

Submission to the Parliamentary Enquiry into Cycling

Please accept my submission to the Inquiry into cycling issues.

About myself:

- I am a 54 year old female cyclist, motorcyclist, and car driver
- I am a registered nurse with over 20 years experience in emergency and critical care nursing
- Single car household
- My husband (aged 62) and I are all weather commuter and/or utility cyclists
- I have two adult daughters, one who currently cycles and does not drive, and the other who will resume cycling when her son is old enough to sit in a child seat, and who has also cycled in Europe.

The needs of all road users must be taken into account. However cyclists bear the brunt of interactions between themselves and motor vehicle users. As cyclists are by far the more vulnerable road users I will concentrate on them, specifically utility, commuter and recreational cyclists rather than sporting cyclists, as this is where my experience lies.

1. Infrastructure

- Cycling promotes health, thus the Queensland Parliament should be looking at means to increase cyclists numbers to reduce preventable lifestyle diseases [Cycling benefits](#). Countries with the highest cycling numbers and lowest death and injury rates for cyclists are those that provide high quality cycling infrastructure (see above paper).
- In Queensland cycling infrastructure is generally poor. On road bike routes are generally in the parked car door zone [Cyclist almost doored in peak hour at Stones Corner](#), are too narrow or disappear
- Bicycle awareness zones (BAZ) should be removed and replaced by “sharrows” placed outside the door zone indicating shared road space. [sharrows](#), [sharrows San Francisco](#)
- Cars are often parked in cycle lanes and BAZs, especially during peak hours eg Annerley Rd at Mater Hospital. Removal of parking from heavily trafficked routes can help reduce competition between bicycles and cars for

space. Cars routinely encroach on bike lanes, particularly when wanting to turn at intersections

- Vegetation, glass and other debris accumulates in bicycle lanes, forcing cyclists into the main stream of traffic
- Separate pedestrians from cyclists on heavily trafficked shared paths as has been done on riverside Bicentennial Bikeway and the Eleanor Schonnel Bridge
- Lower speed limits in suburban and inner city areas [no cyclists deaths on 30 & 40 km/hr roads](#)
- Bike lanes should be separated from traffic by a physical boundary such as a kerb or bollards to protect cyclists from motor vehicles cyclists [Bicycle lanes protect cyclists.](#)

2. Children

- Children who ride bicycles should be able to travel safely on Queensland roads
- Training in road rules should happen in all primary schools. Children need to be aware of road rules, whether they are pedestrians, cyclists, or future motor vehicle operators. Children who know the road rules and cycle make better road users as adults
- Safe routes should be provided to allow children to ride or walk to school. These routes would ideally be protected from all motor vehicle traffic.
- The reduction of speed limits to 30km/hr in suburbs improves safety for walking and cycling children and adults (see above paper)
- More children cycling to school reduces car congestion and childhood obesity
- Physical exercise has been shown to improve concentration levels in children.

3. Driver Behaviour

- Driving is a privilege, not a right. Driver training should be more rigorous, making licences harder to get and easier to lose to encourage better adherence to road rules. This would see a decrease in all road accident deaths
- Hoons and heavy vehicle drivers “skimming” riders should be prosecuted on presentation of video evidence under existing laws eg [poor driver behaviour at roundabout cyclist almost sandwiched between truck and bus](#)

- Turning in front of riders who are going straight ahead is a well known cause of injury to cyclists [Adelaide crash study](#)
- Driver distraction is a well-known and increasing cause of collisions on Queensland roads. Better policing and stiffer penalties would encourage more adherence to existing laws
- Cyclists are regularly the victims of verbal abuse and having things thrown at them. Perpetrators should be prosecuted on presentation of video evidence
- A common misconception exists that drivers alone pay for roads. It needs to be better publicised that roads are paid for from general State and Federal funds. This may help reduce driver aggression towards cyclists
- I have made the following observations during my numerous years of cycling in Brisbane. If I wear lycra and ride my hybrid bike I am regularly “shaved” and verbally abused by motorists. If I ride my upright Dutch bike in street clothing this behaviour reduces markedly. If I ride my upright Dutch bike in my nurses’ uniform I am given considerable leeway, and have yet to experience any aggression by other road users. Anecdotally, this would indicate that much driver aggression is targeted at ‘sport’ cyclists.

4. Commuter routes

- More veloways are required through busy commuter corridors. Expenditure should be on these, rather than meandering routes through parks
- More cyclists mean fewer cars on roads, thus reducing traffic congestion. Provision of high quality commuter cycling routes frees up existing road space

5. Registration of cyclists

- This would cost more to collect than it is worth
- Those jurisdictions that have previously registered cyclists have abandoned the practice. This indicates that it is not of benefit
- The vast majority of cyclists also own cars. They are thus paying registration for vehicles that are not in use when they are cycling
- Registration would further discourage people from cycling, thereby compounding the already serious health problems associated with inactivity
- Children shouldn’t have to be registered
- Many families have multiple bicycles, and the cost to them of registration could be prohibitive in tight economic times.

6. Laws

- Jurisdictions that have mandatory helmet laws have low rates of cycling. Mandatory helmet laws have reduced the success of CityCycle (compare usage rates in cities with MHL with those in cities without [Brisbane v.s. Washington DC](#)), [Brisbane study](#), [Vancouver bike-share delayed](#). They reduce number of female cyclists who need to arrive at their destination without 'helmet hair'. Queensland has high levels of skin cancer – mandatory helmet laws prevent cyclists wearing broad brimmed hats to protect them from the sun. Mandatory helmet laws add to perception that cycling is an inherently dangerous activity, further reducing number of cyclists. Studies have shown that drivers give more passing room to those cycling without helmets. Canadian research indicates that mandatory helmet laws have had minimal impact on hospital admissions for head injuries [Canadian research](#).
- Driver awareness of existing laws is often poor, and laws are often poorly enforced. Drivers are vociferous about cyclists disobeying rules, yet do the same themselves as often with far more dangerous consequences. In bicycle vs. cars collisions, drivers have been found at fault in the vast majority of cases [Adelaide crash study](#) [Brisbane crash study](#).
- Continue to allow cyclists to ride on footpaths
- Change the law to allow cyclists to ride across pedestrian crossings
- Enforce minimum a 1.5m passing distance
- Enact and enforce real penalties for those who hit cyclists (eg Truck vs. Richard Pollett). "I thought I had enough room" would not be considered a reasonable defence if a collision occurred between two motor vehicles.

Thank you for taking my submission into consideration

Yours faithfully



Jennifer Patrick

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