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I am writing to provide feedback on the Issues Paper for Review of the Roads Act 1993. South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD) Population Health recognises the impact that transport systems have on the health of the population. This letter highlights areas of interest to SWSLHD. A more detailed response to questions posed within the Issues Paper is attached in Appendix A.

SWSLHD has produced a [position statement on healthy urban planning and placemaking in South Western Sydney](#). Developed in consultation with stakeholders (including local government), the position statement takes a proactive approach to advocating for built environments that grow healthy, equitable and resilient communities and prioritise wellbeing and social connection. This position statement has informed our response to the Issues Paper, ensuring that our recommendations align with evidence-based principles for creating healthier, more connected and resilient communities.

The recognition of the impact of roads and streets on communities is a positive step towards healthy, equitable and connected communities for NSW. SWSLHD acknowledges that Transport for NSW has made positive moves towards a contemporary and place-specific transportation network development of the [Movement and Place](#) framework. We recommend the integration of Movement and Place principles and objectives into the Act during the reforms.

Drawing on local priorities and evidence, SWSLHD has identified priority areas within the issues paper as follows:

- Definition of Road Users: We support a broadened consideration of road users to include different community groups using roads to encourage safety, independence and activity across the lifecycle. This would include children and elderly road users, those with differing mobility requirements and road users using different vehicle types, including new transport types for micromobility such as e-bikes and light electric vehicles.
- Hierarchical road user and space allocation framework: A hierarchical road user and space allocation framework should be incorporated referencing the specific road users identified above. Extending space allocation guidance into the Act will help increase access to supportive infrastructure required for social inclusion, connection and access in groups that face transportation inequities.

South Western Sydney Local Health District acknowledges the traditional owners of the land.

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- Health and Wellbeing: We support the inclusion of health and wellbeing as specific objectives and objects within the Act. The explicit inclusion of health and wellbeing should be comprehensive to ensure consistency across the Act. Specific objectives have been identified in the response to Question 4.1.
- Equitable outcomes: Equity and equitable outcomes should be an explicit consideration across all proposed changes to the Act, not just within the sections regarding safety, public health and environmental requirements sections. Equity within the Act will need to consider road access, use and quality, as well as procedural functions such as future transport strategic and network planning processes, approval pathways and governance structures to ensure the management, planning and administration of roads in NSW serves and supports road users who may be disadvantaged in the stated areas.
- Efficient decision-making processes: Changes to support faster local decision making and streamlining the statute should facilitate coordination between delegated authorities to ensure the timely delivery of road infrastructure and associated or alternative public transport. Regions with developing or changing transport infrastructure requirements are disadvantaged when mobility options are limited to car-centric movement. Governance changes should reflect the interest of flexible and locally driven community requirements for their transport networks.
- Climate change mitigation: Disaster responsiveness for roads should incorporate the longer-term and cumulative impacts of climate change including heat and flooding, addressed through taking a place-based approach that requires diverse transport network options and supports for adaptive infrastructure.

Should you require any further information, please contact Maria Beer Director, Collaboration, Population Health SWSLHD at maria.beer@health.nsw.gov.au.

Kind regards



Mandy Williams
Director Population Health
Date: 27 March 2025

Appendix A- Response to the Issues Paper

<p>Q 4.0</p> <p>a) What is currently working well?</p>	<p>There have been good examples of suitable road-related investments in Sydney across state and local government responsibility. We encourage further examples of good practice and innovation within public-focused infrastructure and programs. Some examples include interest and activity from local councils in local cycleway design, pedestrian-centric streets and active transport policies. Local councils in South Western Sydney are participating in healthy planning and design, including the Healthy Streets program. An infrastructure example includes the Westlink M7 separated shared pathway between Preston and Baulkham Hills, where community usage is supported by streetlights, signage and maintenance.</p>
<p>Q 4.1</p> <p>a) How could the Act be changed to enable more community uses for roads and streets? (select all that apply)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Define the different objectives for roads and streets -Include outcomes for safety, public health and the environment in the objects of the Act -Simplify the types of roads and streets defined in the Act -Include desired outcomes for the design and operation of local streets and civic spaces -other (please specify) 	<p>All of the proposed options for change suggested by the review are supported, centred on community use, health and wellbeing. During the reform it will be important to integrate changes across the entirety of the Act to capitalise on every possible opportunity for positive community outcomes across the differing responsibilities of the Act. Roads are often given priority over other types of public space development that benefit the community and environment, and we encourage the review to consider the place of roads within the broader NSW planning and transportation networks when redefining roads and streets.</p> <p>Suggested objectives to be included are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Health and wellbeing for all road users 2. Movement and place for equitable opportunities and outcomes 3. Road and street networks should support mixed use planning <p>Along with simplifying classifications of roads and streets, a reform of the Act should consider expanding the included passageways to better reflect the networks of functional human movement through public property and to private property, including pathways such as walking and cycling paths. Footpaths should be considered part of access, including needs of pedestrians who may have disconnected or unsafe movement along public roads, and limited or impeded space on footpaths on car and freight-centric road systems.</p> <p>Definitions of the outcomes for safety, public health and the environment should be determined in consultation with public health organisations including SWSLHD to ensure they reflect best practice and centre on NSW communities and road users. Similarly, outcomes in the design and operation of local streets and civic spaces should be developed through strong consultation practices.</p>

Q 4.1

- b) How can safety be better considered in the planning, administration and management of roads?
- c) How can the Act better recognise the public health and environmental benefits of roads and streets?

Responses 4.1 b) and c) have been combined, as considerations to safety, health promotion and environments have intertwined features.

We encourage that the Roads Act review process consider the available best-practice and evidence-based guidelines, including the resources referenced in the above letter. In addition we encourage that reform of the Act should be broadly consistent with the NSW Healthy Built Environment Checklist.

A hierarchical road user and space allocation framework should be incorporated referencing the specific road users such as those identified in response to Q 4.2 a). Extending space allocation guidance into the Act will help increase access to supportive infrastructure required for social inclusion, connection and access in groups that face transportation inequities. This space allocation framework and associated guidance around its implementation should address road use conflicts between all potential user groups, with priority to pedestrian and cycling safety over car flow or on-road car parking including controls to avoid conflict, such as separated cycleways and walkways and exclusion of heavy vehicles or freight from pedestrian-centric areas.

Other safety and health considerations that the Act can include are as follows;

- Adopting a network approach that reduces heavy vehicle use in built up urban areas.
- Incorporating more effective options for mixed use transport planning that reduces the need for cars while providing for freight.
- A requirement to provide complete infrastructure that is connected to existing infrastructure of suitable quality.
- Standardised speed restrictions to 30km/hr on streets around schools and major urban centres
- Strengthen management strategies during road works and development to ensure safe and connected pedestrian access
- Inclusions for the development of micromobility strategies in places

Q 4.1

- d) What other community issues would you like to raise in relation to the act?

SWSLHD would recommend that both the reform process and the resulting changes to the Act use strong community participatory approaches, engaging with communities as active stakeholders with authority on their needs and community solutions.

Q 4.2

- a) How can The Act be improved to ensure that it considers each category of road user?
- b) Share your personal experience in navigating the Act to provide for a specific group of road users
- c) What other issues would you like to raise for accommodating all road users?

Responses to 4.2 part a) b) and c) have been combined.

SWSLHD runs a number of programs across the community, engaging patients and the public who have highly variable mobility and transportation requirements. To adequately represent road users across all categories, we recommend also addressing transportation requirements within modes. Inclusion of these user groups should be focused on equity, promoting fair and accessible right to passage with high quality infrastructure.

This includes the differing connectivity and infrastructure requirements of:

- Users of all modes across the lifecycle, including children, young adults and the elderly
- Users with differing mobility support equipment including mobility aids, electric vehicles and light vehicle uses
- Commuters using multimodal transport
- Users of active transport modes for utility, recreation and exercise
- Users of e-bikes or vehicles for small scale delivery services
- Students using multimodal or eTransport options.

Also see 4.1

Q 4.3

- a) What issues have you experienced due to overall classification systems to determine roles and responsibilities for NSW roads
 - confusion between legal, functional and administrative systems
 - hard to find which legal classification applies to which road segment
 - confusion about who has authority for which segment of road
 - too many legal classifications
 - other (please specify)
- b) How could the system of road classification in the Act be improved?

Response to b)

We recommend the adoption of the Movement and Place identification system for roads and streets as far as practicable, and the inclusion of footpaths, separated cycleways and walking pathways to understand the movement networks of NSW in a more comprehensive manner.

Also see 4.1 and 4.2

Q 4.4

- a) What issues have you experienced with parallel approval processes under the NSW planning system and the Act?

- Extra time/cost associated with parallel Roads Act 1993 approvals
- Confusion with different processes for the Roads Act 1993 and land use related approvals
- Conflicting advice from roads and land use agencies or areas of council
- Other (please specify)

- b) Can you provide further information on the issues you have experienced?

- c) If you've experienced differences in approach to road network planning and land use planning, how have these affected your work?

SWSLHD provides submissions to planning proposals, development control plans and development applications across seven local government areas. Frequently, we provide evidence and recommendations for developments in growth areas or large precincts where road development and active and public transportation is insufficient or poorly timed for the communities proposed to live or work on the area. This limits transport variability and accessibility to important places and activities of daily living, including green or open spaces, libraries and health services, education and employment opportunities. Peri-urban areas around Sydney face these connectivity challenges.

Plans that attempt to implement quality internal connectivity may have limited uptake and resulting positive health outcomes in their community if a car is required to travel outside of the proposed development zone for employment and education. Road network and land use planning is required to be better coordinated and delivered across planning, funding and implementation, with the inclusion of developers and community stakeholders. Any changes made within this road reform should be integrated across NSW land use and strategic planning policy.

Also see 4.7

Q 4.5

- a) How could the Act make roles and responsibilities clearer for decision-making? (select all that apply)

- Agree to how the network is operated between road authorities
- Less focus on individual regulatory signs and lines on local neighbourhood streets with low traffic volume
- Codify 30-year-old practices that work in the Delegation into the Act
- Align network plans with decision making roles based on risk and network implications
- Other (please specify)

- b) Describe your experience of using the Delegation to Council and any improvements which could be made

- c) Describe your experience of using the Temporary Delegation to Councils and if this approach is more streamlined to regulate traffic and deliver local street and place improvements

Response to part a)

-Clarifying agreements on how the network is operated between road authorities

Changes to support faster local decision making and streamlining the statute should facilitate coordination between delegated authorities to ensure the timely delivery of road infrastructure and associated or alternative public transport. Regions with changing transport infrastructure requirements risk negative health impacts when mobility options are limited to car-centric movement.

-Less focus on individual regulatory signs and lines in local neighbourhood streets with low traffic volumes

When adjusting the decision-making processes around regulatory signage and lines on local neighbourhood areas of low traffic volume, consider the impact of changed vehicle usage to the safety on these streets such as the presence of large SUV and utility “trucks” and delivery vans, as well as micromobility forms such as e-bikes and scooters. Explore alternative measures to improve safety in these areas.

-Align network plans with decision-making roles based on risk and network implications

Aligning network planning with roles should also consider decisions and responsibilities for outcomes and impacts, including on safety, health and wellbeing.

See response to 4.4

Q 4.6

- a) What improvements can be made to the Act to increase flexibility in response to natural disasters?
- b) How can the permit approval process for installing works and structures, undertaking road works, events and activities be made clearer and more consistent across all Road Authorities?
- c) How could compliance and penalty frameworks be changed to address environment and safety compliance?

Response to a)

Disaster responsiveness of roads will be increasingly challenged by the environmental demands of longer-term impacts of climate change (including floods, heat and air quality challenges) and support adaptive infrastructure. Responsiveness should incorporate requirements for diverse transport network options, including away from private or commercial vehicle use, and the place of public transport in disaster response and resilient systems. These risks will be impacted by existing and cumulative spatial inequities.

The Act should include considerations of road infrastructure on climate and urban heat through the position and density of roads, water management and construction materials and also the place of roads in encouraging low-emissions transportation.

Q 4.7

- a) What regulatory features should be tested to ensure the Act can accommodate emerging technologies and new approaches? (select all that apply)
- Ability to change the primary intended function or use of a street at different times of day or days of the year
 - Area wide speed zone reduction on local neighbourhood streets delegated to councils
 - regulation of traffic on local neighbourhood streets and civic spaces delegated to councils
 - other (please specify)
- b) Which provisions in the Act and the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act could benefit from regulatory experimentation?
- c) How could these Acts better support new developments in sustainability?

Response to a)

Trials of the suggested regulatory benefits should have accompanying health and wellbeing goals for the proposed activities and should be evaluated against these measures. Where possible, flexible road uses should prioritise social uses of public space or active and public transportation trials. In trials focused on areas of high non-car use where people's safety is impacted by vehicles, such as school zones, implementation of a suite of changes to an area are recommended, combining strategies such as changing road access, lowering speed zones, restricting access to certain vehicle types, cycling dismount zones including for e-mobility vehicles etc for public safety and to encourage active transport.

- Ability to change the primary intended function or use of a street at different times of day or days of the year
- Area wide speed zone reduction on local neighbourhood streets delegated to councils
- Regulation of traffic on local neighbourhood streets and civic spaces delegated to councils

Response to b) and c)

Between the Act and EP&A Act, we recommend exploring requirements for assessment, monitoring and evaluation of road programs and infrastructure. Some areas of focus may include potential adaptations to the Environmental Assessment processes of major infrastructure to include cumulative impacts of development across regions. Road planning forms an important part of the development of urban areas particularly, but in regions with multiple projects and large growth, these developments impact the environment in an underrecognised way. Evaluation of the processes and outcomes of integrated transportation strategies and networked infrastructure delivered in NSW can inform which changes to the Act may be required and future delivery of high-quality infrastructure.