

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

Organisation: Private Citizen
Name: Mr John Tyler
Telephone: (02) 9579 4812
Date Received: 9/06/2009

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY BLANK

Re: Inquiry into Pedestrian Safety

In relation to the above inquiry, I would like to make a submission relating to two of the terms of reference. The points below are personal observations and not the result of any mathematical study, and therefore could be considered anecdotal evidence. My experience is based on many years as a driver and pedestrian in both the Sydney CBD and Sydney suburbs.

(b) Underlying causes of pedestrian injuries and fatalities;

The cause of pedestrian accidents cannot be attributed to one cause, but are a combination of causes.

Poor driving

- Parents stopping too close to pedestrian crossings near schools to drop children off. On two occasions I witnessed cars stopping on the pedestrian crossing itself to have a chat to other parents crossing the road or on the adjoining footpath, and on one occasion in the past week observing a parent stop on the crossing to let their child out, while other children were attempting to cross. Despite regularly being around two primary schools and one secondary school, I have never seen a police car near the schools monitoring traffic during the morning period
- Cars exceeding the speed limit in 40 km school zones on main roads, often by 20kmh or more. A typical example of this is King Georges Road at Wiley Park. Despite driving past this point every weekday for almost two years, I never once saw a police car, or fixed or mobile speed camera in this area during morning school times
- Cars stopping in the middle of the road to speak to pedestrians on the footpath, blocking traffic. On one occasion the vehicle in question was a NSW Ambulance Service vehicle, and the pedestrians were standing in the middle of the road speaking to the driver
- Inattentive drivers. The most common cause being drivers making phone calls on their mobiles without the use of a hands free, or worse, sending SMS messages
- Aggressive drivers, ignoring pedestrian crossings, or speeding up to get through a pedestrian crossing before pedestrians are able to cross

Poor pedestrian behaviour

- Pedestrians, mainly in the Sydney CBD, ignoring the traffic signals and jay-walking when there is traffic. Most dangerously, I have seen pedestrians try and run across the road to beat on-coming traffic. The most frequent place for this to occur is Druitt St, and the various roads crossing Martin Place. This was the cause of a fatal pedestrian accident at which I provided first aid
- Pedestrians on crossings near railway stations amble across with no regard to the traffic. Instead of waiting and crossing as a group, pedestrians walk across individually, often holding traffic up for 5 or more minutes. Drivers as a result get frustrated and try to get through gaps in the stream of pedestrians. The most obvious examples of this are the western side of Penshurst station, and the Morts Road side of Mortdale station, around the time when trains are arriving.
- Intersections around railway stations where footpaths leading to railway stations stop at the road with no pedestrian crossing allowing access to the station. This means pedestrians have to cross the road without the safety of a crossing to access public transport. The western side of Oatley station is an example of this. Oatley station has an added danger of the viaduct severely limiting visibility.

Poor infrastructure

- Roads marked with faux-brick paving or similar at the end of a footpath, with the footpath continuing on the other side of the road. It is a visual cue for pedestrians to cross, yet it has not been marked as a pedestrian crossing. In this situation pedestrians and drivers both assume they have the right of way. An example of this is Barrack St in the city.
- Pedestrian footpaths adjacent to a major road (speed limit of 70 kph or more) where the traffic travels in the kerbside lane, and there are no protective barriers. The bridge over the railway line on King Georges Road and Hurstville is an example of this
- Intersections where the footpath stops, has an incline down across the kerb with matching access on the opposite side of the road, but no associated pedestrian crossings. This is a visual clue to pedestrians to cross the road, but there is no crossing or other warning to motorists
- Intersections with traffic lights that do not allow sufficient time for pedestrians to cross before the lights change – this is particularly noticeable when elderly people are trying to cross and do not move as fast as younger people.

(e) Additional strategies to increase pedestrian safety

Based on the observations above, the following actions would improve pedestrian safety and reduce the number of pedestrian accidents.

- Placing fixed speed cameras in school zones that are on major roads, adjusted to allow for different speed limits at different times of day, such as the one installed on Forrest Road outside Hurstville Public School
- Installing flashing 40 kph signals in school zones, with a priority given to those areas that are on major roads or roads that otherwise have a speed limit of 60kph or more
- Making pedestrian crossings a raised section of road, in effect having them act as a speed hump. This would only be practical in 50 kph zones.
- Installing appropriate pedestrian crossings in every location where there is facility for pedestrians to cross the road such as ramps down the kerb
- Altering patterned sections of roads so there is no confusion as to the rights of way for pedestrians or motorists in these areas. This could either be marking these locations as pedestrian crossings, or removing the markings so visibly they look no different to the rest of road
- Developing an education programme about safe driving around schools for drivers
- Developing an education programme for pedestrians about the dangers of trying to beat traffic or jay-walking
- Increasing the frequency of Walk signals for pedestrians at traffic lights, particularly in high pedestrian traffic areas such as in the CBD
- Increasing the duration of the walk signals, especially in areas where elderly people are more likely to be crossing roads
- Ensuring that footpaths separate pedestrians and vehicle traffic, either by distance or barrier
- Installing barriers in the centre of the road to prevent jay-walking, as has been done on the Princes Highway at Rockdale on the Northern side of Bay St.

While not a complete list of causes or solutions, implementing the above should make significant reduction in the frequency of pedestrian accidents.

John Tyler