



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY
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Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into Dangerous Driving

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Submission to the ACT Legislative Assembly Inquiry into Dangerous Driving

Uriarra Village is a small semi-rural residential neighbourhood on the outskirts of the ACT approximately 17 minutes' drive from Denman Prospect or Duffy. There are one hundred households, and the population is approximately 310 people (2021).

There are only 2 routes from the Village to Canberra one of which is subject to intermittent closure due to a low-level crossing. Both routes have winding sections where safely overtaking other vehicles and bicycles is not possible.

While there are only 100 households using these roads (plus the surrounding farms) the roads in question are used by a large population of non-residents engaged in cycling, motorbiking, and driving high performance sports cars. This includes periodic road closures due to cycling events which can close one of the two routes into Canberra.

We are underserved by Emergency Services, being outside the range of ACT Ambulance Service for life critical care (residents have been advised to drive to the back of Duffy to meet an ambulance as this results in faster care) and ACT Fire and Rescue. However we still pay the same taxes and rates as any other ACT residents and are entitled to the same treatment and availability of services.

Our chief concerns around road safety are as follows (and in order of priority):

1. There are two intersections, one on each approach road which are routinely used by car hooners in small and large mobs, sometimes between 50 – 100 cars, engaged in doing burnouts. This can occur sometimes 2 to 3 times a week. Despite the government reporting that the incidences of this occurring have diminished, this is not the case. After years of inaction, we simply become tired of reporting it to ACT Policing when no police are sent to break up the gatherings. Residents have been caught up in the convoys of cars coming out to engage in burnouts and have been overtaken on double-lines and have been involved in near-miss situations where a head-on collision was within 10 seconds of occurring. Another resident reported that when attempting to get home and driving through the gathering that a car pulled right out in front of them and commenced burnouts. On another occasion one of the burnout cars stopped on the way from leaving the scene and engaged in public urination in the street of the village within view of a family returning home from a night out to dinner.

There are innumerable approaches which could curb this behaviour without requiring police presence, chiefly camera surveillance at the two hotspots or anti-burnout road surfaces. While this would surely just move the hooners to other locations, hopefully they might choose somewhere that doesn't impact people simply trying to live their lives in lawful peace.

ACT Policing have been quoted as saying they don't mind the gatherings, so long as they aren't bothering anyone. Well, they are bothering 310 people of Uriarra Village.

The impacts of the behaviour are on the safety of the residents, the environment from the rubbish left behind and from the shredded tyres and significant tyre marks on the intersections, which are almost entirely covered in skid marks, and the rights of the residents to live in peace

and quiet.

2. The use of the stretch of Brindabella Road from Cotter Road to Uriarra Road by motorcyclists and high-performance sports cars as a hill-climb racetrack for their amusement. This can be simply individuals or organised groups with resident photographers and videographers. Motorcycles cross to the other side of the road and overtake other vehicles on blind corners. Even when not crossing to the wrong side of the road, when cornering the motorcycles drive dangerously close to the dividing line where they are vulnerable to collisions with oncoming vehicles. There have been numerous motorcycle crashes on this section of the road including at least one fatality.

Once again, policing approaches such as mobile speed cameras would significantly limit the use of this location as a racetrack. ACT Policing could raise significant revenue from this activity in a single weekend. While police do come and patrol these areas, it is typically not during activities of peak dangerous road use.

3. Finally, the difficulty of road users overtaking cyclists safely. Many, many cyclists use the so-called Uriarra Loop 7 days a week, but primarily on weekends. Not only do cyclists use the roads for casual exercise or training but cycling road races are also held several times per year. While safely overtaking a lone cyclist does not often pose any difficulty, when cyclists ride two-abreast and especially when they are in packs of 6-20 it is often dangerous to overtake them. Some cyclists will move into single file when a car is approaching, while many either don't hear the car or refuse to move over even when given a polite toot of the horn to alert them to an approaching car.

Simply put, this road is incompatible for cyclists and cars when the cyclists do not ride single file and do not ride in only small groups. It would be a simple thing for the ACT Government to erect road signs saying "cyclists must ride single file" for the whole loop. It isn't fair to car road users who have no choice of which road to use to have to ride at 20-30 kph behind a large pack of cyclists for kilometres while waiting for a safe place to overtake. Additionally, those waiting for a safe time to overtake are often overtaken by those road users who are too frustrated to wait, and instead choose to risk a head on collision with another motorist.

There have been multiple road fatalities over the last decade involving motorists, motorcyclists and bicyclists.

The submission is put forward by the following residents:



