

**INTERVENTIONS TO REDUCE ROAD TRAUMA IN REGIONAL NSW CAUSED
BY SPEEDING, FATIGUE, DRINK AND DRUG DRIVING**

Organisation: Wollongong City Council

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Partially
Confidential

Mr G C Warren MP
Chairman
Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety
Parliament of NSW
6 Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Our Ref:
Date:

26633134
23 July 2023

Dear Minister

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY – INTERVENTIONS TO REDUCE ROAD TRAUMA IN REGIONAL NSW CAUSED BY SPEEDING, FATIGUE, DRINK AND DRUG DRIVING

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the inquiry on effective current strategies and programs aimed at reducing driving risk factors, such as fatigue, speeding, and driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol, that increase the likelihood of road crashes.

Wollongong City Council is committed to improving road safety and reducing crashes and road trauma within our Local Government Area (LGA). We believe there are five key focus areas essential to achieving this:

1. Education
2. Infrastructure
3. Enforcement
4. Lower Speed Limits
5. Data

Wollongong is the third-largest city in New South Wales, with a population of 219,141 and a geographic area of 715 km². Our LGA includes diverse landscapes such as bushland, dams, cliffs, and beaches, alongside densely populated urban areas. In addition to our residents, we welcome a significant number of visitors who work in, travel through, or explore our region.

Crash statistics for the Wollongong LGA from 2019 to 2023 show that 19% of crashes involved speeding and 8% involved fatigue. These figures underscore the urgent need to address these contributing factors to reduce road trauma and improve safety outcomes for all road users.

1. Education

Road safety education and promotion are critical activities integrated across all aspects of our transport services. There is a growing need for more education to encourage safe driving practices and to expand road safety awareness among walkers, riders, and drivers. Particularly, as children learn to navigate the road environment and set their behaviours.

Transport for NSW funds programs for Councils and Road Safety Officers through the Local Government Road Safety Program (LGRSP), with each project eligible for up to \$10,000 in funding. These projects are developed using local crash statistics and are designed to remind the community and enhance their understanding of how to stay safe on and around roads.

Local program promotion is the most successful when it is undertaken through free social media and/or posters distributed at retail outlets, community facilities, and notice boards. Media releases, community events, and workshops play a vital role in keeping road safety top of mind. While social media can be a powerful tool for connection, it also presents challenges in reach and reliability, as people often use various platforms where shared information may not always be accurate. Funding to promote content on these platforms and target locations and demographics is critical to this success.

However, the current annual funding limits under the LGRSP are insufficient, particularly for highly populated LGAs like Wollongong. Evidence shows that education can lead to positive behavioural change; therefore,

additional funding is essential to deliver more localised and high-reach education programs. LGAs with larger populations should be eligible for increased funding, with greater flexibility and fewer restrictions on expenditure.

Transport for NSW's adoption of the Safe Systems approach within the LGRSP framework is a positive step. This approach enables Councils to apply behavioural and community education strategies, fostering collaboration among government officials, community organisations, and road safety advocates. Together, they promote safer roads, vehicles, speeds, and behaviours.

2. Infrastructure and service improvements

Wollongong City Council manages over 1,100 km of roads on behalf of our community. These assets represent the largest component of infrastructure within Council's portfolio and hold significant value. The Draft Transport Strategy guides future transport infrastructure and service planning, working in alignment with our Community Strategic Plan to ensure our community has access to a safe, affordable, and reliable transport network.

Council's four-year Infrastructure Delivery Program (IDP) outlines upgrades and improvements to our road network — including roads and bridges, footpaths, cycleways, transport nodes, carparks, boat ramps, and traffic facilities — as well as the ongoing maintenance of these assets. The capital budget allocated for transport infrastructure over this period is approximately \$140 million.

It is imperative that Federal and State Government funding to support Council's infrastructure improvements remains sufficient and responsive to rising costs, continuing to support the maintenance and expansion of our extensive transport network.

Wollongong's population is projected to grow by more than 30% by 2046. We are home to one of the fastest-growing residential areas in New South Wales outside the Sydney Region, with significant development occurring in West Dapto. New housing, road upgrades, and public transport connections have been completed, are underway, or are planned to ensure the area grows in a controlled and sustainable manner. The construction of new roads will form a key north–south arterial route, increasing usage across our broader road network.

In addition to our planned growth, multiple recent NSW State Government planning schemes have resulted in significant uplift to sites further increasing the residential population. The delivery of hard infrastructure as outlined above, improvements to public transport services to mode people off private vehicles and into other forms of transport is critical.

3. Enforcement

The Wollongong Local Government Area is served by two police districts: Wollongong Police District in the north and Lake Illawarra Police District in the south. Wollongong Police District operates three stations, though only one is open 24 hours. Lake Illawarra Police District spans multiple LGAs — including Wollongong, Shellharbour, and Kiama — and has only two stations operating 24 hours.

The management of fixed speed cameras, mobile speed cameras, enforcement, and education programs by the NSW Police Traffic and Highway Patrol serves as a continual reminder to road users of the importance of adhering to NSW road rules. However, increased police enforcement is essential to further reduce road-related crashes and pedestrian injuries. Greater police visibility leads to higher compliance with road rules, contributing to a safer environment for all road users. The resourcing of the NSW Police needs to support this critical role.

4. Lower speed limits

Council's draft Wollongong Transport Strategy identifies significant concerns related to driver behaviour. Encouraging alternate travel options can reduce reliance on private motor vehicles, contributing to a safer, more attractive urban environment and improved public health. Despite these efforts, speeding remains a major safety concern for our community.

Crash data shows that 67% of recorded crashes occur on local roads within 50 km/h and 60 km/h speed zones, underscoring the need for targeted speed management. Reducing speed limits in high pedestrian areas and residential streets with high traffic volumes would enhance community safety and support the creation of a more pedestrian-friendly environment. Research indicates that lowering speed limits from 50 km/h to 30 km/h increases the survival rate of pedestrians struck by vehicles to 90%. Therefore, implementing 30 km/h speed zones - particularly around schools, the foreshore, and the City Centre - would significantly reduce the risk and severity of injury-related crashes.

5. Data

Accurate and up-to-date data is essential for governments to effectively reduce road crashes and road trauma. Reliable data enables evidence-based decision-making, allowing authorities to identify high-risk locations, behaviours, and demographic groups. It supports the development of targeted interventions, informs infrastructure planning, and helps evaluate the effectiveness of existing road safety programs. Without current data, resources may be misallocated, and critical trends may go unnoticed, undermining efforts to improve safety outcomes.

Council relies on data from Federal and State Governments in decision making. Currently, there is a significant delay between data being consolidated and made available through the interactive crash statistics platform. Priority needs to be given to expedite this platform updates, aiming for a no more than one quarter. Further, additional fields need to be provided which outline the prevalence of alcohol and drugs; and separates e-bikes and e-scooters. Additionally, the Household Travel Survey data is critical in understanding mode shift change, and a yearly program should be reintroduced.

As road environments and user behaviours evolve, continuous data collection and analysis are vital to ensure that strategies remain responsive, relevant, and impactful.

To effectively address road safety and transport infrastructure challenges, Wollongong City Council recommends the following key actions:

- Increase State Government Funding for Road Safety Education

Expand funding under the Local Government Road Safety Program (LGRSP) to enable Councils to deliver more comprehensive and impactful road safety education initiatives. Funding should be proportionate to each Council's geographic size and the complexity of its transport infrastructure.

- Align Infrastructure Funding with Current Costs

Federal and State Government programs — including the Regional and Local Roads Repair Program, Fixing Local Roads, Roads to Recovery, and the Black Spot Program — must be adjusted to reflect contemporary construction and maintenance costs. This will ensure Councils can maintain and upgrade road networks to safe and sustainable standards.

- Enhance Police Enforcement in Local Areas

Additional NSW Police Traffic and Highway Patrol resources are needed within the Wollongong LGA to increase enforcement of unsafe driver behaviour, including speeding and the misuse of micromobility devices. Increased visibility and enforcement in residential areas will help address growing community concerns and improve compliance with road rules.

- Streamline Implementation of 30 km/h Speed Zone

Introduce a simplified process for establishing 30 km/h speed limits in high-demand areas such as city centres and foreshore precincts. Lower speed limits in these zones will reduce the likelihood and severity of injury crashes, promote active transport, and support healthier lifestyles for residents and visitors.

- Improve Access to Real-Time Data for Councils

Facilitate the sharing of dynamic and up-to-date road safety data with Councils to support timely and evidence-based decision-making. Enhanced data access will enable more responsive planning and the development of targeted safety interventions.

Please contact me should you require further information.

This letter is authorised by

[Redacted Signature]

Wollongong City Council
Telephone (02) 4227 7111