
25th October 2022



WalkSydney Incorporated
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Level 4, 68 Wentworth Ave,
Surry Hills NSW 2010

Rob Stokes
Minister for Cities Infrastructure and Active Transport
52 Martin Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

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Cc **Rob Sharp**, Secretary, Transport for NSW
Cc **Trudi Mares**, Deputy Secretary Greater Sydney
Cc **Camilla Drover**, Deputy Secretary, Infrastructure and Place
Cc **Simon Hunter**, Chief Transport Planner, TfNSW

Dear Minister,

We are writing to object to the removal of automated pedestrian crossings in NSW. TfNSW have not consulted the community, stakeholders or local government prior to this change, and are not providing any reasons to justify their actions. It appears to be a creeping issue, with automated signals removed from health precincts in May, but 'retained for the CBD 24/7' [as of 9 October](#), only to be rolled back to ['daytime hours'](#) 10 days later. Why is the community not being consulted over these proposals? TfNSW removal of pedestrian crossing automation in the CBD, high streets, and health precincts is unacceptable and a throwback to mid-twentieth century-era road engineering.

WalkSydney is the peak advocacy group working to make it easier, safer and more pleasant to walk in Sydney. WalkSydney's vision is that "Walking will be convenient, accessible, safe and enjoyable for everyone." Our members come from a wide cross-section of the community advocating for government to do more to support walking.

We do not support removal of automated crossings particularly from metropolitan centres and high streets where people can become frustrated when they are delayed from crossing resulting in an increased risk of pedestrian injury or fatality.

The NSW Government prioritises walking in its strategic investment framework, Future Transport released in September 2022 says:

"15-minute neighbourhoods

Our vision for 15-minute neighbourhoods will allow communities to be strong, vibrant and active. We will do this by prioritising place making, walking, cycling and micromobility to support 15-minute access to everyday destinations and local transport networks."

Every pedestrian who stops for an automobile, loses access to valuable destinations, contracting the number of opportunities available to them in a 15-minute walk. For every traffic signal missed fewer people are within walking distance of jobs, bus stops, and train stations. Signals requiring actuation to change increase the likelihood of missing the "walk" signal, and having to wait a full cycle.

ABC news report that the removal of automated pedestrian covers is to reduce delays to motorists. On shopping streets and city centres, there are many, many more people walking than driving cars, why are delays to people walking being prioritised over delays to people in cars? TfNSW road space reallocation policies and procedures have no value if traffic operations staff in the Greater Sydney division of TfNSW continue to prioritise people driving cars over people walking.

It is worth noting that in the UK where temporary schemes for active transport installed during pandemic began to be removed, the relevant state minister stepped in to stop that happening before proper evaluation could be made, since removing infrastructure is a waste of public funds.

Walk Sydney request :

1. That the removal of these automated pedestrian crossings is immediately halted and reversed.
2. A meeting with us, you and TfNSW staff, to discuss how we can undo removal or pedestrian crossing automation, and align road operations with TfNSW policy and strategy.
3. TfNSW justify removal of crossing priority in centres, high streets, and health precincts, and conduct Community and Stakeholder engagement to understand and act on feedback.
4. The government put into legislation the road user hierarchy prioritisation to require road traffic engineers in TfNSW consider the needs of all road users, specifically people walking, riding or catching public transport above the needs of private car drivers, to avoid this happening again.

Yours sincerely,

Lena Huda
President, WalkSydney

