

Hello!

Safe Streets to School Randwick wishes to offer our input to the Active Transport Strategy for Randwick City Council.

Who we are

For context, we are a group of local residents who want all children and families in the Randwick LGA to be able to walk and ride safely to school. We are seeking three changes in the long term, to achieve this:

1. Pedestrian priority crossings on streets with speed limits 40km/h and higher
2. Footpaths on streets with speed limits 40km/h and higher
3. 30km/h speed limits for streets where there are no pedestrian priority crossings or footpaths

We have a [petition](#) with 100+ signatures supporting these asks.

Active Transport Strategy

An Active Transport Strategy is a valuable opportunity for Randwick City Council to clearly articulate what it values and how it can measure its progress towards achieving its goals around active transport, which includes walking, cycling and active travel to schools.

This has many benefits for children, and indeed the whole community: better physical health, better mental health, more independence, more social connections, more familiarity with their neighbourhood, less noise and tailpipe pollution from cars.

The recent Integrated Transport Strategy has an objective of "Increase the active transport mode share to 35% by 2031, from a 26% baseline", which can be achieved by considering a number of dimensions:

1. lower speed limits on residential streets
2. better infrastructure to slow drivers
3. better crossing infrastructure to allow children to safely cross streets
4. low cost street closures around schools at certain hours
5. publicity of active transport options
6. collaboration with schools

Students travelling to school

People develop the habits of walking and cycling when young. The best time to start is in the early school years, and the key decision point is in middle to late primary school when parents have to decide if they want their children to travel independently to school by foot or bicycle. The strategy should specifically consider how to get more students walking and cycling to school, with consideration for both primary schools and high schools.

However, an active transport strategy cannot only address people walking and cycling.

The Active Transport Strategy must address how streets influence drivers, otherwise it is an incomplete strategy. Drivers dictate when and where people walk and cycle, or choose not to.

For instance, a number of local schools have shared their concerns with us about unsafe streets surrounding their schools. We have posted these concerns on the map at the Active Transport Strategy feedback page, and attach these specific concerns as an appendix.

Speed limits

A key issue is drivers travelling at higher speeds. When drivers are compelled to drive more slowly, with time to watch for children walking and cycling, the streets become safe.

When cars travel at 50 km/h or higher, it is unsafe for children to cross the road to go to school. Parents know this, and so the rates of children walking to school have plummeted in the last 50 years. The problem is compounded by more parents choosing to drive instead.

At 30 km/h, children have more time to cross the road, drivers have more time to react, and less distance to stop. Lastly, any crash will be far less fatal or less harmful to the child.

We need lower speed limits in our residential streets near schools, so parents know their children can safely walk, scoot and safely to school.

The new NSW Minister for Transport, Jo Haylen, has expressed interest in reviewing speed limits around schools.

This is a great opportunity to achieve Strategic Approach 2.7 in Randwick's Integrated Transport Plan (Work with TfNSW to review speed limits in 2 identified areas each year until 2031).

We are keen to see a region of around 20 streets around one school have speed limits set to 30 km/h. This locality can be used as an example. There are a number of potential first schools to implement this near, as has been discussed with the Mayor and Manager of Integrated Transport during a 2022 meeting: La Perouse Public School, Kensington Public School, Clovelly Public School, South Coogee Public School.

Wollongong, Manly, Newcastle and Liverpool have trialled 30km/h speed zones in their councils, and 30kmh is permanently in place in parks like Centennial Park and the Domain. This is global best practice: it is recommended by the World Health Organisation and the OECD. London, Toronto, Paris, Edinburgh, Madrid, Tokyo, Cardiff and dozens of other cities are doing this in their suburban streets.

Separated cycleways are part of the solution, as connecting routes along high car traffic roads, but take decades to roll out and are expensive to construct. Making the low traffic residential streets into *slow* traffic residential streets will add thousands of safe cycle routes, in a matter of months.

Street infrastructure

Designing streets where drivers travel slower is key. This is essential not only in the streets adjacent to schools, but the surrounding streets, as most students don't only cross one street to get to school - the 40 km/h school zone speed limits in mornings and afternoons immediately adjacent to a school are only part of the solution. We suggest that all quiet back streets around schools should be made 30kmh, and options considered to close some streets to all traffic outside the school gate as Paris has done for 220 schools.

We need consistent annual funding for higher cost infrastructure:

- intersection narrowing
- continuous footpaths
- raised pedestrian crossings
- permanent modal filters

Council should lobby TfNSW for a more predictable, active transport funding stream model.

However, some infrastructure is cheaper, should can be rolled out more widely:

- [street closures](#) during school commute hours
- [bike boxes](#) at intersections
- bicycle parking in schools
- painted footpath signage showing [safe routes to walk to school](#)

We appreciate and support the construction of a bicycle route construction priority list, while simultaneously recognising that this will take many years to build, and only address certain bicycle routes in the Randwick LGA. As listed above, there are other valuable steps to achieving more cycling and walking mode share in our community.

School programs and support

Council needs to work closely with its schools. A survey and online forum to hear the concerns of principals and P&Cs regarding active transport for students would be valuable. We have received feedback from a number of schools about unsafe design of streets.

Council can offer active transport programs to schools, such as: [temporary street closures during pick up and drop off](#), [bicycle buses](#), trials of cargo bikes for parents and kids, bicycle maintenance services on Ride to School Day, and distribution of [teacher resources](#).

Additionally, a road safety audit around schools is ideal, as the [Northern Beaches Council](#) did.

Randwick City Council's new General Manager Ray Brownlee has experience with Northern Beaches Council's work on [transport strategy](#).

Summary

A multi-faceted approach will see Randwick achieve its objective of "Increase the active transport mode share to 35% by 2031, from a 26% baseline."

We are keen to see lower speed limits in residential streets, better infrastructure to slow drivers, better crossing infrastructure to allow children to safely cross streets, low cost street closures, publicity of active transport options, and collaboration with schools.

Thanks for your time considering this submission.

Regards,
Owen Shepherd
Safe Streets to School Randwick

Appendix: Specific concerns of local schools

St Margaret Mary's Catholic Primary School, Randwick

On Clovelly Rd near Centennial Ave, there is a new island crossing. In spite of this structure and the school zone (40 km/h), there are still many cars and cyclists speeding through when students walk to school.

To quote the principal Kylie O'Donnell, "In my first six months at the school, I have had a number of parents approach me to see if this structure could be turned into a proper pedestrian crossing for our community to use."

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College, Kensington

From the assistant principal: "Our first concern is the 4 way intersection at the bottom of our school where Addison St and Kensington Rd cross. It is very dangerous and cars don't slow down. As there are no real crossings, it makes it hard for us to navigate and get our students across the roads. We would like there to be speed hump crossings installed on at least two of the 4 sections of the intersection to allow students to cross safely and force cars to slow down.

As Addison St approaches Tunstall Ave where Balfour Rd is, there is also another dangerous spot and there is no safe way for students to cross the road there. We would like to see something done here also.

The other thing we have tried to get is a no stopping area on both sides of the road between OLSH and OLR on Kensington Rd between 2:30-4pm on school days. At the moment, the parents park on either side, making it hard for buses to get around the corner or stop to pick up students and they double park causing a back up of traffic almost onto Roma Ave."

Matraville Public School

At the intersection of Bunnerong Rd and Beauchamp Rd, many northbound drivers drive at well over 50 km/h after the traffic light turns green. Drivers do so in the morning and afternoon when the speed limit is 40 km/h in a school zone. Please provide clear signalling to drivers north of the intersection that they are still in a school zone after proceeding north through the intersection. A sign read two minutes ago, on a road built like a highway, prior to reaching the traffic lights, is rarely remembered.

Clovelly Public School

Notwithstanding that part of the school is in Waverley Council, the surrounding access streets from Randwick LGA could be calmed to 30kmh - particularly Boundary St, Varna St, Brandon St and Pacific St leading to the playground. We understand that recently an adult was killed on Varna St, and we've heard reports from parents that their children are suffering near misses in the local area while walking to school. This is something that could be actioned rapidly and cost

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