Response to the

Sydney City Centre Access Strategy for further consultation

October 2013
Introduction

Bicycle NSW is a community-based not for profit organisation with over 12,000 members. Bicycle NSW's purpose is “creating a better environment for cycling”.

Bicycle NSW welcomes and supports the NSW Government’s Sydney City Centre Access Strategy, which reflects the NSW Government’s ongoing commitment in the NSW 2021 Plan and the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan to increasing the share of cycling as a mode of transport in NSW.

Bicycle NSW recognises and supports the NSW Government’s commitment to:

- Reducing road congestion, including by more than doubling the mode share of bicycle trips made in the Greater Sydney region, at a local and district level, by 2016 (NSW 2021 Plan Goal 8)
- Promoting healthy lifestyles, including by increasing the mode share of bicycle trips and by reducing overweight and obesity rates (NSW 2021 Plan Goals 8 and 11)
- Improving road safety, reducing fatalities and making NSW roads the safest in the country (NSW 2021 Plan Goal 10)

The potential benefits to safety, transport efficiency and public health that the Sydney City Centre Access Strategy delivers are commendable.

Bicycle NSW supports and commends the Sydney City Centre Access Strategy’s clear commitment to:

- Acknowledging bicycle riding as a legitimate, integral and growing mode of transport into, out of and within the Sydney city centre
- Delivering safety-focused traffic management and road space allocations that will provide efficient, connected routes for bicycle riders and reduce the likelihood of conflict and competition between different modes of transport, including by implementing a 40km/h speed limit in parts of the city centre
- Completing the city centre cycleway network of separated cycleways and key links to that network, including identifying major cycleway arterials into and out of the city centre
- Catering for future demand for travel into, out of and within the city centre, including by acknowledging the projected and targeted growth in the mode-share of bicycle trips

Bicycle NSW is committed to supporting the NSW Government in realising its goals and targets in relation to creating a better environment for cycling and promoting safe multi-mode use of the state’s transport infrastructure, including those articulated in the Sydney City Centre Access Strategy.

Bicycle NSW welcomes our continuing engagement with the NSW Government about policy and programs that create a better environment for cycling.

Bicycle NSW appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Sydney City Centre Access Strategy that was release for further consultation on 11 September 2013, and the opportunity to help strengthen the Government’s proposed plan of action for implementing the strategy.
Strengthening connections to, from and within the city centre

Bicycle NSW supports the *Sydney City Centre Access Strategy*’s aim, consistent with the need identified in the *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, “… to make travel easier to, from and within the city centre for all…” ¹

Bicycle NSW strongly supports the completion of the city centre cycleway network and the investigation of future cycleway connections for the city centre.

Bicycle NSW is pleased to provide the following comments about the *Sydney City Centre Access Strategy* and in support of strengthening the strategy to achieve its stated aims for modal integration, growth and efficiency in transport to, from and within the Sydney city centre.

1. The City’s North

Connections to the north of the CBD from the existing Bourke Street cycleway

At present, the conclusion of the well-utilised Bourke Street cycleway at its northern end in Woolloomooloo does not offer a clear onward cycle route to access the northern part of the city centre.

Detailing such an access route in the *Sydney City Centre Access Strategy* would:

1. Strengthen the *Sydney City Centre Access Strategy*’s aim of facilitating access to and from the city.
2. Support the *Sydney City Centre Access Strategy*’s future investigation of “improving the existing (partial) cycleway between the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the eastern CBD (and Woolloomooloo) via a high level connection along the Cahill Expressway.” ²
3. Support the *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*’s measure of providing “A Connected Cycling Network that targets investment in clearly defined cycleways within a five kilometre radius of major urban centres in the short term and 10 kilometre larger radius of centres in the longer term.” ³
4. Contribute to the realisation of the *NSW 2021 Plan* Goal 8 Target to “More than double the mode share of bicycle trips made in the Greater Sydney region, at a local and district level, by 2016.” ⁴


Access from the north of the CBD to the southern point of the Sydney Harbour Bridge cycleway

The Sydney City Centre Access Strategy acknowledges the 70% increase in bicycle riders on the Sydney Harbour Bridge over the last 40 years.5

Bicycle NSW is concerned about safety risks posed by the existing southern access and egress points of the Sydney Harbour Bridge cycleway. Access and egress to the Sydney Harbour Bridge cycleway at the southern end is made complex by: poor sightlines; a tight bend in a narrow zone that creates a pinch point for bi-directional traffic; the feeder point into Upper Fort Street (adjacent to the primary school); and the steep grade of the access/egress from Watson Road.

Bicycle NSW is a participant in ‘roundtable discussions’ facilitated by Roads and Maritime Services in relation to the Sydney Harbour Bridge ‘Southern Toll Plaza Upgrade’ Project.

Bicycle NSW understands that the second phase of this project will consider remodelling the southern access/egress from the Sydney Harbour Bridge cycleway and we are keen to continue our conversation about this program of works and remodelling the southern cycleway access point with the NSW Government.

The Sydney City Centre Access Strategy’s discussion of completing the city centre cycleway network specifies “Extending the existing bi-directional separated Kent Street cycleway to Liverpool Street and implementing related improvements through The Rocks to connect to the Harbour Bridge.”6 The strategy may be strengthened in this area by indicating whether this work will address the southern access/egress to the Sydney Harbour Bridge cycleway.

Transport for NSW might also consider identifying the Sydney Harbour Bridge cycleway southern access in the strategy’s investigation of future cycleway connections.

Identifying this work could strengthen the strategy’s commitment to completing a “holistic network that cyclists can use”7 by:

1. Complementing and enhancing the investigation of “Cycle connections to Barangaroo”8.

   The strategy identifies that the Barangaroo development is forecast to bring an estimated 23,000 jobs to the city centre.9 Creating a safe, connected cycle route from the northern side of Sydney Harbour to Barangaroo would contribute to the NSW 2021 Plan Goal 8 Target to “More than double the mode share of bicycle trips made in the Greater Sydney region, at a local and district level, by 2016.”10

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5 Transport for NSW, Sydney City Centre Access Strategy (for further consultation), NSW Government, Sydney, September 2013, page 19.
6 Ibid, page 36.
7 Ibid, page 36.
8 Ibid, page 36.
2. Complementing and enhancing the investigation of “Improving the existing (partial) cycleway between the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the eastern CBD (and Woolloomooloo) via a high level connection along the Cahill Expressway."  
Addressing the Sydney Harbour Bridge cycleway southern access/egress in conjunction with the Cahill Expressway cycleway and the aforementioned city centre connection to the northern end of the existing Bourke Street cycleway would strongly contribute to the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan’s measure of providing “A Connected Cycling Network that targets investment in clearly defined cycleways within a five kilometre radius of major urban centres in the short term and 10 kilometre larger radius of centres in the longer term.”  

2. The City’s South

Establishing a north-south cycleway along Castlereagh Street

Bicycle NSW welcomes the strategy’s commitment to “Establishing a bi-directional separated north-south cycleway along Castlereagh Street…” 

Bicycle NSW acknowledges that the existing College Street north-south cycleway will be removed in order to accommodate the traffic expected to be diverted from George and Elizabeth Streets.

Bicycle NSW strongly recommends that, in the interest of maintaining a safe north-south route while the Castlereagh Street cycleway is being built, the existing College Street cycleway is retained until completion of the new Castlereagh Street bi-directional separated north-south cycleway.

In addition to risking the safety of bicycle riders in the city centre, removing the cycleway in College Street before providing the Castlereagh Street cycleway could discourage riders who currently use the College Street cycleway from continuing to cycle into (or via) the CBD, and may also discourage new or novice riders from adopting cycling as a mode of travel into, out of, or within the city. These effects would run counter to the NSW 2021 Plan Goal 8 Target of increasing the mode share of bicycle transport for trips in the Sydney region.

Providing clear and safe connections to the southern CBD near light and heavy rail hubs

Bicycle NSW notes that the existing cycle route into the Sydney city centre from the south, at Chalmers and Elizabeth Streets near Central Station, is part of a complex, multi-mode intersection. Bicycle NSW notes that the construction of the CBD and South East light rail extension will bring more modal complexity to this area.

11 Transport for NSW, Sydney City Centre Access Strategy (for further consultation), NSW Government, Sydney, September 2013, page 36.
The strength of the strategy may be enhanced by acknowledging the need to investigate cycleway connections that provide a clear path for cyclists who enter the city centre environs at this southern point and seek clear connection to the Castlereagh and/or Liverpool Street cycleways.

Integrating clear cycle routes at this complex intersection will contribute to the strategy's aim of increasing transport choices, improving amenity and improving safety for all road users.\(^\text{14}\)

**Completion of the city cycleway network prior to construction of the light rail**

Bicycle NSW acknowledges that completing the extension of the Kent Street cycleway and new east-west cycleway along Liverpool Street will be completed before construction of the light rail in the CBD.\(^\text{15}\)

Bicycle NSW suggests that the strength of the *Sydney City Centre Access Strategy* in relation to bicycle transport may be bolstered by ensuring completion of the holistic city cycleway network before construction of the light rail commences.

3. The City’s East

**Clear east-west cycle routes at the southern end of the CBD**

Bicycle NSW acknowledges the *Sydney City Centre Access Strategy’s* commitment to constructing the Liverpool Street cycleway between Darling Harbour and Castlereagh Street, as well as the extension of the east-west cycleway along Park Street to connect with the Castlereagh Street cycleway.

Bicycle NSW welcomes the creation of clear east-west cycle routes at the southern end of the CBD.

**Connections to and from existing cycleways in the east**

Bicycle NSW supports investigation of the cycling connection along Oxford Street between the Castlereagh Street cycleway and Taylor Square. This connection, which would enhance the existing Bourke Street cycling artery, would bolster travel into and out of the city from the east, contributing to:

1. Meeting the *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan* measure providing “A Connected Cycling Network that targets investment in clearly defined cycleways within a five kilometre radius of major urban centres in the short term and 10 kilometre larger radius of centres in the longer term.”\(^\text{16}\)

2. Realising the *NSW 2021 Plan* Goal 8 Target to “More than double the mode share of bicycle trips made in the Greater Sydney region, at a local and district level, by 2016.”\(^\text{17}\)

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\(^{14}\) *Ibid*, page 36.  
3. Unlocking the potential of inner-Sydney residents to ride to work (as identified in the strategy\(^{18}\)).

4. The City’s West

**Provision of cycle connections to Barangaroo**

Bicycle NSW supports the investigation of cycling connections to Barangaroo in the city’s west.

As identified in the discussion of the *The City’s North*, above, Bicycle NSW suggests the *Sydney City Centre Access Strategy* could be strengthened via consideration of the remodelling of the southern access/egress to the Sydney Harbour Bridge cycleway and its contribution to connecting cyclists to Barangaroo safely and efficiently.

**Shared use of the Pyrmont Bridge for connections to the west of the CBD**

Bicycle NSW acknowledges that the existing western connection to the city centre along the Pyrmont Bridge is a mixed-mode, shared thoroughfare for pedestrians and bicycle riders, to and from inner-city western points including the Anzac Bridge and adjacent suburbs.

Bicycle NSW worked with stakeholders including the NSW Government’s Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, the Pedestrian Council of Australia and the City of Sydney to develop infrastructure and communication solutions to facilitate a safe shared zone on the Pyrmont Bridge for pedestrians and bicycle riders alike.

Bicycle NSW supports maintaining the existing shared-use arrangement on the Pyrmont Bridge; the *Sydney City Centre Access Strategy* may be strengthened by specifying the Pyrmont Bridge’s mode-share arrangement and its connection to cycleways in the city centre including the existing King Street cycleway and the proposed Liverpool Street cycleway between Darling Harbour and the centre.

5. Movement within the CBD

**Recognition of ‘minor’, mixed-use routes within the CBD**

Bicycle NSW acknowledges that the purpose of the *Sydney City Centre Access Strategy* is to deliver a fully integrated transport network that prepares Sydney’s city centre for the future.\(^{19}\)

Bicycle NSW also acknowledges that the strategy defines the major routes into, out of and around the Sydney city centre for each mode of transport.

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\(^{19}\) *Ibid*, page 4.
In relation to cycling, Bicycle NSW understands that it is not the intention of the *Sydney City Centre Access Strategy* to – nor does the strategy – define every cycleway or cycling route that may be taken into, out of, or around the city centre. Accordingly, there are many streets within the CBD that individuals need to access that are not explicitly identified in the strategy.

The strategy may be strengthened by explicitly recognising that cyclists, pedestrians, motorists and taxi services may – legitimately – take routes through the CBD that are (intentionally) not defined in the strategy. Such recognition will strengthen the *Sydney City Centre Access Strategy*’s commitment to considering – and balancing – the needs of each transport mode,20 and to each mode’s understanding of the need to share the city with other users.

**Shared use of the ‘pedestrianised’ section of George Street**

Bicycle NSW acknowledges the strategy’s intention to redefine George Street as the “public transport and walking spine” of the city.21 Bicycle NSW understands that walking is a dominant mode of transport within the city centre and that the safety of pedestrians is critical to the integrated transport system within the city.

Bicycle NSW advocates the safe, aware and considerate behaviour of bicycle riders. We would welcome the opportunity to contribute to future plans for the sharing of the George Street pedestrianised section, building on our experience with the pedestrian- and bicycle rider-shared Pyrmont Bridge, as mentioned above.

**Phasing of traffic signals to support efficient and safe movement around the CBD**

The *Sydney City Centre Access Strategy* identifies the timing and phasing allocations of traffic signals as having a disproportionate impact on pedestrians within the city centre.22

Bicycle NSW’s commitment to creating a better environment for cycling encompasses our commitment to safety and compatible integration for all transport modes. Bicycle NSW therefore supports, in principle, phasing and timing of traffic lights that provides safe and efficient movement around the city centre for all users.

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The Broader Context

1. Public Health

Bicycle NSW acknowledges that realisation of the NSW Government’s NSW 2021 Plan Goal 11 of “Keeping People Healthy and out of Hospital” is strengthened by creating a safe, connected way of travelling into, out of and around the city by bicycle.

Cycling is an ‘active’ mode of transport that can deliver physical and mental health benefits that contribute to the NSW Government’s NSW 2021 Plan Target of reducing overweight and obesity rates.

Bicycle NSW strongly supports initiatives to encourage bicycle riding and its associated health benefits.

2. Road Safety

The NSW Government’s NSW 2021 Plan Goal 10, “Improve Road Safety”, is entirely consistent with Bicycle NSW’s commitment to creating a better environment for cycling.

Bicycle NSW acknowledges that the NSW Government’s target of reducing road fatalities and making NSW roads “the safest in the country” underpins many of the Sydney City Centre Access Strategy’s transformational initiatives.

Bicycle NSW welcomes the Sydney City Centre Access Strategy’s plans to create a better environment for cycling in the Sydney city centre by separating cycleways from vehicles, buses and pedestrians to provide safer, more direct routes to their destinations and reduce conflicts between cyclists and other traffic.

Bicycle NSW supports the reduction of the speed limit to 40km/h in some parts of the city in an effort to reduce crash rates and severity.

Bicycle NSW supports the lawful use of bicycles for transport. We actively encourage our members, and all bicycle riders, to obey road rules and to respect the needs of all road users.

Bicycle NSW acknowledges that obedience to road rules benefits all transport infrastructure users.
3. Wider cycleway networks

Bicycle NSW recognises that the **Sydney City Centre Access Strategy** is part of a broader range of transport policy initiatives that contribute to cycling in NSW, and to the Goals, Targets and Priority Actions of the **NSW 2021 Plan**.

Bicycle NSW applauds the NSW Government’s recent application to Infrastructure Australia for funding for the Inner Sydney Regional Bike Network. We are naturally keen to do all we can to support the progress of this application.

Bicycle NSW recognises the NSW Government’s commitment in the **NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan** to providing “A Connected Cycling Network that targets investment in clearly defined cycleways within a five kilometre radius of major urban centres in the short term and 10 kilometre larger radius of centres in the longer term.”

Bicycle NSW is greatly encouraged by the NSW Government’s commitment to cycling infrastructure and transport choices.

### Summary

The NSW Government’s **Sydney City Centre Access Strategy** is a clear, positive plan that will deliver a fully integrated transport network that prepares Sydney’s city centre for the future.

Bicycle NSW welcomes the NSW Government’s acknowledgement that a variety of transport modes are critical to the efficiency of travel to, from and within the city centre, and indeed to inner and outer metropolitan locations, as well as to regional areas.

Bicycle NSW welcomes the NSW Government’s acknowledgement that the efficiency of travel to, from and within the Sydney city centre is reliant on a fully-integrated transport network that includes all modes of transport – of which cycling is one.

Bicycle NSW is committed to providing a positive voice for cycling and creating public momentum to assist in delivering a better environment for cycling.

Bicycle NSW is committed to supporting and collaborating with the NSW Government to implement the initiatives in, and realise the benefits of the **Sydney City Centre Access Strategy**. We look forward to continuing to engage with the NSW Government as consultation is finalised and the **Sydney City Centre Access Strategy** is delivered.

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