



CAMWEST
CYCLISTS' ACTION MOVEMENT

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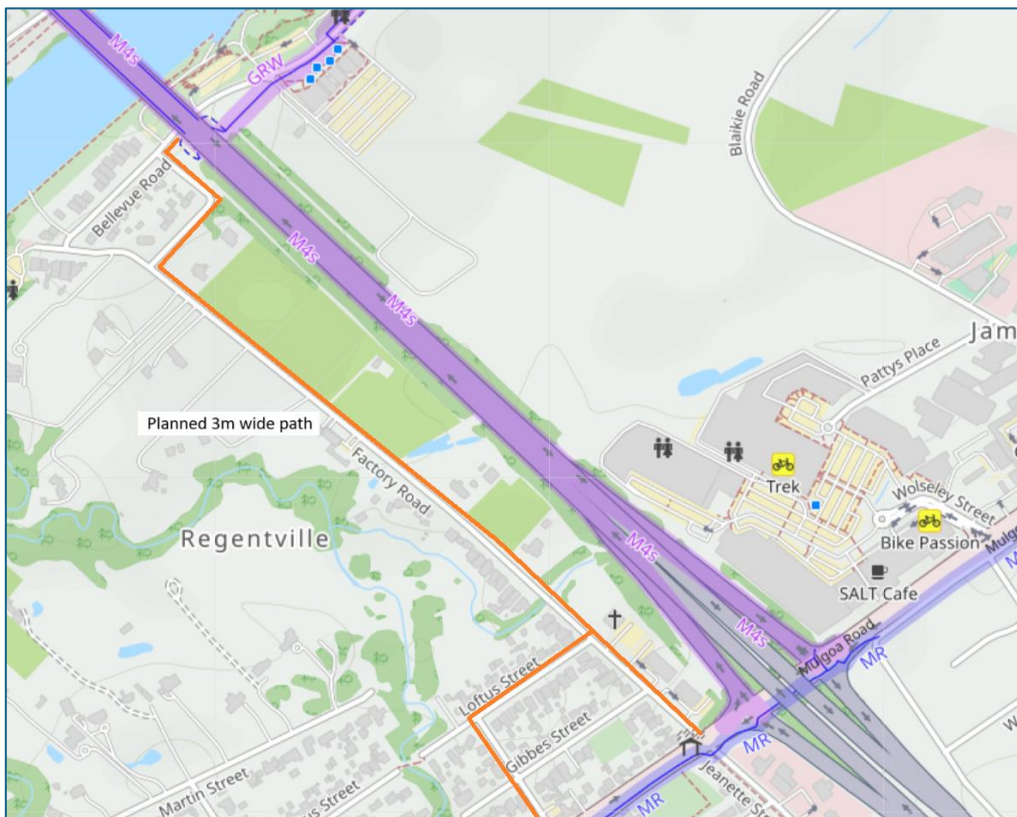
16th September 2024

M4 Bridge Pedestrian Ramps Upgrade Feedback

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the plans for the M4 Bridge Pedestrian Ramps Upgrade at the Nepean River, Penrith (*The Plan*).^[1]

These comments have been prepared on behalf of CAMWEST, a Bicycle NSW affiliated Bicycle User Group with a focus on advocating for and encouraging cycling in a large part of Western Sydney, including the Penrith area.

The Great River Walk Loop on both sides of the Nepean River between the M4 bridges and the Yandhai Nepean Crossing is a fantastic asset for the area and well used by the local community. During busy periods the paths can become quite congested with walkers, joggers and those using various wheeled transportation modes. Although a comparatively low contributor to overall traffic on the ramps, the M4 bridges also form part of an important active transport link between Regentville on the eastern side of the river (Factory St has a planned 3m wide shared path along it leading to existing shared paths along Mulgoa Rd and into Glenmore Park)^[2] and the residential areas of Leonay and Emu Plains on the western side of the river.

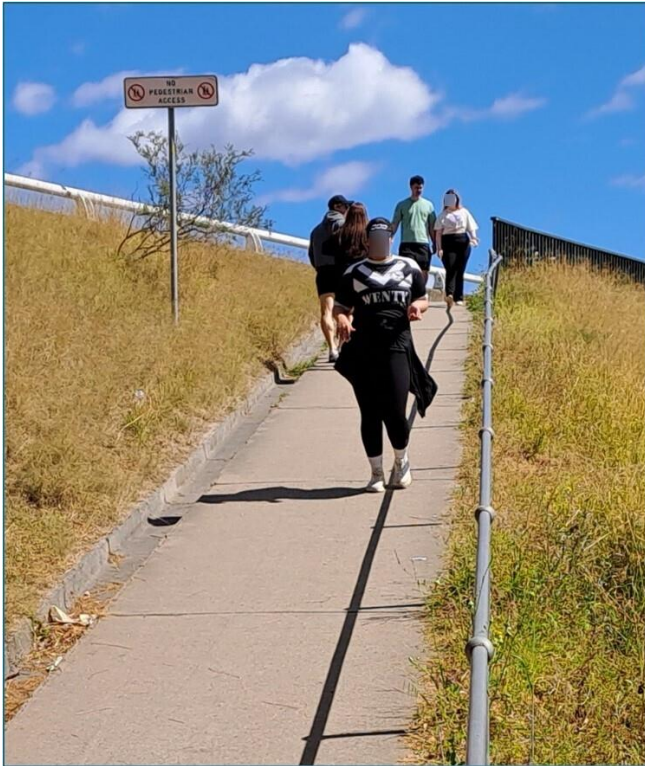


Marked-up Open Street Map image showing the planned shared path along Factory Rd and surrounding streets between the Great River Walk / M4 bridge ramps and the existing shared path alongside Mulgoa Rd.^[2]

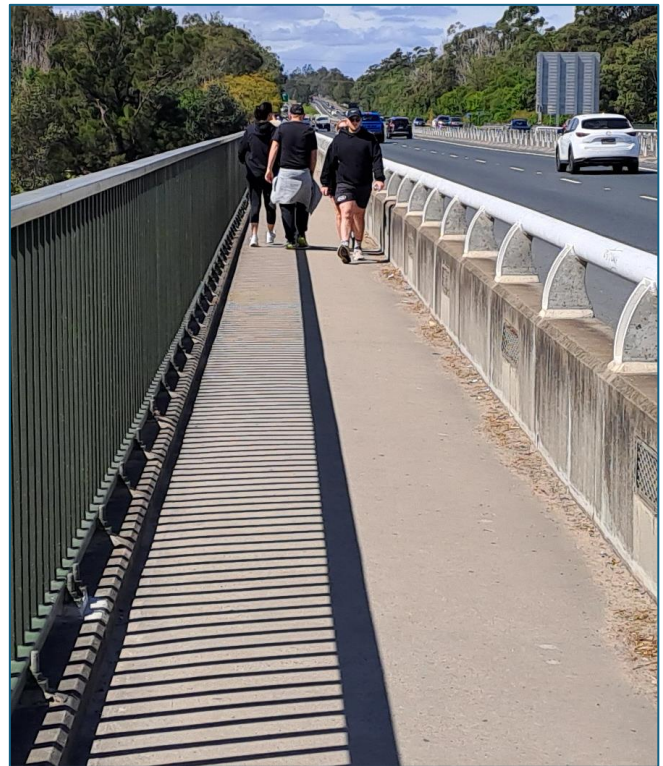
Current Ramps and Bridges:

The current ramps are around 1.8m wide, although weeds have encroached on a couple of them effectively narrowing their widths a little. There are currently 'No Pedestrian Access' signs against the recommended flow of movement. We feel the current signage is confusing. Why say 'No Pedestrian Access' when there are clearly pedestrians coming from the opposite direction? We observed most people that were walking on the southern side of the M4 in the 'recommended' direction, but some groups of people walking against the flow on the northern side.

The two bridges alongside the M4 carriageways are around 1.75m wide.



NE Ramp, with No Pedestrian Access sign and one couple walking against the sign.



Northern bridge, with two couples passing.

Plan and suggestions:

1. CAMWEST is in full support of the upgrading of the four M4 bridge ramps, the improved lighting, and the 'further' encouragement of one-way movement on the bridges and ramps either side of the river. The steepness of the current ramps can be challenging for the average rider even when there are no other path users struggling up the ramps ahead. Some riders walk the ramps. The current 'No Pedestrian Access' signs adjacent to and/or on the ramps with wide two-lane paths approaching



Recommended design from The Plan

them are confusing at best. Arrows painted on the pathways may be clearer.

2. We couldn't see any indication in the documentation provided as to the planned widths of the new ramps. The Cycleway Design Toolbox^[3] recommends 4m width for a two-way shared path. We couldn't see recommended guidelines if one-way is anticipated. Given the observed number of groups walking the ramps and bridge some days, any extra width would be appreciated. Would separate pedestrian and cyclist ramp paths be an option?
3. If funding allows, we'd also recommend alternative stair access to each of the bridges. Providing stairs would:
 - Give those walking or jogging that aren't using prams, trolleys or wheelchairs a more direct option of getting to/from the bridge level. Some people may be frustrated by walking up the lengthened ramps.
 - Reduce the number of people using the ramps, helping to reduce the potential for conflict between different users.

If the current project funding does not allow for the incorporation of stairs, we ask that the ramp design allow stairs to be readily retrofitted later.

4. Taking into consideration the sightlines of path users, where appropriate we'd ask that trees be planted that when mature would provide shade for those using the stairs/ramps.
5. We'd ask that the design of the ramp switchbacks allow for the gentlest turning radius possible for those riding bikes.
6. The pedestrian bridge platforms on both sides of the M4 are quite narrow. Further encouraging one-way movement across the bridges may go part of the way to alleviating congestion and conflict, but we feel it's only a partial solution. Although outside the scope of this project, we'd ask that pedestrian bridge platform be considered for widening as a future project, and that the ramp project be designed to readily interface with widened platforms.

Please let us know if we can further assist in any aspect of the development of this project or if clarification is required for any of the above points.

This feedback was prepared by Rob Kemp with the assistance of several local cyclists on behalf of CAMWEST Bicycle User Group Inc.

References:

- 1 <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects/current-projects/m4-bridge-pedestrian-ramps-upgrade-at-nepean-river-penrith>
- 2 <https://yoursaypenrith.com.au/factoryroad>
- 3 <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2023/Cycleway-Design-Toolbox-Web.pdf>