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Use of Segways in the ACT

The Canberra Pedestrian Forum:

1. does not object to the use of Segways on roads, bicycle-only paths or separated footpaths that are designated for the use of bicycles; and
2. supports the use of Segway-like vehicles on shared paths and pedestrian footpaths, provided that:
 - (a) consistent with the Road Rules definition of “pedestrian”, they cannot travel at over 10 kilometres per hour on level ground; and
 - (b) the ACT Government commits to enforcing this restriction.

Use of Segways on roads, bicycle-only paths or separated footpaths that are designated for the use of bicycles

These uses will have minimal impacts on pedestrians.

Use of Segway-like vehicles on shared paths and pedestrian footpaths

They cannot travel at over 10 kilometres per hour on level ground

The potentially damaging kinetic energy that is released in a collision is proportional to mass, and proportional to the square of speed.

According to the Segway website (<http://www.segway.com>), the “patrol” model weighs about 50 kg and Segways can be pre-set by their owners to a maximum speed of either 20 km/h or 13 km/h.

Australian Road Rule 18 classes a person driving a motorised wheelchair as a pedestrian if the wheelchair cannot travel at over 10 kilometres per hour (on level ground).

This Rule could be modified to allow Segway-like vehicles to also be classed as pedestrians, if they cannot travel at over 10 kilometres per hour (on level ground). It is probably feasible to produce a Segway model that cannot exceed 10 kilometres per hour.

In a collision, a person riding a Segway at 10 km/h releases seven times as much kinetic energy as a pedestrian.

At 13 km/h, the Segway rider releases twelve times the kinetic energy of a pedestrian. At 20 km/h the Segway rider releases almost thirty times as much kinetic energy as a pedestrian.



The ACT Government commits to enforcing this rule

If some Segway models were permitted on ACT footpaths, it is highly likely that non-complying models would also be used on footpaths because:

1. enforcing the 10 km/h rule would require being able to distinguish between complying and non-complying Segways;
2. it could be very difficult to distinguish between complying and non-complying Segways; and
3. the ACT has a generally poor track record in enforcing Rules that affect pedestrians. For example:
 - i. less than half of Canberra Road users even know the Rules that require turning drivers to give way to pedestrians at intersectionsⁱⁱ;
 - ii. only half of pedestrians comply with red pedestrian signalsⁱⁱⁱ;
 - iii. Only 5% of cyclists comply with the Rule that prohibits them from riding across pedestrian crossings^{iv}.

Leon Arundell
Convenor
9 December 2011

i Australian Road Rule 18: *Who is a pedestrian*

A pedestrian includes:

(a) a person driving a motorised wheelchair that cannot travel at over 10 kilometres per hour (on level ground); and

(b) a person in a non-motorised wheelchair; and

(c) a person pushing a motorised or non-motorised wheelchair; and

(d) a person in or on a wheeled recreational device or wheeled toy.

ii Canberra fails Road Rules test:

http://grapevine.net.au/~mccluskeyarundell/MR_Canberra_fails_Road_Rules_test.pdf

iii Green light for Northbourne Avenue Walkers,

<http://grapevine.net.au/~mccluskeyarundell/MRsignals.html>

iv Canberra Pedestrian Forum observation of 50 cyclists crossing Challis St Dickson at the Sullivan's Creek bicycle path zebra crossing, 10 June 2010.