

The Hon. John Graham MLC  
Minister for Roads  
52 Martin Place  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

4<sup>th</sup> October 2024

Email: [via website](#)

## Epping Bridge

Dear John,

Bicycle NSW was appalled to learn the NSW Government is pushing ahead with the \$220 million proposal to replace and widen Epping Bridge.

In its current form, this project will deliver a very poor outcome for pedestrians, bike riders and the future amenity and liveability of Epping. Adding road capacity and inducing more driving flies in the face of NSW Government's own policies, strategies, development goals and net zero targets.

Bicycle NSW will not provide a detailed submission at this stage. Instead, we are writing directly to you in your capacity as Minister for Roads with the following questions about the planning of Epping Bridge:

1. How does a project to increase vehicle lanes in a suburban centre comply with the **NSW Future Transport Strategy**?

As an example, Strategic Direction *E2 - Existing infrastructure is optimised* has response *E2.2 Stabilise Greater Sydney's traffic*:

"...stabilising traffic can inform infrastructure prioritisation so that we focus on projects that encourage more productive modes of transport such as public transport, walking and cycling. Road projects will focus on freight and essential travel. Projects that cater predominantly to single occupant private vehicles within established urban areas may not be prioritised."

2. Has the **Road User Space Allocation Policy** has been correctly applied in planning the Epping Bridge widening?

The Road User Space Allocation Policy has recently been updated. The new version provides Transport for NSW with a much stronger mandate to find a better balance between movement and place, with priority given to people walking, cycling and using public transport. Transport for NSW must adhere to these principles ahead of any guidance that seeks to protect or maintain private vehicle level of service.

Road user space decisions must be documented, providing evidence and reasons, and the outcomes assessed against strategic intent. Projects must aim for an overall reduction of the mode share of private motor vehicle trips within built-up areas. Compliance with this Policy and related procedures is mandatory, and projects may be subject to an audit and monitoring process.

I would imagine that two bus-only lanes, with new and improved bus services through and to Epping, is the only possible justification for creating new road space in this location.

3. How does widening a road around a key train interchange, making access by bike and pedestrians more difficult, assist your goals to deliver 'density done well'?

**Transport-Orientated Development**, where high-quality, high-density neighbourhoods support public transport use, is a key NSW Labor platform. It is critical that these precincts are very walkable, with safe, convenient, and attractive access. Increasing through traffic, widening a road that goes right through a town centre and forcing people outside cars to use a pedestrian bridge with unreliable lifts, or a painfully slow multistage crossing, is a complete anathema to those ambitions.

It gets worse. We understand that future development to the west of Beecroft Road will allow an even wider road reserve to accommodate the 6th lane created by the bridge widening. But who will want to develop land next to a 6-lane motorway? And who will want to live there? Epping deserves a very different approach to planning.

4. How has the **Providing for Walking and Cycling in Transport Projects Policy** been applied?

An existing shared path will be widened but this adds no new connectivity. It is obvious that the wider roads will be harder to cross and reduce accessibility by bike. An investment of this scale should deliver a strategic cycleway corridor that is safe for bike riders of all ages and abilities. At the very least, all crossings must be rideable.

5. Why has the design been allowed to reach this stage in contravention of the [Transport for NSW's own standard](#) on **Providing signalised crossings on all intersection legs**?

There must be a very good reason not to provide crossings on all sides of Epping Bridge. Was there a Safety In Design workshop? What were the outcomes? It is not acceptable to prioritise the fast flow of vehicles adjacent to a station in a town centre where there are high levels of pedestrian activity.

6. How can the NSW Government justify \$220 million on this disruptive and doomed project?

That is double the allocation for active transport for the entire state over the next 4 years! (Noting that we are still waiting for clarification on the Get NSW Active funding in the [24/25 NSW Budget](#)). Only 25% of 346 eligible projects received funding from this year's \$60 Million Get NSW Active allocation. Far too many great schemes are languishing while money is wasted on road projects.

We recognise that this project was designed and planned under the previous administration within a very complex political context.

The Minns Government has a golden opportunity to stand up to entrenched car-first thinking at Transport for NSW and establish a different trajectory for Sydney's suburbs.

We urge the NSW Government to take a very close look at the planning process for Epping Bridge, articulate the desired outcomes and demand adherence to contemporary NSW policies. The new bridge must then be re-designed to enable Epping's renaissance as a walkable, green and liveable precinct, focused on high quality public transport, where future generations can build good lives.

Bicycle NSW is very tired of battling road projects which take our collective goals for health, emissions, air quality, congestion, active transport and liveability in the wrong direction. We hope that a detailed review of the Epping Bridge project will initiate a step change in the way NSW Government plans the transport network in Greater Sydney and beyond.

I thank you for your time responding to my question,

Yours sincerely,



Peter McLean

Chief Executive Officer  
Bicycle NSW

cc	Josh Murray	Transport Secretary	secretary@transport.nsw.gov.au
	The Hon. Jo Haylen	Minister for Transport	via website
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*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.*