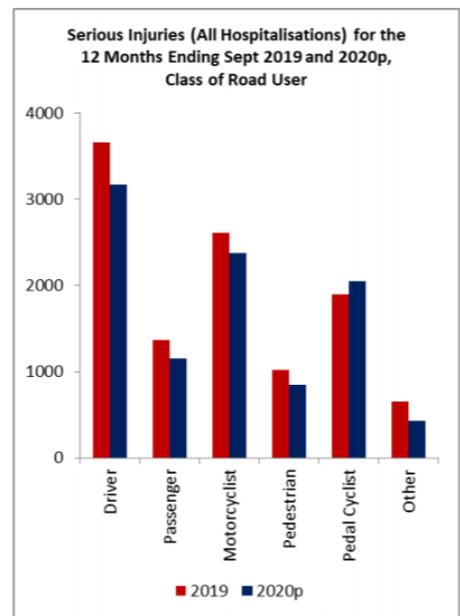
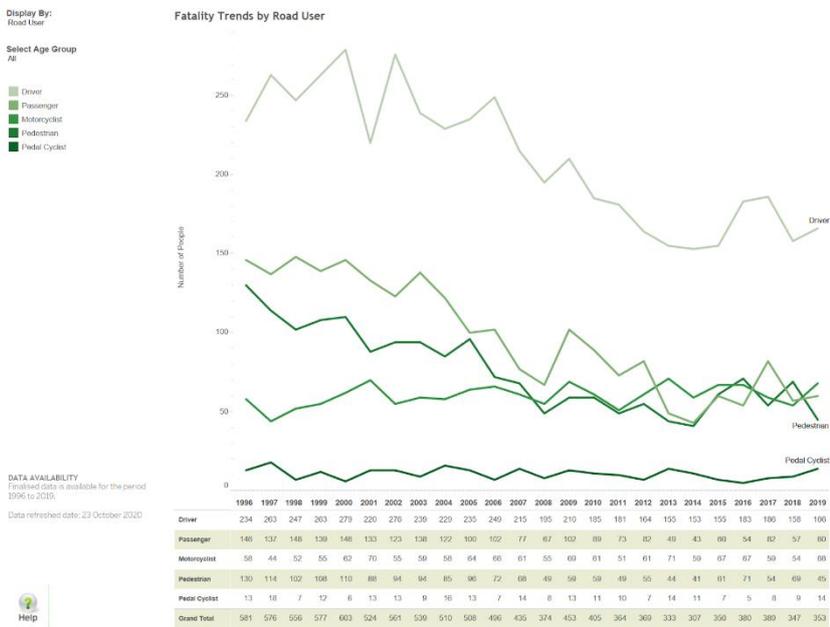


To Whom it May Concern,

RE: 2026 Road Safety Action Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 2026 Road Safety Action Plan.ⁱ 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.

The development of the 2026 Road Safety Action Planⁱⁱ provides an opportunity for reflection and course correction to improve the safety of all road users in NSW. The 2012-2021 Road Safety Plan for NSW set a “...State Priority Target to reduce road fatalities by 30% by 2021 (from 2008–10 levels).”ⁱⁱⁱ The total average fatality rate for the three years 2008-2010 was 410. There were 353 fatalities in 2019, 57 fewer or a 13% reduction.

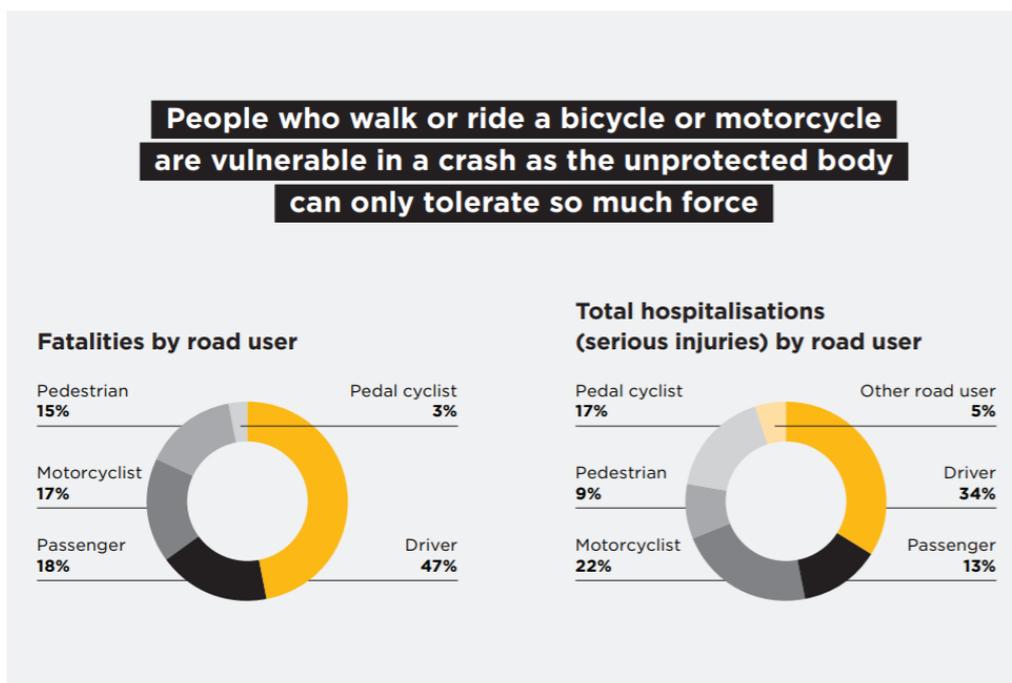


NSW Government^{iv}

NSW Government^v

Bicycle NSW recognises this is a reduction, but it is less than half of the target. However, bike rider fatalities calculated on the same averages rose by 25%. As injury totals reduced significantly for drivers, the reduction for bike riders was much smaller.^{vi} This echoes national data where 1 in 5 of the 60,000 people hospitalised due to injury in a land transport crash was a cyclist and the rate of hospitalisation for cyclists across all age groups rose by an average of 1.5% each year.^{vii}

It is not difficult to understand why the NSW Government has struggled historically to achieve mode shift to active transport when, for comparatively small number of kilometres travelled by bicycle the injury and fatality rate remains so significant. The data highlights vulnerability but should also act as a call to action for more effective measures that prioritise the safe movement of people, rather than just motor vehicles.



NSW Government^{viii}

If the strategic approach to road safety does not shift, State plans for emission reductions and increased use of active travel will also fail. People who do not feel safe to walk and cycle in road related environments will continue to travel by motor vehicle. Mode-shift targets are:

- critical to Future Transport 2056 Plan^{ix}
- the achievement of net zero emissions by 2050 set out in the NSW Climate Change Policy Framework,^x
- and to health improvement from reducing inactivity.



Sometimes it helps to visualise the data, and each of the issues highlighted graphically represents an opportunity for road safety strategy to help transform NSW for the better.

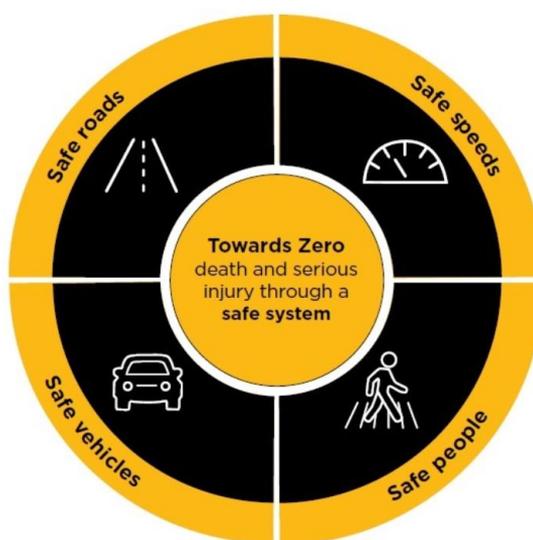


Bicycle NSW appreciates the principles espoused in the Movement and Place framework referred to in the draft National Road Safety Strategy. They are reflected in a range of the policies of Transport for NSW particularly the [Movement and Place Framework](#).

Continuing with the 'current plan' condemns us to fall short of the targets that have been set. It also fails to maximise the benefit this framework and excellent NSW policies such as the Providing for Walking and Cycling in Transport Projects Policy CP21001^{xii} and the Road User Space Allocation Policy CP21000^{xiii}. Now is the time to reflect, reset and take action to ensure zero road fatalities becomes a reality, not just a target.

The Road Safety Plan 2021 adopts the internationally recognised Safe System approach, which is a holistic and proven approach that considers how people, vehicles, speeds and roads work together to create a safe system. The system acknowledges:

- The human body has physical limits to withstanding the impact of a crash.
- People sometimes make mistakes – but this shouldn't cost anyone their life.
- Roads, roadsides, travel speeds and vehicles need to be designed to help avoid a crash or reduce the impact of a crash if it happens.
- Road safety is a shared responsibility. We all need to make decisions with safety in mind, from the design of our roads and vehicles, investment, laws and education, to each road user acting safely every day.



Transport for NSW, Road Safety Plan 2021^{xiv}

How can we enhance road safety in NSW, learning from the Road Safety Plan 2021, and doing better?

Safe Vehicles

The 'Safe vehicles' focus has been on motor vehicles and the safety of the passengers inside them, but it fails to address the hazards posed to bike riders and pedestrians by bigger vehicles, bull-bars, blind spots, heavy vehicles without safety measures such as side underrun protection or blind spot detection.

Around 18% of all NSW road crash deaths (64 in 2019) involved a heavy vehicle although only 2.5% of motor vehicles registered in NSW and 8.3% per cent of vehicle kilometres travelled in NSW are by heavy vehicles.^{xv} Bicycle NSW^{xvi} and the National Road Safety draft strategy^{xvii} call for regulation and heavy vehicle safety technologies including:

- Side (to protect pedestrians and cyclists from going under heavy vehicles) and rear (to reduce the intrusion into a car's passenger compartment) underrun protection systems
- Autonomous Emergency Braking
- Fatigue Monitoring systems
- Lane Departure Warning systems
- Enhanced vehicle visibility markings
- Enhanced driver's field of view through the introduction of blind spot information system
- Anti-lock braking/Electronic braking systems
- Electronic Stability and anti-rollover
- Cabin rollover protection^{xviii}

The NSW Government knows what needs to be done, the Heavy Vehicle National Law Review^{xix} largely agrees, and similar international standards have been in place for years, but people are still waiting for the legislation and enforcement they need to keep them safe - even as construction booms and heavy vehicle movements increase.

'Helping people choose safe vehicles'^{xx} could also undermine overall road safety unless this is managed carefully. Purchasers will invariably select motor vehicle features that prioritise their safety and that of their passengers, even if that increases the risk to other road users. Targeting the removal of older vehicles from the road will not improve bike rider and pedestrian safety if newer vehicles are larger, have more external features or on-board operating systems that prioritise driver and passenger safety over all other road users. NSW needs strong regulation to ensure vehicle safety features and operating systems maximise the safety of road users endangered by a motor vehicle, not just its passengers and driver. Road safety isn't enhanced if what makes vehicles safer for drivers and passengers increases the risks for bike riders and pedestrians.

Bicycle NSW recommends State legislation be implemented requiring all heavy vehicles to conform with the safety standards set out by the National Office of Road Safety within two years, and that all contracts for NSW Government projects require that contractors conform with these measures.

Bicycle NSW recommends State legislation to regulate vehicle features, additions and operating systems to reduce hazards posed to other road users, especially bike riders and pedestrians.

Safe Roads

Until COVID-19, 'Safe roads' appeared to almost exclusively focus on the safety of motor vehicle operators and occupants. From audio-tactile markings, the installation of Armco cable barriers (often narrowing or removing road shoulders used by bike riders or preventing drivers from crossing the midline to pass riders safely), multi-billion dollar investments in motorways and tunnels that exclude bike riders - all whilst most 'bike infrastructure' amounted to painted lines in door zones or stencils on roadways.

The pop-up bike lanes and low speed zones introduced as part of the COVID-19 pandemic have demonstrated that investing in safe separated infrastructure is essential to get more people to switch mode and ride bicycles. These pop-up bike lanes reflect a safety standard that supports riders of all ages and backgrounds in line with our policy^{xxi} is for an infrastructure standard that makes bike riding safe for 8-80 year olds to travel independently.

The new Road User Space Allocation Policy CP 2100^{xxii} requires that:

“Transport for NSW allocates physical and temporal road user space safely and equitably to support the movement of people and goods and place objectives.”

This is supposed to be done in such a way as to avoid adverse impacts on road safety for all road users including vulnerable road users, the loss of space for walking, and an overall increase in general traffic lanes for private motorised vehicles.^{xxiii} In a similar manner to the draft National Strategy, road infrastructure planning and investment should be linked to safety improvement,^{xxiv} and this must include bike rider safety. If followed, these policies would make roads far safer for bike riders.

Creating infrastructure for movement corridors that neglect the needs of bicycle riders has seen Armco wire barriers installed on high speed and rural roads in NSW in such a way they:

- Remove or narrow the road shoulder so it has become unusable for bicycle riders
- Prevent motor vehicle operators crossing the mid-line of the road, to safely pass bicycle riders and comply with minimum passing laws
- Increase the risk of injury to bicycle riders if they crash or a pushed into these barriers by drivers

There are rapid, low-cost changes that can be made to road infrastructure within 1-2 years to make cycling safer including:

- Reducing speed limits
- Using audio-tactile line markings and double lines on motorways to deter egress from road lanes into cycling lanes or the road shoulder, as well as to alert fatigued drivers
- Altering the placement of parking so that painted bike lanes are protected by parked cars, rather than bicycle riders being allocated the door zone and protecting parked motor vehicles
- Replacing pedestrian lanterns with dual bike and pedestrian lanterns to enable safe, legal road crossing

Bicycle NSW recommends the new Road User Space Allocation Policy CP 2100^{xxv} be followed.

Bicycle NSW recommends allocating 10% state transport budget for cycling infrastructure,¹ requiring every transport project deliver positive provisioning for bike riders, and prioritising safe separation.

Bicycle NSW recommends when infrastructure planning and investment is made in the road related environment, it must be to enhance the safety of all road users. Roads do not become safer by trading the lives of bicycle riders, to make motor vehicle operators safer.

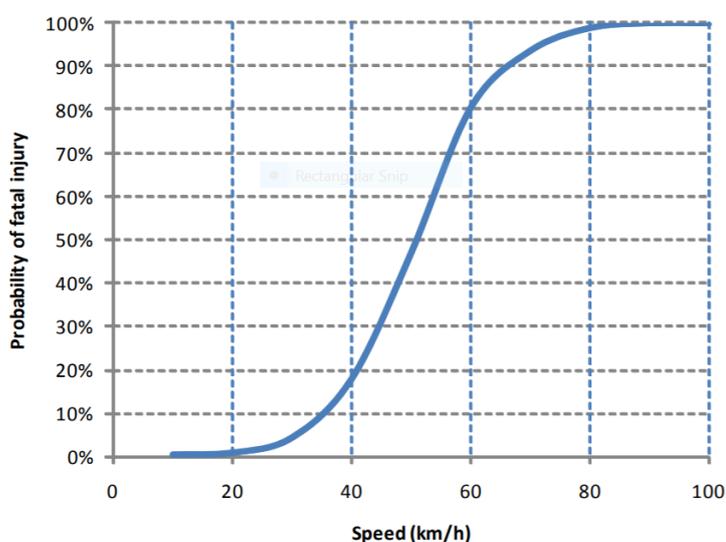
Bicycle NSW recommends incentivising the rapid deployment of existing, low-cost, technologies and treatments to improve the road related environment for bike riders.

¹ A further 10% ought to go to pedestrian infrastructure – but we will leave pedestrian advocates to develop this point

Safe Speeds

'Safe speeds' are an excellent idea and reducing the speed motor vehicles travel at can make a big difference to the outcome of road crashes. However, the focus of speed enforcement on NSW roads remains on keeping motor vehicle drivers and passengers safe.

Cameras and speed traps are usually set on State and arterial roads, enforcing speed limits of between 50-100km/ hour. Whilst crashing at these speeds in modern vehicles may be survivable for drivers and their passengers, the outcomes for bike riders are invariably fatal. Statistics show at 50km/h, the average speed of suburban streets in Australia, the risk of a pedestrian or cyclist dying in an accident with a motor vehicle is 55%, this drops to 25% at 40km/h and 5-10% at 30km/h.^{xxvi}



Whilst the safest speed for bike riders and pedestrians is 30km/h or below, little enforcement is carried out to keep suburban, neighbourhood and town speeds safe, meaning changing signs alone is likely to have little immediate impact. NSW drivers accustomed to travelling at higher speeds are also unlikely to change their behaviour quickly if the only speed control measure introduced is a road sign.

Bicycle NSW appreciates reconfiguring roads or employing sufficient police could be prohibitively expensive. However, COVID measures have seen innovative, inexpensive measures deployed in the road environment to calm traffic including installing pop-up cycleways, pop-up dining areas, using planter boxes, pop-up bike parking and car parking to narrow roadways so as to reduce travel speeds whilst improving community amenity.

Bicycle NSW recommends using a combination of traffic calming, speed signs and enforcement to reduce travel speeds in suburbs and local neighbourhoods to 30 km/hr.

Safe People

Education, licensing systems and enforcement all have a place in making people safer on the road, but opportunities are being missed. Australia has proven adept at changing health and safety behaviour when it commits to a multi-faceted approach. From seat belt wearing, smoking cessation, HIV & Aids, drink driving and now COVID-19 control measures – Australia is one of the most successful countries at improving human health and safety through multi-faceted approaches to law, policy, enforcement and behaviour change.

To date bike rider safety hasn't been taken seriously in NSW. Weak, transactional or victim-blaming road safety campaigns,^{xxvii} a failure to educate new drivers and those renewing licenses, missed opportunities to educate on social media when those expressing aggression towards bike riders and pedestrians on government and Police feeds are self-identifying their need for education and behaviour change. In the face of these deficits Bicycle NSW invested significant resources in developing a road safety campaign for the Centre for Road Safety. When efforts to get it delivered failed, we created Safety on Spokes,^{xxviii} a campaign that won cross party and multi-road user support.

Of the 308 people killed on NSW roads in 2019, 14 or 4% were cyclists,^{xxix} however journeys by bike represent far less than 1% of kilometres travelled. Based on 2019 data, 12.9% of people in NSW rode a bike in the last week, or 0.6 million people.^{xxx} However 81% of these rode for recreational purposes and 72% of respondents in NSW stated they were not interested in riding for transport.^{xxxi} Given the high proportion of bike riding that takes place in parks and off road environments for recreation, the road toll for bike riders is disproportionately high. Disturbingly, in spite of lockdowns in several states during 2020, and fatality reductions for all other types of road user, bike rider fatalities in 2020 remained the same as for 2019.

Instead of a multi-faceted approach to bike rider safety, campaigns in NSW focus on helmet wearing, hi-vis and messages that bike riders can somehow 'transact' for safer motorist behaviour through hyper-vigilance and perfect observance of road rules. Little to no effort has been applied by the National or NSW Government to educating or campaigning on motorist behaviour change. Personal protective equipment is the least effective measure in the hierarchy of controls for achieving safety, and most deceased bike riders in road crashes were wearing helmets when they died.

The focus of policing and road safety data in NSW is on alcohol, speed and fatigue and more recently mobile phone use. However, law breaking, negligent, and deliberately aggressive driving are a common bike rider experience, cause of crashes and are rarely acted on by NSW Police. Bicycle NSW hoped the introduction of minimum passing legislation in NSW would improve bike rider safety. Unfortunately, as 2019 data reflects, NSW Police are more focused on enforcement activity to penalise bike riders than on enforcement to keep them safe.^{xxxii} Efforts by bike riders to report close passed to NSW Police or Crime Stoppers are usually unsuccessful, or even met with retaliatory efforts by NSW Police to try to book the rider for not travelling in the gutter. At present no incentives or sanctions exist for Transport for NSW, the Centre for Road Safety or NSW Police for improving bike rider safety or reducing fatalities and injuries.

Road configurations such as urban intersections with high traffic volumes, and speed limits up to 100 km/h contribute to 'T-bone' or side impact crashes. Pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists are particularly vulnerable at intersections and make up over 45% of the fatalities.^{xxxiii} In countries such as the United Kingdom, advanced stopping lines and cycle super-highways have been retro-fitted into the road environment to make bicycle riding safer.

The fatality rates for bike based workers has further highlighted the unsafe infrastructure, road user behaviour and workplace practices.^{xxxiv}

Bicycle NSW has had to work hard and for too long to have the deaths of these riders taken seriously. Unfortunately, the safety issues faced by food delivery riders have become emblematic of poor community attitudes towards bike riders. Too often media, police and government discourse has portrayed bike riders as not belonging on the road, law breaking, erratic and annoying. Social media feeds and commentary on news, government and police sites contain abundant evidence of the poor and aggressive attitudes towards bike riders. Community attitudes and culture need changing urgently,^{xxxv} if Australian road safety is to be improved and targets for mode shift to bike riding achieved.

Bicycle NSW recommends the NSW Government seek the advice of non-government forum of Cycling and Walking Australia and New Zealand. Representatives from every state already have a clear picture of road rules, infrastructure and enforcement issues that are hazardous for bike riders, and in many issues a set of sensible approaches and solutions ready for government to trial or implement.

Bicycle NSW recommends trialling new measures aimed at improving bike rider safety, as well as tying funding allocation to road safety performance, including reducing bike rider fatalities and injuries.

Bicycle NSW recommends all NSW and mandate safer work practices for the food delivery sector and bike based workers.

Bicycle NSW recommends Transport for NSW take the lead and develop a high impact road safety education campaigns to promote safe driving around bicycle riders, and that ongoing measurement be undertaken to determine the impact, and adjust messages to improve road safety culture and attitudes towards bike riders.

Policy

Excellent policies have been written that, if followed, would make NSW the best and safest state for bicycle riders. These include:

- RMS 2013 supplements to the Australian Standards including AS1742 Part 9: Bicycle facilities
- Providing for Walking and Cycling in Transport Projects Policy CP21001^{xxxvi}
- Road User Space Allocation Policy CP21000^{xxxvii}

The same can be said of the Austroads Guides and Australian Standards that have been written, but too often are poorly followed, or totally ignored.

- Austroads Guide to Temporary Traffic Management²
- Austroads Guide to Road Design³
- Austroads Guide to Road Safety⁴
- Austroads Guide to Road Design – Part 6A Walking & Cycling^{xxxviii}
- Australian Standards:
 - AS2890.3 Parking Facilities: Part 3 – Bicycle Parking Facilities
 - AS1742 Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices
 - AS1743 Road Signs - Specifications

² Austroads Guide to Temporary Traffic Management (2019) [Online 1/4/2020] <https://austroads.com.au/publications/temporary-traffic-management/agtmm-set>

³ Austroads Guide to Road Design (2019) [Online 1/4/2020] <https://austroads.com.au/publications/road-design/agrd-set>

⁴ Austroads Guide to Road Safety (2019) [Online 1/4/2020] <https://austroads.com.au/publications/road-safety/agrs-set>

Most of the problems are not to be found in policy, but rather investment, implementation and the priority given to motor vehicle users over all other road users. If the target for zero road deaths is pushed out till 2050, the priority given to funding and implementing excellent policies will remain very low.

Bicycle NSW recommends the NSW Government and its contractors be required to follow the standards set down, report transparently on compliance and safety issues.

For too long road safety has neglected the needs of bike riders, even as NSW Government plans, policies and priorities need more people to ride bikes for transport. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that NSW is capable of effective leadership and innovation that has transformed the road related environment and bike rider safety in some areas. This has led to mode shift, and the lessons learned could help transform this road safety policy and implementation to ensure that more road users make it home safely.

Yours faithfully,

Bastien Wallace – BA LLB
General Manager of Public Affairs, Bicycle NSW

ⁱ NSW Government, Towards Zero, 2026 Road Safety Action Plan, [Online as at 15/4/2021] https://towardszero.nsw.gov.au/2026plan?fbclid=IwAR0t-UgPi61Oa8BN7_PWOFZ4Fh_PrG0tH8kznmAjx7U7dEAsYgl9IDIBc

ⁱⁱ NSW Government, Towards Zero, 2026 Road Safety Action Plan, [Online as at 15/4/2021] https://towardszero.nsw.gov.au/2026plan?fbclid=IwAR0t-UgPi61Oa8BN7_PWOFZ4Fh_PrG0tH8kznmAjx7U7dEAsYgl9IDIBc

ⁱⁱⁱ Transport for NSW, Road Safety Plan 2021, NSW Government [Online as at 9/4/2021] <https://towardszero.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-02/road-safety-plan.pdf>

^{iv} NSW Government, [Crash and casualty statistics - NSW general view](#); Fatality trends by road user [online as at 9/4/2021] <https://roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/statistics/interactivecrashstats/nsw.html?tabnsw=5>.

^v NSW Government, Transport for NSW, Quarterly Bulletin of Serious Injury Crash Data Quarter ending September 2020 (preliminary) [online as at 15/4] <https://roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/downloads/serious-injuries-sep2020-quarter.pdf>

^{vi} In 2020 14 bike riders died in NSW

^{vii} AIHW, R Kreisfeld & JE Harrison (2019) *Pedal cyclist deaths and hospitalisations 1999–00 to 2015–16* (2019), Injury Research and Statistics Series Number 123 Cat. no. INJCAT 203. Australian Government, Canberra [Online as at 9/4/2021] <https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/fbff1344-6b3f-4b2a-8649-fb879dcd69ab/aihw-injcat-203.pdf.aspx?inline=true>

^{viii} NSW Government, Towards Zero, Road trauma in NSW—a snapshot [online as at 15/4/2021] <https://towardszero.nsw.gov.au/mediadownload/46/road-trauma-snapshot>

^{ix} NSW Government, Future Transport 2056 [Online 1/4/2020] <https://future.transport.nsw.gov.au/plans/future-transport-strategy/future-transport-greater-sydney>, Points 3-5

^x NSW Government, NSW Climate Change Policy Framework [Online as at 15/4/2021] <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/-/media/OEH/Corporate-Site/Documents/Climate-change/nsw-climate-change-policy-framework-160618.pdf>

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