

31 January 2019

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Darebin City Council

The Secretary  
Economy and Infrastructure Committee  
Parliament House, Spring Street  
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Sir/Madam

**Re: Inquiry into the increase in Victoria's road toll**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to this Inquiry.

Darebin City Council strongly supports improved safety for our road users. In 2018, we endorsed our second Darebin Safe Travel Strategy (2018-2028) which, along with our Darebin Walking Strategy, provides an overarching ambition to increase walkability and safety of our streets for all road users, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable of our road users – pedestrians, bike riders, older adults and children. In addition, as the first Council in the world to declare a Climate Emergency, we have invested heavily in infrastructure and programs with the aim of getting more people using active modes of travel to reduce emissions, improve public health and create a more productive local economy.

Our local communities have told us that they want to see safer streets in Darebin. In the context of this inquiry, this means improving the safety of our roads for all road users, including pedestrians, cyclists, children and older adults - our most vulnerable community members. As a Council we have a record of significant direct investment in these areas on local roads. We also have a long history of advocating for new and improved pedestrian crossings, lower speed limits, and better traffic calming on non-local roads and would welcome opportunities to partner with the Victorian Government and other stakeholders to deliver these projects to make our roads safer to use for all.

We note that the Economy and Infrastructure Committee of the Victorian Parliament has invited community input on a number of broader issues relating to safer roads, including:

- *adequacy of current speed enforcement measures and speed management policies*
- *adequacy of current road standards and the road asset maintenance regime.*

**Adequacy of current speed enforcement measures and speed management policies**

We agree that it is important to consider the effectiveness of current enforcement measures and speed management policies. Speed plays a significant role in the impact and severity of crashes on our roads, particularly those crashes involving our vulnerable road users. We think it's important to consider safer speeds as part of the Safe System principles, acknowledging that people will always make mistakes, so the system should be forgiving so those crashes don't result in serious injury or death.



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### Other opportunities for the management of speed on our roads

Darebin is committed to decreasing local speed limits to 40km/hr for 30 percent of the municipality by 2021. An evaluation of crash statistics in Darebin has shown that on roads reduced from 60km/hr to 50km/hr there has been an average decrease per kilometre/per year of:

- -0.071 fatal crashes
- -0.516 serious injury crashes
- -1.125 other injury crashes

This equates to a reduction in total crashes of 36 per year, 11 less serious injury crashes, and 1.5 less fatal crashes per year on those roads. In addition, it should be noted that over fifty percent of crashes on Darebin roads that resulted in death or injury, between 2011 and 2015, occurred in 60 or 70km/hr zones, compared with only eight percent in 40km/hour zones. For context, eight percent of Darebin roads are 60km/hr, and 91.5 percent are 50km/hr and below.

The Institute for Road Safety research, Netherlands (SWOV) recommends that the best way to protect vulnerable road users is to limit the driving speed of motorized vehicles stating that *"international research has shown that a driving speed of 30 km/h is the upper limit of the lowest probability of pedestrians being killed in a collision with a car. Cyclists also benefit from such a speed reduction."*

According to Corben et al, *"A driver who chooses to travel at 50km/hr in a high pedestrian activity area exposes pedestrians...to on average, a four-fold increase in the risk of death, compared with a travel speed of 40km/hr."*

With this and other research overwhelmingly supporting the positive impacts of reduced speed limits on our roads, we suggest that government simplifies the process for local government to implement speed limit reductions on both local and arterial roads. The positive outcomes from the City of Yarra trial of 30km/h speed limits creates opportunities for further speed limit reductions to 30km/hr. This would be particularly applicable in neighbourhoods where walking trips form a large part of the mode share due to local services such as schools and community centres. We would also be interested in any investigations into changing variable speed limits around schools to permanent 40km/hr (or 30km/hr) zones.

### Other opportunities to reduce risk to vulnerable road users

We have a history of advocating for State Government support to fund pedestrian crossings at several of our highest priority locations on the Darebin Principal Pedestrian Network, and support future opportunities to partner with other levels of government to ensure our most vulnerable road users are not exposed to unnecessary risk when sharing the road space with motorists. One example we would be interested in government investigating is to further increase the safety of pedestrians, by permanently reducing the speed limit on approaches to pedestrian crossings for a minimum length to provide clarity for motorists.

Darebin Council has also previously provided input to a State Government review on funding for school crossing supervisors. We reiterate that a decrease to this funding would negatively impact the work we do around safe travel to school, as funding for road safety infrastructure would have to be reallocated to fund the crossing supervisors, or additional funding would be required to improve safety in place of crossing supervisors.

Council was very pleased to receive matched funding through the Safe Travel in Local Streets program and has been able to achieve 3km of safer roads for pedestrians, bike riders and motorists. Further funding of this nature would have significant benefits for our local communities.

Most of Victoria's streets and paths are under the care and management of local governments. Improving the level of safety for all road users requires close cooperation between levels of government, while recognising the limited resources and funding available to local government. Key projects in Darebin City to improve the safety for our road users, and which we are calling for the Victorian Government to progress as a priority, are:

- Funding for the construction of nine priority pedestrian crossings on arterial roads in Darebin
- Fast tracking approvals for reduction of speed limits to 40 km/hr in priority neighbourhoods
- Further funding through the Safe Travel in Local Streets program
- Funding for Strategic Cycling Corridors

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Yours sincerely,

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**Cr Susan Rennie**  
Mayor