

2024 NSW Road Safety Forum

22nd February 2024

Bicycle NSW and WalkSydney joint statement

Road trauma statistics have trended in the wrong direction over the last few years. [365 lives were lost](#) in the year to 22nd February 2024 in NSW, 99 more than in the previous 12 months. **This is a 37% increase.** 47 people have died in crashes so far in 2024, up 15% on the 3-year average for the same time of year. For every death there are 5 serious, life changing injuries. Each crash impacts many other people as well, with friends, families, first responders and bystanders left reeling.

There has been a complete failure of the NSW Government [Towards Zero](#) campaign.

Bicycle NSW and WalkSydney welcome the NSW Road Safety Forum and look forward to hearing from global experts on initiatives that have been proven to work in other jurisdictions.

Bicycle NSW and WalkSydney stress that active and public transport must be an essential part of any strategy to reduce the road toll.

There is a strong correlation between [distance driven and crashes](#). One of the best ways to reduce risk of road trauma is to reduce the amount of time people spend in cars.

Centre for Road Safety data highlights that most road trauma occurs close to home on roads which are familiar to people. If some last mile trips are replaced with active or public transport, many crashes could be avoided. And yet road safety initiatives continue to focus on roads, cars and drivers - not mode shift.

Bicycle NSW and WalkSydney make the following recommendations to the NSW Road Safety Forum:

- **Provide viable alternatives to driving**

It is critical that the NSW Government steps up efforts to deliver a full range of equitable alternatives to driving in all parts of metropolitan and regional NSW.

Quality walking and cycling infrastructure, well shaded by trees, must be a priority for all levels of government, alongside urban planning policy that delivers mixed used, compact developments to reduce the need to travel. Research suggests there are over 2 million car trips per day which are under 2km long in Greater Sydney. Switching some of these trips to active modes is low-hanging fruit for improved road safety.

Public transport between towns must be viable in regional areas. It is relatively affordable to increase services, reduce ticket prices and facilitate trip planning to encourage people to use buses and trains. Bikes must be allowed unboxed on buses and trains so users can address last mile barriers.

To help focus the minds of all stakeholders, NSW Government transport strategies should include targets for mode shift and kilometres travelled, as is now the case in countries such as [New Zealand](#) and [Scotland](#).

- **Reduce speed limits**

Speed is one of the basic risk factors in traffic. We urge the NSW Government to set lower and more appropriate speed limits on all types of roads.

Bicycle NSW and WalkSydney align with other walking and cycling advocacy groups, including Better Streets and Victoria Walks, to reiterate that 30km/h speed limits should be rolled out in areas of high pedestrian activity, on mixed traffic cycle routes and around schools.

- **Deliver more enforcement and education for drivers**

Education campaigns around sharing the road must be well-resourced to reach all corners of the community. For example, Minimum Passing Distance legislation has been in place since 2018 but public awareness is limited.

It is essential to align enforcement to risk, with evidence-based criteria informing enforcement programs and the setting of appropriate fines.

The focus of enforcement and messaging must shift from victims to drivers e.g. "Walk Safety to School Day" sends the wrong message about who should modify their behaviour. This driver-centric mindset has led to 'solutions' such as pedestrian fencing and overbridges to keep pedestrians from being harmed by vehicles. But these are 100% car infrastructure and create enormous barriers to active transport.

- **Increase funding for active transport**

AS set out in our [recent letter to the NSW Premier](#), NSW currently only spends 0.2% of its transport budget on active travel. This is 100 times below that recommended by the UN (20%).

We ask the NSW Government to allocate 10% to walking and cycling programs over the next four years with a view to increase this investment to 20% as capability to deliver increases.

Active transport infrastructure averages 4:1 to 5:1 return on investment ([Queensland Government](#) and TfNSW) due to the enormous benefits to community health, productivity, and environment.

Bicycle NSW has been the peak bicycle advocacy group in NSW for forty-eight 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.

WalkSydney is a community group advocating for walkability in Greater Sydney. WalkSydney works to influence the infrastructure, policies, decision making processes and institutions that shape the walking environment in Greater Sydney to overcome the physical, social and institutional barriers that may limit people's choices to walk. Members provide advice and recommendations to state and local governments and information to citizens about the benefits of walking and options to improve walking in Sydney.