

Submission to Queensland Parliament's Inquiry into Cycling Issues**From: Mitchell Bright Sent via email on 21 July 2013****This submission is based on my personal experiences commuting by bicycle.**

I spend several hours a week riding a bicycle on the road as I commute from my home at Lawnton to my workplace at the Brisbane Airport on most week days (about 56 km round trip). I am not a sports cyclist; I ride a bicycle because I am concerned about the depletion of non-renewable fossil fuels, air pollution, and global warming. I also ride to offset the negative health effects of modern sedentary lifestyles including my desk-based workplace. I also ride my bicycle because I enjoy it and I prefer cycling to driving or using overcrowded public transport to get to work.

When I ride to work I wear my florescent and reflective work wear. I use rear and front flashing lights both day and night. I ride on the least trafficked roads using the road shoulder where possible. I have a rear view mirror and use it to check for heavy vehicles approaching from behind. I do everything I can to keep myself safe whilst riding on the roads to work.

Occasionally motorised vehicle drivers pull out from driveways, side streets and enter roundabouts without seeing me, despite my lights and florescent / reflective clothing. This does not concern me greatly as I anticipate vehicles will pull out and I am ready to brake or swerve when they do.

What does concern me however, is the deliberate threatening behaviour exhibited by some car, truck and bus drivers. Although incidents are infrequent, over the years I have had objects thrown at me from vehicles, vehicles deliberately passing close to me despite there being no other traffic in adjacent lanes, and I have also had an approaching vehicle drive directly at me.

Last month a car driver took exception to me 'taking the lane' briefly whilst riding my bicycle northbound on Gympie Rd across the South Pine River Bridge where there is no shoulder. The driver of the vehicle pulled alongside me in the adjacent lane and then swerved their vehicle sideways toward me, forcing me towards the rails of the bridge. The driver sounded the car's horn to emphasise their displeasure with me taking the lane. There was no need for this behaviour by the car driver as they could easily pass me because there were two northbound lanes and no other vehicles in the right hand lane. I was also cycling reasonably quickly as this bridge is at the bottom of a slope. I recorded the vehicle registration number and reported the incident at my local police station the same evening. The police officer I spoke to took my details and made a note in his notebook saying he would speak to the driver about their driving behaviour.

I considered the driver had threatened my life by swerving their car towards me on the narrow bridge. If the driver had pointed a rifle at me from the car instead of swerving I would have considered it no greater threat. However, the police do not seem to take

threatening behaviour using a motor vehicle seriously. They did not enter the incident in the QPRIME data base so there is no record of this incident to build a case in the event that the driver is reported again. I have not heard back from the police and based on my experience reporting other incidents I do not expect to. If the driver had pointed a rifle at me I believe the police would have taken the matter very seriously, and gone immediately to confront the offender as they would consider it a serious threat to public safety.

The casual attitude of the police towards incidents where drivers threaten other road users by using their car as a weapon, contributes to the roads becoming a more aggressive environment. Might is right on our roads. The standard for manners amongst road users is worse than those seen in a dockside public bar. Examples illustrating the lack of respect by motorists for other road users, drivers, pedestrian and cyclists alike can be observed on most roads any day of the week.

We need a cultural change amongst road users in Queensland and this must be lead by the law enforcement agencies and backed by government policy. Whilst I support a minimum safe passing distance law it will not make the roads safer unless it is enforced and backed up with an education campaign designed to change the current unsafe aggressive driving culture we have on Queensland roads.

Sincerely



Mitchell Bright

