

The Hon. Andrew Constance MP
Minister for Transport
52 Martin Place,
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Minister Constance,

RE: Great Western Highway

I am writing in support of the Blue Mountains Cycling Safety Forum (BMCSF), Shadow Minister for Active Transport The Hon. Jo Haylen MP and local MP The Hon. Trish Doyle and their efforts to improve the safety of the Great Western Highway for bike riders.

Bicycle NSW has been the peak bicycle advocacy group now in NSW for over forty-four years, and has over 30 affiliated local Bicycle User Groups. Bicycle NSW exists to create a better environment for all bicycle riders and our advocacy is guided by three policy pillars to achieve this, namely:

Build it for Everyone: cycling infrastructure should be built suitable for all riders, and we say 'from 8-80' as a reminder children through to elders should all be able to use it independently

Safe Home: because everyone deserves to arrive home safely and laws, regulation and enforcement need to support this

Invest Now for Health: calls for government to recognise the importance of investment in safe cycling to address the rising impact of inactivity on human health

We share the serious concerns of Blue Mountains residents, cyclists, pedestrians and road users in regards to safety on the Great Western Highway at Faulconbridge. There is currently no road shoulder on the corner between Metro Petroleum and Todarellos Fruit House, forcing cyclists to ride into busy and fast-moving traffic on a blind corner.

Recent road resurfacing treatments have created a further hazard for riders by adding a raised lip between the new and the old road surface. The images supplied by the BCSFM (overleaf) paint a terrifying picture. It is highly likely this will lead to a crash that causes serious injury or death, without urgent action taken by the NSW Government. These works also fail to conform with the safety standards set down by the NSW Government and Austroads.¹

Prior to the works, riders had around 30 centimetres between the Armco rail and the edge line when travelling west from the petrol station. Following the resurfacing this has been reduced by half, and the risk of slipping on the lip created by the works means riders must now travel in the traffic lane around a blind corner. The east-bound road is similarly impacted starting well before Todarellos Fruit House. Transport for NSW have previously acknowledged² the road shoulders at Faulconbridge are virtually non-existent and need to be widened.

Minister, we support calls by the BCSFM for work to be undertaken urgently to permanently widen the road shoulder at this pinch-point, and others along the highway, in the interests of all road users. We also support the proposal in the interim for temporary pathways be constructed on either side of the road, behind the barriers. This would provide physical separation for riders and greatly improve safety. This is especially important as bike riders cannot access an alternative route.³

¹ Austroads Guide Part 6a: Walking & Cycling <https://austroads.com.au/publications/road-design/agrd06a>

² Jennie Curtin, (9/12/2019) Highway not ready for huge B doubles, Blue Mountains Gazette [Online 28/8/2020] <https://www.bluemountainsgazette.com.au/story/6528558/upgrade-could-be-years-project-boss/>

³ Damien Madigan, (9/2/1019) Blue Mountains Cycling Safety Forum steps up campaign for safety upgrade of Great Western Highway, Blue Mountains Gazette [Online 28/8/2020] <https://www.bluemountainsgazette.com.au/story/5895764/highway-safety-group-steps-up-campaign-ahead-of-march-state-election/>

We support calls by the BCSFM, Jo Haylen MP and Trish Doyle MP for a formal consultation process to engage all road users in the forward works program for the Great Western Highway. Bicycle NSW would be pleased to provide support or assistance to ensure road safety in this area is improved for riders.

Yours faithfully,

Bastien Wallace
General Manager of Public Affairs
Bicycle NSW



