

28th July 2022

RE: Road Safety in Rural Communities for all

Bicycle NSW thanks the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee for the opportunity to provide comment on road safety in regional NSW. Given the majority of Australian road accidents and fatalities occur in rural and regional NSW, This is an important inquiry with the opportunity to make a difference.

Bicycle NSW supports and endorses the Amy Gillett Foundation's joint submission. We would also like to draw your attention to the work of 30Please.org with its emphasis on speed as a leading contributor of road deaths. In addition, we request that the committee encourage active transport culture through regional implementation of the Transport for NSW (TfNSW) Movement and Place Framework. A key component to encouraging active transport in the regions, and reducing pressure on the roads, is to integrate the road and rail networks and open viable rail trails for bicycle users.

Reduce speed

Speed is the lead contributor of injury and death on roads, particularly rural roads. Where there is no adequate separation of vulnerable road users from drivers, the following reductions of speed are necessary and recommended by the International Transport Forum¹:

- 30 km/h limit on residential/ non-arterial streets where there is a mix of bicycle riders and motor vehicle traffic
- 50km/h in other areas with intersections and a high risk of side collisions
- 70km/h on rural roads without a median barrier to reduce risk of head-on collisions
(International Traffic Safety Data and Analysis Group 2018)(30Please.org)

Movement and Place

Since 2019, there has been a **seismic shift in Transport for NSW policy direction**, framed by innovative thinking around 'place'. This is because 70 years of car-centric design have adversely

¹ International Traffic Safety Data and Analysis Group. Speed and Crash Risk: Research report. Paris: International Transport Forum, 2018

impacted the health, safety, liveability and amenity of communities. It is simply no longer acceptable to regard towns and communities as thoroughfares for traffic. They are places with their own precious lives which need to be prioritised over cars. The Movement and Place Framework takes a cross-governmental integrated approach to infrastructure projects and land use design. It is bolstered by two policies published by TfNSW in early 2021 that require State projects to prioritise road space for active transport:

Road User Space Allocation Policy CP21000² establishes a road user hierarchy that considers pedestrians first and private cars last. Multiple environmental and health benefits will flow from increased walking, cycling and public transport use. The streets will be more equitable for road users of all ages, incomes and abilities.

Providing for Walking and Cycling in Transport Projects Policy CP21001³ requires every transport project funded by Transport for NSW to include provision for walking and cycling, which must be delivered from the outset of the project. The policy applies to anyone planning, designing, delivering, building or managing a transport project or asset for, or on behalf of, TfNSW. By extension all the material within the AGF and 30Please.org submissions relate to these policies as they prioritise pedestrians and cyclist safety.

A pro active transport policy

The application of the TfNSW Movement and Place Framework encourages active transport by making it safer and more accessible for all. The net gain for safety through investment and promotion of active transport infrastructure and culture cannot be understated. More people walking and riding with the policy framework and infrastructure to support them means safer, healthier, more resilient, attractive and inviting communities. Bikes on regional trains (not in boxes) and alternative bicycle routes away from major regional highways will significantly reduce the risks and tensions for all road users as well as stimulating tourism and economic development opportunities for regional NSW.

Rail corridors are vital linkages in the regional network. Where there are no longer viable rail lines, NSW has many potential rail trails which could connect regional communities, separate

² NSW Government, Road User Space Allocation Policy CP21000, [Online as at 19/2/2021] www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2021/road-user-space-allocation-policy.pdf

³ NSW Government, Providing for Walking and Cycling in Transport Projects Policy CP21001, <https://s23705.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/providing-for-walking-and-cycling-in-transport-projects-policy.pdf>

cyclists from roads and bring tourism and prosperity, as they do in other states. This can only happen with the passing of the NSW Rail Trails Amendment Bill 2022.

Vision Zero for road safety in regional NSW can be achieved by reappraising road design and road user interactions through the lens of Movement and Place. Country roads and towns are places with important lives and characters worth protecting. Reducing speed (particularly in suburban areas) is an important start. Separating vulnerable road users from cars, encouraging active transport and making full use of the rail corridors including rail trails, are other vital linkages.

Bicycle NSW has been the peak bicycle advocacy group in NSW for over forty-five years, and has over 30 affiliated local Bicycle User Groups. Our mission is to *'Make NSW better for all bicycle riders'* from 8 to 80 years of age, and we support improvements to facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.



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