



27 January 2021

WalkSydney Incorporated
www.walksydney.org
Level 4, 68 Wentworth Ave,
Surry Hills NSW 2010
contact@walksydney.org

Thank you for providing the community with this opportunity to make submissions on the [draft Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional transport plan](#).

WalkSydney is a community group advocating for walking exploring the issues that confront those who want to walk in Greater Sydney (Wollongong to Newcastle, and the Ocean to the Blue Mountains). The organisation is a non-profit group, governed by a Committee.

Our mission is to make walking convenient, accessible, safe and enjoyable for everyone.

WalkSydney promotes best practice, advocates for improvements to infrastructure, policies, decision making processes, and encourages the education of practitioners.

Summary response:

While we recognize that some parts of the plan align with the goals of our mission for making walking more convenient, accessible, enjoyable and safe for everyone, we are disappointed in the lack of ambition. We feel the plan is too much business as usual and will not effectively embrace the region's potential for active transport.

The Illawarra and Shoalhaven should be an active transport paradise given its geography and climate.

We welcome the following points of the plan:

- i) the emphasis in this plan of the need to increase uptake of active and public transport;
- ii) the role of transport in achieving a low emissions future;
- iii) the statement that "continuing to accept current travel behaviours, and in particular high levels of private car use, is ultimately unsustainable";
- iv) that the plan seeks to improve road safety and contribute to the achievement of the "towards zero" goal;
- v) reduced speed limits in residential and other areas being considered,
- vi) that Transport for NSW will be working with the school and local government sectors to address barriers to walking and cycling to schools in the region.

Our concerns about the plan:

Our region has a connected transport network for cars but does not adequately support travel for people who don't have a car. We should urgently make it a priority to create a safe and connected travel network for all modes of travel, including people walking, cycling and using public transport.

Many streets in the region lack footpaths and crossings. Walking on the street next to cars that drive 50km/h without any separation is not safe nor pleasant which helps to explain an extremely low walking and cycling share of 4%. Not to mention lack of support for people with visual impairment or diverse mobility requirements.



We urge Transport for NSW to implement 30km/hr speed limits:

We support implementing 30 km/h speed limits for urban and residential streets with particular priority for those frequently used by children and young adults. We support the adoption of a default 30km/h limit area to minimise confusion for motorists and pedestrians than targeting individual streets. This does not mean “every road”, but that 30km/h should be the norm and higher limits should be exceptions only where there is evidence that such a higher limit will be safe for road users, people walking and cycling. In March this year, Ministers from 130 countries announced the Stockholm Declaration, which includes a commitment to 30km/h speed limits in urban areas.

There is little benefit from motor vehicles driving above 30km/h on local roads. Research shows that impact on travel time is minimal.

Please find below links to two research reports that support why 30km/h is the safer speed limit for our neighbourhoods:

Journal of the Australasian College of Road Safety - Vol 28 No 3, 2017

(https://barrosdool.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ACRS-journal-Vol28_3-e-edition-extract.pdf)

Safe Speed: Promoting safe walking and cycling by reducing traffic speed - 2008

(<https://www.victoriawalks.org.au/Assets/Files/Safe%20Speed%20Report%20Dec%20202008.pdf>)

We propose adding the following objective in the plan: **within 2km of each school or activity centre, streets should have footpaths and crossings or 30km/h limits.**

Pedestrian priority crossings:

Pedestrians should have priority when crossing the roads. We need more pedestrian priority crossings (for example Wombat crossings) where cars frequently drive faster than 30km/h. Over-using the pedestrian islands all over Wollongong LGA whilst maintaining priority for vehicles is suboptimal. It manifests the view by some drivers that they own the streets and makes it hard for children to cross the road. If children are not allowed to walk unsupervised and are driven to school, the next generation will be a car-dependent generation. This will come along with all kinds of disadvantages for public health (obesity etc).

We propose the following objective in the plan: **when redesigning streets with speed limits higher than 30km/h pedestrians priority crossing rather than pedestrian islands are to be included in the design**

The Wollongong CBD (with the exception of the mall) is very welcoming for cars but not for pedestrians. 60km/h speed limits close to where people are walking is dangerous for vulnerable road users and terrible for place making (as per your work on the [Movement & Place framework](#)).

Automated pedestrian crossings:

In Wollongong CBD, the pedestrian signal timing does not support walking, with pedestrians waiting too long for a green pedestrian signal followed quickly by the red signal. This does not provide adequate time for able-bodied people to cross the street in that time, causing issues for people with mobility requirements, or living with disabilities.

Give enough space for active transport users:

The shared paths along the coast are a great showcase on the potential our region has for increasing uptake in walking and cycling when safe infrastructure is provided.

However, it can get busy at times and it would be safer for all path users, especially pedestrians, if faster cyclists would be given a safe option to use the streets next to the paths as an alternative. The simplest and easiest way to achieve safer road space is to lower the speed limit on the roads closest to the beach. For example, Trinity Row in Bulli



should have a speed limit of 30km/h or below and people cycling should be able to enter and exit the shared path. A 30km/h limit would also be beneficial for the high amount of people crossing the road. For the avoidance of doubt we are not suggesting to ban cyclists from the “Blue Mile” we rather suggesting to give them more options on busy stretches.

Further proposed changes for The Transport Opportunity:

1. The Transport Vision 2041 mentions a target of 20% of all trips across the region will be by active or public transport, double that of 2016. This is unambitious. A better target for 2041 would be 50%, with a 2030 target of 20%.
2. Objective 1: a walking and cycling mode share of 8% by 2041 is extremely unambitious. Given there is no safe and connected transport network for walking and cycling in place, the current mode share of 4% is a pure reflection of this fact. By 2041, the region should have a safe, connected network in place and the share of active transport should be 30% or higher.
3. Vision Zero target on our roads by 2056 is positive. However, in order to be achieved, the region would have to start implementing speed limit policies that support Vision 0. This includes 30km/h in locations with possible conflicts between pedestrians and cars. Add: “Implement Vision 0 policies, including lower speed limits across the LGAs”.
4. By 2041 region “will be well on the way to a low emissions future”. Again, we propose that this strategy should be more ambitious and suggest this should be “will have achieved low emissions, and be well on the way to a zero emissions future”.
5. Focus on crash clusters: Speed limits in Australia are one of the highest out of all OECD countries. We should urgently align with international best practice. We should be careful when focusing on clusters of road casualties and ignoring the non-clustered that can outnumber the former. Whilst locations of future non-clustered are not predictable, the use of population-wide interventions such as wide-area lower speed limits can be far more effective in reducing total casualties than cluster site specific interventions.
6. Initiatives – none of the seven deliverable initiatives within a ten-year time frame support increasing active transport. An increase in active transport would make the road system more efficient for all road users especially in peak times.
7. the 30 km/h speed limit trial should involve all multiple localities within the region.

WalkSydney would be delighted to be further involved in the discussion around how to improve active transport in the region. While we are currently focussed mostly on the Sydney region up to Wollongong, we have an interest in helping to create a safe walking network across all of NSW.

Thank you for taking the time to read our submission.