



## MEDIA RELEASE

### STEEL TRANSPORT REFORMS WELCOMED, BUT MUST WORK IN CONCERT WITH CLAY BILL

Pedal Power ACT and the Australian Federal Police Association (AFPA) have welcomed the introduction of a second bill to amend Canberra's road transport legislation, but cautioned it must be enacted alongside amendments tabled by Greens MLA Jo Clay in June in order to provide comprehensive improvement in protections for Canberrans on our paths and roads.

Pedal Power ACT Chief Executive Officer Ian Ross said Transport Minister Chris Steel's *Road Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2021* will introduce a raft of measures to improve safety of our roads and paths.

"Pedal Power has intensely campaigned for improvements to our road transport legislation since a bike rider was seriously injured last year, with the at-fault driver receiving only a \$393 fine", he said. "After that incident, we placed our negligent driving legislation under a microscope, and found significant gaps".

The Bill tabled in the Assembly by Minister Steel today will provide stronger penalties for culpable driving, negligent driving that causes harm, unsafe behaviour of mobility devices, and negligent driving that does not cause injury. These reforms are very welcome and will improve the safety of all Canberrans.

Mr Ross said this amendment would work well if enacted alongside an amendment tabled by Greens MLA Jo Clay in June, which will also provide police with the capacity to provide fines for negligent driving that harms vulnerable road users.

AFPA President Alex Caruana similarly welcomed the introduction of improved road transport offences, but cautioned against relying solely on a traffic offence which can only be resolved following a court process, instead of equipping police to issue an infringement notice. "Research shows that the swiftness and severity of punishment, and the perceived ability to avoid punishment, are critical factors in modifying driver behaviour," he said.

"Except in the most serious cases, infringement notices, when appropriate penalties are applied, remain the best option for police, for victims and for offenders," he said.

"We would like to see both the Steel Bill and the Clay Bill enacted together. Together, they will provide ACT Policing with an increased capacity to address unsafe behaviour on our roads".



He said that the Canberra community was shocked recently when three members of ACT Policing were driven into by a motor vehicle driver while conducting their lawful duties during a traffic stop. “While these police officers were only doing their job, they were also unequivocally vulnerable road users at the time of the incident.

“The AFPA believes that more can be done in the legislative space to improve the safety of all vulnerable road users as a distinctly at-risk group.”

Mr Caruana noted that the overwhelming majority of public submissions in response to Jo Clay’s bill supported the establishment offences which can be resolved via infringement notice with appropriate penalties.

Ends

Thursday 5 August 2021

**Media enquiries:**

- Pedal Power CEO Ian Ross, and AFPA President Alex Caruana, are available for interview on request.

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