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“Keep the Mall for People” - Active Transport Taskforce

The Illawarra Active Transport Taskforce (IATT), an intersectoral group co-ordinated by Healthy Cities Illawarra, has called for the Crown Street Mall to remain closed to traffic.

The IATT represents the interests of cyclists and pedestrians in the Illawarra. Taskforce members include local Councils, the Roads and Traffic Authority, Healthy Cities Illawarra, the Heart Foundation, NSW Health, bike businesses and bicycle user groups. The Taskforce’s charter is to make the Illawarra more amenable to pedestrians and cyclists and educate planners and the public about the benefits of active travel.

“Our submission to Wollongong City Council calls for the Mall to remain safe for pedestrians by supporting Option A”, said Jill Merrin, Community Environmental Health Officer for Healthy Cities Illawarra, and IATT convenor.

“Many other countries are going in the direction of closing more streets to traffic to make them people-friendly. We don’t believe it is constructive to go back to a shopping centre which is dangerous to pedestrians and cyclists, unattractive and polluted by traffic fumes.

“Rather, we need to address the problems with the Mall to make it into the beautiful city centre that it should be.”

IATT’s submission recommends improving the usage and safety of the Mall by:

- making the Mall attractive to pedestrians;
- providing good quality active and public transport infrastructure; and
- ensuring the built form is human friendly.

“Rather than go backwards to an era of car-dominance, we should be upgrading and updating the Mall to reflect current trends in city design, recent moves towards promoting active and public transport rather than private motor vehicles, and a future where fossil fuels are truly fossils.”

“It is a mistake to think that opening the Mall to traffic will revitalise it or make it safer. You just have to look at the Kembla St to Corrimal St block which is open to traffic but is no better used or safer than the Mall.”

Previous community surveys over recent years found that the great majority of people want the Mall to remain closed to traffic.

“The Mall’s ideal central location, leading down to the beach, close to the major shops, McCabe Park, the Civic Centre and the railway station, should make it one of the best in Australia” said Ms Merrin.

The IATT’s submission to the Crown Street Mall Renovations Option paper is attached.

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