



MEDIA RELEASE

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Pedestrians take to the streets.

The Canberra Pedestrian Forum wants the ACT government to provide safe, convenient walking routes to shops, schools and work.

“Too many walking routes are interrupted by busy roads that are prioritised for cars,” says Forum convenor Leon Arundell. “Pedestrians often choose to make dangerous mid-block crossings, rather than take a long detour and face excessive delays at traffic lights.”

Mr Arundell praises the ACT Government for introducing 40 km/h speed limits near shopping centres, and the 30 km/h car-pedestrian shared zone in Childers St.

“But we still have 50 km/h *de facto* shared zones on up to one in three Canberra streets. These streets have no footpaths. People in motorised wheelchairs, and parents pushing baby carriages, have no option but to walk along the road.”

“Many Canberrans are discouraged from walking, and take the car instead,” says Mr Arundell, “This adds to the pressures on our roads.”

Mr Arundell will represent the interests of pedestrians at the Road Safety Roundtable on 14 May, which is being hosted jointly by ACT Chief Minister Jon Stanhope and NRMA Motoring and Services Regional Director Alan Evans.

Mr Arundell believes that it is time for road authorities to take pedestrians seriously.

“Walking is Canberrans’ third most popular way to get to work, after cars and buses,” he says, “but pedestrians on roads are the forgotten majority.”

He welcomes the NRMA’s support for a cultural change among Canberra drivers¹. “Every driver becomes a pedestrian as soon as he steps out of his car. The NRMA represents 120,000 Canberra pedestrians.”

For Further Comment

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¹ Alan Evans, NRMA joins ACT road safety talks, *The Open Road*, May/June 2009, p.15.