

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please consider the following personal submission into the issues relating to bicycle riders on our roads.

Local governments, state governments and federal governments all want more people to ride bicycles. Why? To reduce congestion, to increase diversity in transport modes, to improve health, there are many reasons which are not in dispute. So we must consider what are the barriers to people choosing to ride, even sometimes?

A national survey conducted in 2011 found that *“more than 62% of Australians want to be able to ride a bike for transport, but that road safety fears were preventing participation” (Cycling Promotion Fund and National Heart Foundation, 2011)*. It also found that *“More than 80% of survey respondents believed that the Federal Government should be doing more to promote a cycle safe culture”*.

It is clear from these statistics that more people would take up the opportunity to choose cycling as a form of transport if the safety issues were addressed. But to tackle these issues we have to consider the very different attributes of a person making a trip by bicycle to a person using a motor vehicle. There is a very urgent need to provide lawful protection to physically unprotected bicycle riders from physically dangerous motor vehicles.

Every time a person makes a trip by bicycle instead of car, they reduce the overall risk to the society around them because the likelihood and consequences of them injuring another person is only a fraction of what it would be in a car: this is a benefit to society. The risk to the bike rider is much higher however, and the road rules need to do everything possible to protect that person on a bike, as follows:

- infringements for motorists should be much higher than infringements for cyclists;
- all efforts need to be made to protect cyclists by law from the very large physical threat of motor vehicles. The 1 metre rule is a very good place to start;
- there is no benefit to registering bicycles and restricting in any way the number of people riding bicycles on our roads, to make our society safer we need to embrace and celebrate people and children riding bikes;
- Road safety and crash data offer no evidence to support increased regulation of bicycle riders.

In conclusion, the law must be used to provide protection to the vulnerable situation a person riding a bicycle is in when they are mixing with motorised traffic. If we do not do this, we will see more and more people chose not to ride a bike, which is a detriment to the safety of our community as a whole. I pondered one night on my ride home, when I was narrowly missed by a turning vehicle, “if even the passionate enthusiasts like me feel threatened on a bike, how are we ever going to get the majority riding”. This may be a good start.

Regards,
Prudence Oswin,

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