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Design of Roads and Street, TfNSW WALKSYDNEY SUBMISSION

WalkSydney is the peak body advocating for walking in the Greater Sydney Region. We are 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.

WalkSydney's vision is for walking to be the first choice for short trips around Sydney.

WalkSydney has three key asks:

- ❖ *30 km/hr urban default speed*
- ❖ *streets that are safe and easy to cross*
- ❖ *pedestrian priority over cars*

*WalkSydney is a member of the **Better Streets** coalition, an collection of hundreds of community organisations advocating for better streets in Australia*

WalkSydney welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the Design of Roads and Streets (DORAS), although given the size of the review task and the complexity of the material presented it is disappointing TfNSW engagement is so short and unstructured. WalkSYdney and Better Streets would welcome an opportunity to meet with TfNSW staff to discuss the any of the issues raised in our submission.

We note that TfNSW has been developing and refining Movement and Place for a decade however the guide makes it abundantly clear that they don't understand how to match land use with streets and roads, or low speed local streets. At the most basic level DORAS design speeds are too high, street are too wide.



Our feedback related to the 1. audience and intent of the “standard”, 2. content (and missing content), and minimum design parameters 3. look and feel of the document.

WalkSydney and Better Streets say that achieving more walkable and rideable urban areas is readily achievable in the short to medium term by shifting infrastructure investment and a default speed limit of 30 km/hr.

If slow speeds were adopted, we could get much more out of our existing road space by “sweating the assets” by adopting narrower lanes, allowing the delivery of bus and cycle priority for mode shift without long business cases (predicated on road widening or traffic displacement). This is how London has accommodated millions more trips since 2000 without building roads (and reducing car trips by 1 million).

This approach would also be safer, reducing car premiums (as has happened in Wales) and returning billions to Treasury (eg \$880m just committed for Elizabeth Drive without strategic justification or modelling support).

1. Audience and intent of DORAS

The DORAS should be more explicit about the audience. WalkSydney *assumes* the DORAS is a TfNSW standard ie: applies to all State Roads, and a local Government Guideline ie: can be adopted by local government. DORAS will fail if it is neither a standard for TfNSW to better align vehicle movement in place, and conversely increases the impacts of vehicles on local roads.

To the extent that it applies to state roads, it should not restate Austroads standards but only contain deviations (the Austroads Guide to Road Design, AGRD does the job otherwise). To this extent, 3.2m for general traffic lanes is supported over the 3.3-3.5m in Austroads. However, to the extent it applies to councils, this standard is too high. For example AGRD Part 3 Table 4.3 recommends lanes of 3.0 to 3.4 for low speed low volume roads, and this ‘lowest common denominator’ is higher than both NSW typicals, and DORAS.



Recommendation 1 : DORAS must explicitly define the role of DORAS for local government (optional guidance) *and* TfNSW (standard, as deviations to reduce from Austroads).

To the extent that DORAS applies to local roads it must be better than Austroads and reflect the range of NSW local road conditions that we wish to replicate, particularly ‘self-describing’ narrow slow streets where people walk and live ‘lower carbon’ lives.

2. Content (and missing content)

The following content must also be included:

- Net Zero – climate impacts and mitigation
- Speed reduction plan
- Signal operation plan
- How to develop a local government streets code
- Examples of other streets codes
- Vehicle lane widths

2.1. Missing Content : Climate change impacts and mitigation

Road transport and road related infrastructure represent the second biggest source of green house gas emissions. DORAS *must* address Net Zero emissions.

2.2. Missing Content: Develop a pathway to fast-track safe speeds for NSW roads and streets

The introduction of 30 km/hr speed limits has progressively occurred in overseas and local jurisdictions. Uptake in Australia has been slow by state and territory governments. The pace of changes has prevented mode shift, causes too many preventable deaths and touches too many families. Road violence is the biggest killer of children in Australia today. Speed reduction can *be* achieved at the stroke of the regulatory pen, with minimal traffic management interventions. Public education campaigns can help to explain the rationale and the benefits, to reinforce and generate broad community support.

The posted speed limit and design speed for the overwhelming majority of the street network (local roads and HPAAs) **should be 30km/h not 40km/h** , and the DORAS should describe the plan for how this can be achieved – WITHOUT significant investments in capital works.

Recommendation 2 Develop a pathway to fast-track safe speeds for NSW roads and streets

2.3. Missing Content: Signal operation should match surrounding land use



TfNSW exclusively control signals on all NSW roads. Over and over again Councils and Community see how little TfNSW prioritise people when designing signal phasing across the road and street network.

DORAS should explicitly direct TfNSW to phase signals to prioritise walking and riding for specific street and road typologies eg: Main streets, and local streets. The current signal series of standards does not prioritise people and has outdated warrants that require people *prove* they need to be able to cross state roads.

The DORAS should also provide a pathway for Local Government to *require TfNSW provide more priority for people and not vehicles on their street network.*

Recommendation 3. Develop a pathway to match signals phasing on local streets and main streets to match land use and prioritise people riding and walking.

2.4. Missing content : How to develop a local government streets code

If the DORAS is a “gudie” for local Government , Councils will need to develop their own streets codes. The DORAS should describe a process for developing a streets code, and explain its implications and *reference* other best practice streets codes- local streets codes or best practice internation guidelines.

Recommendation 4: Include a new section on “ Developing a streets code” including references to existing streets codes and other best practice examples

2.5. Content: Vehicle lane widths and corridor cross sections

The DORAS minimum lane widths are too wide. 3.2 m – 3.5 m is unnecessary for the majority of local streets and many state roads. The consequence of wide streets is vehicles drive too fast and their insufficient space for other uses such as separated cycleways, and or vehicle road space are over represented across road corridors. The minimum vehicle lane should be 2.8 m.

The local road vehicle corridors are commonly less that 12 m, it is simply not possible to accommodate two vehicle lanes at 3.2 meters, vehicle parking within the average corridors.

Recommendation 5: DORAS minimum road and street lane widths be reduced to 2.8 m to allow all users to be accommodated with the road corridor.

3. ‘Look and feel’ should – technical documents need consistency, flow charts , diagrams and tables

The overall look and feel of the entire documents *must be improved.* The document is too text heavy , lacks diagrams, flow charts and easy reference tables. Too much content is repeated and often inconsistent. The entire document would benefit from a design review and technical edit. When technical guidance lacks appeal, is too complex and text heavy it



becomes irrelevant. Examples of better more appealing guidance include NACTO guides or the City of Sydney - Sydney Streets Code.

Recommendation 6: Engage a professional editor and designer to improve the overall look and feel, reduce text bases content and provide more flow charts, diagrams and simple easy to read tables.

WalkSydney welcomes any opportunity to meet with TfNSW staff to discuss any of the 6 recommendations raised in this submission. We hope that you will see that the DORAS is not ready to be finalised and requires significant modification to be fit for purpose and providg guidance for the design and operation of roads and streets on local and state roads.

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