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28<sup>th</sup> September 2022

Dear City of Sydney Cycleways team,

**Re: Proposal to allow two-way bike traffic on some one-way streets**

Bicycle NSW welcomes the City of Sydney's proposal to allow two-way bike traffic on more one-way streets. We believe this is a well-considered initiative to encourage bicycle riding for short trips on quiet streets. It will also progress Sydney City's bicycle network and plans for a more sustainable, equitable and resilient city.

159 streets in 24 suburbs across Sydney have been identified as suitable for allowing two-way bike traffic. Eligibility has been determined according to good line of sight and connectedness with Sydney's growing network of bike paths, cycleways and quietways. With about 40 such street treatments already in existence, the precedent for allocating more bicycle-friendly streets is a proven winner.

**Quiet, residential streets are an essential component of a safe network for bike riding**

While separated bicycle paths are necessary on main roads, the remainder of the street network should welcome pedestrians and cyclists in a safe, mixed environment where traffic speeds and volumes are reduced<sup>i</sup>. The proposed list of lanes and streets are quiet, narrow, residential roads many of which were made one-way in order to prevent motorists taking short cuts or rat-running at speed.

Two-way cycling on one-way streets encourages bicycle riding by greatly expanding options for convenient, safe and direct routes that are generally more comfortable and attractive than main roads. This is because the streets that direct traffic one-way with bicycle exceptions are quiet residential streets. Without the width or traffic volume to warrant separation, these streets are supported by clear signage and initial public education requiring all traffic users to avoid each other by keeping left and giving way where required. There are already a number of one-way lanes and streets in Inner Sydney that work really well.

**Contraflow cycling is a low-cost, easy-to-implement adjunct to walkable, liveable cities.**

The city of Adelaide has had contraflow street treatments since 2013<sup>ii</sup>. Contraflow streets are an efficient use of road space common throughout Europe and Japan. They enhance connectivity, directness and improve safety by separating cyclists from motorists.

There is sometimes community concern that streets are too narrow to allow a bicycle to safely pass a moving car. However, there is robust evidence of positive outcome from legalising contraflow cycling on narrower roads. For example, in Brussels 43% of streets with contraflow authorised have less than 3.5m width and no negative impact on safety has been identified. In fact, studies show that 'relatively higher levels of both objective and perceived safety are linked to better mutual visibility when passing a car driving in opposite direction than when being overtaken by one driving in the same direction'<sup>iii</sup>

Contraflow cycling is supported by filtering out through-traffic and enabling a calmer street environment more conducive to walking and cycling. While it is necessary to protect local streets from through motorised traffic, cycling can be encouraged as it does not generate noise or pollution.

Filtered permeability also realises the Sustainable Sydney 2030-50 goal of a decarbonised, decongested city by opening the way for micromobility. Relying upon cars, vans and trucks for the last mile clogs city streets, adding to emissions, whilst transitioning to micromobility, like e-bikes and cargo bikes, is beneficial for people, places and businesses<sup>iv</sup>.

**Bicycle NSW strongly supports this initiative and suggests the following additional measures:**

- Safer posted speed limits (ideally 20 km/h) on all affected streets.
- Changes to the street design where necessary to slow traffic. Continuous footpaths, extended kerbs, raised platforms, new landscaping and more tactile paving can all be considered to force drivers to reduce speed.
- Clear signage for all road users that the street is one-way for motor vehicles, two-way for bicycles.
- An education and awareness campaign for residents and motorists.

**Sydney's bike network is gaining momentum**

We applaud the progress already underway. The pop-ups installed in 2020, intended to help alleviate pressure on public transport during the COVID-19 pandemic, added 10km to the network and contributed to an increase of 40% in rider number from pre-pandemic levels. The Pitt Street from Circular Quay quickly attracted 6000 bike trips a week<sup>v</sup>. The City of Sydney's 2021 Active Transport Survey shows that the number of residents who ride regularly has increased from 7% in 2017 to 18% now. The survey also shows significant improvements in riders' perceptions of safety. 86% felt confident riding on the streets, up from 75% in 2017.<sup>vi</sup>

High quality walking and cycling environments maintain global competitiveness and reputation. A target has been set for 90% of trips to work in central Sydney to be by walking, cycling or public transport. Sydney is at a tipping point: there has never been a better time to build infrastructure for bike riding and active transport. As the new Minister for Infrastructure, Cities and Active Transport, Rob Stokes MP, set out in a recent speech<sup>vii</sup>, active travel projects that stitch the suburbs together and enable people to get around without a car will be a major focus for the NSW Government. This mission is supported by Transport for NSW's Road User Space Allocation Policy CP21000<sup>viii</sup>, which establishes a road user hierarchy that considers pedestrians first and private cars last.

Bicycle NSW commends Council's ambitions to provide sustainable, equitable transport options for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities. Safe cycling facilities help decongest roads, public transport and parking, don't contribute to environmental pollution and benefit local businesses.<sup>ix</sup>

Yours sincerely,



Francis O'Neill

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Bicycle NSW



Peter McLean

Chief Executive Officer  
Bicycle NSW

*Bicycle NSW has been the peak bicycle advocacy group in NSW for forty-seven years, and has more than 30 affiliated local Bicycle User Groups. Our mission is to ‘create a better environment for all bicycle riders’, and we support improvements to facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. Bike riding provides a healthy, congestion-reducing, low-carbon form of travel that is quiet, efficient and attractive for all ages with the correct infrastructure design.*

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<sup>i</sup> Committee for Sydney. 2021, May 18. Making Sydney a cycling city. <https://sydney.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Committee-for-Sydney-Making-Sydney-a-cycling-city-May-2021.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> City of Adelaide 2013, [https://ehq-production-australia.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/2f3d5e5e99545e990c0e5b1bfccb287ad10db237/documents/attachments/000/002/894/original/Contra-flow\\_Consultation\\_leaflet\\_-\\_Little\\_Sturt\\_St\\_Wilcox\\_St.pdf?X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIA4KKNQAKIOR7VAOP4%2F20220927%2Fap-southeast-2%2Fs3%2Faws4\\_request&X-Amz-Date=20220927T031031Z&X-Amz-Expires=300&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Signature=58e8e6b98c2104ccf695c3c253fc06297972bdf117b0896b31c5684ae289e918](https://ehq-production-australia.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/2f3d5e5e99545e990c0e5b1bfccb287ad10db237/documents/attachments/000/002/894/original/Contra-flow_Consultation_leaflet_-_Little_Sturt_St_Wilcox_St.pdf?X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIA4KKNQAKIOR7VAOP4%2F20220927%2Fap-southeast-2%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20220927T031031Z&X-Amz-Expires=300&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Signature=58e8e6b98c2104ccf695c3c253fc06297972bdf117b0896b31c5684ae289e918)

<sup>iii</sup> Cycle Highways EU 2019. <https://cyclehighways.eu/design-and-build/infrastructure/contraflow-cycling.html>

<sup>iv</sup> WSP 2022, Future of Delivery: Unleashing the potential of micromobility for the last mile <https://www.wsp.com/en-au/insights/future-of-delivery>

<sup>v</sup> City of Sydney. 2021, March 18. Pitt Street leads the way with plans for a permanent cycleway <https://news.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/articles/pitt-street-leads-the-way-with-plans-for-a-permanent-cycleway>

<sup>vi</sup> City of Sydney. 2021, August. Active Transport Survey 2021. <https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/-/media/corporate/files/publications/surveys-case-studies-reports/city-of-sydney-active-transport-survey-2021-report.pdf?download=true>

<sup>vii</sup> Stokes, Rob. 2022, Feb 10. Footpaths and cycleways are an act of democracy – ask Steph. Fifth Estate. <https://thefifthestate.com.au/urbanism/planning/footpaths-and-cycleways-are-an-act-of-democracy-ask-steph/>

<sup>viii</sup> 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](http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2021/road-user-space-allocation-policy.pdf)

<sup>ix</sup> Jerome N Rachele. Do the sums: bicycle-friendly changes are good for business, The Conversation [Online as at 24/2/2021] [Do the sums: bicycle-friendly changes are good business \(theconversation.com\)](https://theconversation.com/do-the-sums-bicycle-friendly-changes-are-good-for-business)