

**Submission
No 25**

REDUCING TRAUMA ON LOCAL ROADS IN NSW

Organisation: Wollondilly Shire Council

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Submission fro Wollondilly Shire Council:

Wollondilly Shire Council, on the south western outskirts of Sydney and at the foothills of the Southern Highlands, is surrounded by spectacular, natural beauty and rural pastures. Its 2,560 square kilometres stretch from Yanderra in the south, Appin and Menangle in the east, Warragamba in the north with the Nattai wilderness, Yerranderie and Burrigorang Valley to the west. The scale and geographic spread of our Shire is such that we will always have a high reliance on private vehicles. Public and alternate transport arrangements are relatively poor compared to more urbanised areas, with limited bus services and infrequent diesel train services that terminate at Campbelltown. Also, there are issues with the unreliability of passenger train services on the Southern Highlands line given that freight trains using this line are prioritised over passenger trains. Many in our community are reliant on this poor public transport network to access work, education or other needs such as health and social services.

Growth of the Shire through land development has already created significant challenges and opportunities for Council Infrastructure. Roads are the biggest component of the asset maintenance backlog and are seen as the most important asset class by the Community, which Council is trying to address through the Asset Management Strategy. At the same time, capacity issues will likely become a bigger issue for the Community such as the linkages from Silverdale to Penrith and Liverpool plus congestion through Picton as well as aging infrastructure such as Broughton Pass and Douglas Park Drive. While Council can pursue short to medium 'small' scale initiatives to relieve these issues, the ultimate fixes are beyond Council's ability to pursue under its normal budgets and these Projects will need to be funded through a variety of sources such as through development contributions and government grants.

Wollondilly Shire Council is responsible for 128km of regional roads, 655km of major connecting, urban and rural sealed roads, the outside lanes of 5 km of state roads, 70km of unsealed roads, and 81 bridges under our care and control. Picton Road and Appin Roads are the only State Roads within the Shire under the care and control of TfNSW. The costs associated with roads are high and the funds available to service them are finite. The roads asset "backlog" calculated at the end of 2015/16 was projected at \$42m. Unfortunately, on the ground this "backlog" over the years has resulted in many roads that are older than their intended life and have deteriorated significantly.

Road safety is a major community issue, with higher than average crash rates across the Shire, particularly for our younger drivers. Growth in population will see more users on the roads and a greater need to provide a safe transport network

Our only avenue to try and boost our funding levels to improve safety on our road is via grants offered by the State and Federal Governments through the Safer Roads Program Funding . The application process is onerous and time consuming on Council resources and staff, who are already overstretched. There is no guarantee that the application will be successful and as such, Council are unable to dedicate resources to preparing detailed designs for projects that might not see the light of day. The applications rely heavily on crash statistics and of the those only fatal or serious injury crashes are able to be used in support of the application. Crashes involving animal strikes are not considered at all.

If Council is successful in receiving additional funds for safety initiatives on our local road – we then need to divert Council funds to the segment of road in question. Grant funding provided is not to be used on existing road pavements, and as stated earlier, many of our roads are already older than their intended life and require existing pavement rejuvenation to be able to complete the safety works as funding has been supplied for. The rush is then on to be able to get the detailed designs completed, works programmed/constructed and financial reports completed by the end of May for the financial year claims.

The system is overly onerous on already strained local government departments that are responsible for large infrastructure portfolios, with limited income.

A better, fairer funding stream from State and Federal Government is requested to allow local government to make decisions on the best place to use the funds, especially those on the fringe of metro areas with little public transport options, to improve road safety on local roads.

Regards,
Norma Toweel