

Making walking in Canberra easy for everyone

Living Streets Canberra



The most liveable places are highly walkable communities. Walking is easy, attractive, safe, convenient and comfortable.

If Canberra is to be Australia's most walkable city, age-friendly, accessible, highly liveable and climate-friendly, then everyone in Canberra needs to be able to enjoy public spaces and walk easily, safely and conveniently. That's *everyone* – whether young or old; fast or slow; walking, using a wheelchair or other assistance; pushing a pram; wheeling luggage; riding a scooter, skateboard, tricycle or rollerblades; commuting to work or school, shopping, sitting, between appointments, or simply out on the streets for exercise, leisure or pleasure.

This means Canberra needs to be an inviting, safe and comfortable place for people to be out and about, with walking being the obvious and natural choice for everyday local journeys.

Walking is already Australia's most common form of exercise, particularly for people over 35 and women. Canberrans value walking despite the suitability of our infrastructure and a culture that means walking is not the natural choice for most Canberrans' everyday local journeys.

Upgrading our walking environment is fast and inexpensive compared with roads and rail - and can create a lot of jobs quickly.

Let's get moving!

1. Bring walking infrastructure up to scratch

Challenge

The ACT's paths are a significant public asset, highly valued by the community - yet rapidly ageing with many in poor condition and need urgent attention to make and keep them safe, useable and accessible.

Having disconnected network elements, allowing paths and other infrastructure to deteriorate and remain in damaged or unusable condition for months and years, and fixing them after they are broken is not good enough. This would not be acceptable for roads, so why would it be acceptable for other, essential transport infrastructure?

Solution

Upgrade walking infrastructure so it's safe, useable and accessible before 2024, focussing on:

- Upgrading systems and processes for maintaining paths and other infrastructure for walking, so that these essential community assets are kept in good and accessible condition - just like roads are
- Ensuring safe and convenient walking access to public transport, schools and local shops, making walking easier than driving is now

- Safe and easily accessible streets for children, people with disabilities, and seniors
- Better lighting for safer walking at night

2. Develop a plan

Challenge

If we fail to plan, we plan to fail.

A whole-of-government plan to make walking in Canberra easy for everyone will help Canberra become Australia's most walkable city, age-friendly, accessible, highly liveable and climate-friendly.

Solution

In consultation with the community, by the end of 2021, **develop a plan to make walking an easy choice for everyone, every day.**

3. Keep people informed

Challenge

People appreciate transparency and accountability. It helps them understand the journey of decision-making and delivery of services and amenities. They can see the current state of affairs and what's needed, plans for delivering it, and progress towards it. Otherwise, it's a mystery that leads to frustration and cynicism.

Solution

Improve transparency and accountability of public works by creating and maintaining a publicly available detailed online map showing the status of our path network elements and status of upgrading it (e.g. work to be done, work planned, work in progress)

4. Invest in street trees

Challenge

In our changing climate, weather is becoming more extreme and therefore more of a health and safety issue for people on foot. Of particular concern is increasingly extreme heat in summer. Not only is it a problem for people walking, but it deters people from walking: without sufficient shelter and associated cooler temperatures, people would prefer to travel in an air-conditioned box from one air-conditioned building to another, even over very short distances.

Trees, particularly deciduous ones, provide shelter from the sun, wind and rain and help cool local environments, making it safer and more pleasant for people to walk.

Solution

Develop and implement a plan to **ensure full tree cover of paths**, to improve comfort and attractiveness of walking environments and public spaces.