

**INQUIRY INTO PEDESTRIAN SAFETY
(MINISTERIAL REFERENCE)**

Organisation: Action for Public Transport (NSW) Inc
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Geoff Corrigan MP
Chair
NSW Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety (Staysafe)
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000
staysafe@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Corrigan,

Inquiry Into Pedestrian Safety

We refer to your call for submissions to the Committee's inquiry into road safety issues involving pedestrians in NSW. We do not have the resources to prepare a detailed response to all the terms of reference, but are pleased to tender a few points for your consideration.

Terms of Reference

- (a) Short and long terms trends in pedestrian injuries and fatalities in metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas;
- (b) Underlying causes of pedestrian injuries and fatalities;
- (c) The incidence of drivers leaving the scene of the accident after hitting pedestrians;
- (d) Effectiveness of recent measures to address pedestrian safety;
- (e) Additional strategies to increase pedestrian safety;
- (f) The current emphasis placed on pedestrian road users as part of land use policies and in the planning and management of the road system;
- (g) Pedestrian safety issues and strategies in other jurisdictions; and
- (h) Any other related matters.

Most of our points below would fall under item (b) above.

1. Left-turning vehicles.

The engineers at the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) have arranged the traffic signals at many intersections so that when pedestrian walk sign comes on, so too does the green light for left turning vehicles. Some motorists act like cattle dogs menacing pedestrians' ankles. Sometimes there is a delayed left turn signal, but frequently not sufficiently delayed to allow a fit and mobile pedestrian to clear a very broad intersection before motorists begin to behave in an intimidating fashion - to say nothing of less mobile, elderly and slightly handicapped pedestrians. Some just have a sign saying look out for pedestrians, implying that the road is primarily for motorists.

Some intersections like this are quite bad, eg the Kingsway at Miranda, and impatient drivers treat pedestrians as a nuisance.

We recommend that during the pedestrian traffic phase that the pedestrian should have sole right to the road.

At intersections where the sign says “left turn on red permitted after stopping”, motorists still think they have priority over pedestrians. Drivers look right to see if there is a break in the traffic so they can turn left, and don't look left to see if a pedestrian is crossing. Even if they see a pedestrian crossing either way, drivers still think they are entitled to proceed.

2. Bicycles on Footpaths

The increased use of bicycles on footpaths continues to be a problem, discouraging walking. This is a particularly sore point for blind pedestrians. The Government has been reluctant to legalize riding bicycles on footpaths, but is also reluctant to prosecute.

3. Miniature Scooters on Footpaths

The use of miniature scooters on footpaths is more of a hazard to pedestrians than skateboards or even rollerblades. These are also used very frequently, and recklessly on railway station ramps, despite signs being displayed prohibiting their use.

4. Battery powered Golf-Buggy Vehicles on Footpaths

There is increasing use of battery powered golf-buggy like vehicles on footpaths, usually by elderly people. They come up behind pedestrians very quietly but frequently menacingly as if they own the footpath with their implicit message to get out of the way. They have become a problem in suburban areas with many old people. Perhaps they should be equipped with bells like bicycles.

5. Vehicles Reversing out of Driveways

Cars reversing out of driveways are a danger. We would be reluctant to concur with the idea of reversing alarms such as are used on trucks, because these create a noise problem, but reversing cars are still a problem. The responsibility of the driver to take care for pedestrians should be re-emphasised and perhaps reinforced.

6. RTA Statistics

The RTA Statistical Statement of Road Traffic Accidents should be obtained and studied to see which types of accidents have claimed the lives of pedestrians, and the age level. Fatalities in the past have been highest for the very young and especially the elderly. Of course, there are no statistics for “near misses”. For every “hit” there are probably 99 near misses.

7. Parking on Footpaths

Motorists who park on footpaths can make it very difficult for people with wheelchairs, strollers and shopping trolleys to get around the obstruction without moving onto the road.

There is a culture in the motoring fraternity that it is somehow preferable to cause inconvenience to pedestrians rather than to motorists, and that therefore parking on the footpath is preferable to parking on the road. Perhaps it is related to the fact that pedestrians do not react with immediate

loud and incessant horn blowing.

This culture needs to be addressed and positively dissuaded. Pedestrians represent a broader segment of society than do motorists! The arrogance of motorists needs to be curtailed.

8. Poor Design of Turning Indicators on Vehicles

Another problem is car design, and the position and brightness of the indicators (when a driver deigns to use them). It is not easy for a pedestrian watching a car to work out which of the many little boxes might be flashing. Waiting broadside on to a vehicle at a corner or roundabout, a pedestrian has difficulty in first identifying the indicator amongst all the coloured plastic, and then in seeing whether the light is flashing or not. Most times it is safer to wait until the car is gone, because many car indicators have atrophied from lack of use.

9. A "Hypothetical"

Staysafe should imagine a world where every pedestrian has a pocket-sized weapon which can stop a car on the spot. That is, pedestrians are able to threaten motorists in the same way motorists currently threaten pedestrians. That's what Staysafe should be aiming for - a level playing field!

Yours faithfully

Allan Miles
Secretary
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