Josh Murray
Secretary
Transport for NSW
231 Elizabeth Street
SYDNEY NSW 200

19th September 2024

Email: secretary@transport.nsw.gov.au

Oak Flats Shared Path

Dear Josh,

I am writing to ask Transport for NSW to urgently investigate **a change to the bike network near Oak Flats station** in City of Shellharbour

A safe shared path that linked the railway station car park to the underpass under Lakes Entrance Road has been rebuilt as a 1.5m footpath by the new owner of the land east of the station.

The previous path was not as wide as it should be, at about 2.0m, but it provided a safe route from the station to the shared path on the east side of Lake Entrance Road, and onto key destinations - Shellharbour City Centre, the beach, and the paths around Lake Illawarra (Figure 1).

Bike riders are now unable to legally ride this route due to the new footpath classification. They are forced out onto Pioneer Drive using the road. They must then cross 4 *extremely* busy lanes of traffic to the south of the Pioneer Drive/Lake Entrance Road roundabout to rejoin the Lakes Entrance Road shared path (Figure 2). The photo in Figure 3 shows this unprotected crossing on a weekday in the middle of the day.

Shocked by this change, advocates from the Illawarra and Kiama Bicycle User Groups asked for the new path to be widened and bought up to a minimum shared path standard.

However, in late August, this entire connection was erased from the Transport for NSW Cycleway Finder map (Figure 4).

It is unclear why Shellharbour City Council allowed the developer to build a 1.5-metre-wide footpath rather than an improved, wider shared path.

Ben Stewart, Council's Executive Director Infrastructure Services, has tried to reassure the community that developer is providing, as required by the DA, a 2.5m-wide shared path along its Pioneer Drive frontage. But there are no plans to connect this short section with the station. It cannot be reached without riding first on a 4-lane road and negotiating the Pioneer Drive/Central Avenue roundabout. This is totally unsuitable for inexperienced riders.

Mr Stewart also explained that new traffic lights are planned for the Pioneer Drive/Lake Entrance Road intersection "to enhance pedestrian and cyclist access". But this project could take years, and the crossing for path users will inevitably be very slow as the movement of vehicles will be prioritised. In the meantime, TfNSW will add a new left turn lane, increasing the crossing to 5 lanes!

Mr Werner Steyer of Illawarra BUG met a representative from Transport for NSW on 29th August to explain his concerns. He has had no response yet.

(02) 9704 0800 | info@bicyclensw.org.au | www.bicyclensw.org.au
Gadigal Country, Level 9, 66 Goulburn St, Sydney NSW 2000
ABN 26 511 801 801

Bicycle NSW requests the reinstatement of a safe shared user path to provide access to Oak Flats station via the underpass of Lakes Entrance Road.

The short length of new footpath needs to be widened to 2.5m to create a shared path connection to the path on the east side of the underpass. This must then be promoted as a safe route on the TfNSW Cycleway Finder map.

Council will need to negotiate with the new landowner. We can only assume that the need to leave adequate space for a shared path was overlooked when the site boundaries and relevant easements were agreed during the sale of the land.

I'm sure you will agree that new development should always *improve* active transport connections, and not remove important safe links.

Yours sincerely,

Peter McLean

Chief Executive Officer
Bicycle NSW

cc.	The Hon. Jo Haylen	Minister for Transport	via website
	The Hon. John Graham	Minister for Roads	via website
	Anna Watson MP	Member for Shellharbour	shellharbour@parliament.nsw.gov.au
	Anna Bradley	Executive Director, Cities and Active Transport, TfNSW	anna.bradley@transport.nsw.gov.au
	Cassandra Ffrench	Regional Director South, Transport for NSW	cassandra.ffrench@transport.nsw.gov.au
	Chris Homer	Mayor, Shellharbour City Council	chris.homer@shellharbour.nsw.gov.au
	Ben Stewart	Executive Director, Infrastructure Services, SCC	ben.stewart@shellharbour.nsw.gov.au
	Wayne Wilson	Acting Transport Planning Manager, SCC	wayne.wilson@shellharbour.nsw.gov.au

Bicycle NSW has been the peak bicycle advocacy group in NSW for over 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.

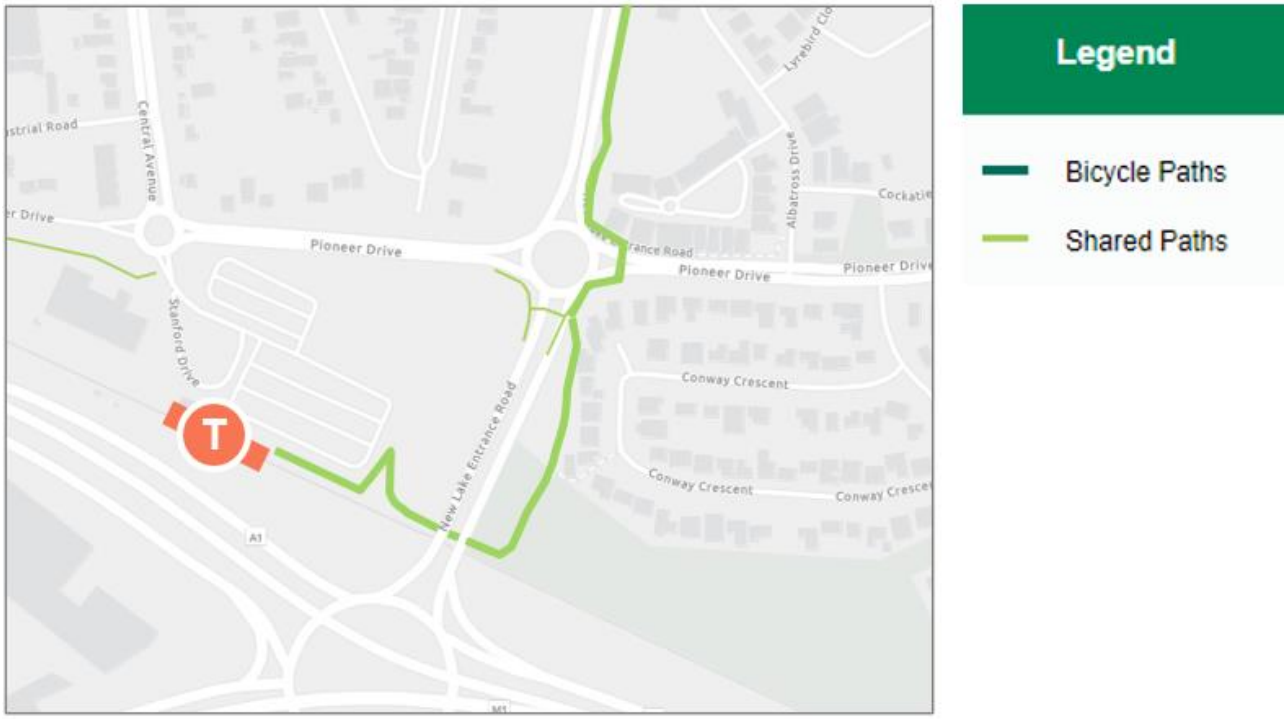

Figure 1: The previous safe route used by bike riders between the station and the shared path on the east side of Lake Entrance Road (Image: TfNSW/Bicycle NSW)

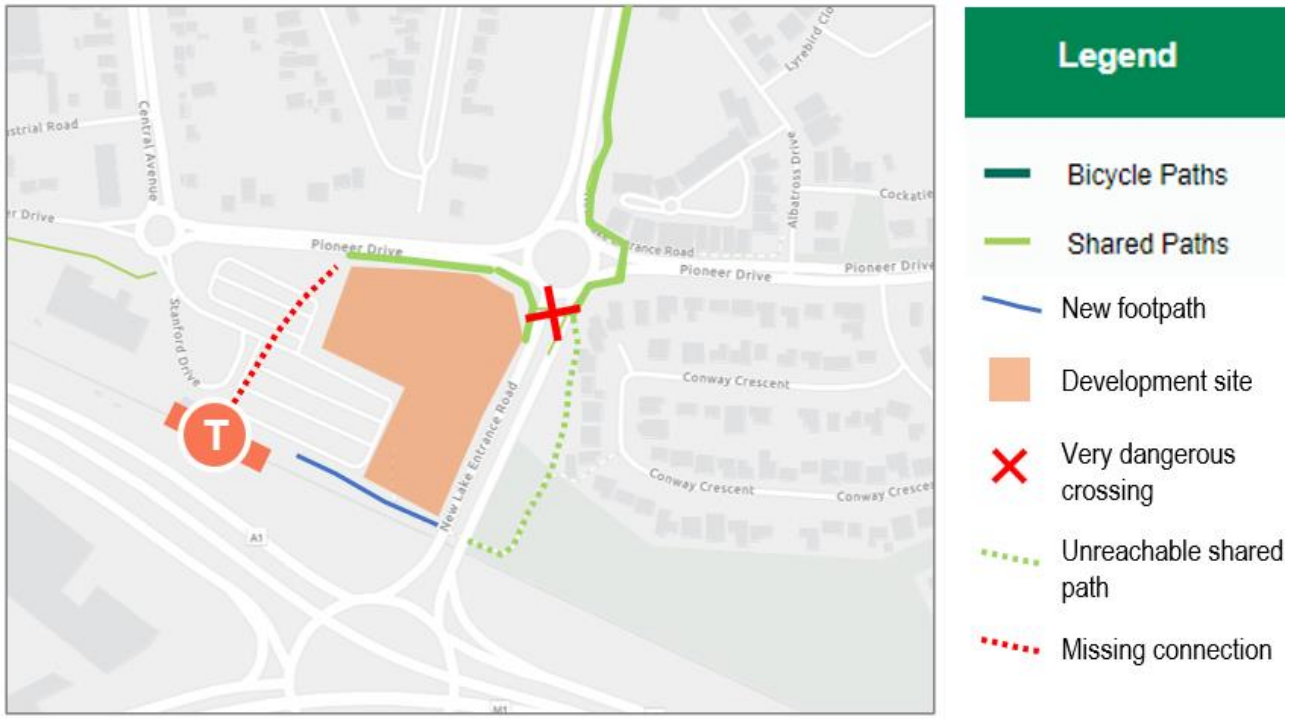

Figure 2: The network is now fragmented and unsafe (Image: TfNSW/Bicycle NSW)

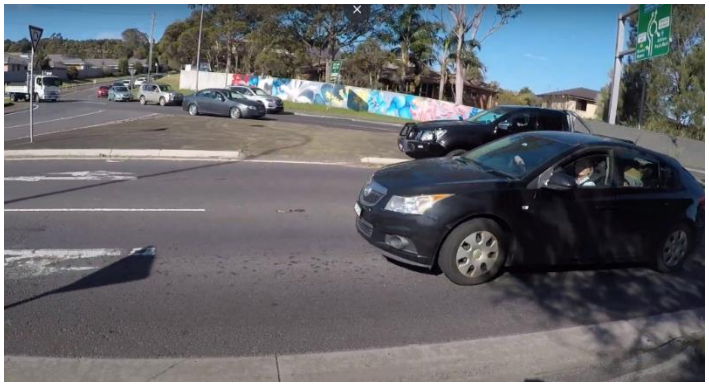

Figure 3: The unprotected multi-lane crossing of Lake Entrance Road, looking east, midday, off-peak. (Image: iBUG)

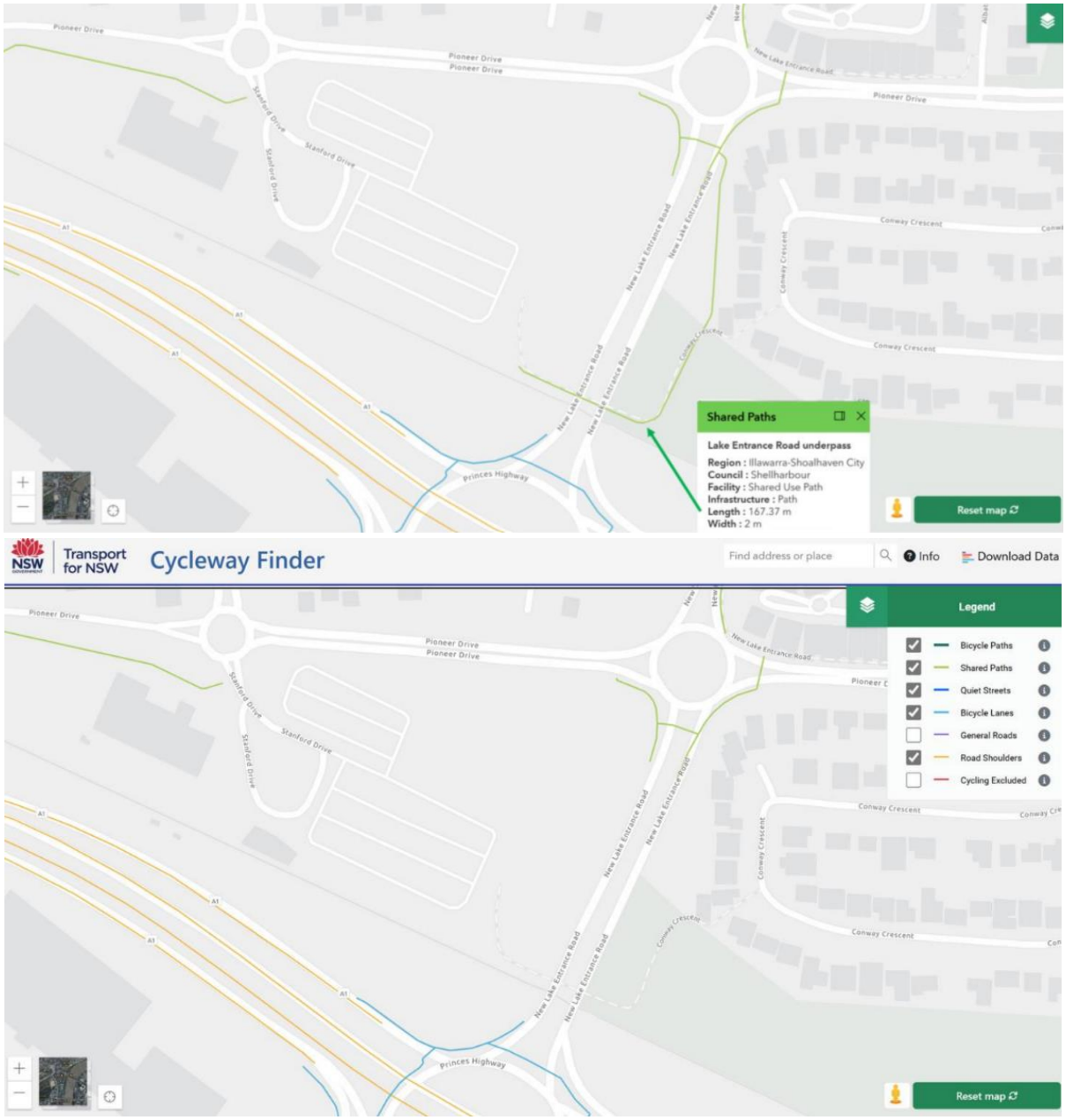

Figure 4:
Screen shots from the TfNSW Cycleway finder map. Top extract is from **24th August 2024**.
By **1st September 2024**, the path was gone leaving no viable, safe route for bike riders. (Image: TfNSW)