

REDUCING TRAUMA ON LOCAL ROADS IN NSW

Organisation: Penrith City Council

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The Hon. Lou Amato MLC
Committee Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety (Staysafe)

Via Email: staysafe@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear The Hon. Lou Amato MLC

NSW Parliament Inquiry – Submission into Reducing Trauma on Local Roads in NSW

Thank you for providing Local Councils with the opportunity to submit comments on the above inquiry into reducing trauma on local roads in NSW.

Penrith City Council welcomes continued cross-government and agency support to identify, plan, deliver and evaluate the effectiveness of road safety initiatives delivered across all jurisdictions as we work together towards zero fatalities by 2050.

While this Parliament Inquiry relates to reducing trauma on local roads, it is important to recognise that the crash history on local roads within the Penrith LGA does not represent a higher percentage of crashes when compared to state roads. The data reveals that about half of all crashes occurs on unclassified roads (1660) with the other half of crashes occurring on classified roads including freeways/motorways (608) and other classified roads (1073). Put simply, half of crashes occurs on local roads with the other half occurring on NSW Government roads. Therefore, whilst local roads make up 90% of NSW road network and State account for 10%, 50% of crashes occur in just 10% of the State road network.

When considering the contributing factors casualties involving vehicle speed (16%) is the leading factor involved with crashes followed by fatigue (8%). Both these statistics are above the Sydney Region of 10% and 5% respectively. Sadly, Penrith LGA also has a higher number of fatalities when compared with the Sydney Region with 35 people being killed between 2014 and 2018. Countermeasures to respond to speeding will require continued partnership with the NSW Police to coordinate enforcement and Transport for NSW (formerly RMS) who will approve initiatives such as reducing speeds in high pedestrian areas around the City Centre and hospital precincts.

Currently, 71.4% of resident workers travel to work by car either as a driver (66.5%) or a passenger (4.9%). This is higher than the Greater Sydney average (56.6%). Penrith residents who travel to work outside of the LGA travel an average of 23 kilometres, further than the average commute of 15 kilometres for Greater Sydney residents. The vast majority (93.8%) of people who work locally in Penrith also live in Penrith or surrounding western Sydney LGAs including Blacktown, Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury. The jobs to resident workers ratio for Penrith City in 2017/18 was 0.78, meaning that there were fewer jobs than resident workers. Locating jobs closer to where people live will reduce private vehicle travel times which will have a significant benefit to road safety.

There remain inefficiencies with the public transport timetable and network coverage whereby residents achieve better time when they drive rather than use public transport. Mode-shift to public transport uptake is complex and requires further detailed analysis to understand how a whole-of-government response can be implemented that is tailored specifically for the Penrith LGA and wider western Sydney region. By continuing to work towards a 30-minute city and reducing travel times this should create safer driving conditions by reducing fatigue and speeding behaviour.

TfNSW (formerly RMS) have a significant role to play in managing the safety of the local road network. This involvement has been significantly eroded over the past few decades with expenditure stagnating and not retaining relevance with the rapidly growing road network and road users as we see our population increase.

Assistance to Local Government through grant funding targeting critical road safety elements including signs, lines, street lighting, traffic signals, traffic facilities, pavements etc. have been continually limited. Importantly the transport hierarchy through road classification plays an important role in establishing safer roads. And whilst Council welcomes the recent announcement to review road classification, it is long overdue, and Council is sceptical that it will simply be an avenue for TfNSW to down classify more of the road network to Local Government. The local roads are under increasing pressure through lack of arterial road expenditure, and the current framework fails to recognise the growth and changes being experienced across the entire local and state road network.

Penrith City Council has a long history of working collaboratively with various NSW Government agencies in delivering safer roads, infrastructure, services and amenities. To reduce the overall number of casualties in the LGA continued and sustained joint effort will be needed for both local and state roads as well as coordinated activities to improve road safety outcomes and reduce road trauma through raising awareness and improving understanding of road safety issues amongst all road users.

Collaborative efforts will continue under the NSW Government funded Road Safety Behaviour Program to increase driver awareness and education; provision of free child seat fittings; pedestrian and bicycle education; regional active transport advocacy and school zone education and enforcement.

As a designated strategic centre for Sydney's future three-city aerotropolis model, improved connectivity via our transport infrastructure is a necessity. Government decision making is critical to achieving successful outcomes. The NSW Government's Future Transport 2056 acknowledges the vital role transport plays in the land use, tourism, and economic development of towns and cities. It includes issue-specific and place-based supporting plans that shift the focus away from individual modes of transport, toward integrated solutions. The Strategy and Plans also focus on the role of transport in delivering movement and place outcomes that support the character of the places and communities we want for the future.

Roads and streets are key assets of an integrated transport network. They support most transport solutions: traffic, parking, freight but also buses, pedestrians and cyclists. All users need to be considered to deliver a successful and integrated solution. All the parts contribute to a more efficient whole, where traffic and parking consider other transport modes and new travel choices are not just encouraged but supported.

Council's longer-term goal would be to reduce car dependency, congestion and parking needs by providing high frequency and reliable public transport as well as a safe and connected active transport network that protects vulnerable users. This is a significant key to reducing road trauma.

Council supports continued targeted funding for rural road improvements, local streetscape funding that deliver place-based outcomes within residential, shopping and school areas. Council also supports ongoing funding prioritisation to the NSW Police to provide enforcement activities that target the Penrith LGA's contributing factors of all crash types that includes driver speed, fatigue (distraction) and alcohol.

Behavioural insights and psychology form part of successful behavioural change campaigns. Additional targeted social research would be welcomed to understand and respond to human behaviour around the contributing factors of crashes especially speed, fatigue, driver distraction and inattention. Continuing to strengthen stakeholder relationships and design programs around cultural sensitivity, gender or other social considerations is needed

Council supports other road safety experts in their efforts to continue to reduce speed limits, particularly in areas with vulnerable road users and adapt speeds to suit the quality of the road and protect drivers and passengers from inevitable human errors. Council welcomes the expansion of lower speed limits in high pedestrian areas including city and town centres as well as around hospital precincts and schools.

Penrith City Council is committed the Safe System approach to improving road safety takes a holistic view of the road transport system and the interactions among the key components of that system: Safe Roads, Safe Vehicles, Safe Speeds, and Safe People. Road safety is a shared responsibility. All levels of government, business and the community need to make decisions with safety in mind, from the design of our roads and vehicles, investments, laws and education, and each road user acting safely each and every day.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this review. Council looks forward to continuing this partnership in years to come.

Should you have any queries regarding this information, please do not hesitate to contact [REDACTED] during business hours.

Yours faithfully

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