

Mr Tom Duncan
Clerk
ACT Legislative Assembly
London Circuit
CANBERRA ACT 2601

18 December 2025

Dear Mr Duncan

Tom

Thank you for your letter concerning petition E-PET-048-25, lodged by Mr Thomas Emerson MLA regarding the installation of an overpass on Canberra Avenue.

The Road Safety Action Plan commits ACT to a number of road safety principles including the Vision Zero (which means no deaths or serious injuries on our road transport network). The Road Safety Program has expanded on the Australian and ACT Governments' commitment to Vision Zero.

The concerns about pedestrian safety along Canberra Avenue have been raised since 2020. The ACT Government reviewed the safety of pedestrians in 2022 and 2023 and identified potential improvements to footpath connections, updating signs and median bollards to prevent illegal parking in the median. While path improvements were completed, the installation of bollards was subject to the National Capital Authority (NCA) approval and were not implemented.

A feasibility study into the crossing facilities near St Edmund and St Clare's college was undertaken in May 2024 and one of the objectives was to explore different type of pedestrian crossing facilities at this location including overpasses and underpasses.

These facilities were not considered as feasible options due to the following reasons:

- The large footprint of the structure will prevent meeting accessibility requirements, particularly the buildings on the northern side of the road (opposite St Clares) significantly impact the ability to achieve the pedestrian path of travel and adequate levels for accessibility, as in order to achieve a safe grade for the ramp a minimum length of ramp will be required;
- The impact on the utilities, services and existing trees on both sides of Canberra Avenue; and
- Security concerns from the nearby buildings and the structure where any overpass would encroach into the adjacent building line.

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In addition, surveys around the world have found that pedestrians will always favour at grade intersections and won't use overpass or underpass facilities at times with low traffic. These facilities would not necessarily achieve desired level of patronage and pedestrian injury prevention.

The provision of a school zone was ruled out at the time, as Canberra Avenue is classified as an arterial road with around 20 thousand vehicles per day in both directions, with about 10% of the volume of traffic in the school pick up or drop-off times. The mean speed is about 60km/hour and based on the available information, signalised midblock pedestrian crossing was considered the most reasonable and practicable solution at the time.

The time it takes to cross a road is a major decision factor for pedestrians. If safe crossing facilities can be made easy to access and provide minimal delays, many studies have shown that they are more likely to use them. The proposal to install pedestrian activated traffic signals on Canberra Avenue, will not only provide a safer way to cross the road, but will also result in minimal delays to pedestrians wishing to cross the road. Upon pushing the button, pedestrians will be provided with a green walk signal in less than 20 seconds.

The unfortunate event from 28 March 2025, where two students from St Edmunds College were hit by a car whilst waiting to cross Canberra Avenue due to antisocial behaviour of a driver in a stolen vehicle, prompted the Government to commit to a new signalised midblock pedestrian crossing on Canberra Avenue. This project will be jointly funded by the ACT Government and the Australian Government through the Safer Local Roads and Infrastructure Program (SLRIP).

The Preliminary Sketch Design has been finalised at this point of time and the completion of the signalised crossing on Canberra Avenue east of Burke Street is anticipated by the end of 2025-26 financial year. It is also noted that Canberra Avenue is also subject to planning approval by the NCA and the design will be submitted to them for approval in the coming weeks. Further, any other future treatments in the corridor would require their approval.

I am pleased to inform you about the development of this significant project, and I trust this information is of assistance to the community.

Sincerely



Tara Cheyne MLA
Minister for City and Government Services