

SPEED LIMITS AND ROAD SAFETY IN REGIONAL NSW

Organisation: Safe Streets to School

Date Received: 21 June 2022

Attention: Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety
Subject: Speed limits and road safety in regional NSW



Submission By Safe Streets to School

21st June 2022

Safe-streets-to-school.org is a group of concerned residents and volunteers who have come together to campaign for safe streets for children to walk or ride to school, the whole way from their home to school. We started our campaign in the Wollongong LGA and our campaign is being replicated in other LGAs now. We have more than 1000 supporters and are growing.

Our Asks:

Please separate our kids from fast-moving traffic so they can walk or ride to school safely. We are asking within 2km (the walking catchment) of every school for:

- Pedestrian priority crossings and footpaths on streets with speed limits 40km/h and higher
- 30km/h speed limits for streets where there are no pedestrian priority crossings or footpaths

Why is this important:

Children deserve to walk or ride to school safely. Especially in regional areas a large proportion of suburban streets lack footpaths. For example in Wollongong 50% of streets have no footpaths.¹ Streets without footpaths and crossings with speed limits higher than 30km/h are not considered safe by Australia's safe system approach.²

The Case for crossings:

Research shows that children cannot judge gaps in traffic consistently when cars go faster than 30km/h to safely cross a street.³

On streets where there are no footpaths and crossings, reducing the car speed to 30km/h would prevent most accidents: the stopping distance for a car traveling 30km/h is 13m. Stopping distance for a car traveling 50km/h is 37m.⁴ The risk of death or serious injury if hit at 30km/h is less than 10%; compared to 90% if hit at 50km/h. It is an unreasonable risk to place our children in harms way on their journey to school.

30km/h limits in neighbourhoods

Our asks would result in significantly less road trauma and Australian roads. For example, a conservative estimation is that 30 km/h speed limits on local residential streets have the potential to reduce Australian road transport casualties by 7% or \$1.6 billion every year.⁵ A Bristol study found that a 20 mph city-wide speed limit intervention led to a city-level reduction of fatal injuries of around 63%. The authors suggested that the city-wide approach to reducing speeds encouraged a more general behaviour change in drivers, which in turn contributed to reducing injuries across the city.⁶

Watch an example of TV coverage⁷ (taken in Bulli, NSW) about our campaign to see that there is a clear appetite in the community to make street safer for kids and to get people to slow down.

¹ https://www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0026/9944/City-of-Wollongong-Pedestrian-Plan-2017-2021.pdf

² <https://safe-streets-to-school.org/about/>

³ <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/11/101123101539.htm>

⁴ <https://roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/speeding/>

⁵ <https://barrosdool.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ACRS-journal-Vol28.3-e-edition-extract.pdf>

⁶ Bornioli, A., Bray, I., Pilkington, P., & Parkin, J. (2020). Effects of city-wide 20 mph (30km/hour) speed limits on road injuries in Bristol, UK. *Injury prevention*, 26(1), 85-88.

⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olGzhk1rraE>