

**Submission
No 54**

SPEED LIMITS AND ROAD SAFETY IN REGIONAL NSW

Organisation: Voice of Woodville & Wallalong Incorporating BHAS Action Group

Date Received: 5 July 2022

NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Speed limits and road safety in regional NSW

Attention: Joint Standing committee on Road Safety

Initially allow me to give you an understanding of who VOWW is.

VOWW is a community action group for Woodville and Wallalong, and incorporates the BHAS action group, who represents the residents of Brandy Hill, Seaham and Nelson Plains.

Our interest specifically relates to the impact of an unsafe environment that is produced on the road both within our community and downstream of our community as a result of both volume of heavy traffic and unsafe driving practices by other road users.

Now, do we have scientific collected data – NO

Do we have the lived experience -- YES

And it is on this lived experience that we can categorically advise that there are multiple unsafe situations occurring upon the roads within our community. Some directly due to physical aspects and many due to the behaviour of humans.

It is important to acknowledge that the presence of rock quarries has an impact because of the volume of 50tonne gross trucks operating on these roads, and not because of driver behaviour of those who drive these trucks, which we in broad terms acknowledge as near best practice.

Physical aspects are:

- Poor location of bus stop north bound on Seaham Road adjacent Sophia Jane Drive – both road alignment and drivers repeatedly failing to reduce speed as require when double yellow lights on the bus are flashing has resulted in near misses.
- Poor to very poor alignment of some intersections – may have been fit for purpose decades ago but not so now with traffic volumes and vehicle mass
- Lack of safe access to child care centres. There are two that are directly impacted by heavy truck traffic, namely
 - Jacaranda Grove Preschool on Seaham Road and
 - Tilly's Play & Development Centre Bolwarra on Patterson Road
- With respect to those areas where the children interact with traffic there is an imperative for legislation to bring about a significant and consistent improvement that will categorically protect them. Why not 40k/hr zone with associated road markings and infrastructure as deployed for all schools?

Human aspects contribute significantly to road hazards with a mixture of

- Straight out excessive speed and misuse of the roads; eg burn outs, and “drag races”
- Modifications to vehicles that brings about a desire to demonstrate “how good is this” and how much noise can my car make, and general misuse of our roads. The evidence is always there.
- And within rural communities’ **excess speed** is a significant contributor to road kill of our fauna. Not only are the threatened Koalas victims, but along Brandy Hill Drive it is possums, water hens, turtles, echidna, reptiles, different owl species, kangaroos, and possums. Most country roads suffer such events but is it OK that “it is only our native fauna” and so we should not seek to protect them.
- It is the excess speed and the blinding light that are retrofitted to so many vehicles that blind not only human but also our native fauna.

With our rural communities the operation of heavily burdened gravel trucks is a reality. Yet there is a reality that within our residential areas there is a gaping lack of consistent speed limits.

If it is good enough to have 50km/hr in built up residential areas (and even 40km/hr in some instances) then should it not be so that all residential areas have 50km/hr the prescribed speed limit.

The ability to join a road when a heavily laden truck is approaching is daunting and where roads merge even more hazardous due to reduced vision over the right-hand shoulder.

We know road alignment and merging lanes are a fact with our road networks so why not in all towns and rural areas, where there are residential areas, make reduce speed limits the law, and

- create a safer environment for all users,
- reduce noise and traffic induced pollution,
- and maybe see smoother traffic flow,
- and definitely a safer environment

James Moore

President VOWW