Transport for NSW
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9th February 2026

Dear Transport for NSW,

RE: Draft Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plans for Central West and Orana and Illawarra Shoalhaven

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plans (SRITPs).

Bicycle NSW has been the peak bicycle advocacy group in NSW for fifty years and has over 37 affiliated local Bicycle User Groups. Our mission is to *'make NSW better for all bicycle riders'*. We advocate for new cycling routes that provide connections to jobs, schools and services for daily transport and recreation trips. 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.

Bicycle NSW is very supportive of the **transport vision** of a safe, connected, sustainable, and resilient transport network that supports the efficient movement of people and freight and improve the wellbeing, health and productivity of residents and visitors to the regions.

We are pleased to see **a clear list of achievable actions**, with a mix of hard infrastructure and soft policy and service measures. Improved public transport is clearly a focus area,

Many of the things we care about are discussed at length in Sections 4 and 5, where the context is analysed and the challenges and opportunity set out. We found detailed commentary on separated cycleways, connected footpaths, vibrant towns centres, lower speed limits, tree canopy, multimodal trips and accessible, reliable public transport.

A commitment to NSW Government Net Zero targets is clearly established. And there is an important focus on building resilience in the transport network. Active transport plays a huge role in providing customers with viable alternative transport options during increasing natural disaster events.

The Road User Space Allocation Policy is mentioned and its role in placemaking is introduced. It is fantastic to see initiatives to reallocate road space to improve place outcomes, safety and amenity on as main streets in Albion Park, Wollongong, Orange, Cowra, Narromine, Blayney, Coonabarabran, Gilgandra and Condobolin. These are ambitious but exciting plans!

However, **Bicycle NSW has many concerns about the SRITPs**, as we highlighted in submissions on the Hunter and South East Tablelands plans in early 2025. Our recent article More of the same for regional transport planning explains why we remain disappointed with this set of plans.

Despite good intentions to prioritise public and active transport, the car-first thinking of the last 70 years predominates.

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There are concrete commitments for road projects, while most of the public and active transport initiatives get ‘investigations’ and ‘early planning’. The result will be wider roads, numerous intersection ‘upgrades’, new slip roads and additional capacity, allowing more cars to travel at faster speeds.

This brief submission highlights these concerns and makes some suggestions for the final SRITPs. We have not provided detailed recommendations, or extensive links to evidence and data to support our views. This submission is not directed at council staff who need clear guidance on achieving better streets and places. The teams at Transport for NSW should be very well versed in best-practice transport planning.

Some of our concerns:

- There is **no transport hierarchy** for different road users to help all levels of government make consistent and transparent decisions about funding, road space allocation and delivery priorities. A hierarchy with people walking at the top should be clearly articulated to the community and all stakeholders in the SRITPs.

- There are **very few concrete projects for active transport**, with funding and timelines rather than ‘investigations’. The implementation of 3 key Strategic Cycleway Corridor projects in Wollongong is an excellent short-term initiative, as is the expansion of micromobility parking and end-of-trip facilities at stations and major bus interchanges in the Illawarra Shoalhaven. But in the Central West and Orana, the only project is to improve active transport along and across the Great Western Highway at Lithgow.

- The **indicators** in the appendix are very vague and have no numerical metrics. It is not good enough to aim for indicators to trend up or down without real and meaningful targets, or baseline data. As an example, the SRITPs do not specify how much walking and cycling infrastructure is needed to complete networks.

- Significant **mode shift** away from private cars is essential to achieve Net Zero. But the only targets around modal share is to ‘stabilise’ vehicle travel. The Climate Council calculated in Shifting Gear that no more than 36% of trips should be taken in a car by 2030, half the current NSW average rate of around 80%. Private vehicle kilometres need to be converted to shared and active travel at the rate of around 5% a year. The SRITPs must stimulate a radical change to our transport system with firm numerical targets.

- There is not enough emphasis on **safe speed limits** and no commitment to lower speeds beyond undertaking speed zone reviews. ‘30km/h’ and ‘40km/h’ are found just a couple of times in the SRITPs, despite these being best-practice speed limits for urban streets.

- Trees are not mentioned in any initiatives, even though shade from the **tree canopy is critical** for a liveable and usable transport network.

- There are no initiatives to facilitate the **transport of bikes on trains and buses**. Although bikes can be wheeled onto the CityRail services to Kiama and Bombaderry, they must be boxed and weigh under 20kg to travel beyond Lithgow. Many bicycles, such as e-bikes and tandems, do not fit within the size and weight limits. Buses rarely accept bikes of any type. This is a serious impediment to local connectivity and bike-related tourism.

- **Cycle tourism** is ignored, as are the huge economic and social benefits offered by the development of **rail trails**.

- Finally, the documents are very **long and very repetitive**. The do not tell a compelling story to the community about the future of the regional transport.

Recommendations for the final SRITPs:

- Include **a transport hierarchy** than informs every transport planning decision, putting pedestrians first
- Apply the **Road User Space Allocation** policy in all projects
- Fund and build **separated cycling infrastructure,** beginning with the Strategic Cycleway Corridors and Regional Connected Cycleways planned by Transport for NSW
- Develop **facilities for cycle tourism** such as rail trails, rural touring routes and mountain bike parks, supported by safe active and public transport connections
- **Lower speed limits** to 80km/h on undivided regional roads, 40km/h in urban areas and 30km/h for all local streets, school zones and town centres. Timeframes for speed reductions should be short term.
- Develop safe, continuous walking and cycling networks within 500m of every school
- Build continuous footpaths across side streets to reinforce pedestrian priority
- Ensure that there is a safe and accessible crossing between every pair of bus stops, and that every bus stop has lighting, a seat and shelter
- Facilitate the transport of **unboxed bikes on trains and buses**
- Make every residential street a cycle street, with traffic calming and a 30km/h speed limit - creating low traffic, low speed streets for high impact at low cost
- Deliver **secure bike parking** in all developments and at public transport, town centres and community facilities
- Develop facilities that **harness the potential of micromobility**. E-bikes and e-scooters are gamechangers in hilly areas with longer distances between destinations
- Ensure that all key active transport routes have good lighting and passive surveillance
- Install consistent **high-quality wayfinding** across the region for people walking, cycling and using public transport
- Create **tree canopy** over pathways to ensure that they are comfortable to use in the warmer months
- Establish a proactive approach to **behaviour change** with a wide range of programs and initiatives to support people to ride and walk
- Interrogate any road projects that will increase capacity and induce more driving, taking inspiration from the Welsh Government's approach
- Establish **clear, numerical targets** for infrastructure roll out, mode shift and road trauma reduction

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Conclusion:

There are so many reasons to deliver a real step change in transport planning for regional NSW.

Transport connects us to everything: our communities, workplaces, friends and family, education, healthcare and all the essential services we need. Our ability to get around – safely and without barriers – is fundamental to our quality of life, wellbeing and participation in society.

A fundamental shift to walking, cycling and public transport is essential to maximise access to work and education, improve the amenity of our towns and suburbs, keep people healthy and reduce emissions on the long road to Net Zero.

It is not possible to meet climate or liveability goals by repeating past mistakes. Meanwhile, significant population increase is forecast for both Central West and Orana (12%) and Illawarra Shoalhaven (36%) over the next 15 years. Transport for NSW's analysis show that population growth will be concentrated in older age groups with a 50% increase in residents aged over 65 across these two regions. Continued car reliance is not an option for this group.

The only way to move away from the congestion, poor health, pollution and inequality that results from car-dependency is to ensure that people have **viable alternatives** to the private car.

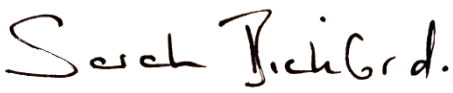
Active and public transport investments must be front and centre of the SRITPs. Not only in the words, but also in the budgets. We can't afford to keep on kicking the can down the road.

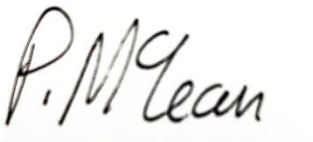
Bicycle NSW urges Transport for NSW to review the draft Plan to address our concerns.

Bicycle NSW would like to be involved with the delivery of active transport infrastructure regional NSW. We can offer expert advice at each stage, from the planning of walking and cycling networks to the detailed design of paths and intersections. Many of the relevant technical standards, policies and guidelines are drawn together on our website.

We look forward to working with Transport for NSW, Local Government Authorities and local Bicycle User Groups to grow active travel over the coming years.

Yours sincerely,





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