

## **Response of Metro East Bicycle User Group (MeBUG) to the document *Nelson Road Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety Investigation*.**

Nelson Road precinct has many types of road and pavement users, and we appreciate that council is attempting to reconcile their needs and explore options. Later stages of the plans, i.e., Phases 2 and 3 show safety advantages for cyclists.

We consider that Phase 1 should not occur. It has no advantage for cyclists and is in fact more dangerous for them than the existing conditions. The (full) report produced for council, *Nelson Road Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety Investigation*, Section 6.6 pp 39-40, does not state any advantage to cyclists in Phase 1. The title of the design report and the heading "Safety Improvements for Nelson Road" are misleading as far as cycling is concerned in Phase 1.

A known risk built into Phase 1 is the potential for conflict between drivers who may become impatient with cyclists whom they are unable to safely overtake for long stretches of roadway. Cyclists who are travelling at most at 20kph and probably 10kph or less, will be followed by drivers wanting to go 40kph. The Specific Audit comments in the *Investigation* on p.16 name car-dooring and sideswiping of cyclists as a hazard of the Phase 1 design.

### In Phase 1

- cyclists will form part of a single column of traffic each side of a newly narrowed section of Nelson Road (3m wide rather than 3.7m)
- there is no room for vehicles to pass cyclists safely.
- the speed limit for traffic is shown as 40 kph.
- awareness of a vehicle close behind, perhaps with an impatient driver, is a known source of cyclists' fear, and a disincentive to riding.
- the gradient travelling south on Nelson Road from Thames Street is at the limit of rideability (4.2%) for most people and thus most cyclists in that direction will be quite slow in front of 40kph traffic.
- Busses (on several routes), trucks, ambulances, and cars, as well as cyclists will be on Nelson Road.
- parking will remain on both sides of Nelson Road north and south of Thames Street
- the staged move from Phase 1 to the later acceptable phases has no certain timeline or funding.
- the timeline to later stages depends also on removal of parking, a known political challenge.
- Nelson Road route's role as a Strategic Cycling Corridor and Easy Ride council route is thoroughly compromised in Phase 1, and the suggestion that cyclists ride through Box Hill Gardens instead, will not suit for all known destinations of riders north and south.

The Nelson Road Investigation report refers (Section 1.3.6 page 15) to the Safe System approach to protecting vulnerable road users. which says *Very low speed limits/speed environments are required to protect vulnerable road users in accordance with Safe System principles. An impact speed of 30 km/h is recognised as the Safe System speed for vulnerable or unprotected road users (pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists).*

A recently published local study by Monash University researcher, Lauren Pearson of the Sustainable Mobility and Safety Research Group in the School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine (SPHPM), at Monash University, concluded that while 45% of men reported not wanting to ride on the road

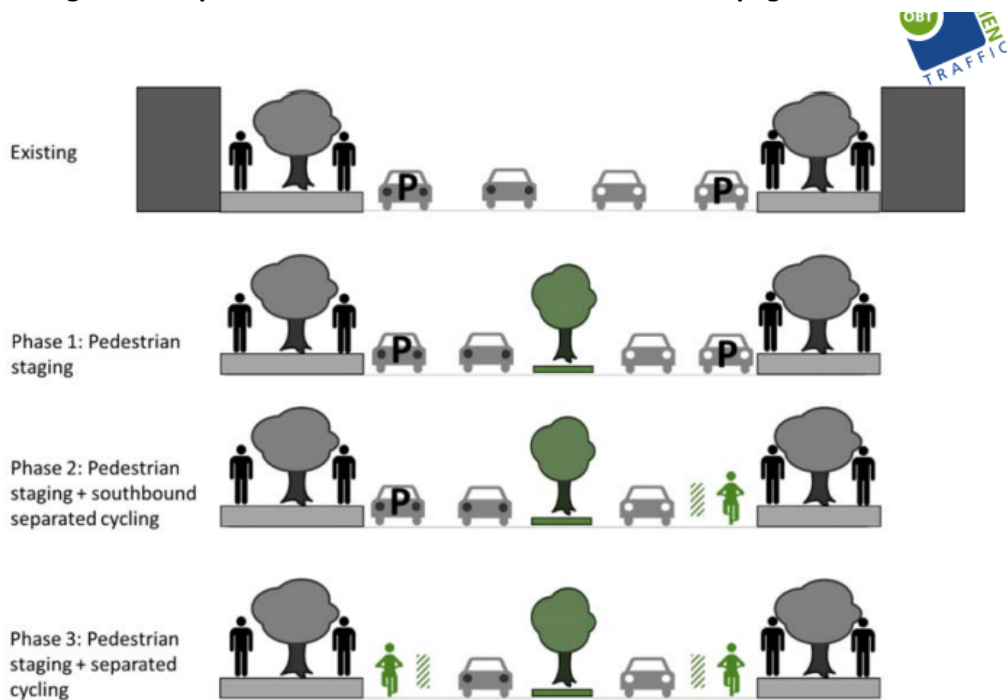
with motor vehicles, the figure sat at 61% among women. Concern at being injured in a collision with motor vehicles was reported by 43% of males but 59% of females, while concern about aggressive behaviours from drivers was reported by 45% of males and 55% of females.

Phase 2a involves providing alternative options for those now using the 2-hour parking on Nelson Road. The removal of Nelson Road parking may be less problematic than in residential areas. But it must be done before any other treatments.

Phase 1 prioritizes pedestrians and parking. There is the prospect of the Phase 1 “temporary planting” in the median becoming entrenched, and a reversion to the current existing safer cycling conditions would be impossible, while later design phases would still have no certain date of implementation. The *Investigation* document p.25 says “... each phase may be operational for an extended period such as several years. There is also the potential that latter phases will not be implemented; hence interim stages may become the ultimate state.”

Such uncertainty is unacceptable from a cycling point of view.

**Phases of the staged development of Nelson Road shown in Section 6.4-page 38**



**FIGURE 24: CONCEPTS PHASES**

We urge council to take up the challenge of proceeding directly to Phases 2a and 2b to improve both cycling and pedestrian safety on this designated Easy Ride and Strategic Cycling Corridor route.

**Elaine Hopper Community group member for Nelson Road input responding for Metro East Bicycle User Group (MeBUG) 0431 020 703**



METRO EAST BICYCLE USER GROUP INC.

PO Box 172 Blackburn Vic 3130

<http://mebug.org.au>

[mebug@mebug.org.au](mailto:mebug@mebug.org.au)