

24 July 2013

The Research Director  
Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
Brisbane QLD 4000

Dear Sir/Madam

### **SUBMISSION TO INQUIRY INTO CYCLING ISSUES**

RACQ is the peak motoring body in Queensland and, with more than 1.2 million members, is also the largest membership organisation. Our advocacy priorities are reflected in our advocacy charter and incorporate safety, affordability and sustainability. We understand that mobility into the future is a key issue for our members, particularly as our population ages and the demographic profile of the community changes.

RACQ supports any positive effort to improve the interaction between road users and congratulates the committee on conducting the Inquiry into Cycling Issues. This review is important as the road environment is increasingly being used by many different types and sized vehicles. This is likely to continue as the population ages and there is an ever increasing range of new mobility options available to consumers, including bicycles, recumbent bikes, mobility scooters and other motorised mobility aids such as pedelecs, segways and motorised scooters. At the other end of the spectrum, there are more and larger heavy vehicles seeking not just to access the highway network, but also the “first and last mile” of their trips on local roads.

It is disappointing that the terms of reference for the review are so narrow. We would have preferred the committee or the Queensland Government had provided a discussion paper to inform the context and to focus policy development on specific and achievable issues and options, as well as desired outcomes of the inquiry. This submission incorporates some of the issues we believe should be considered in a more comprehensive review.

RACQ is aware there is a national process underway through the National Transport Commission (NTC) seeking to harmonise road rules across states and territories. RACQ supports uniform road rules through the NTC *Review of the Australian Road Rules and Vehicle Standards Rules* and it is our preference that any new options on road rules relating to cycling be considered within the context of this review.

Notwithstanding this, RACQ supports Queensland cyclists, regardless of their age, being allowed to ride on footpaths. This is a position held by bicycle advocacy groups and also proposed to the NTC in the uniformity of road rules discussion. This should be achievable whether the NTC proposes uniformity through a model law approach, as currently exists, or through an applied law approach as exists with heavy vehicles and rail safety.



## **Road Sharing Approach**

RACQ is committed to a road-sharing culture that provides mechanisms for courteous and harmonious road use. We promote the road as a shared space with multiple users in a range of vehicles including trucks, buses, cars, bicycles and mobility aids as well as pedestrians. All road users should obey the road rules, be focussed on driving safely and sharing the road with all other users, paying particular care around vulnerable road users such as cyclists and pedestrians.

We believe the majority of road users, whether they drive motorised or non-motorised transport, are considerate of each other. However, there will continue to be negative interactions between road users. These are generally caused by a number of inter-related factors: individual behaviours and cultural attitudes that indicate an unwillingness to share the road; poorly planned or uncondusive infrastructure to meet the needs of users of different sized vehicles; and rules-based legislation that sets minimum standards rather than providing tools to promote a road-sharing culture.

RACQ believes it is the role of government to enhance cyclist safety through the successful introduction of engineering, enforcement and education measures. This incorporates infrastructure modification to improve safety and allow a greater margin for user error; law making to reduce adverse practices; and education to encourage all road users to adopt safer habits.

RACQ believes greater separation of motorised and human powered vehicles using infrastructure such as bikeways, footpaths and on-road bike lanes is the safest mechanism. However, in many instances such engineering options are cost prohibitive or unavailable.

Critical to a safe road sharing culture is a widespread understanding and commitment to following all the road rules. It appears that lawlessness on the road by the minority of road users leads to a less than respectful road culture that is not ideal or conducive to safety. In this context enforcement of the road rules is important.

We believe there are likely to be significant benefits from the government and others focussing efforts on mass behaviour change. Maximising effort at a cultural level will provide the most effective cost benefit in the short term and focus political support for other infrastructure and legislative solutions.

RACQ believes the outcomes of the review should incorporate a mass education campaign about road user courtesy acknowledging that cyclists and other vulnerable road users have a legitimate place on the road, and that there is a need for all road users to familiarise themselves with the current road rules.

The rest of the paper will address the specific TORs.



## **TOR 1: Short and long term trends in bicycle injuries and fatalities involving motor vehicles.**

The interaction of cyclists and other road users has been an issue for some time. Often the impetus for this discussion in the public sphere is a tragic crash or media attention. Consequently, the debate is rarely informed by strong evidence and is often focussed on hearsay.

The earlier remarks about the lack of information provided by the committee are pertinent here as government holds the information related to this term of reference. It is not optimal for the committee to seek this advice from the public or interest groups when it has the capacity to request that information from government. RACQ is concerned that seeking this advice from the public and interest groups perpetrates the use of hearsay or impressions, rather than actual data and research evidence.

In the absence of publicly available Queensland data, RACQ has analysed the Monash Alfred Cyclist Crash Study (MACCS) to inform our consideration of what is required to improve safety outcomes for cyclists. As a detailed Australian study of 159 attendees to hospital emergency departments, this study provides valuable information on the causes of serious injuries, excluding fatalities.

The study provided an analysis of 159 crashes involving cyclists of whom 145 of the 159 were 18 years old or over. Of these, 99% were licensed to drive a motor vehicle. As this was crash data, all participants were involved in at least one crash. Half of crash victims had not had another crash in the previous five years.

Only 27% or 44 of the 159 cycle crashes involved a collision with a motor vehicle, of which 10 of these were parked, with 60% of bicycle crashes involving no other bicycle or vehicle.

While the majority of crashes did not involve another vehicle, it is important to note that crashes with motor vehicles are likely to result in more serious injuries.

The MACCS report provides some useful information about predictors of crashes. Bike light use and cloudy weather were assessed as significant predictors of injury outcome. This points to cyclist visibility being a critical issue. Cyclist speed was the only significant predictor of head injury risk. Because the vast majority of cyclists in the study wore helmets, the non-use of helmets was not identified a significant predictor of head injury.

A survey of Queensland cyclists by Washington, Haworth and Schramm for Queensland University of Technology in 2010 showed some interesting and similar findings about self-reported injuries and perceived risk among cyclists in Queensland. This research also found that the vast majority of cyclist crashes were not with motor vehicles. However, its focus on perception of risk and rider behaviour may also be useful in developing a mass education campaign.



Using an evidence base of studies into injury and perceptions of risk provides an understanding of the factors affecting cyclist injury and should be used to support mass education and to plan for new engineering, enforcement and education measures. These studies should identify more precisely the groups that would benefit from a campaign to improve road use culture and, therefore, a mechanism to target those groups with specific key influencers.

Ensuring that a road culture campaign will be successful requires market segmentation with messaging targeting a range of road users. For example, while RACQ can have an impact upon motorists generally, the taxi fleet and other professional drivers need to be targeted through workplace training and focussed interventions. Similarly, there are a range of road interaction issues specific to heavy vehicles that should be addressed by peers through organisations such as the Queensland Trucking Association and the Transport Workers Union.

An opportunity exists to place safe driving and interactions between road users in the context of workplace health and safety. We believe that anyone driving as a part of their employment should be adequately trained to prevent injury to themselves or others. While clearly taxi drivers and couriers see themselves as professional drivers, there are many people whose driving is a secondary part of their work and who do not consider themselves to be professional drivers. For example, community nurses, tradespeople and teachers who need to travel from one workplace to another throughout their day to complete their main tasks are all drivers in their workplace and are often not considered professional drivers. Promotion of road user safety as part of workplace health and safety would also serve to change road culture as this sort of training has spillover into the non-work environment.

**TOR 2: Evaluation, considering factors such as effectiveness, enforceability and impacts on other road users of existing and any other alternative road rules, such as the 1m rule, which govern interaction between cyclists and other road users.**

RACQ is not convinced of the benefits of enshrining a 1 metre passing rule in legislation. The current road rules should be adequate if road users followed the rules as they apply and there was education and reinforcement to support them doing so.

However, we believe that motorists need to give cyclists adequate room and this should be the subject of both engineering interventions and education campaigns. For example, the Amy Gillett Foundation's *1 metre matters* campaign could be supported and promulgated by a range of organisations including government, with road signage in locations seen as black spots for cyclists providing reminders to motorists.

RACQ is concerned that enforcement of a 1m road rule would be problematic and easily subject to dispute. Careful consideration of unintended consequences would also be necessary. In dense urban traffic environments there are many movements, including cyclists passing motor vehicles, that currently and reasonably occur despite passing widths less than 1m.



There are some specific incidences where it is not in the interest of any road user to have a 1m rule. Cyclists benefit from passing inside vehicles at stop lights to enable them to get to the front of the queue and filter through the intersection. The benefit for the cyclist is that they can get through intersections easily and they are not waiting behind idling vehicles.

The critical issue is for motorists to understand that a separation distance in the range of 1m, depending on the speed and traffic context, should always be provided as a safe buffer for the cyclist. This behavioural and cultural issue is perhaps best achieved through an awareness campaign. Legislation also has the potential to create greater animosity for the small minority of aggressive or problem motorists and cyclists, leading to more road rage, while a yardstick 1m provides a benchmark for motorists to use.

Many motorists seem to be unaware of the road rules relating to cyclists. RACQ has not studied this particularly, but it is apparent when listening to talkback radio and other forums. Even some of the submissions to the committee are premised upon a lack of knowledge of the current road rules. This further supports the notion that there are benefits to additional education of all road users about the road rules and other measures that encourage safe cyclist interactions.

Further consideration of any 1m passing rule should be undertaken through the NTC *Review of the Australian Road Rules and Vehicle Standards Rules* rather than by Queensland in isolation.

**TOR 3: Current penalties and sanctions, including where there are differential fine rates for cyclists compared to other road users.**

RACQ has no concern regarding the current penalties and sanctions.

**TOR 4: The potential benefits and impacts of bicycle registration.**

There are many benefits in encouraging cycling and RACQ is concerned that registration will provide unnecessary barriers to people riding bikes. The number of vehicles on the road reduces as cycling increases, thus reducing congestion and increasing air quality.

RACQ does not support registration for cyclists. Many cyclists already pay registration for their motor vehicle so they should not be penalised if they choose to ride a bicycle on occasion. As many children have bicycles and some adults have multiple bicycles, any registration scheme would be complex and costly to administer and enforce. The additional red tape would result in little if any revenue benefit and discourage cycling.

At the same time, bicycles do not cause damage to the road network itself as they are very light compared to cars and trucks.



## Conclusion

In conclusion, RACQ supports a review of the road sharing and cyclist interactions, though we would prefer any implementation is aligned with the outcomes of the NTC review of the Australian Road Rules and Vehicle Standards and moves towards harmonisation.

A critical issue for RACQ is changing the road culture to support more law abiding and respectful road sharing. This can be achieved with enforcement of the current road rules and education of all road users to ensure that people understand the road rules and the need for courtesy and adherence.

Ultimately, engineering, enforcement and education are the most effective strategies and coalesce with a safe systems approach. RACQ prefers separation of road users where feasible. However, all road users need to understand the law, follow the road rules, and be considerate of each other.

Thank you for the opportunity to have input to the review. We would like to meet with the committee in the hearing process. For further information, please contact our Manager, Sustainable Transport, Genevieve Graves at [Genevieve.graves@racq.com.au](mailto:Genevieve.graves@racq.com.au) or on 3872 8911.

Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Paul Turner', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Paul Turner  
Executive General Manager – Advocacy