



## DEA NSW in support of proposed Oxford St East Cycleway

May 2023

To whom it may concern,

Doctors for the Environment Australia (DEA) is a charitable organisation of doctors who recognise that human health and wellbeing require an environment free of pollution, capable of providing nutritious food, rich in biodiversity, and able to provide for current and future generations sustainably. <https://dea.org.au/>

DEA's work is supported by a distinguished Advisory Committee of scientific experts whose knowledge of medical and public health issues is fully contemporary. Our members work across all specialties in community, hospital, and private practices.

The NSW branch of DEA (DEANSW) is pleased to support the proposed Oxford St East Cycleway. Dedicated cycle lanes provide significant health benefits including the following:

1. Many of our group are hospital doctors and we can affirm that dedicated cycle lanes save the lives of the children and adults who cycle, because collisions with motor vehicles are prevented. Children are at greatest risk and statistically more likely to die from traffic violence than any other cause including cancer. Put simply, no-one expects pedestrians to walk on the same lane that cars use, and it is not good practice to expect cyclists to expose themselves to the same danger.
2. There are other, less obvious effects, based on an understanding that it is imperative to decrease Sydneysiders' reliance on motor vehicles. Sydneysiders now make 2 million car trips under 2 km every day, with severe public health and environmental effects. These include:
  - a. Respiratory disease (such as asthma and bronchitis), and increased hospital admissions, due to inhalation of gases and particulate matter from vehicle emissions, which are recognised as one of the leading causes of global mortality and morbidity. <https://dea.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Final-air-pollution-submission-PDF.pdf>
  - b. Obesity due to use of passive (motor vehicle) transport. Due to intergenerational inactivity, Australia faces an obesity pandemic with 25% of Children and 67% adults already regarded as overweight/ obese.
3. Indirect effects due to degradation of the environment, as particles get washed or blown into rivers and seas to re-enter the biosphere and our food chain, with as-yet poorly understood effects.

4. Indirect effects due to climate change: it is concerning that passenger vehicles in Australia emit 40% more carbon than the European Union, 20% more than the US and 15% more than New Zealand. (Reference: <https://dea.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/DEA-submission-May-2023-Nat-Fuel-Efficiency-Standard.pdf> )

A 2022 NSW government report estimated a **\$1.75 billion annual cost to health** in NSW from motor vehicles: <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/-/media/OEH/Corporate-Site/Documents/Air/sydney-air-quality-study-stage-2-program-report-220644.pdf>

With better, safer street design that prefers active (cycling, walking) and public transportation Australia would be able to meet its Vision Zero objectives. Urban renewal of Oxford St is a critical environmental health issue and aligns with City of Sydney's sustainability goals to make the CBD a place that values walking and cycling over driving.

On behalf of our colleagues in DEA NSW, thank you for your consideration. We remain at your disposal should you wish to seek clarification or discuss any of the above.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Shaun Watson etc  
Co-chair

Dr Nicholas Williams etc  
Co-chair