

**Response to Question on Notice from the Chair of the Parliament of Australia's
Joint Select Committee on Road Safety**

On 29 September 2021, there was the following exchange between the Chair of the Joint Select Committee on Road Safety, the Hon. Darren Chester MP, and the representative of Occupational Therapy Australia (OTA), Professor Carolyn Unsworth.

CHAIR: In reference to other road users, I think that in your submission you refer at some points to older pedestrians as well. They are a particularly vulnerable group. Does the OT association have any view in relation to urban speed limits? We're seeing a lot of changes in a lot of communities now where there are 40km/h zones in several towns. Is that something that the OT association has looked at? Are you not looking in that space?

Prof. Unsworth: I can certainly take that question on notice back to my professional association and come back with responses.

OTA thanks the Chair for the opportunity to respond further to this question.

OTA supports the speed reductions associated with school crossing zones, and high street shopping strips, which is usually 40km/hr. Furthermore, testing is currently underway in residential streets in Collingwood and North Fitzroy in inner suburban Melbourne, where the speed limit has been reduced to 30km/hr. OTA supports both initiatives, which are designed to increase pedestrian safety, and notes that speed reductions are of particular value to older pedestrians who are more vulnerable to death or serious injury if involved in an incident.

The 40km speed limit or initiatives to reduce speed limits to 30km in some areas also support safer road environments for children, as well as pedestrians with a range of disabilities who have limited mobility and use mobility devices such as scooters or wheelchairs, or who are ambulatory but have significantly slowed walking speed and cannot easily evade an incident.

Occupational therapists work closely with older people and people with disabilities to ensure they are as safe as possible when pedestrians. Occupational therapists provide travel training to support people to walk or use public transport to navigate their local community, as well as education in the safe use of mobility devices such as scooters or wheelchairs in local residential and commercial / service environments.

A reduction in motorist speeds in these environments supports safety for these groups, with survival rates of pedestrians involved in incidents jumping from 50% at 59km/h to 95% at 30km/h (Hussain et al., 2019).

Hussain, Q., Feng, H., Grzebieta, R., Brijs, T., & Olivier, J. (2019). The relationship between impact speed and the probability of pedestrian fatality during a vehicle-pedestrian crash: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Accident Analysis and prevention*, 129, 241- 249.