

Thursday 3 October, 2019

Att: Infrastructure Team, City of Ballarat

Re: Caledonian Primary School pedestrian safety issues, October 2019

From: School Council, Caledonian Primary School

To whom it may concern,

We would like to bring to your attention several issues that are of concern to families at Caledonian Primary School, Brown Hill. These have been reported to the Brown Hill Progress Association, whose members support our intention to raise this issue with you in order to improve footpath and road safety for local children.



1. SCHOOL CROSSING - Thompson Street, opposite Caledonian Primary School.

The west side of this very busy school crossing is a bluestone kerb with a gutter. There is no sloped kerb ramp.

The access is problematic enough for those with bikes, scooters or prams. It could be nearly impossible to access with a wheelchair or for vision-impaired users.

With the change to the Brown Hill Bus Route (#15) now including Thompson Street, it is essential that this designated school crossing is upgraded to be accessible to all. Alternative places to cross where there are no ramps, for example, opposite 8 Thompson Street, are far more dangerous with vision being limited due to parked cars. With cars and now local buses using the street and children crossing to get to and from school, this should be considered as a priority site.

This issue was submitted in writing to the City of Ballarat on 11 October 2017 by a school parent and local resident, Kate Rogan. In May 2019, Kate met with John Hartigan who said the City of Ballarat considered this issue to be a 'high priority'. We are led to believe may mean action is taken within the next one to two years.

We request that this issue be prioritised with urgency.

Proposed action: Upgrade the kerb to a sloped ramp with urgency.

2. FOOTPATH – Thompson Street, west side, between Canterbury Street and Water Street, opposite Caledonian Primary School.

There is currently no footpath on the western side of Thompson Street between Canterbury Street and Water Street. This section links from the school crossing at the Water Street roundabout (at the Lane Street intersection, just before the railway underpass). It is also a section of path used by many people who live to the west of Caledonian Primary School, when walking or riding with their children to either Caledonian Primary School, St Francis Xavier Primary School, Brown Hill Kindergarten or Woodman's Hill Secondary College.

There is also a Public Transport Victoria bus stop across the road on the corner of Water Street and Thompson Street, which may have increased the use of this area for pedestrian traffic.

To walk or ride along the western side of Thompson Street from Canterbury Street to the school crossing, involves negotiating loose dirt with some uneven gravel (mud in winter) with cast iron and PVC water pipes exposed on the nature strip.

The recent 'Transport Impact Assessment Report' prepared for the City of Ballarat as part of the Brown Hill Local Area Plan project states (p.32):

7.7 Pedestrian Connections

Whilst existing residential areas may provide substandard pedestrian connections, pedestrian footpaths should be provided on both sides of all new residential streets (other than short, low volume cul-de-sacs).

*In additional pedestrian footpaths should be constructed on both sides of all existing streets with a classification of a collector street or higher. This includes Water Street, sections of Humffray Street, and the existing residential areas of Gracefield Road. **Further, any existing streets utilised by buses should be provided with pedestrian footpaths on both sides of the street, to encourage public transport usage.***

Proposed action: Build a sealed footpath along Thompson Street, from Canterbury Street to Water Street.

3. PERMANENT 40km ZONE – Brophy Street

Brophy Street runs along the eastern side of Caledonian Primary School. This is the side of the school where the junior school is located, with children as young as 4 years old accessing the school.

The southern section of Brophy Street and adjacent Water Street are both in a school zone, with the 40km/hr being activated between 8.00 am and 9.30 am in the morning and 2.30 pm and 4.00 pm in the afternoon. It is our understanding that, being in a school zone and on a residential street, Brophy Street should be a permanent 40 km/hr zone, as is Thompson Street.

There is a '40 km/hr school zone' sign on Brophy Street facing north towards Humffray Street North. However, there is no speed sign on Brophy Street facing south towards Water Street (although the section of Water Street either side of the Brophy Street intersection is in a 'school zone').

In the morning, there is often traffic banked up from the Water Street/Scott Parade roundabout (just before the bluestone railway underpass). School parents report that traffic travelling along Water Street toward Ballarat will often use Brophy Street as a shortcut to Humffray Street North and way to avoid the railway underpass traffic.

Proposed action: Make the Brophy Street school zone a well-signed, permanent 40km/hr zone.

4. SCHOOL CROSSING – Brophy Street

As many school families report near misses on Brophy Street at school drop off and pick up times, we also request that a school crossing be put on Brophy Street. This would make it far safer for children who live to the east of the school to walk or ride to school. It would also increase the safety of children being dropped off or picked up on the eastern side of Brophy Street and needing to cross the road to get to the school.

Proposed action: Put a school crossing on Brophy Street.

5. EXTEND SCHOOL CROSSING – Water Street

There is a school crossing on Water Street which is supervised before and after school. However, there is no crossing on the adjacent service road where many families park to drop off or pick up their children from Caledonian Primary School.

Children need to cross the service road to walk between the supervised crossing over Water Street and the footpath into the school. The Crossing Supervisor has voiced concern about children running across the service road in front of cars, not realising that the service road is unsupervised.

Proposed action: Extend the school crossing across Water Street to include the Service Road. This may require an additional supervisor. Consider signs with flashing lights to highlight the 40 km/hr school zone on Water Street.

6. SAFE CROSSING – Humffray Street North, between Thompson Street and Brophy Street.

There are limited places along Humffray Street North to cross safely. One is at the roundabout on the north west corner of Russell Square (Stawell Street North). At this location, pedestrians and those with bikes, scooters and wheelchairs, can cross half-way before negotiating traffic coming in the other direction.

For the rest of Humffray Street North in Brown Hill there are no designated crossings. Some sections allow pedestrians and riders better vision than other sections.

With the increase in development in Brown Hill, particularly east from the Western Freeway, there is a significant increase in the volume of traffic, particularly at peak times.

Around 8.30am on school days, when many people in Brown Hill are travelling to their place of work or education, there is a large number of cars travelling into Ballarat from the east of Brown Hill. At the same time, families are travelling to Brown Hill Kindergarten, Caledonian Primary School, Woodman's Hill Secondary College and St Francis Xavier Primary School by car, foot, scooter, bike or pram. Sometimes an adult is accompanying children. In other cases, older children are crossing Humffray Street North unsupervised.

Many Caledonian Primary School families have reported that crossing Humffray Street North around 8.30am on a school morning with children is dangerous and stressful. Cars are reported to travel in a fast and in a steady stream. Finding a safe gap in which to cross is reported to take up to five minutes.

In order to walk or ride to school, some senior students from Caledonian Primary School need to independently negotiate crossing Humffray Street North. We are concerned that this is becoming increasingly difficult for them to do safely.

The recent 'Transport Impact Assessment Report' prepared for the City of Ballarat as part of the Brown Hill Local Area Plan project states that Humffray Street North is a 'Link Road' or 'Connector Road'.

The report indicates that Humffray Street North currently carries approximately 5240 cars per day and has a capacity of 6000. Therefore, it is categorised as 'nearing capacity'. The report states (p.33):

“It is noted that Humffray Street North is approaching the desired environmental capacity however it is considered to be located within an already developed area, as such it is expected there will be minimal future traffic volume growth”

With the significant development continuing in the 'emerging Brown Hill' area, north east from the Western Freeway, we disagree with the expectation that there will be 'minimal future traffic volume growth' on Humffray Street North. School families who live along Humffray Street North report that that the traffic along the road is continuing to increase, with people trying to get into the CBD and avoid the Water Street/Victoria Street traffic (two school crossings, a roundabout, a railway tunnel and traffic lights between a high school and two primary schools).

Further from the report:

7.4 Road Connections to the Ballarat CBD

The primary road connections from the study area to the Ballarat CBD are provided via Water Street and Humffray Street North. Both of these routes have capacity limitations, with Water Street restricted by the existing rail underpass near Victoria Street, and Humffray Street having a constrained cross-section, with direct property access, kerbside parking and ('substandard', p.32) bicycle lanes.

In order to accommodate increased traffic capacity, and encourage CBD connections via Victoria Street, a further rail underpass (just west of the existing underpass) may be considered. This would allow for additional approach lane capacity to the Victoria Street intersection.

We suspect that, were there a school crossing on Humffray Street North in the vicinity of Thompson Street, there could be a significant increase in the number of people using active transport to travel to and from our school, in addition to nearby Brown Hill Kindergarten, St Francis Xavier Primary School and Woodman's Hill Secondary College.

Proposed action: Build a safe crossing on Humffray Street North in the vicinity of Thompson Street.

7. CONCLUSION

We would be very happy to meet with a member of your team to show them the sites listed in this document and discuss options.

We suspect there are other sites around Brown Hill that also require attention. However, these are the areas relevant to Caledonian Primary School.

If required, letters of support can be provided by Brown Hill Kindergarten, Brown Hill Progress Association, Brown Hill Lions and Lioness Clubs and several other community and activity groups in Brown Hill.

We appreciate your time to consider our proposed actions and look forward to hearing from you.

Geoff Dickson, Assistant Principal, Caledonian Primary School, 5332 6955

Melissa Watts, President, School Council, Caledonian Primary School, 0407 687 409

Sarah Greenwood-Smith, School Council Member, Caledonian Primary School, 0409 707 162