

**Submission  
No 35**

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

**Organisation:** Northern Beaches Council

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The Chair,  
Joint Committee on Road safety  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
Sydney NSW 2000.

## *NSW Parliamentary Inquiry: Reducing trauma on local roads in NSW*

The Northern Beaches Local Government area has fifty-five suburbs within its boundaries and at the 2016 Census an estimated population of 266,344. This was an increase of 15,150 people or 6.4% from 2011 to 2016. Public transport in this area consists of buses, ferries, taxis, and other share riding services. There is no heavy or light rail transport options servicing this area leading to the area being more reliant on cars as a means of transportation.

Northern Beaches Council is committed to making its roads a safe environment for all road users. Council has recently completed the public exhibition of Council's Road Safety Plan which is based on core elements from the NSW Road Safety Plan 2021. The 2021 plan has a four pillars approach being safer vehicles, speeds, people and roads and will be in line with the theme of Towards Zero.

NSW has set a target of zero fatalities and serious injuries on our roads by 2056 and to achieve this immediate action is needed to reduce road speeds in cities and regional centres. Pedestrians are one of our vulnerable road users, and make up 17 per cent of NSW fatalities and 9 per cent of all serious injuries (Road Safety Plan 2021). Most of these casualties occur on urban streets (Road Safety Plan 2021). To reduce casualties on local roads consideration for reduced speed limits, better protection for pedestrians at traffic signals, road user behaviour change, and improved enforcement. Changes to the way the road network is designed and used, putting people first and making changes to warrants and technical directions to further enhance road safety and aid in the creation dedicated places for people in line with the movement and place classification concept.

These are the six themes for consideration in reducing road trauma with a focus on the local road network.

1. **Reducing speed limits** – Council is developing a framework that would see the speed limit on local roads based on their function within the road network. The goal would be for the majority local roads to move to 40km/h speed limit, with residential streets given a 30km/h speed limit along with areas of high pedestrian numbers to enhance the safety of local streets.

Roads that perform a local distribution/movement function would have a speed limit of 40 km/h; sub-arterial roads would have a speed limit of 50km/h. The focus would be more on the amenity rather than the rapid movement of vehicles along the road.

- Northern Beaches Council is working through the concept of 30km/h zones with TfNSW in several locations and several issues have come to the fore around treatments being self-enforcing, the speed zone determination process, and what to do with School Zones in the trial areas. This process needs to be stream lined to allow the Roads Authority to be more responsive to the community in determining the local speed limits.

## 2. **Pedestrian protection at traffic signals**

Traffic signals design where possible needs to cater for pedestrian volumes crossing the road without exposing the pedestrians to the risk from traffic.

- The implementation of smart controls with pedestrian protection phases based on the direction of travel of the pedestrians. This would work well where the phase holds turning traffic prior to the red arrow dropping to allow all movements.
- The implementation of pedestrian count down timers to pedestrians know how much time they have to cross the road prior to the change in phase. Whilst not required in most locations, should be mandatory in High Pedestrian Activity Areas and around transport hubs.

## 3. **Road User behavioural change**

Northern Beaches Council commissioned independent research to assist in development of a 5-year Road Safety Plan where we identified 43% of the road users were classified as ‘negative motorists’. They are categorised in the research as being negative about life and difficult to change. This group tends to feel entitled to use the road and not happy about sharing it with other road users, especially bicycle riders.

This research also identified some behaviours that need to be addressed as highlighted below.

- Many bicycle riders feel that motorists are selfish and are aggressive towards them
- Some motorists feel that paying registration and licensing fees entitles them to preference on the road. Although research also shows that the majority of bicycle riders are also motorists
- There is a lack of knowledge of road rules, especially in relation to sharing the road with bicycles

Significant government funding is assigned to improving infrastructure. There needs to be a recognition that education and behavioural change campaigns are needed in conjunction with infrastructure improvements. Transport for NSW should look to implement change behaviour campaigns and/ or increase funding for Local Government to have Road Safety staff to assist with the implementation of appropriate campaigns.

#### 4. Enforcement

There needs to be a continuous program of targeted operations on local roads to reinforce the need to drive to the conditions in that road environment as well as on the main road network. Working with Councils across the local road network to target areas of concern using data collected by the roads authorities to determine when and where driver behaviour needs to improve. The implementation of the mobile phone detection cameras to help reduce distraction caused by mobile phone use needs to include local roads as well as main thoroughfares.

#### 5. Putting people first

Ensure that funding is provided at a State level and to assist Local Government to introduce measures to provide for and protect vulnerable road user groups. Notably, by ensuring that bicycle facilities are funded and provided wherever possible to protect this vulnerable road user group.

- design roads to have separated bicycle lanes
- introduce bicycle head start boxes where possible at signalised intersections
- ensuring continuity of bike lanes through intersections
- supporting Councils to develop bike plans and provide these facilities

Ensuring more pedestrian facilities are provided to assist pedestrians to safely use and cross roads by:

- installing pedestrian refuges and traffic islands to assist pedestrians to cross roads on identified pedestrian desire lines
- upgrading pedestrian refuges to marked pedestrian crossings where it is safe and appropriate to do so
- upgrading marked pedestrian crossings to signalised pedestrian crossings or grade separated facilities where the volume of traffic or pedestrians makes it safer to do so
- Supporting Councils to introduce 10km/h Shared Zones in streets dominated by pedestrian traffic
- Increasing the level of funding to Council's to assist with the provision of pedestrian facilities near schools and other high pedestrian activity areas

## 6. Warrants and Technical Directions

These need to be updated in accordance with international best practice and with input from urban designers as well as traffic engineering professionals. This would allow the most appropriate solutions to be addressed for vulnerable road users instead of being limited by warrants.

Review of all recommendations and taking action to reduce trauma on local roads is imperative in leading the way to providing safer communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the reduction of trauma on local roads.

Sincerely



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Northern Beaches Council