



PRESS RELEASE

*Embargoed until 10am on Saturday 20th July*

*Issued by Dublin Cycling Campaign, Dublin Commuter Coalition, Irish Pedestrian Network, and Extinction Rebellion Dublin*

## Dubliners Reclaim City Centre Street in Fight for Clean Air

A coalition of transport and environmental groups freed Dublin's South William Street from motor traffic today, creating a space for people by preventing motor vehicles from accessing the area.

Dublin Cycling Campaign, Dublin Commuter Coalition and the Irish Pedestrian Network joined forces for today's action, with additional support from Extinction Rebellion activists. The groups say that the time has come to fight back against the dominance of motor vehicles in our towns and cities.

The action was prompted by the recent release of Environmental Protection Agency data which showed that air pollution in Dublin is regularly exceeding the levels deemed safe by the EU. In Ireland, the number of premature deaths attributed to air pollution annually is estimated by the EPA as 1,510 people. This is ten times the number of people who died in 2018 as a direct result of road traffic collisions.

Activists wearing anti-pollution masks installed traffic-prevention measures on South William Street at 10am on Saturday and have said they will continue a series of similar actions on streets around Dublin. These would continue, they promised, until the immediate actions, not words, of Dublin City Council and the government show they get the message that "streets are for people, not cars."

"We are extremely concerned about the toxic levels of air pollution being created by motor vehicles on a daily basis," said Janet Horner of the Dublin Cycling Campaign, "Poisonous air harms all of us, but particularly the most vulnerable. This is a

public health emergency and we need to take immediate action to reduce motor traffic and to create clean air zones throughout the city. People have a right to clean air.”

Neasa Hourigan, founder of the Irish Pedestrian Network and a Green Party Councillor for Dublin City, said: “We are calling on the authorities to create public places for people, not cars. South William Street should have been pedestrianised years ago, and today we intend to show how even our most urban streets should be a place where people with disabilities and young children can access the public realm with ease.”

Kevin Carter, Acting Chairperson of the Dublin Commuter Coalition, said: “The vast majority of people moving in the city centre are walking, on bikes and on public transport but they get a minority of the space. Air quality and the environmental impact of cars are going to be election issues at the next general election. Politicians need to realise that people want cities that are clean, attractive and liveable. This isn’t possible if the streets are dominated by cars, so something has got to give.”

Robin Cafolla, speaking on behalf of Extinction Rebellion Dublin said: “Transport emissions account for about one third of global greenhouse gas emissions and the rise of the private motor car has been a contributory factor in the acceleration of climate collapse. We have to take radical action to reduce our dependence on cars and enable more people to walk, cycle and use public transport.”

## Contacts

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## Notes to the editor

1. Traffic prevention measures will be erected at the junction of South William Street and Wicklow Street at 10am on Saturday 20th July.

2. Dublin Cycling Campaign is a registered charity (RCN#20102029). For the past 25 years it has been advocating to make Dublin a more liveable city where people of all ages and abilities can safely cycle.
3. Dublin Commuter Coalition is a group that advocates on behalf of public transport users as well as cyclists and pedestrians in the Greater Dublin Region.
4. The Irish Pedestrian Network is an organisation focused on articulating the rights and needs of pedestrians in Ireland.
5. EPA report on Nitrogen Dioxide levels in Dublin:  
<https://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/air/quality/urbanenvironmentalindicatorsnitrogen dioxidelevelsindublin.html>
6. "Billions of air pollution particles found in hearts of city dwellers"  
The Guardian, 12th July 2019 -  
<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/jul/12/billions-of-air-pollution-particles-found-in-hearts-of-city-dwellers>