



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

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EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM



**YEAR 5 INQUIRY RESOURCES**  
**AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM—HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES—CIVICS AND**  
**CITIZENSHIP STRAND**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Year 5 inquiry resources Australian Curriculum—Humanities and social sciences—Civics and citizenship strand</b>	<b>1</b>
Year 5 inquiry question—How and why do people participate in groups to achieve shared goals?	1
Assembly committees—Working together to achieve a goal (Civics and citizenship strand—Year 5)	2
Inquiry question	2
Learning Objectives	2
Resources	2
Australian curriculum	2
Orientation	2
Activities	3
Activity 1—read the story	3
Activity 2—watch videos:	3
Activity 3—discussion	3
Activity 4—Public hearing role play—Inquiry into footpath safety	3
Activity 5—Extension activity	3
Activity 6—Reflection	3
<b>Resource 1—A Day in the Life of Penelope Primrose</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Resource 2—Inquiry process and class discussion points</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Resource 3—Background information and teacher role play script</b>	<b>13</b>
Background	13
inquiry topic	13
Terms of reference	13
Public Hearing	13

Roles	13
Committee members conducting the hearing	13
Witnesses	14
Student Responsibilities	14
Room setup for public hearing	15
Report	15
Teacher running script	16
<b>Resource 4—Student scripts for inquiry into footpath safety role play</b>	<b>22</b>
Committee Chair script	22
Committee Members script	25
Questions for Minister for City Services	25
Questions for Risk Management Co-ordinator and City Services Staff	25
Questions for ACT Public Safety Association Members	25
Questions for Individuals from the ACT community affected by footpath damage	25
Questions for ACT Restorations and Driveways Engineers	25
Questions for Pedal People ACT	26
Minister for City Services and Government Staff Script	27
Opening Statement	27
Information that can be included in answers to questions	27
Risk Management Co-ordinator and City Services Staff Script	28
Opening Statement	28
Information that can be included in answers to questions	28
ACT Public Safety Association members Script	29
Opening Statement	29
information that can be included in answers to questions	29
Individuals from the ACT community affected by footpath damage	30

Opening Statement	30
Information that can be included in answers to questions	30
ACT Restorations and Driveways Engineers	31
Opening Statement	31
Information that can be included in answers to questions	31
ACT Pedal People	32
Opening Statement	32
Information that can be included in answers to questions	32

## YEAR 5 INQUIRY QUESTION—HOW AND WHY DO PEOPLE PARTICIPATE IN GROUPS TO ACHIEVE SHARED GOALS?

The following set of civics and citizenship lesson plans have been designed around a story created by Joann McAlister, Office of the Legislative Assembly.

The Penelope Primrose story presents an opportunity for students from upper primary school to explore the ways the community can have their voices heard in the Assembly through the committee system.

The lesson plans are designed to be completed after students have read the story as they will need to be familiar with the characters and plot to understand and complete the activities.

The Assembly's education and engagement program offers a wide range of different programs for primary and high school students that can be tailored to meet the needs of teachers and students. Schools groups are welcome to visit the Legislative Assembly to participate in role play activities where students take on roles as the Speaker, Clerk, government members, opposition members and more. For more information, contact:

Manager, Education and Engagement

T (02) 6205 3016

E [LAeducation@parliament.act.gov.au](mailto:LAeducation@parliament.act.gov.au)

## ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES—WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE A GOAL (CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP STRAND—YEAR 5)

### INQUIRY QUESTION

How and why do people participate in groups to achieve shared goals?

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

How and why do Assembly committees conduct public inquiries?—Students will come to understand how Assembly committees provide an opportunity for community input through public inquiries and how the committee process is similar to students' own learning processes guided by the inquiry and skills strand of the Australian curriculum.

### RESOURCES

- Resource 1—A day in the life of Penelope Primrose (story attached)
- Resource 2—Inquiry process and class discussion points (attached)
- Resource 3—Background information and teacher role play script (attached)
- Resource 4—Student scripts for inquiry role play on footpath safety (attached)
- Videos (<https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/Explore-your-Assembly/videos/committee-snapshots>)
- Fact sheet on committees (<https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/Explore-your-Assembly/resources/fact-sheets/committees>)

### AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

- How people with shared beliefs and values work together to achieve a civic goal (ACHASSK118).
- Develop appropriate questions to guide an inquiry about people, events, developments, places, systems and challenges (ACHASSI094).
- Evaluate evidence to draw conclusions (ACHASSI101).

### ORIENTATION

This unit focuses on how the Assembly's committee system is an important way for the Assembly to learn more about the views of the community. It is also an opportunity to look at how students' own efforts to learn about an issue follow a similar process.

Through individual or group reading, watching a video, structured discussion, and a role play activity, students will explore the committee inquiry process and how issues can be analysed and different views can be listened to as part of a public inquiry. Activities can be done over two or more lessons.

In addition to the attached resources, see also the Assembly factsheet on [committees](#) and watch the [committee snapshots](#) videos.

## ACTIVITIES

### Activity 1—read the story

Students to read “A day in the life of the Penelope Primrose” (resource 1) either together as a class or individually.

### Activity 2—watch videos:

Students to watch [committee snapshots](#):

- Committee inquiry process—an explanation of the committee inquiry process; and
- Community engagement with committees—how can the community have input into the Assembly’s committee inquiry process.

### Activity 3—discussion

Conduct a structured discussion drawing parallels between the committee inquiry process and the learning process that students themselves undertake to find out more about an area of interest or a particular topic/subject that they engage with as part of their studies in the classroom.

The HASS inquiry and skills strand methodology is remarkably similar to the committee inquiry process and can be used as a basis for exploring the underlying concepts of both students’ own learning and that of committees (i.e. questioning, researching, analysing, evaluating and reflecting, and communicating).

See resource 2 for discussion points.

### Activity 4—Public hearing role play—Inquiry into footpath safety

Read “A day in the life of the Penelope Primrose” (resource 1) for background information (if not already done in a previous lesson).

Public hearing role play on footpath safety aims to take students through a committee inquiry process. It can be scaled up or down to cater for class size so that all students are able to participate (resource 5).

### Activity 5—Extension activity

Create your own committee public hearing into an inquiry question (this may require a couple of lessons to complete the entire process). To complete the inquiry students will need to determine the terms of reference to guide the inquiry, form a committee and identify witness groups to answer the inquiry question. Committee members create their own questions for the witnesses. Witnesses would not traditionally have written answers, answers at a public hearing are given in response to questions as they are asked (questions without notice). Alternatively if the witnesses are given the questions prior to the hearing they could prepare answers (questions on notice). Each witness group usually provides an opening statement that is prepared prior to the hearing.

### Activity 6—Reflection

Students to reflect on how the community can raise issues and have their voices heard by Members of the Legislative Assembly through the committee process. This includes participation by making a submission and appearing before a committee as a witness.

# RESOURCE 1—A DAY IN THE LIFE OF PENELOPE PRIMROSE

By Joann McAlister

I stir out of a strange dream about choosing different coloured jackets for my puppy, Perry, and sit up with a start. I blink, stretch my mouth wide in a yawn, and raise my arms high in a stretch.

“Wait, what?” I’m gazing up and I poke my long coloured nails. Then I pull back my covers and give my enormous feet an incredulous look. “These aren’t my feet! Why do I have red nails? And WHERE IS ALL MY HAIR?” I lumber to my mirror and my jaw falls open.

Because this isn’t my body. This isn’t my face. And this is ABSOLUTELY not my hair. This is the body of my mum, Pamela Primrose, Member of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory. My name is Penelope Primrose and I’m a primary school student in Canberra. I have short nails, am on the A-grade soccer team and certainly should not have these obscenely huge feet. How am I supposed to play soccer with these enormous ski-feet?

“Muum!!! What’s going on?”

My mum bolts into my room, knocking my mirror to the floor with an obnoxiously loud smash. I can’t believe my eyes – my mum looks just like me.

“Ow! Penny – there you are! Oh my goodness – I can’t believe this is happening! You look like me and I look like you! Remember how I bumped into our postman, Mr War Lock, yesterday? And then I tried to explain to the policeman who saw the whole thing it was an accident. And after I accidentally knocked Mr Lock over again, Mr Lock *did* say something about a curse. I really thought he was just kidding about that,” Mum sighs.

“I don’t have time to be cursed today! I have a committee meeting this afternoon, the election is soon and I can’t get us into the Curse Reversal doctor until next week. This is a disaster! What are we going to do?” She attempts to pace but she trips over her normal-sized feet and she scrapes three of my favourite posters from my walls so paper rains down all over my bedroom floor.

“Er, Mum. Hey – Mum! MUM!” I finally manage to poke my mum in the ribs hard enough with my claw-like nail on the end of these super annoying long arms to get her attention and she says, “What? What is it?”

“Well, maybe, just this once, I could go to work in your place,” I say. “You’re always saying I should learn more about the Legislative Assembly. This could be my chance!”

And mum could take my spelling test and finish my geography assignment.

“Oooh, OK. You’re right.” The fear is fading from her very pretty green eyes. “Yes. Thank you. Now remember while you’re at work today – we’re all responsible for democracy.”

“Yes, yes,” I interrupt her, “I know, you’ve told me before. Democracy is a two part word - ‘demos’ is the whole citizen living within a particular city-state and ‘kratos’ means power or rule. The Australian Capital Territory and Australia are both representative democracies.”

“OK, OK, you’ve convinced me. I’m sure you’ll find it interesting. Good luck!” She thwacks a briefcase and her daily diary into my hands, gives me a gentle tap on my back, and I trudge out of the house, ready to see what the day will bring.

I have a lot of questions about today, including; what does my mum do? How does she do it?

I'm excited to find out!

#

First, we are preparing for the upcoming election. I meet up with Mum's good friend, Mr Sam Spencer, who is also a Member of the Legislative Assembly. We're campaigning – going door to door to discuss people's issues and what our party, the Play Party, will be doing to help them when we get elected (or re-elected). I wonder how many of the 25 Members of the ACT Assembly are doing the same today.

"How BUSY are we?" Sam grins at me as we jog along. "Lucky **one of the functions of democracy is to have free and frequent elections**, so we only have elections every four years, right?"

"Yeah, lucky," I pant, as I struggle to keep up. My mum's body is not used to jogging, that's for sure.

Mum and I have talked about how the ACT is cut up into five areas, called **electorates** and each area has a similar number of voters in them. Sam and I are campaigning in Brindabella, which is the southern electorate that covers most of Tuggeranong.

We knock on a door and when it opens, Sam smiles a toothy grin at the voter and says, "Good morning. My name is Sam Spencer and I am a candidate for Brindabella. I am part of the Play Party and **we as a party believe in justice and fairness for all and we also have a strong belief in people engaging in play, in certain areas and at certain times, if they wish.**"

"Mmm." The voter is a tall woman with suspicious eyes and she screws up her face. "I like the sound of justice and fairness but I'm an arachnophobic, so **I'm more interested to hear what the Play party thinks about the squashing of all spiders on sight.**"

Oh, I totally know the answer to this question so I say, "The Play Party has a policy that if the spider remains outside a person's premises, it should be left alone," I say.

Now the woman is glaring at us as her voice grows louder and louder. "Unacceptable! I am the head of the 'No Spiders Group for the ACT' and next year **we're going to create our own political party**. Until then, I'm going to be **campaigning against anyone who doesn't agree with our position** on immediate spider squashing. Good bye!" She slams the door in my face.

"Excellent!" says Sam. "Bit of differing views, but all citizens should be treated equally and accorded dignity and respect - a great feature of a healthy democracy."

I nod and I keep this advice in mind as we campaign for the next three hours.

#

Sam is also the Minister for Education, so after a quick cup of hot chocolate, he has to leave to open a new school. I wave at him and continue plodding along the street just outside the Legislative Assembly when I see a group of young students from my class all milling together outside the Assembly. One of them is my good friend, Tamara Taffy, and she breaks away from the pack and bounds over to me.

"Ms Primrose! Ms Primrose!"

That's when I notice that Tamara holding a poster that says:

**FIX ALL FOOTPATHS NOW!**

A number of my classmates are yelling, "Fix all footpaths NOW!" One of my classmates, Ben Bratt is holding a picture of a glum-looking five-year old flopped beside a chipped and broken footpath. The five-year old is missing her two front teeth, has a skinned knee and her right arm in a sling. Just looking at the sad five-year old and her sore knee makes my stomach roll over.

Oh yeah. I remember now.

My mum said that last year a little kid called Laurel Lee was skipping along the footpath. This footpath had a tree next to it and some roots had grown up underneath the footpath, making the footpath lumpy instead of smooth and flat. Laurel tripped over the footpath and fell flat on her face, knocking out two teeth, grazing her knee and breaking her arm.

An ambulance came to the accident and **whisked Laurel to the hospital to see a doctor and get a cast on her arm.** That's what I'm looking at in Ben's picture.

After that, **the Assembly created an inquiry into footpath safety for a committee to investigate in further detail.** Along with two other MLAs, my mum is part of that committee which will hold a public hearing to listen to community opinions on footpath safety. One of the submissions made to the committee is that there should be **an amendment to our safety laws and that all footpath issues must be fixed within three months.** This law would make sure Canberrans could be safer from footpath accidents. **My classmates and other Canberrans like the idea of this law. They are protesting to ensure that changes will be made to the law.**

I focus back on Ben and ask him, "What can I do to help?"

Ben hands me a clipboard and then says, "**This is a petition** about footpath safety. It has over 600 signatures. Can you please present it in the Assembly for us, please?"

I look at the petition. It's a piece of paper and on it are the following words:

PETITION

To the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

This petition of certain residents of the Australian Capital Territory draws to the attention of the Assembly that damaged footpaths in the ACT are not being fixed in a timely manner.

Your petitioners therefore request the Assembly change the Footpath Safety Laws to ensure footpaths are fixed within three months.

Underneath that is a long list of names, addresses and signatures.

"Yes. Of course I'll present it."

Ben's mum leans her head over and stares at me – straight into my eyes. "This issue is very important to us. So important that I've watched all of the parties: the Play party, the Frisbee party and the Study party in the Assembly and what they've said about footpaths and that will affect how I vote in the election. I like that your

Play party has a policy that footpaths should be fixed within three months. I hope you'll also consider the idea of one week. I'm looking forward to the committee report on footpath safety."

"Thank you. Yes, my mu-, er, my party has a strong belief that footpaths must be fixed as soon as possible. We are hopeful that the committee's report will convince all Legislative Assembly members to agree to change the laws."

Then I tuck the paper into my briefcase and make my way into the Assembly.

#

I'm on the Ground Floor of the Assembly in a meeting room, squirming in my chair. I'm excited to have a meeting for the Footpath Safety Committee over our lunch break. The Legislative Assembly is a **unicameral parliament** which means it only has one lower house and doesn't have an upper house or house of review. Instead, the Assembly has a committee system that investigates certain issues and then prepares a report for the Assembly on the issue.

"Hi, Pam! Hi Pam!"

Mike Marrone from the Frisbee Party enters the room, followed by Gail Greenwich from the Study Party and Imogene Ivory, the committee secretary. Imogene's job is to organise committees and their meetings and hearings and they all sit down.

"Hi," I respond.

"OK," says Gail, who is the Chair of this Committee. She gazes over at the three of us. "Thanks for coming this afternoon."

The rules of the Assembly, or Standing Orders, as they're called say that there must be one member from the Play Party, one from the Frisbee party and one member from the Study party to make up a committee. So that's why there are four people in our Footpath Safety Committee meeting today (including Imogene who begins to take notes).

"Looks like we're all here." Gail looks over the papers in front of her. "So, today we're discussing the upcoming Public Hearing for this committee. We have received 53 submissions from people in the ACT about footpaths and safety and we've read through all of them. Our job is to choose witnesses from all sections of the community."

Mike Marrone from the Frisbee Party speaks up. "Yes, so firstly I think it's important to have the Minister for City Services and her staff appear before our committee."

The Minister is the person responsible for footpaths in the ACT and has people who work with her and who supervise new work and repairs to footpaths.

"Yes. And we had 28 submissions from people directly or indirectly affected by injury as a result of footpaths, so we'll include all of them," says Gail.

I nod, as I've already checked through all of the submissions. "There were six submissions from cyclists, five of whom are members of Pedal People, the ACT's cycling advocacy group so we will invite a few of the members to appear."

Mike taps his finger on the piece of paper in front of him. "We had a submission from the Risk Management Co-ordinator from City Services discussing the process involved in fixing footpaths, including staffing, materials and awareness of damaged paths. Do we agree that he and his team should be on the list of people to appear before our Committee?"

"Yes." Gail checks over her paperwork. "I have two submissions here from a community organisation called the ACT Public Safety Association. They work with the community to help make Canberra safer and they talk to many groups and individuals in Canberra about footpaths and safety, so we'll include them on our list. Anyone else?"

Mike speaks up again. "I have a submission from ACT Restorations and Driveway Engineers. This is a privately owned company that has worked with the ACT Government on installation and repair of footpaths in the ACT for over 23 years, so they will contribute to the good cross section of views from the other witnesses."

"Thank you, everyone," says Gail. "We will hold our public hearing in one week. Imogene, could you invite all of the witnesses just mentioned to the hearing and publicise the hearing in the newspaper and on social media?"

"Yes," says Imogene. "I'll organise that."

"OK." Gail nods at all of us. "Thank you for your time today. We'll meet with Imogene in two days to discuss the list of witnesses and prepare for the Public Hearing. Thank you."

#

It is the end of the day. I still need to **lodge the petition with the Clerk**. First I need to count the number of signatures. There are a LOT, so this could take a while!! There are 602.

Before I go, I visit the Clerk and give him the petition. I'll go home for a quick dinner and then I'm off to the Young Canberra Citizen of the Year Awards. What a day!

Hopefully tomorrow I'll be back to my usual soccer playing, normal-sized feet wearing self!

## RESOURCE 2—INQUIRY PROCESS AND CLASS DISCUSSION POINTS

School inquiry process	Committee inquiry process	Class discussion points (similarities between committee inquiry process and classroom/student inquiry process)
Questioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Referral</b>—the Legislative Assembly can ask a committee to look into an issue, or a committee can itself nominate to undertake an inquiry.</li> <li>• <b>Terms of reference</b>—sets out the scope of an inquiry and help the committee to stay focused on the issues that it is investigating. They also assist groups and individuals that wish to make a submission, or to appear before a committee at a public hearing, as part of the inquiry process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>All committee inquiries have ‘terms of reference’</b> which set out what the committee wishes to learn more about as part of the inquiry and what questions the committee wishes to answer.</li> <li>• <b>Students to discuss either in groups or as a class how they think that the topics/subjects that they learn about each day are decided</b> and what reasons there might be for deciding that certain topics or subjects are worthy areas of learning.</li> <li>• <b>Students should be able to identify that the teacher or school curriculum will sometimes decide what they will learn more about, while other times students themselves will come up with ideas that they wish to explore.</b> Learning topics are generally related to areas of knowledge that are useful to our participation in the community.</li> <li>• <b>Teacher to outline that the committee inquiry process is very similar.</b> A committee can be given a topic/subject by the Assembly to learn more about (where, for instance, the Assembly considers that a topic is important to the community) or a committee can decide on its own to undertake an inquiry (called a self-referred inquiry) where the members of the committee considers that it is important or useful. When a committee learns more about a topic/subject, it is able to give better advice to the Assembly about that topic/subject and help the Assembly do its job in making decisions.</li> </ul>

School inquiry process	Committee inquiry process	Class discussion points (similarities between committee inquiry process and classroom/student inquiry process)
Researching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Publicity</b>—the committee will advertise the inquiry to ask for community input.</li> <li>• <b>Submissions</b>—Made by individuals, community organisations, peak bodies, special interest groups, representatives from government directorates, and academics and other subject matter experts.</li> <li>• <b>Research</b>—committee will look at government policy, legislation, reports and sometimes conduct site inspections for the inquiry issue.</li> <li>• <b>Public Hearings</b>—once submissions have been received a committee may hold one or more public hearings to gather further evidence. People who appear before a committee are called witnesses, although not everyone who makes a submission appears as a witness. To get further information the Committee members ask questions of the witnesses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>All committee inquiries have to gather information on the topic</b> to help answer the ‘terms of reference’ through the writing of a report and to help them make recommendations to the government that will improve the operation or outcomes for the topic.</li> <li>• <b>Students to discuss either in groups or as a class</b> where they think that the information on the subject can be found and what delivery methods the information may come in.</li> <li>• <b>Students should be able to identify that there can be a range of sources of information, both primary and secondary</b>, such as books, journals, newspapers, video or other multimedia and in person through interview.</li> <li>• <b>Teacher to outline that like students</b> committees use similar sources of information to research the subject of the inquiry. Each inquiry also calls for submissions which are received from a range of people, including the government, subject experts, community organisations and individuals. The committee will hear evidence from witnesses who appear before them to answer questions in public hearings.</li> </ul>
Analysing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Private meetings</b>—Committees meet to discuss how they are going to answer the inquiry question. They will determine dates for public inquiries and identify people they wish to invite to question based on submissions received. They may also do site visits at relevant locations to look at the issue, including talking to people who use or work at the site.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>All committees have private meetings</b> to talk about information they have received and decide which people or groups they would like to question further through the public meeting process. After collecting information they will also analyse it to write a report based on what they have found that includes recommendations to the government.</li> </ul>

School inquiry process	Committee inquiry process	Class discussion points (similarities between committee inquiry process and classroom/student inquiry process)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Students to discuss either in groups or as a class</b> the information they have found, will it answer the question or will they need to find further information sources to help answer the inquiry.</li> <li>• <b>Students should be able to identify that information obtained</b> forms the basis for formulating the final answer to the inquiry question.</li> <li>• <b>Teacher to outline that like students, committees analyse the information they have, including submissions they receive from the community.</b> Committees will ask some of people who made submissions to appear before the committee at a public hearing. These people are called witnesses and members of the committee will ask them questions about the inquiry topic to gather further/more in depth evidence for the committees consideration.</li> </ul>
Evaluating and reflecting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private meetings—the committee will reflect on all the information they have received and write a draft report, often known as a ‘chair’s draft’, which includes findings and recommendations, is prepared by the committee secretary in consultation with the chair. Once the chair has approved the draft report, it is circulated to other members, who may also suggest amendments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Committee members meet to</b> evaluate and reflect on the information they have received throughout the inquiry process. This information will be used to decide what recommendations they will make to the government with the aim of improving the operation or outcomes for the inquiry topic.</li> <li>• <b>Students to complete their answer to the inquiry question.</b> Students will need to evaluate and reflect on the information gathered to provide an answer and/or conclusion to the inquiry question Students use their conclusions to answer the inquiry question in the format required, such as report, speech, poster, etc.</li> <li>• <b>Students should be able to identify that</b></li> </ul>

School inquiry process	Committee inquiry process	Class discussion points (similarities between committee inquiry process and classroom/student inquiry process)
		<p>they need to complete the inquiry by providing an answer to the question in the desired format.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Teacher to outline</b> that in the same way that students are required to hand in completed work answering the inquiry question to the teacher, committees are required to write a report which is presented to the Assembly.</li> </ul>
Communicating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Report</b>—Committees table their final reports in the Assembly. The Assembly and the government will consider the findings and recommendations contained in a report, however, a committee has no power to enforce its recommendations</li> <li>• <b>Response</b>—the government has four months to respond to the report. The government response is also tabled in the Assembly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Committee members must agree on the report and its recommendations</b> before presenting it to the Assembly in the form of a written report. The government must respond to the report within a four month period.</li> <li>• <b>Students to present their report to the teacher/class</b> depending on the required end product which could be written work, a speech, oral presentation or video.</li> <li>• <b>Students should be able to identify that teacher and/or class feedback on their work is like the committee receiving a government response.</b></li> <li>• <b>Teacher to outline that like students, committees have to present their report to the Assembly once it is completed.</b> The committee will make a number of recommendations for the government to consider to improve the issue being considered. The government will look at each recommendation and present a response for the committee which states if they agree with, disagree with or will take note of each recommendation.</li> </ul>

## RESOURCE 3—BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND TEACHER ROLE PLAY SCRIPT

### BACKGROUND

The topic of the committee role play relates back to the Penelope Primrose story, in particular where Penelope talks about the footpath safety petition and participates in a committee meeting and discussion around who should be appearing as witnesses at the public hearing. The role play script is for the public hearing element of the committee system with students taking roles as committee members and witnesses. The teacher will need to outline the inquiry topic, terms of reference, that submissions have been received and that witness have been decided. This is the public hearing to collect witness evidence to help the committee write a report with recommendations to improve footpath safety.

### INQUIRY TOPIC

Members of the Committee on Footpaths has been asked to review the safety of footpaths in the ACT. The Committee has called for submissions by advertising the inquiry in the local newspapers and through some electronic networks to the ACT community.

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

The committee has set the following terms of reference for the inquiry to inquire into and report on footpath safety, based on issues identified in the Penelope Primrose story, with particular reference to:

- reported incidents of footpath damage;
- whether the safety of Canberrans been affected;
- the maintenance schedule and length of time to fix damaged paths; and
- any other related matter.

### PUBLIC HEARING

The committee has received submissions from the minister and government directorate, community groups and individuals. The committee has discussed the submissions, decided which witnesses they would like to question and invited them to appear before the committee and answer questions. The committee is now ready to hold a public hearing.

### ROLES

To conduct the role play the teacher will need to allocate the various positions to students.

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS CONDUCTING THE HEARING

Committee Chair and three committee members (4 students).

## WITNESSES

Based on the submissions received, the Committee has invited the following witnesses to appear:

- Minister for City Services and staff—4 students;
- Risk Management Co-ordinator from the City Services Directorate—4 students;
- ACT Community and Public Safety Association—4 students;
- Individuals from the ACT community affected by footpath damage—4 students;
- ACT Restorations and Driveways Engineers—4 students; and
- Pedal People ACT—4 students.

This arrangement caters for a class of 28 students, adjustments for a larger class include sharing longer witness statements or answers between two students, a smaller class means students can reply to two questions.

Scripts are provided for:

- the committee chairperson;
- the committee members—same script however questions are numbered to correspond to each of the roles (ie committee member 1 reads question 1, committee member 2 reads question 2 and committee member 3 reads question 3). These roles are ideal for less confident readers; and
- each of the six witness groups have a different script—the same one page script can be shared within each group if witnesses are seated in the same reading order as the script, it can be passed down the line after each person has finished (ie witness 1 gives the opening statement, witness 2 answers question 1, witness 3 answers question 2 and witness 4 answers question 3). Statements and answers vary in length to cater for a range of readers.

Once the roles have been allocated each group can be given their scripts, if possible each group of four students can determine between themselves which speaking part they would like to have.

## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

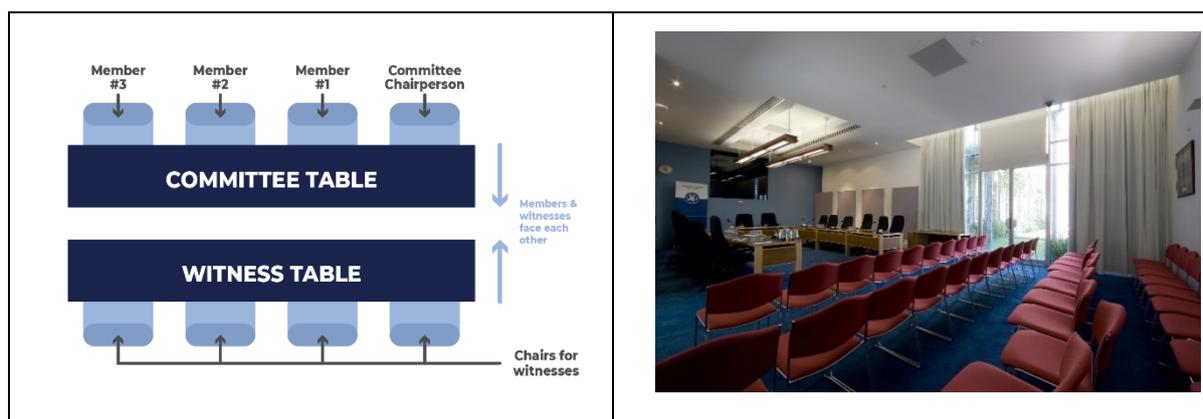
The committee chair conducts the proceedings, calls for an opening statement from the witnesses and adjourns the meeting.

Each committee member listens to the opening statement and asks one question to each of the witness groups after being called on by the chair.

Each witnesses group presents an opening statement and answers the questions from committee members. While waiting for their turn to appear before the committee each witness should quietly watch other groups from the public gallery.

**Optional extension:** committee members could formulate additional questions to ask the witnesses after the scripted answers have been completed (questions without notice).

## ROOM SETUP FOR PUBLIC HEARING



Public hearings at the Assembly are held in committee rooms which have the following set-up:

- Members and witnesses sit facing each other at the tables;
- Seats for community members to watch the proceedings (public gallery), people who are appearing as witnesses can also wait in these seats for their turn to talk to committee; and
- Witnesses will change during a public hearing, moving from the public gallery to the witness seats, when they have finished they leave the witness tables and the next group of witnesses move to sit in the witness seats.

## REPORT

At the conclusion of the inquiry process a report which includes recommendations to the government is presented to the Assembly during a sitting period.

**Optional extension:** the teacher could ask the student committee members if they have reached any conclusions after hearing the evidence and what they might recommend if they were writing a report on the issue of footpath safety.

## TEACHER RUNNING SCRIPT

**Note:** This script is the running order of the role play to assist the teacher to conduct the role play with the students. Students will only require their individual scripts as each one participates in the role play.

**Committee Chair:** Welcome to the committee inquiry into Footpath Safety. The terms of reference for the inquiry are to determine if there has been incidents of footpath damage, how extensive this damage might be, whether the safety of Canberrans has been affected and any other related matter.

**Committee Chair:** The committee will hear from six witness groups, the:

- Minister for Transport and City Services and staff;
- Risk Management Co-ordinator from the City Services Directorate
- ACT Public Safety Association;
- Individuals from the ACT community affected by footpath damage;
- ACT Restorations and Driveways Engineers; and
- Pedal People ACT.

**Committee Chair:** I welcome the Minister for City Services and staff, please come to the table.

*[Wait for witnesses to move to their seats]*

**Committee Chair:** Please state your name for the Hansard record.

**Minister for City Services and staff:** each person to say their names in turn

**Committee Chair:** Do you wish to make an opening statement?

**Minister for City Services:** All Canberrans have the right to travel on footpaths in the ACT in safety and security and the government is committed to the safety of all its citizens. A number of ACT footpaths were installed up to 40 years ago and dealing with these older footpaths has been a costly and difficult exercise. Footpaths need to be inspected and if they are found to be damaged they are marked for repair. The government has been working to establish a regular inspection roster, and allocate money from each budget to fixing damaged paths. Replacing paths in older areas in Canberra has been hard due to electricity and light poles, gardens along the path and the cost of materials used in surfacing.

**Committee Chair:** Committee members do you have any questions?

**Committee Member 1:** Does the Minister think that footpaths in the ACT are safe?

**City Services staff member 1:** The great majority of the footpaths in the ACT are safe for people to ride, walk or run on. Every year a number of issues impact ACT footpaths, such as fallen tree branches due to storm activity, cracks caused by tree root activity or deliberate damage. These problems are dealt with on as they occur. Often we are advised of the issue by a member of the public and we attend to it as soon as we can.

**Committee Member 2:** What is the Government doing to ensure that footpaths are safe for people with mobility issues and vision impairment?

**City Services staff member 2:** The government responds to every report of footpath problems and fixes them depending on the level of urgency. If a path is affected by something that restricts the movement of people with disabilities this receives a high priority order to be fixed.

**Committee Member 3:** Some footpath accidents occur as a result of poor education of pedestrians/cyclists. What is the government planning to do about this?

**City Services staff member 3:** The government has partnered with Pedal People and we are developing a cartoon video, aimed at primary and high school students that demonstrates the safest way to travel on shared paths with other path users.

**Committee Chair:** I thank the Minister and staff for appearing before the committee today.

*[Wait for witnesses to move back to previous seat]*

**Committee Chair:** I welcome the Risk Management Co-ordinator and staff from the City Services Directorate, please come to the table.

*[Wait for witnesses to move to their seats]*

**Committee Chair:** Please state your name for the Hansard record.

**Risk Management Co-ordinator and staff:** each person to say their names in turn

**Committee Chair:** Do you wish to make an opening statement?

**Risk Management Co-ordinator:** The City Services Directorate is in charge of managing a certain amount of money from the budget each year which is used to build new footpaths, repair and rebuild older footpaths in order to assist all Canberrans to have a positive, safe and enjoyable outdoor experience.

**Committee Chair:** Committee members do you have any questions?

**Committee Member 1:** What are the barriers preventing quick repair of footpaths in the ACT?

**City Services staff member 1:** There are several issues that affect prompt repair of footpaths. One is that there is a fixed amount of money for footpath creation, repair and rebuilding each year. The work is changing, new issues arise and priorities have to be updated. The money and work have to be managed every day to make our paths safe. Another issue is if we have staff away from work when they are sick which slows down work on footpaths. A third barrier is that if we don't know about a footpath problem then we can't fix it.

**Committee Member 2:** What can the government do differently to ensure that less injuries occur?

**City Services staff member 2:** I think we do a good job with the money and staff resources we are given each year. To reduce injury we could make sure that dangerous paths are fixed quickly by setting a time period for the work to be done. We could also increase our inspection rate to make sure we find any problems faster.

**Committee Member 3:** What is your section doing to ensure that vulnerable people are safe on footpaths?

**City Services staff member 3:** As soon as we are alerted to a major footpath defect we section it off to ensure no one can walk or ride across it. We would give this a high priority to fix the problem as quickly as we can.

**Committee Chair:** I thank the Co-ordinator and staff for appearing before the committee today.

*[Wait for witnesses to move back to previous seat]*

**Committee Chair:** I welcome the ACT Public Safety Association, please come to the table.

*[Wait for witnesses to move to their seats]*

**Committee Chair:** Please state your name for the Hansard record.

ACT Public Safety Association Manager and staff: each person to say their names in turn

**Committee Chair:** Do you wish to make an opening statement?

**ACT Public Safety Association Manger:** The ACT Public Safety Association believes that Canberra has one of the largest networks of shared paths in the country, but that the ACT government could do more to facilitate safety of path users. Our organisation has only been in existence for 7 years, but in that time has received over 1200 complaints about the state of or the lack of shared paths. We liaise with the ACT government on behalf of our members and advocate

**Committee Chair:** Committee members do you have any questions?

**Committee Member 1:** What are some of the issues that the more vulnerable people in our community experience on Canberra footpaths?

**ACT Public Safety Association staff member 1:** Canberrans with vision impairment/blindness or mobility issues can experience significant issues while navigating damaged shared paths. Trips, falls and injuries have resulted from contact with paths that have deteriorated over time.

**Committee Member 2:** What does your organisation recommend to ensure that footpaths are safer?

**ACT Public Safety Association staff member 2:** We encourage the government to widen their scope for path inspection. We feel that all paths should be inspected annually and that heavily used paths should be inspected every few months. If a heavily used path is reported it should be fixed within one week.

**Committee Member 3:** In the past some of the areas in the ACT were developed without footpaths, leading to accessibility issues. Can some of your members share their experiences?

**ACT Public Safety Association staff member 3:** Yes, my name is Vera Little. I am blind and use a cane to assist with my mobility. Last year I tripped over an extensive crack in a footpath in my local area, fell over, spraining my wrist and grazing my hand. Later I learned that the footpath with the crack had not been inspected for almost two years, is not considered a priority area and that it may be 12 months before it is fixed. This seems like a very long time to wait and in the meantime, I do not feel it is safe for me to walk along that path.

**Committee Chair:** I thank the ACT Community and Public Safety Association for appearing before the committee today.

*[Wait for witnesses to move back to previous seat]*

**Committee Chair:** I welcome people from the ACT community affected by footpath damage, please come to the table.

*[Wait for witnesses to move to their seats]*

**Committee Chair:** Please state your name for the Hansard record.

**ACT community members:** each person to say their names in turn

**Committee Chair:** Do you wish to make an opening statement?

**ACT community member 1:** We represent the organisation that assists with building and repairing footpaths and shared paths around the ACT. Our aim is to complete the work in the safest possible manner while causing the least amount of disruption to path users. Our job can be made difficult by cyclists who ignore “roped off” areas, damage caused by vandals, and the amount of work to be completed. The ACT path network is one of the biggest in the country and work is done as the government budgets and priorities allow.

**Committee Member 1:** Can you tell the committee about your experience on ACT footpaths?

**ACT community member 2:** My name is Linda Lee and I have a 6-year-old daughter named Laurel. One day last year she was skipping along the footpath on our street. This footpath had many trees next to it, but one tree in particular had some roots that had grown up underneath the footpath, making it lumpy instead of smooth and flat. On this day, Laurel tripped over the bump on the footpath and fell over. When she fell, she knocked out two teeth, grazed her knee and broke her arm. She will need continuing orthodontist attention to ensure that her adult teeth come through properly, she required three stitches and had a pin put in her elbow and had to wear a cast for 6 weeks. There will be ongoing issues because of this accident that could affect her the rest of her life.

**Committee Member 2:** In your opinion, what could assist long-term safety and accessibility on ACT footpaths?

**ACT community member 3:** In my opinion all footpaths that are reported with a serious defect should be fixed within one week. If a defect has been reported, the area should be cordoned off to ensure that no injuries occur. To ensure that all footpaths are examined, there should be a roster system that ensures that all footpaths are looked at on a 6-monthly basis.

**Committee Member 3:** What is the most important issue that needs attention regarding ACT footpaths?

**ACT community member 4:** We think educating the public about the “Fix My Street” app and website would go a long way to making sure that more of the footpath issues are fixed. Had I known about this site I would have reported the defect as soon as I saw it. But the government also needs to fix these problems quickly. My daughter was both lucky and unlucky. Lucky that she didn’t sustain a serious head injury, but also unlucky that this defect wasn’t reported, roped off and fixed. I call upon the government to make this a priority as a matter of public safety.

**Committee Chair:** I thank the individuals affected by footpath damage for appearing before the committee today.

*[Wait for witnesses to move back to previous seat]*

**Committee Chair:** I welcome the ACT Restorations and Driveways Engineers, please come to the table.

*[Wait for witnesses to move to their seats]*

**Committee Chair:** Please state your name for the Hansard record.

**ACT Restorations and Driveways Engineers:** each person to say their names in turn

**Committee Chair:** Do you wish to make an opening statement?

**ACT Restorations and Driveways Engineer 1:** We represent the organisation that assists with installing new footpaths and shared paths around the ACT. Our aim is to complete new or refurbishment path work in the ACT in the safest possible manner while causing the least amount of intrusion or disturbance to path users. Our job can be hampered by cyclists who ignore “roped off” areas that are being refurbished, damage caused by vandals, and the sheer scale of the amount of work to be completed. The ACT path network is one of the most comprehensive in the country and we aim to keep expanding as government budgets and priorities allow.

**Committee Chair:** Committee members do you have any questions?

**Committee Member 1:** What are the most common issues that your organisation encounters in terms of footpath safety?

**ACT Restorations and Driveways Engineer 2:** The most prevalent issues that we come across are raised paths due to root intrusion from nearby plant and tree life, paths that have been deliberately damaged or paths that have been damaged/alterd due to storms or hot weather conditions.

**Committee Member 2:** Does your organisation feel that the age of some ACT footpaths is a contributing factor to condition and safety?

**ACT Restorations and Driveways Engineer 3:** There are some footpaths in the ACT that while they are decades old, are perfectly serviceable while others are worn, damaged or in poor condition. The differences are due to a range of factors including path positioning that results in greater exposure to the elements that contributes greatly to a quicker degradation of path materials. Storm activity can change the conditions around the path, causing or increasing damage to the path. Having said all of that, older paths that are exposed to the elements and storm damage will degrade quicker than newer paths.

**Committee Member 3:** In your organisation’s opinion, what could assist long-term safety and accessibility on ACT footpaths?

**ACT Restorations and Driveways Engineer 4:** The implementation of an official path inspection officer or officers would assist us in locating damaged paths before they impede users. Also a larger budget would ensure that we could assign more staff to this project, meaning that more works could be carried out over the year.

**Committee Chair:** I thank the ACT Restorations and Driveways Engineers for appearing before the committee today.

*[Wait for witnesses to move back to previous seat]*

**Committee Chair:** I welcome the Pedal People ACT, please come to the table.

*[Wait for witnesses to move to their seats]*

**Committee Chair:** Please state your name for the Hansard record.

**Pedal People ACT:** each person to say their names in turn

**Committee Chair:** Do you wish to make an opening statement?

**Pedal People ACT member 1:** Active transport, such as walking and cycling is one of the best ways to maintain good health and fitness. Over the past 30 years the government has built many shared paths through the Canberra region to assist both bike riders and pedestrians, but our organisation still feel that they have more work to do. We continue to monitor bike accident statistics that show that the safest passage for bike riders is on shared paths. However, as mentioned to the government on numerous occasions many shared paths don't follow the most direct route to town centres thereby making time-challenged cyclists less inclined to use them and more likely to engage in on-road cycling.

**Committee Chair:** Committee members do you have any questions?

**Committee Member 1:** Since the start of the year, do Pedal People have any statistics on injuries/issues experienced by members on shared paths?

**Pedal People ACT member 2:** We only have anecdotal evidence regarding injuries, but the ACT government keeps road injury and death statistics and I can confirm that 29 cyclists have reported injury since January this year with no deaths recorded.

**Committee Member 2:** Has enough been done to ensure that footpaths are fixed in a timely manner?

**Pedal People ACT member 3:** There are two issues – finding out about a damaged path and then fixing the path once it's been reported as damaged. We feel that the government could be more proactive in inspecting paths. Regarding fixing of damaged paths – sometimes this can take weeks or months, leaving cyclists with no safe options.

**Committee Member 3:** What actions could the ACT government take to ensure safety and security for Pedal People members?

**Pedal People ACT member 4:** The installation of more shared paths and the institution of an inspection officer for shared paths. Both of these would help to keep cyclists off the roads and out of active traffic areas and assist in making ACT's cycling paths the safest they can be.

**Committee Chair:** I thank the Pedal People ACT for appearing before the committee today.

*[Wait for witnesses to move back to previous seat]*

**Committee Chair:** The committee hearing is now adjourned. The committee will consider the evidence from today and write its report which will be tabled in the Assembly.

## RESOURCE 4—STUDENT SCRIPTS FOR INQUIRY INTO FOOTPATH SAFETY

### ROLE PLAY

#### COMMITTEE CHAIR SCRIPT

**Committee Chair:** Welcome to the committee inquiry into Footpath Safety. The terms of reference for the inquiry are to determine if there has been incidents of footpath damage, how extensive this damage might be, whether the safety of Canberrans has been affected and any other related matter.

**Committee Chair:** The committee will hear from six witness groups, the:

- Minister for Transport and City Services and staff;
- Risk Management Co-ordinator from the City Services Directorate
- ACT Public Safety Association;
- Individuals from the ACT community affected by footpath damage;
- ACT Restorations and Driveways Engineers; and
- Pedal People ACT.

*[Call first group of witnesses for questioning]*

**Committee Chair:** I welcome the Minister for City Services and staff, please come to the table.

*[wait for all witnesses to move to their positions at the witness table]*

**Committee Chair:** Please state your name for the Hansard record.

*[wait for all witnesses to say their name]*

**Committee Chair:** Do you wish to make an opening statement?

*[wait for Minister to read an opening statement]*

**Committee Chair:** Committee members do you have any questions?

*[allow each committee member to ask a question]*

**Committee Chair:** I thank the Minister and staff for appearing before the committee today.

*[wait for first group of witnesses to return to their seats]*

*[call second group of witnesses for questioning]*

**Committee Chair:** I welcome the Risk Management Co-ordinator and staff from the City Services Directorate, please come to the table.

*[wait for all witnesses to move to their positions at the witness table]*

**Committee Chair:** Please state your name for the Hansard record.

*[wait for all witnesses to say their name]*

**Committee Chair:** Do you wish to make an opening statement?

*[wait for Risk Management Co-ordinator to read an opening statement]*

**Committee Chair:** Committee members do you have any questions?

*[allow each committee member to ask a question]*

**Committee Chair:** I thank the Risk Management Co-ordinator and staff for appearing before the committee today.

*[wait for second group of witnesses to return to their seats]*

*[call third group of witnesses for questioning]*

**Committee Chair:** I welcome the ACT Public Safety Association, please come to the table.

*[wait for all witnesses to move to their positions at the witness table]*

**Committee Chair:** Please state your name for the Hansard record.

*[wait for all witnesses to say their name]*

**Committee Chair:** Do you wish to make an opening statement?

*[wait for ACT Public Safety Association member 1 to read an opening statement]*

**Committee Chair:** Committee members do you have any questions?

*[allow each committee member to ask a question]*

**Committee Chair:** I thank staff from the ACT Community and Public Safety Association for appearing before the committee today.

*[wait for third group of witnesses to return to their seats]*

*[call fourth group of witnesses for questioning]*

**Committee Chair:** I welcome people from the ACT community affected by footpath damage, please come to the table.

*[wait for all witnesses to move to their positions at the witness table]*

**Committee Chair:** Please state your name for the Hansard record.

*[wait for all witnesses to say their name]*

**Committee Chair:** Do you wish to make an opening statement?

*[wait for ACT Community member 1 to read an opening statement]*

**Committee Chair:** Committee members do you have any questions?

*[allow each committee member to ask a question]*

**Committee Chair:** I thank the individuals affected by footpath damage for appearing before the committee today.

*[wait for fourth group of witnesses to return to their seats]*

*[call fifth group of witnesses for questioning]*

**Committee Chair:** I welcome the ACT Restorations and Driveways Engineers, please come to the table.

*[wait for all witnesses to move to their positions at the witness table]*

**Committee Chair:** Please state your name for the Hansard record.

*[wait for all witnesses to say their name]*

**Committee Chair:** Do you wish to make an opening statement?

*[wait for ACT Restorations and Driveways Engineer 1 to read an opening statement]*

**Committee Chair:** Committee members do you have any questions?

*[allow each committee member to ask a question]*

**Committee Chair:** I thank citizens from the ACT Restorations and Driveways Engineers for appearing before the committee today.

*[wait for fifth group of witnesses to return to their seats]*

*[call sixth group of witnesses for questioning]*

**Committee Chair:** I welcome the Pedal People ACT, please come to the table.

*[wait for all witnesses to move to their positions at the witness table]*

**Committee Chair:** Please state your name for the Hansard record.

*[wait for all witnesses to say their name]*

**Committee Chair:** Do you wish to make an opening statement?

*[wait for Pedal People member 1 to read an opening statement]*

**Committee Chair:** Committee members do you have any questions?

*[allow each committee member to ask a question]*

**Committee Chair:** I thank the members from the Pedal People ACT for appearing before the committee today.

*[wait for sixth group of witnesses to return to their seats]*

**Committee Chair:** The committee hearing is now adjourned. The committee will consider the evidence from today and write its report which will be tabled in the Assembly.

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS SCRIPT

### QUESTIONS FOR MINISTER FOR CITY SERVICES

1. Does the Minister think that footpaths in the ACT are safe?
2. What is the Government doing to ensure that footpaths are safe for people with mobility issues and vision impairment?
3. Some footpath accidents occur as a result of poor education of pedestrians/cyclists. What is the government planning to do about this?

### QUESTIONS FOR RISK MANAGEMENT CO-ORDINATOR AND CITY SERVICES STAFF

1. What are the barriers preventing quick repair of footpaths in the ACT?
2. What can the government do differently to ensure that less injuries occur?
3. What is your section doing to ensure that vulnerable people are safe on footpaths?

### QUESTIONS FOR ACT PUBLIC SAFETY ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

1. What are some of the issues that the more vulnerable people in our community experience on Canberra footpaths?
2. What does your organisation recommend to ensure that footpaths are safer?
3. In the past some of the areas in the ACT were developed without footpaths, leading to accessibility issues. Can some of your members share their experiences?

### QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS FROM THE ACT COMMUNITY AFFECTED BY FOOTPATH DAMAGE

1. Can you tell the committee about your experience on ACT footpaths?
2. In your opinion, what could assist long-term safety and accessibility on ACT footpaths?
3. What is the most important issue that needs attention regarding ACT footpaths?

### QUESTIONS FOR ACT RESTORATIONS AND DRIVEWAYS ENGINEERS

1. What are the most common issues that your organisation encounters in terms of footpath safety?
2. Does your organisation feel that the age of some ACT footpaths is a contributing factor to condition and safety?
3. In your organisation's opinion, what could assist long-term safety and accessibility on ACT footpaths?

## QUESTIONS FOR PEDAL PEOPLE ACT

1. Since the start of the year, do Pedal People have any statistics on injuries/issues experienced by members on shared paths?
2. Has enough been done to ensure that footpaths are fixed in a timely manner?
3. What actions could the ACT government take to ensure safety and security for Pedal People members?

## MINISTER FOR CITY SERVICES AND GOVERNMENT STAFF SCRIPT

### OPENING STATEMENT

All Canberrans have the right to travel on footpaths in the ACT in safety and security and the government is committed to the safety of all its citizens. A number of ACT footpaths were installed up to 40 years ago and dealing with these older footpaths has been a costly and difficult exercise. Footpaths need to be inspected and if they are found to be damaged they are marked for repair. The government has been working to establish a regular inspection roster, and allocate money from each budget to fixing damaged paths. Replacing paths in older areas in Canberra has been hard due to electricity and light poles, gardens along the path and the cost of materials used in surfacing.

### INFORMATION THAT CAN BE INCLUDED IN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. The great majority of the footpaths in the ACT are safe for people to ride, walk or run on. Every year a number of issues impact ACT footpaths, such as fallen tree branches due to storm activity, cracks caused by tree root activity or deliberate damage. These problems are dealt with on as they occur. Often we are advised of the issue by a member of the public and we attend to it as soon as we can.
2. The government responds to every report of footpath problems and fixes them depending on the level of urgency. If a path is affected by something that restricts the movement of people with disabilities this receives a high priority order to be fixed.
3. The government has partnered with Pedal People and we are developing a cartoon video, aimed at primary and high school students that demonstrates the safest way to travel on shared paths with other path users.

## RISK MANAGEMENT CO-ORDINATOR AND CITY SERVICES STAFF SCRIPT

### OPENING STATEMENT

The City Services Directorate is in charge of managing a certain amount of money from the budget each year which is used to build new footpaths, repair and rebuild older footpaths in order to assist all Canberrans to have a positive, safe and enjoyable outdoor experience.

### INFORMATION THAT CAN BE INCLUDED IN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. There are several issues that affect prompt repair of footpaths. One is that there is a fixed amount of money for footpath creation, repair and rebuilding each year. The work is changing, new issues arise and priorities have to be updated. The money and work have to be managed every day to make our paths safe. Another issue is if we have staff away from work when they are sick which slows down work on footpaths. A third barrier is that if we don't know about a footpath problem then we can't fix it.
2. I think we do a good job with the money and staff resources we are given each year. To reduce injury we could make sure that dangerous paths are fixed quickly by setting a time period for the work to be done. We could also increase our inspection rate to make sure we find any problems faster.
3. As soon as we are alerted to a major footpath defect we section it off to ensure no one can walk or ride across it. We would give this a high priority to fix the problem as quickly as we can.

# ACT PUBLIC SAFETY ASSOCIATION MEMBERS SCRIPT

## OPENING STATEMENT

The ACT Public Safety Association believes that Canberra has one of the largest networks of shared paths in the country, but that the ACT government could do more to facilitate safety of path users. Our organisation has only been in existence for 7 years, but in that time has received over 1200 complaints about the state of or the lack of shared paths. We liaise with the ACT government on behalf of our members and advocate

## INFORMATION THAT CAN BE INCLUDED IN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. Canberrans with vision impairment/blindness or mobility issues can experience significant issues while navigating damaged shared paths. Trips, falls and injuries have resulted from contact with paths that have deteriorated over time.
2. We encourage the government to widen their scope for path inspection. We feel that all paths should be inspected annually and that heavily used paths should be inspected every few months. If a heavily used path is reported it should be fixed within one week.
3. Yes, my name is Vera Little. I am blind and use a cane to assist with my mobility. Last year I tripped over an extensive crack in a footpath in my local area, fell over, spraining my wrist and grazing my hand. Later I learned that the footpath with the crack had not been inspected for almost two years, is not considered a priority area and that it may be 12 months before it is fixed. This seems like a very long time to wait and in the meantime, I do not feel it is safe for me to walk along that path.

## INDIVIDUALS FROM THE ACT COMMUNITY AFFECTED BY FOOTPATH DAMAGE

### OPENING STATEMENT

We represent the organisation that assists with building and repairing footpaths and shared paths around the ACT. Our aim is to complete the work in the safest possible manner while causing the least amount of disruption to path users. Our job can be made difficult by cyclists who ignore “roped off” areas, damage caused by vandals, and the amount of work to be completed. The ACT path network is one of the biggest in the country and work is done as the government budgets and priorities allow.

### INFORMATION THAT CAN BE INCLUDED IN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. My name is Linda Lee and I have a 6-year-old daughter named Laurel. One day last year she was skipping along the footpath on our street. This footpath had many trees next to it, but one tree in particular had some roots that had grown up underneath the footpath, making it lumpy instead of smooth and flat. On this day, Laurel tripped over the bump on the footpath and fell over. When she fell, she knocked out two teeth, grazed her knee and broke her arm. She will need continuing orthodontist attention to ensure that her adult teeth come through properly, she required three stitches and had a pin put in her elbow and had to wear a cast for 6 weeks. There will be ongoing issues because of this accident that could affect her the rest of her life.
2. In my opinion all footpaths that are reported with a serious defect should be fixed within one week. If a defect has been reported, the area should be cordoned off to ensure that no injuries occur. To ensure that all footpaths are examined, there should be a roster system that ensures that all footpaths are looked at on a 6-monthly basis.
3. We think educating the public about the “Fix My Street” app and website would go a long way to making sure that more of the footpath issues are fixed. Had I known about this site I would have reported the defect as soon as I saw it. But the government also needs to fix these problems quickly. My daughter was both lucky and unlucky. Lucky that she didn’t sustain a serious head injury, but also unlucky that this defect wasn’t reported, roped off and fixed. I call upon the government to make this a priority as a matter of public safety.

# ACT RESTORATIONS AND DRIVEWAYS ENGINEERS

## OPENING STATEMENT

We represent the organisation that assists with installing new footpaths and shared paths around the ACT. Our aim is to complete new or refurbishment path work in the ACT in the safest possible manner while causing the least amount of intrusion or disturbance to path users. Our job can be hampered by cyclists who ignore “roped off” areas that are being refurbished, damage caused by vandals, and the sheer scale of the amount of work to be completed. The ACT path network is one of the most comprehensive in the country and we aim to keep expanding as government budgets and priorities allow.

## INFORMATION THAT CAN BE INCLUDED IN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. The most prevalent issues that we come across are raised paths due to root intrusion from nearby plant and tree life, paths that have been deliberately damaged or paths that have been damaged/altered due to storms or hot weather conditions.
2. There are some footpaths in the ACT that while they are decades old, are perfectly serviceable while others are worn, damaged or in poor condition. The differences are due to a range of factors including path positioning that results in greater exposure to the elements that contributes greatly to a quicker degradation of path materials. Storm activity can change the conditions around the path, causing or increasing damage to the path. Having said all of that, older paths that are exposed to the elements and storm damage will degrade quicker than newer paths.
3. The implementation of an official path inspection officer or officers would assist us in locating damaged paths before they impede users. Also a larger budget would ensure that we could assign more staff to this project, meaning that more works could be carried out over the year.

## ACT PEDAL PEOPLE

### OPENING STATEMENT

Active transport, such as walking and cycling is one of the best ways to maintain good health and fitness. Over the past 30 years the government has built many shared paths through the Canberra region to assist both bike riders and pedestrians, but our organisation still feel that they have more work to do. We continue to monitor bike accident statistics that show that the safest passage for bike riders is on shared paths. However, as mentioned to the government on numerous occasions many shared paths don't follow the most direct route to town centres thereby making time-challenged cyclists less inclined to use them and more likely to engage in on-road cycling.

### INFORMATION THAT CAN BE INCLUDED IN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. We only have anecdotal evidence regarding injuries, but the ACT government keeps road injury and death statistics and I can confirm that 29 cyclists have reported injury since January this year with no deaths recorded.
2. There are two issues – finding out about a damaged path and then fixing the path once it's been reported as damaged. We feel that the government could be more proactive in inspecting paths. Regarding fixing of damaged paths – sometimes this can take weeks or months, leaving cyclists with no safe options.
3. The installation of more shared paths and the institution of an inspection officer for shared paths. Both of these would help to keep cyclists off the roads and out of active traffic areas and assist in making ACT's cycling paths the safest they can be.