further State-funded investments in public transport networks as well as safe walking and cycling infrastructure. We would also support opportunities to improve the State's framework for developer contributions to enable councils to build more walking and cycling infrastructure that improves safety, particularly in legacy areas.

#### Heavy vehicles

Reduced driver visibility of heavy and long vehicles present a hazard for pedestrians and cyclists across our City. Councils regulate heavy vehicle restrictions on our local roads, however, funding for major freight infrastructure improvements is reliant on support from the NSW Government.

Greater collaboration is needed between the NSW Government and councils to improve freight movement of heavy vehicles, particularly initiatives aimed at separating heavy vehicles from other road users.

Council has sought funding to resolve two key freight issues for our City – the delivery of the Pennant Street Bridge and the Lower Hunter Freight Rail Bypass. We can provide the Committee with further information about these projects if requested.



## **Road safety and infrastructure funding programs**

### Local Government Road Safety Program, Walking and Cycling Program

Council does not currently participate in the LGRSP. However, Council is supportive of recent attempts to improve the alignment of the LGRSP with the four-year delivery programs used across local government.

Council has been successful in seeking funding under the NSW Walking and Cycling Program. We would welcome changes to the program guidelines to include funding for footpaths and suggest improvements to the administrative processes could also be beneficial. In addition, the program not only has councils competing with each other, but also with TfNSW, which applies for funding under this program for State roads.

Council suggests the Committee consider opportunities for a Road Safety Officer position(s) to be shared across the Hunter region to help prepare regionally consistent Road Safety Action Plans in partnership with councils. We also suggest that funding streams for local and State roads should be separated. Funding streams using a risk based approach could also avoid competition between councils.

### **A strategic, embedded approach to road safety**

Identifying road safety priorities is best undertaken via strategy development and locality planning, supported by investigations with appropriate staff expertise and structured opportunities for dedicated community consultation activities.

Council's Community Strategic Plan (CSP), together with NSW Government policy, directs Council to improve access and mobility, inclusive of road safety. The CSP is the community's long-term vision and provides high-level strategies for achieving this vision.

We suggest that specific road safety projects may be better identified in lower level strategies, which adapt to changing priorities year on year, therefore accommodating new infrastructure, changes to government policy, and changes to funding arrangements.

Council would welcome additional opportunities to embed the Safe System approach into the work of local government. We suggest TfNSW facilitate training, for local government, in Safe System design and implementation.