

Submission to: The Inquiry Into Cycling Issues

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Items for consideration in the aim of improving cycling infrastructure and road user interaction.

1. Cycling as a recreational pursuit and a means of transportation improves overall health of participants. This in turns assists in reducing the financial and operational strain on public health facilities and early medical intervention for obesity related health problems.
2. Cycling as transportation reduces traffic congestion and demand for vehicle parking while also reducing the wear and tear on road infrastructure normally associated with vehicular traffic.
3. Cycling is a no/low emission method of transport. I include the low emission descriptor to allow for electric-assist bicycles which require the batteries to be recharged from mains electricity supply. This could be offset if solar charging stations such as those used for electric vehicles were also made available for bicycles.
4. Bicycles are cost effective in terms of purchase price and maintenance costs.
5. Separated bike lanes may encourage greater participation by commuters further reducing vehicular congestion.
6. The introduction and enforcement of laws mandating that motorised vehicle maintain a safe distance (1.5 metres) when overtaking cyclists.
7. Information campaigns to make public the rights and responsibilities of cyclists under the road rules. There is considerable misinformation in the public sphere which engenders hate campaigns against cyclists- an example being that cyclists are never entitled to ride two abreast.
8. Campaigns to make non-cyclists aware of the need to be aware that:
  - cyclists can be anywhere at anytime
  - cyclists do have a right to be on the road
  - paying vehicle registration does not give one ownership of the road
9. Campaigns to make cyclists aware of the need to:
  - Share the road
  - Follow the road rules
  - Acknowledge the rights of other road users

## My background

I am a cyclist, I am a motorist and I am a citizen of a community which I hope has the interests and wellbeing of all of its members at heart. I have had articles thrown at me from passing vehicles and been subjected to verbal abuse while participating in an activity which not only brings much happiness and health benefits but is also completely legal.

Four years ago while on an early morning ride, I was struck by a vehicle which failed to give way at an intersection. I was fortunate in that I suffered only minor physical injuries and the loss of the bike. The apprehension around cycling again took a considerable period to abate as the incident reinforced that as a group, we are amongst the most vulnerable of the road users. No matter who is in the wrong where vehicles and cyclists are involved in incidents, the cyclist will inevitably suffer the worst in what is a no-win situation.

Recent incidents locally and nationally have brought this issue to the fore. The deaths of local rider Sue Bell and of Cairns cyclist Tanya Roneberg have struck many in the community very hard. The death of cyclist Richard Pollett and subsequent acquittal by jury of the driver of the vehicle which struck the cyclist highlights the need for an enforceable safe passing distance law.

Media reports which may be well-intentioned to promote more harmonious relations amongst road users often descend into torrents of abuse against the cycling community in the comments section.

All of this concerns me greatly and I implore the government to engage all sides of the issue to seek feasible solutions to a growing and dangerous issue.