

Transport for NSW

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## PIA feedback on the Roads Act 1993 Issues Paper

The Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Roads Act 1993 Issues Paper. PIA is the peak body representing planning and the urban and regional planning profession, with over 5,000 individual members across Australia.

PIA recognises the opportunity of the Roads Act Review to support the overall aim of reducing car dependency and accommodating a range of transport modes. This aim is supporting by the following key points:

- PIA supports re-orienting regulation towards intentional and strategic use of Movement and Place principles.
- This can be assisted by redefining road and street categories to accommodate desired future function in a clear and systemic way using Movement and Place concepts.
- PIA recommends undertaking a process to identify and resolve sticking points in the integration of referrals and approvals under the Roads Act and the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.
- PIA also suggests renaming of the Roads Act to 'Movement and Place' to reflect the contemporary approach sought through this Review.

Both the PIA NSW Policy and Advocacy Committee and PIA NSW Transport Network have informed this submission. It also aligns with the Statement of Priorities for NSW Emerging Planners, Priority 3 – Transport, infrastructure and connectivity, which states:

*“Integrated transport planning is critical to enabling liveable and sustainable communities in NSW.”*

## Objectives of the Review

PIA notes there are four objectives of the Roads Act 1993 Review stated in the Issues Paper:

1. Enable more contemporary uses for roads and streets.
2. Enable faster local council and other roads authority decision making.
3. Create an easier to use statute that is adaptable and responsive to the future via planning.
4. Overcome operating challenges for roads authorities.

PIA supports the Review objectives and gives particular attention to objectives 1 and 3 in this submission.

We also note and support the policy of “overall reduction of the mode share of private motor vehicle trips within built-up areas” set out in the Transport for NSW Road User Space Allocation Policy and identified in the Issues Paper.

## Roads vs streets and places

Roads and streets perform various transport, civic, social and economic functions. Each of these roles is essential – but the type of road or street which is suitable for them might differ hugely in terms of physical design, vehicle speeds, and the priority given to different modes.

This is recognised in the Issues Paper and the NSW Movement and Place Framework, which establishes a method for categorising roads and streets according to their contrasting functions.

The terminology of Movement and Place is not carried through into the current Roads Act, which classifies roads primarily according to their transport or traffic (aka ‘movement’) functions. This is appropriate in many cases but can privilege movement functions over ‘place’ – the functions of streets as a public space for a variety of users, usually at low speeds.

A key opportunity of the Roads Act Review is therefore better integration of the Movement and Place framework within the overall system, along with guidelines such as Design of Roads and Streets.

## Desired future function

Use of functional Movement and Place categories also implies a need to recognise the desired future function of roads and streets.

Existing classifications do not account for desired future function, making it difficult to integrate roads and streets with future investments in public transport and changing development patterns. This is particularly a concern in infill areas seeking to increase population density and reduce car dependency over the long-term.

The disconnect between legal and administrative categories and desired future functions is also a problem where roads take on a strategic movement function but are not recognised proactively.

For example, Fifteenth Avenue in South West Sydney has become an important route for future transit connections to the Aerotropolis but remains classified as a local road. This has not established a clear strategic intent for this route for the State Government to provide a basis for collaboration and investment.

Conversely, there are many streets across Greater Sydney with high pedestrian activity and important retail, recreational and civic functions and yet are identified as state and regional roads for movement – at the expense of desirable place functions. Examples include Railway Parade Burwood, The Grand Parade, Sans Souci, Parramatta Road and Oxford Street.

Reorganisation of road and street classifications around desired future Movement and Place functions could improve outcomes in these examples by allowing the following to occur:

- Recategorisation of roads and streets to reflect the intended outcomes of an integrated transport plan.
- Recategorisation would be accompanied by a statement of desired future function, outlining upgrades and standards to be achieved.
- This would give weight to functional aims, providing a stronger basis for collaboration between agencies and levels of government.
- Movement and Place categories could also be recognised in planning and urban design strategies.

## Opportunity for an integrated approach

The Roads Act Review presents an opportunity to recognise the existing and desired future functions of roads and streets, in accordance with contemporary Movement and Place principles. PIA is pleased to see this opportunity recognised in the Issues Paper, which states that a more systematic approach could:

*"Shift the focus of regulation from reactive and operational to intentional and strategic."*

To achieve this, road and street categories should be reorganised to give weight to movement, place and composite functions. In other words, categories should distinguish between objectives of maximising traffic flow and providing a safe and welcoming environment for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users at low speeds.

Functional categorisation should also give effect to planning and transport strategy which seeks a desired future outcome. For example, roads surrounding a planned Metro station might be reclassified to allow a more streamlined process for works to support pedestrian access. On the other hand, roads surrounding a planned freight and logistics hub may be reclassified to accommodate a strategic movement function.

Integration of strategy within the Roads Act should provide a basis for simplified assessment and delegation of management responsibilities (as noted in the Issues Paper). Resolving complex issues at the strategic level could allow for streamlined assessment for works which align with desired future function, including potentially fewer concurrence and referral triggers. This offers a means of addressing Objectives 2 and 4 of the Review.

## Classification of road users

The Review also provides an opportunity to classify road users and define how they should be accommodated within the road space. Road users could be classified by speed rather than transport mode – this would uphold Movement and Place concepts while accommodating emerging modes of transport. For example, if e-scooters are travel below a certain threshold they may be suitable for shared paths and cycleways.

## Congestion charging

Road pricing and congestion charging are also potentially important means of reducing the mode share of private motor vehicles in major centres such as the Sydney CBD. A proportion of the revenue collected through these mechanisms could also be allocated to improve public and active transport connections to the area in-line with strategy.

While out of the scope of the Review, any changes to Part 13 (Finance) of the Roads Act should not preclude a future congestion charging policy.

## Access / Connections to roads for new developments

PIA supports establishing a framework which would enable quicker decision-making with regards to road access for new developments. Measures to support this may include developer contributions to upgrade local active transport connections to incentive mode shift and reduce traffic impacts of development.

PIA recommends a process be undertaken to research and resolve barriers for the timely integration of referrals / concurrences / approvals between the Roads Act and EP& A Act. There

are frequent examples of impasse as potential road connections are unable to be progressed within typical development application timeframes.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on this timely review. For further information please contact us at [nsw@planning.org.au](mailto:nsw@planning.org.au).