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WalkSydney is pleased to make a submission on the [Inner West Councils Pedestrian Crossing Warrant policy](#).

WalkSydney is the lead advocacy group working to make it easier, safer and more pleasant to walk in Sydney. With a growing population we need to ensure people can easily walk to public transport, local shops and services, and shared transport options and this draft policy provides a great opportunity to achieve these outcomes.

WalkSydney supports the Better Streets asks, calling for safe, healthy, people-friendly, climate-friendly streets in New South Wales:

- **Safe streets** – with safe space to walk, cycle and cross on busy roads and quiet, low-traffic streets in neighbourhoods
- **Healthy streets** – where walking, wheeling, or riding is the natural choice for short journeys, children can play, get physical, and move easily outdoors and infrastructure is provided equitably
- **People-friendly streets** – with lots of plants and seating, and where motor traffic doesn't dominate – especially in town centres
- **Climate-friendly streets** - that promotes the growth of zero-carbon shared mobility options so that all residents have suitable, sustainable, transport choices on their doorsteps

The specific asks are:we want

- 75% of students walk, scoot, or take public transport to school daily
- Adopt 30km/h speed limits on all local residential streets and town centres
- Build 1,000 kilometres of connected, safe, and direct cycle and micromobility routes per year
- Improve and expand beautiful streetscapes for local business
- Build or upgrade 2,560 pedestrian crossing

We congratulate Council on its policy to move to 40 km/h default limits and 30 km/h limits for high pedestrian areas, school zones, and other places. We urge you to go further. The introduction of 30km/h zones and speed limits on all local streets, where people walking or riding and vehicles regularly share the same space, has been found to effectively reduce fatalities and injuries. The chances of survival diminish rapidly at speeds greater than 30km/h when someone is hit by a vehicle.



According to the NSW Centre for Road Safety, in a crash between a car and somebody walking, there is a 10 per cent risk that the person will be killed at 30 km/h, 40 per cent risk at 40 km/h, and a 90 per cent risk at 50 km/h. Overall, the WHO have concluded that an increase in average speed of 1 km/h results in a 3% higher risk of a crash and a 4 to 5% increase in fatalities.

Above 30 km/h impact speeds, people walking are at considerably greater risk of death. This is even greater for the young and elderly. In the distance a 30km/h car can stop, a 50km/h car is still driving. Higher speeds narrow motorists' peripheral vision and impact their reaction times.

By introducing a 30km.hr default speed limit Council could address the objectives set out in the policy and completely eliminate the need for a warrants based approach.

Council's Draft Pedestrian Crossing Warrant policy has excellent objectives (see below) however the implementation approach using numerical warrants is an outdated and unhelpful way to identify where safe crossing opportunities should be provided.

The policy should address each objective and describe how a warrant of 30/hr crossing three times a day will

- a. Contribute to road safety outcomes.
- b. Improve amenity for people walking and cycling.
- c. Manage public spaces in the public interest.
- d. Allow Council's limited resources to be prioritised.
- e. Support the Integrated Transport Strategy of Council
- f. Support public domain planning initiatives of Council.
- g. Contribute to the fair, transparent and consistent management of traffic for all road users"

Warrant systems Section 5.2 require people to already be making the crossing, before the crossing can be implemented. This does not address locations where people feel unsafe and are therefore unwilling to cross. In addition the Inner West Council warrant is an unnecessarily high bar requiring 50% more people to cross before a crossing is implemented on a local or regional road than TfNSW who also use a warrant system to implement crossings on a state road, only requiring 20 crossing per hour.

WalkSydney does not support the use of warrants. Making the bar so high it's difficult to jump over only makes it more difficult for people who want to walk to walk!

The policy in its current form is therefore not in keeping with either the Community Strategic Plan and its targets and objectives, nor is it in keeping with the Integrated Transport Strategy and the hierarchy of road users.

The policy should focus on and respond to land use. Crossings should be provided where people have a high need to cross. This includes land uses such as schools, laneway accesses, recreation facilities (pools), train stations, high streets, adjacent shops, health facilities etc. By developing a network of walking routes for people to access these types of land uses, gaps in the network of crossing opportunities can be identified and provided to "Improve amenity for people walking and cycling".



Prioritisation is an important issue to determine which crossing to implement first – there are many ways to do this such as multicriteria assessment, funding and constructability. A warrant based system makes it too hard to provide facilities in the right places.

The factors considered under 5.3 are relevant to the development of a pedestrian crossing but should be considered against the objectives of the policy which are “Contribute to road safety outcomes”. Not providing a crossing in a location where there is demand for crossing because flooding, heavy vehicles volumes, speed profile or sight distance *prioritises existing road users over people walking*. Instead, other requirements should be addressed *in order to provide a safe crossing*.

I would also like to draw your attention to the word “accident” used in the first sentence of the last para of section 5.3.

Vehicle crashes are not accidents. NSW has a vision zero target, Council’s work contributes to achieving this goal. Vision zero implies that all serious injuries and fatalities can be eliminated using the safe systems approach. Council’s work plays an important part in achieving vision zero.

People who drive cars, make a conscious decision to get into a car, people walking should not expect that the consequence of walking across or along a public street could be death. The responsibility to protect people walking lies with safer people – people driving cars, trucks and buses and safer roads – Councils and TfNSW. The road toll for people walking is not the result of accidents, it is the result of people driving vehicles crashing into people walking and causing injuries and death. Please do not use the word accident in your policy.

Thank you for taking the time to read our feedback.

Yours sincerely,

Anna Harvey and Tegan Mitchell
WalkSydney Board members