



Canberra Pedestrian Forum media release

## Infrastructure review ignores footpath needs

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The Canberra Pedestrian Forum calls on the ACT Government to include suburban footpaths in a review of our pedestrian and cyclist transport infrastructure.

Footpaths take us to shops, schools, bus stops, and work. They are safe places for our children to skate or ride bikes, for us to push our babies, for our seniors to ride mobility scooters, and for everyone to walk.

Many of our streets don't have footpaths. If nature strips are blocked by cars or landscaping, then we must walk along the road, into the face of oncoming cars.

Walking and cycling are important to Canberra. Six per cent of commuter trips in 2006 started with a walk to the bus stop, and another five per cent of commuters walked all the way to work. Two and a half per cent of commuter trips were by bicycle.

The ACT Government's *Pedestrian and Cyclist Infrastructure Review* is supposed to give equal emphasis to the needs of commuter cyclists, recreational cyclists and pedestrians. But it cannot do that because the government has restricted it to Town Centres, "major employment nodes" and "main routes."

This review will not address the need for footpaths in our suburbs, unless the Government broadens its scope.

The Canberra Chronicle recently highlighted the plight of Campbell residents, whose need for footpaths has remained unmet for 40 years.

Every Campbell street has a road, for the two thirds of residents who drive cars. Requests for footpaths, which will serve all Campbell residents, are placed on a waiting list that is several years long.

But Campbell is just the tip of the iceberg. Many streets in Canberra suburbs have no footpaths, or have footpaths for only part of their length.

Many of us can't even get to a bus stop without walking on the road, because the Government allows illegal landscaping and illegally parked cars to obstruct our nature strips. A month after Tony Gill of Roads ACT inspected Rosenthal Street in Campbell and noted illegal "extended gardens from a number of residences," its nature strips are still obstructed by illegally parked cars and by more than twenty illegally extended gardens.

The current plans have been revealed by Senior Transport Engineer Russell Yell of Cardno, and featured on the front page of the Canberra Chronicle under the headline "Riding toward a cycle plan."

The plans show no new footpaths in the suburbs where they are most needed. It shows new trunk cycling routes outside the Town Centres, a cycling link along Majura Rd, and shared cycle paths that in many cases will be converted from existing footpaths.

Canberrans will have only one week to comment on these plans, after they are put on public display in several Town Centres on 9 November.

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