

MEDIA RELEASE

Two Fat Tradies throw their weight behind footpath safety campaign

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Two of Sydney's best known tradesmen are calling on fellow tradies and other motorists to consider where they park in order to avoid posing a risk to pedestrians with impaired vision.

The Two Fat Tradies from TV's *The Block* have thrown their weight behind Guide Dogs NSW/ACT's *Think Before You Park* campaign after learning that a survey of people with impaired vision found 77% had been hampered by vehicles blocking footpaths¹.

They star in a pedestrian safety video developed by Guide Dogs and funded by a \$10,000 NRMA Safer Driving School Road Safety grant, which was launched today by the NSW Minister for Transport Gladys Berejiklian.

"Encountering a vehicle parked across a footpath is annoying for any pedestrian, but imagine what it's like for someone who can't see it," said Dr Graeme White, CEO of Guide Dogs NSW/ACT.

"It can force the person into unsafe situations such as having to walk out onto the road. It can also be disorienting, or the person might sustain an injury from objects like ladders protruding from the back of a tradie's ute.

"Our message is simple: Think Before You Park. Clear footpaths are safer for people who are blind, safer for families and safer for all pedestrians."

The Two Fat Tradies, Duncan and Mark, were excited to be involved in the video, which also features a number of people who use guide dogs or mobility aids such as canes to get around.

"You may think that parking your truck on the footpath for a minute is ok, but for a person with vision impairment, it could ruin their day," says Duncan.

"We're appealing to our fellow tradesmen to 'think before they park,' and reduce the risks posed to people with impaired vision."

The video was unveiled today on the new www.thinkbeforeyoupark.com.au website.

Every council across NSW and the ACT will receive posters promoting the video and website, which Guide Dogs has requested to be displayed in key public areas.

NRMA Motoring & Services Director Geoff Toovey praised Guide Dogs NSW/ACT for the safety video.

"The video is a fantastic initiative by Guide Dogs NSW/ACT to educate the community about this often overlooked road safety issue," said Mr Toovey.

“Motorists should take a moment to think before they park and resist the temptation to park across a footpath, even when there is limited road parking.

“Many of us take for granted the ability to navigate around parked cars and or other obstacles that get in our way. By being mindful about where you park your vehicle we can avoid someone getting hurt.”

In launching the *Think Before You Park* campaign, NSW Minister for Transport Gladys Berejiklian said: “I am delighted to support this important safety campaign.

“The video paints a really vivid picture of the hazards faced by vision-impaired people when they have to navigate away from the safety of a footpath because a vehicle is in their way.

“In many of these cases, I am sure drivers just did not think about the impact their actions may have on others.

“Hopefully this campaign will make drivers think before they park.”

For more information about Guide Dogs NSW/ACT visit www.guidedogs.com.au or call 02 9412 9300.

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Note to Editors: Please see overleaf for background paper

References:

¹ Guide Dogs NSW/ACT Client Survey, 2010, *Sweeney Research*