

Pedestrian safety and traffic at the Lake Primary School, Cabarita

Cabarita residents and members of the Lake Primary School community have contacted Council with concerns about the safety of children when using roads adjacent to the Lake Primary School, in particular Dyar Avenue and Seventeenth Street. We acknowledge these concerns and take them seriously.

The community's concerns

- Dyar Avenue is narrow and doesn't allow for additional traffic exiting the school during peak times
- Dyar Avenue is not safe for children to ride on and there are no separate shared paths to separate children from vehicular traffic
- Dyar Avenue is dusty when cars need to pull onto the road shoulder
- Dyar Avenue needs a reduced speed limit during school pick up and drop off times
- The 17th Street school crossing is not utilised as it is not staffed by monitors
- The shared path on 17th Street is on the wrong side of the road and should be duplicated on the other side of the road so that it better connects to the residential areas near Lake Hawthorn.
- Request for better infrastructure and traffic safety measures to address these concerns.

What Council is doing

- Collecting and analysing data for the area including traffic and pedestrian counts, accident history, future population growth.
- Investigating perceived and real traffic problems
- Analysing future demand and links to population growth areas
- Considering justifications for infrastructure improvements
- Identifying potential solutions
- Identifying funding options for any identified infrastructure improvement (i.e. Council Capital Works Program, State/Federal Grants etc.)

Engagement and communications

Staff are in regular discussions with representatives from the Lake Primary School and will continue to keep them informed. The school is also providing key data around demographics and student numbers which will help us understand potential demand and future infrastructure links required in the area and to encourage active transport options.

Timelines for investigation

Council staff are currently collecting traffic and pedestrian data (which is expected to be completed in the next two weeks). This will then be analysed but will be shared with both Cabarita Inc. and the Lake School once completed. Our aim is to have a draft investigation report prepared by the end of January 2021. At this point we would meet with the key stakeholders in the Cabarita community to discuss.

School drop off and pick ups

COVID-19 has significantly impacted how children are dropped off and picked up from school, resulting in unusual traffic movement on roads near schools. While this is likely to be a short term scenario (but still needs to be considered in the context of road safety), it is another factor that needs to be considered in the investigation.

Pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure

Council acknowledges the value in active transport options for our community and supports the encouragement of this where possible. When investigating existing infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists and possible improvements, we will consider factors such as pedestrian numbers, frequency of pedestrian movements, road related infrastructure and the number of vehicles using State roads and Council roads. Part of our investigation will map where all students live and how they get to school.

Residential expansion and growth in Cabarita

Residential zones in Cabarita are currently set and not expected to expand in the medium term. Any future expansion and required infrastructure upgrades will be included and detailed in future Development Plans.

The urban growth boundary of Mildura has been set and will not be reaching Seventeenth Street at this point in time. Connections between Cabarita and Mildura will be investigated as part of upcoming work Council is doing to review footpath and shared paths.

Road works and improvements in the area

A number of roads and streets in the Cabarita area have been upgraded in recent years as part of Council's Asset Renewal Program. The same considerations will be given to Dyar Avenue, when the road pavement is renewed.

Council is currently reviewing the parameters used and how we prioritise road maintenance and asset road renewal. Community will be actively invited over the next six months to contribute to this – which will look at priorities for works across all roads, footpaths and shared paths in the municipality.

As part of this work, Council's Engineering Unit will be undertaking a complete review of our footpath and shared pathway strategies, which will create the list of works for new and upgraded pedestrian and cyclist priority projects. The infrastructure suggested by the Cabarita community will be included as part of the strategy review.