



COBURG CENTRAL ROAD SAFETY IMPROVEMENT SURVEY

Community Survey Report
October 2017

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1. Introduction

Background

Bell Street (between Service Street and Budds Street) and Sydney Road (between Bell Street and Ohea Street) features a bustling shopping strip, local schools and activity centres, which in turn attracts a high number of pedestrian and vehicle traffic.

Making local and busy places safer for people whether they are travelling on two wheels or four, or by foot, is crucial to help save lives and prevent injuries.

In this local area people on foot are particularly vulnerable with 30% of crashes involving pedestrians. Crash statistics show that over five years to the end of 2016 there were 61 casualty crashes in these locations, 25 of which involved pedestrian and cyclists, including one fatality.

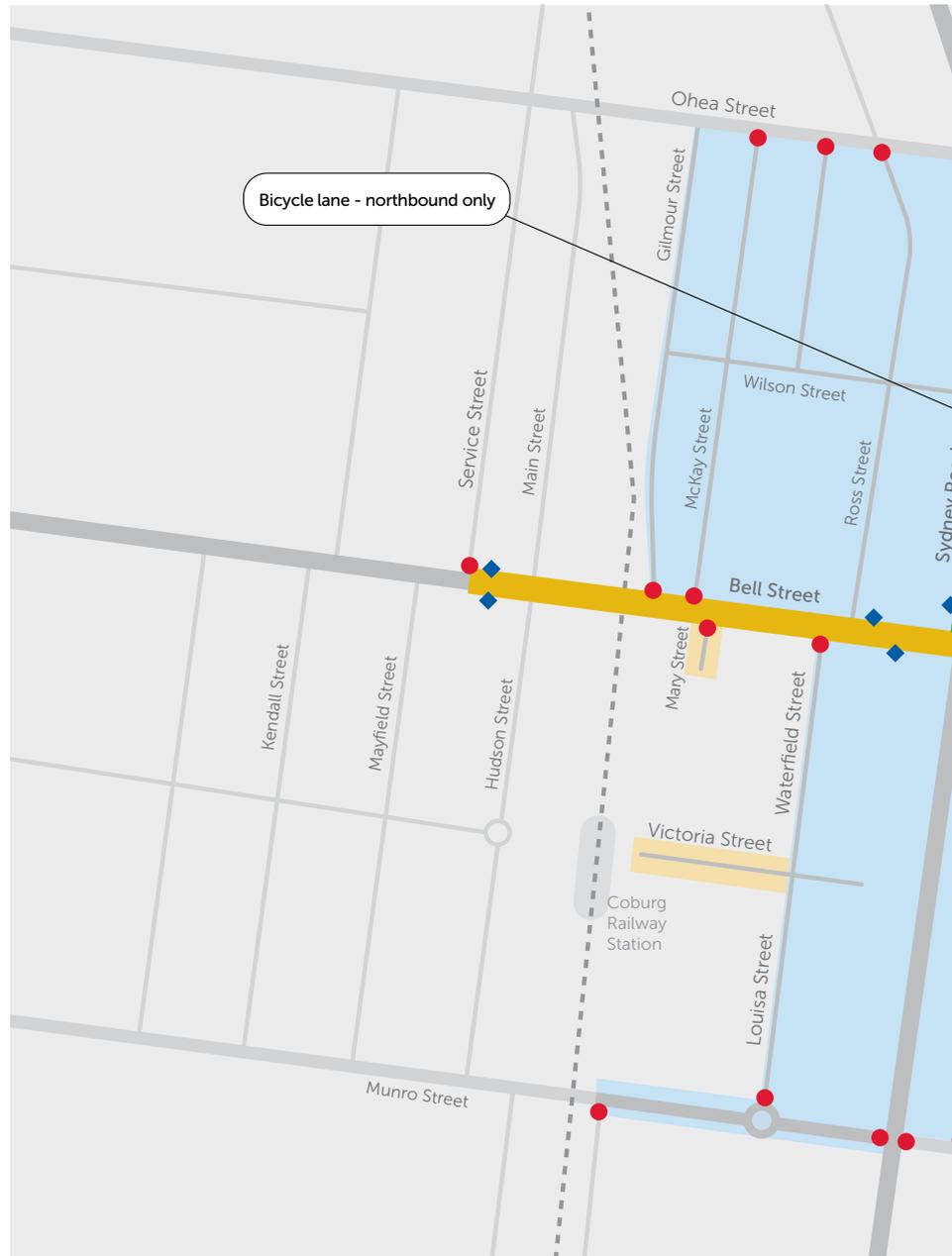
We're addressing the unacceptable number of road crashes and concerns raised by the local community by introducing a safer environment for pedestrians, cyclists and other road users.

To help save lives and prevent injuries, we are introducing a safer speed of 40km/h and a number of road safety improvements along Bell Street (between Service and Budds streets) and Sydney Road (between Bell Street and Ohea Street).

The project

In August and September 2017 VicRoads engaged local residents, traders and broader community to give us feedback on whether a safer speed of 40km/h should be permanently introduced or introduced between the hours of 7am-7pm, or 7am to 12 midnight.

This report summarises the results of this survey and has helped to inform VicRoads investigation on determining an appropriate balance between safety and mobility, while considering factors such as the type of road users, crash history and the road environment



How we engaged you

The survey was open for a three week period from 28 August to 18 September and was available online, via email and through face to face consultation sessions.

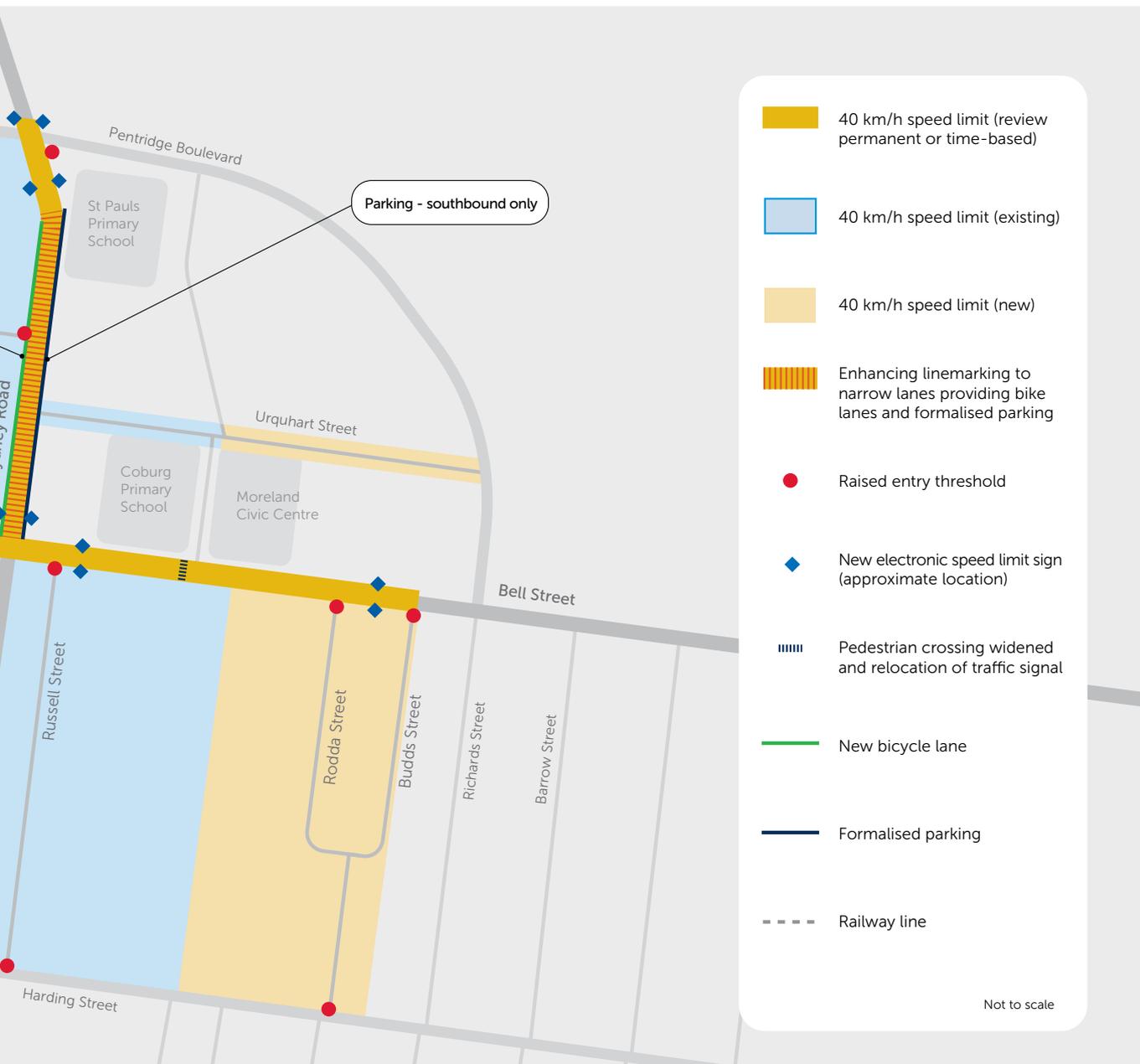
We geo-targeted a social media campaign via Facebook that reached more than 48,000 people. We further reached the community through a local media campaign which included the local schools and shopping precincts.

Who responded

In total there were 816 completed surveys and more than 1,000 individual comments.

More than 40 percent of people lived in Coburg, Coburg North and Moreland, with a further 30 percent residing in Pascoe Vale and Pascoe Vale South, Preston and Brunswick.

73 percent of people that responded identified as living in the local area, 30 percent visit the local area and 15 percent are non-local commuters that travel through the area.



Summary of feedback

One in three respondents felt unsafe or very unsafe on Bell Street and one in four people felt unsafe or very unsafe on Sydney Road. Pedestrians and cyclist were more likely to feel unsafe on these sections of road. The major factors contributing to people feeling unsafe were driver speed, erratic and dangerous driving, traffic congestion and different types of road users competing for limited road space.

There was a strong preference, 67 percent, for a time based safe speed reduction of 40km/h along these sections of road between the hours of 7am and 7pm. The major factors considered by respondents were increased pedestrian activity and road traffic during these hours, which contributes to an unsafe environment, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists. Outside of these hours the majority of people felt that the current speed of 60km/h is appropriate given the reduced number of pedestrians and traffic.

The following summarises the survey results and outlines the next steps from VicRoads.

2. Survey Results

Using Bell Street and Sydney Road

The majority of people use both nominated sections of Bell Street and Sydney Road.

Figure 1

More than 70 percent of people use the sections of road because they are local residents, 30 percent visit the area and 15 percent are non-local commuters travelling through the area.

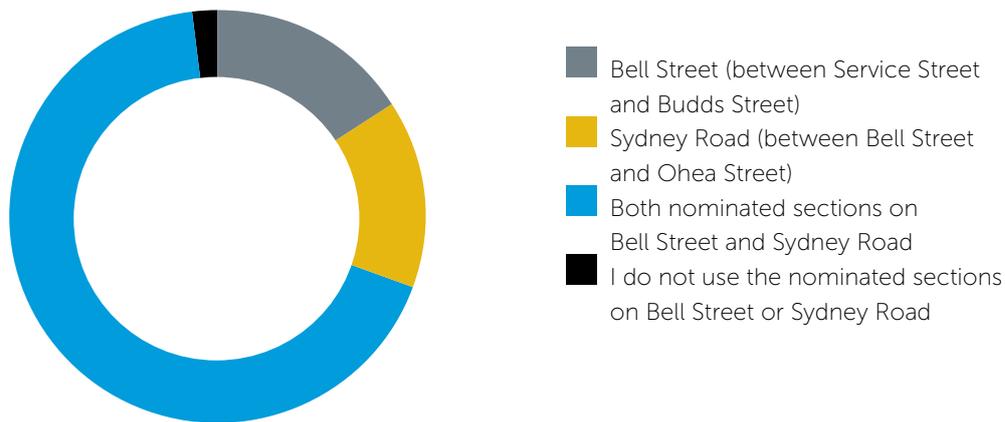


Figure 2

77 percent of people travel on these sections of road by car, 10 percent walk and 6 percent travel by bicycle.

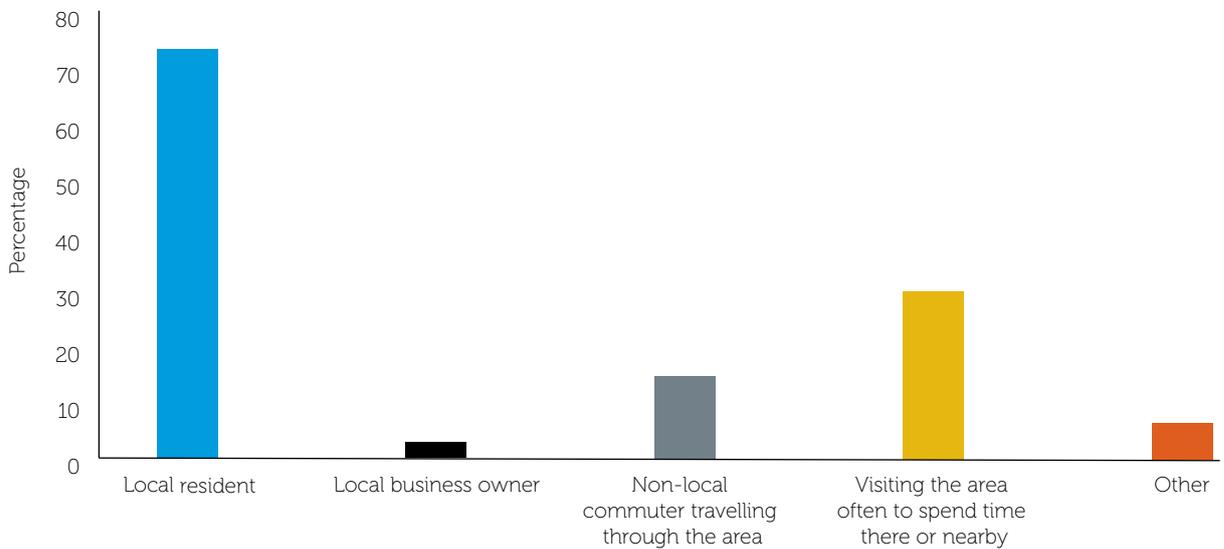


Figure 3

The majority of people (43 percent) use these sections of road a few times per week followed by people using the road once a day or at least once a day.

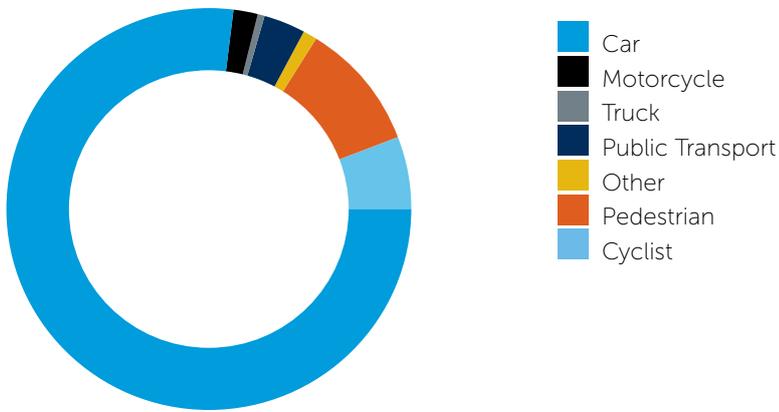
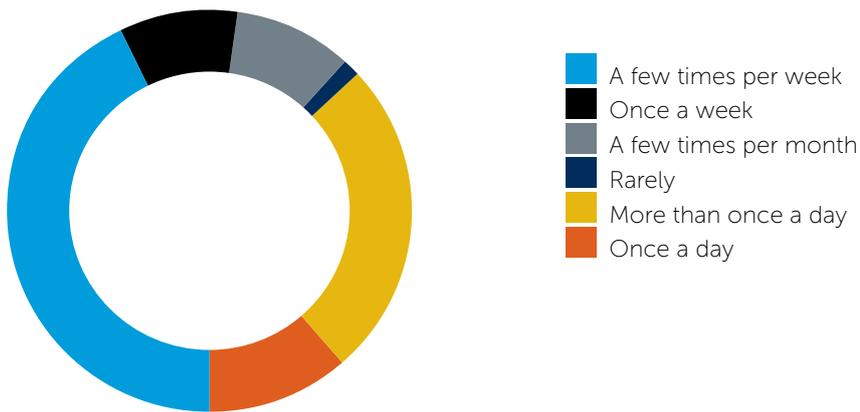


Figure 4

People are using these sections of road across all times of the day, with the majority travelling between the evening peak followed by off peak hours of 9am to 3.30pm. The majority of people are travelling on both weekdays and weekends.



Safety on Bell Street

One in three people felt unsafe or very unsafe when crossing, using or travelling along the nominated section of Bell Street compared to 49 percent who felt safe or very safe.

Figure 5

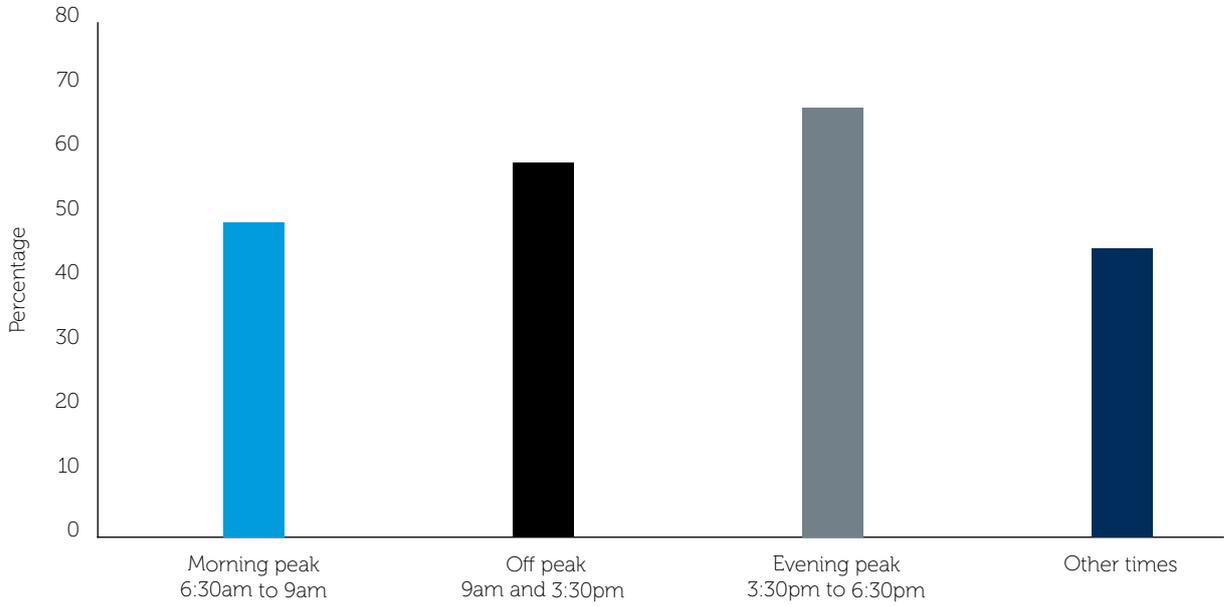


Figure 6

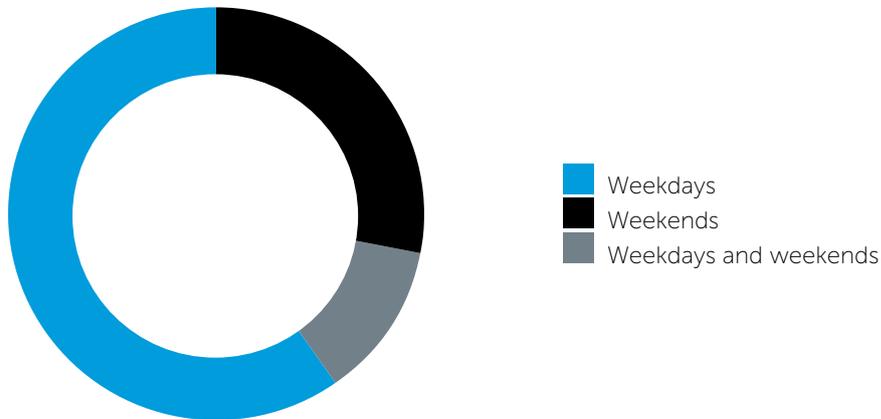
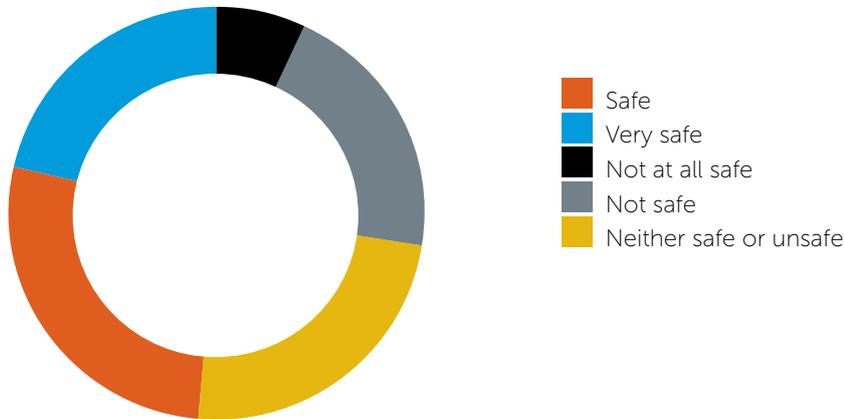


Figure 7

278 people commented on why they felt safe or unsafe on this section of road. The vast majority of comments related to people feeling unsafe as either a pedestrian or cyclist. The major factors that contribute to feeling unsafe are driver speed, particularly drivers speeding through intersections, traffic signals, erratic driving, drivers ignoring road rules and traffic congestion.



What you said

A mixture of trucks, buses and cars traveling fast going over a railway crossing then right turning traffic and major intersection combines to have too many variables and more likely have an accident. When driving thus section I am highly alert for the above reasons...and have been driving it for 24 years.

As a pedestrian, you have to be on your toes at all times. Watch your surroundings because of crazy drivers that go over the speed limit, or drive in a dangerous manner. They go over the red lights, don't watch where they're going. I saw a few accidents at that intersection. It's particularly dangerous if you try to cross bell St on a pedestrian footpath. Drivers often try to go through regardless if it's red or if they're people walking.

Bell st is very narrow with dual carriageway either side. when truck travel along the road they are perilously close the pedestrians. There is not separation or protection for pedestrians. Heaps of trucks, buses and cars drive break the speed limit and run the red lights at intersection of bell and main st. Around 1 year ago I was crossing bell st at intersection of main st in front of the ran of shops and a car came around the corner from main st and hit us to the ground. Thankfully we just had bruised but it does highlight the risk to pedestrians. This took place around 7 pm at night. I also feel better st lighting is needed.

Car drivers speed and don't seem to follow rules — especially at the bell st and Sydney rd intersection and bell st and pentridge boulevard intersections. I've had several near misses crossing both these as pedestrians, and the number of drivers who run red lights at these intersections is significant.

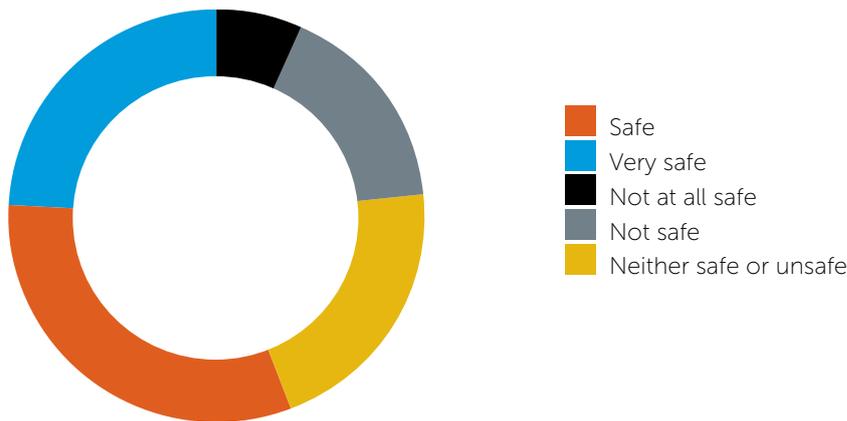
Bell street and Sydney rd have a lot of traffic and the road narrows on all parts. As an experienced cyclist I use the footpath on Sydney rd north of bell street as the road narrows, the lanes are not aligned, there is a bus stop and cars accelerate after reaching the end of the 40 zone. That part is frightening.

Safety on Sydney Road

One and four people felt unsafe or very unsafe on the nominated section of Sydney Road compared to 55 percent of people that felt safe or very safe.

Figure 8

206 people commented on why they felt safe or unsafe using this section of road. The vast majority of comments related to feeling unsafe as a pedestrian, cyclist or driver. The major factors that contribute to feeling unsafe are vehicles speeding on Sydney Road north of Bell Street, the road configuration and number of road users competing for shared road space and parked cars during peak periods.



What you said

Again, narrow lanes and the street parking causes issues virtually every time I drive through there. Turning right onto Sydney from Urquhart is the spot. The left lane turns directly into parked cars, forcing them to merge left immediately after making the right hand turn. Really stupid spot to have on street parking. I am also a commuting cyclist and this area generally is horrific...

it seems once cars cross Sydney Road heading north is licence to push the speed up. The slow crawl up Sydney Road from Munro to Bell maybe be a cause – drivers must get frustrated and once over bell have a sense of freedom. The speed at which drivers reach north toward ohea and the blind curve is tricky when walking or cycling.

The northbound Sydney Rd lane narrows prior to Ohea and is dangerous for cyclists who often get cut off leading in to the intersection. The footpath also narrows with in footpath services that make it difficult for pedestrians and cyclists with service entry for the car washing space. Clearer demarcation for the shared path interface with the footpath would be useful given the O'Hea shared path link up.

There are trans, bikes, pedestrians and motorists and it is a very busy intersection with multiple lanes and roads converging. I find it very unnerving and frightening to navigate esp as a cyclist or when walking with my child in her pram.

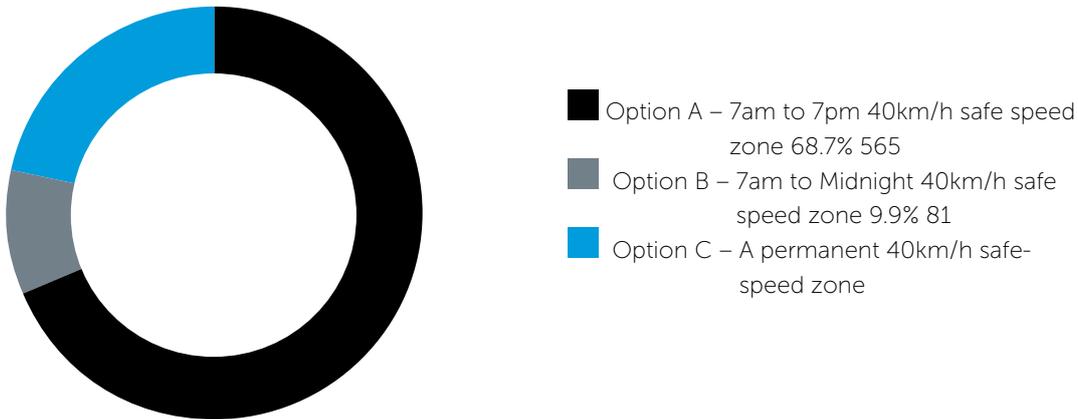
What can I say, this section is just nuts. The bicycle lane disappears. Everyone speeds up and races each other after the frustration of 40kmph on sydney road. There are cars swinging across lanes to try to get to the 4 different routes at the junctions. Cars stop in peak. Cars pull out of the vacant lots and the church.

Introducing a safer speed for Bell Street and Sydney Road

The majority of people, 67 percent, prefer a time based safe speed of 40km/h on the nominated sections of Bell Street and Sydney Rd between the hours of 7am and 7pm.

Figure 9

570 people commented on their preferred time option for a safe speed reduction of 40km/h along these sections of road. Increased numbers of pedestrians and traffic during the hours of 7am and 7pm were the major factors considered in preferring this option.



What you said

After peak hour the roads are not backed up in traffic and the area isn't filled with people crossing roads or walking on the path allowing for a safe travel at 60km

I believe that the time period between 7am and 7pm is when people who can benefit the most from the safe speed zone will be most likely to be using those roads, such as families and cyclists.

Anywhere there are large numbers of pedestrians speed limits need to be 40 kph. Variable times reflect the changing primary usage of the entire space.

Outside of these hours, this intersection travels smoothly with few pedestrians. During the peak time of 7am to 7pm it is very busy with cars, buses, trucks and pedestrians. Slow the traffic down when necessary, but the rest of the time it is fine

Peak times seem to make the most sense. The most vulnerable would be kids and seniors and they're most likely to be at home beyond 7pm.

3. Next steps

Thank you to everybody that completed the survey in August and September 2017.

Based on the community's feedback a decision has been made to introduce a safe speed reduction of 40km/h on Bell Street (between Service Street and Budds Street) and Sydney Road

(between Bell Street and Ohea Street) to be implemented on a part time basis between the hours of 7am and 7pm.

The safe speed reduction will provide a more consistent speed in the local area by integrating with the existing 40km/h part time speed along Bell Street and

Sydney Road and deliver a safer environment for all road users during this busy period.

This change will be introduced by mid 2018 and delivered in conjunction with other safety improvements along these sections of road.

