

Red light on the delay

ALEKS DEVIC

A PLAN to make Victorian drivers wait longer at traffic lights to allow pedestrians extra time to cross the road has had the brakes put on it.

The State Government snubbed the plan yesterday, saying it would instead look at other options to boost pedestrian safety.

But Victoria Walks executive director Dr Ben Rossiter, who put forward the reform proposal, has warned that people will not accept inaction.

Government focuses on other crossing options

Dr Rossiter said there should be an audit of all traffic lights to assess the level of service given to pedestrians and find out where improvements could be made.

"To say they can't do anything because it interrupts traffic flow is not good enough," he said. "We have to think about what we can do to help protect older pedestrians. To do nothing is not an option."

Victoria Police should also

be booking reckless drivers at crossings and not just jaywalkers, he said.

The Transport Accident Commission and VicHealth have supported the report by pedestrian safety group Victoria Walks, which the *Herald Sun* revealed yesterday.

Its proposals include cutting speeds to 30km/h in some areas, changing give-way laws requiring drivers to also yield to pedestrians, and leaving the

"green man" on for longer to allow older people more time to cross the road.

The TAC yesterday would not say which recommendations it would like to see implemented but said pedestrian safety was a "key priority".

There have been 27 pedestrian deaths so far this year.

The research reveals most older pedestrians are hit by right-turning motorists at intersections and most were in

50km/h and 60km/h zones. Crash stats on older pedestrians reveal an average of 17 deaths, 147 serious injuries and 114 other injuries each year.

But Roads and Road Safety Minister Luke Donnellan yesterday said: "We are not currently considering a blanket increase in pedestrian walk times. However, we consider the safety of intersections for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists case by case."



Yesterday's *Herald Sun*

Premier Daniel Andrews said rather than reducing crossing times, benefits could be gained from having wider traffic islands on new roads. aleks.devic@news.com.au