

Mr Hon. Jamie Briggs, MP
Minister for Cities and the Built Environment
by email to jamie.briggs.mp@aph.gov.au

Basic transport infrastructure

Dear Mr Briggs

Please allow me to congratulate you on your elevation to the Ministry, and to ask you:

1. How much walking infrastructure is there in Australia's towns and cities? and
2. What priority will the Australian Government give to transport infrastructure for walking?

The reason I ask is that my observations confirm that there are many places where walking infrastructure, such as footpaths is inadequate or completely absent.

These places include for example a section of the old Princes Highway in Bulahdelah NSW (below) where there is no footpath to a school that fronts onto the highway.



The presence of absence of a footpath determines the transport options for the last kilometre of the freight supply chain – the kilometre from the retail outlet to the customer's home.

The implications for travel are even more significant than the implications for freight, especially for people who are too young or too old to drive, or who would simply like to be able to safely walk or cycle to local schools, shops, services bus stops or recreational facilities.

The absence of a footpath is often associated with nature strip obstructions. You can see a hundred photos of obstructed nature strips, all in a single suburb in the national capital, at <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10152698027745997.1073741832.283913150996&type=3>

Obstructed nature strips give people no option but to walk along roads. If the nature strip is obstructed you may walk along the street, on the side facing oncoming vehicles. But those vehicles do not have to give way to you. Vertical kerbs can make it difficult to move a baby stroller out of the way of an approaching vehicle.

Even when a nature strip is clear of obstructions, its soft and uneven surface increases the risk of falls and requires extra effort from children riding bicycles or parents pushing baby carriages. Walking on a wet nature strip can lead to wet feet, which in turn can cause discomfort or illness.

A [RACV study](#) found that eighteen per cent of bus stops in outer Melbourne do not connect to footpaths.

I have not been able to find general statistics about how many streets have footpaths along both, one or no sides. I estimate that only half of Canberra's homes have direct access to a footpath, another one in five has access to a footpath on the other side of the street, and three in ten Canberra homes have no access to footpaths along their streets. You can see the details of my estimates at <http://grapevine.net.au/~mccluskeyarundell/LSFootpathFree.html>

Yours Faithfully



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2 October 2015.