

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please consider my personal submission to your inquiry into cycling issues.

1. Bicycle registration

Bicycle registration will not deliver a benefit to anyone. However, bicycle education could be beneficial for all road users through cycling on roads being more predictable. I see many new riders doing crazy maneuvers on the road. Most of these people are adults, I assume mainly because they are only half recalling cycling skills they had as a child. The pathway to becoming a proficient cyclist should not be about trial and error. The government should look at partnering with private industry to deliver bicycle education to children, adults and professional drivers.

2. Road rules

I question whether a change in the road rules will greatly improve driver attitudes towards cyclists, and contend changing the road rule will only be a band-aid solution over deeper problems.

The ABC recently aired an episode of *Sh*tville express* where the host Joe Hildebrandt stated "Everyone hates cyclists except other cyclists" Joe didn't explain why this is so but my opinion is because drivers think cyclists are static objects, most people don't really know how roads are funded and think cyclists are getting a free ride. The reality is that cyclists provide a net economic benefit for every kilometer they cycle. Many studies in Australia and overseas have come up with different dollar values but every study I have read has **always** shown cycling to be a net benefit to the community. Cycling suffers "the tragedy of the commons" where instant individual gratification of drivers dominates over long term community benefits of other more efficient transport modes. A change in the road rule is unlikely to improve driver acceptance that the cyclist delaying them for a few moments represents wider benefits to the whole community.

The angst experienced in the cycling community about the road rules is well justified when a cement truck driver involved in the death of a cyclist was found not guilty of dangerous driving. I too have had a truck pass within millimeters of my wrist, a kangaroo point garbage truck in my case. If I was wearing long sleeves that day maybe I wouldn't be writing this submission now. I was left wondering why getting a truck load of garbage 2 seconds further down the road was worth more to that driver than my life. I struggle to understand how any reasonable person could say events like this are not dangerous and could be justified in any way. I wonder if the verdict from the Pollet jury would have been different if some of them had ever experienced the aerodynamic disturbance of a truck passing mere millimeters away from them. In most cases if the motorist slows down just a little an opportunity to safely pass will quickly present, driving below the speed limit is not a crime. Sometimes I drive my car at cycling speeds and I find I am not abused by other drivers anywhere near the same way as if I was riding a bike, demonstrating that the problem is not about delay it's about driver attitudes towards cyclists. In my opinion changing the wording of the law will only have a weak effect on changing the uninformed attitudes of drivers (and juries) about safe and reasonable behavior near cyclists.

I experience the greatest abuse from drivers when I have to ride fully in the traffic lane, the crazy thing is that I usually only have to do this because of other cars parked on the street. It's beyond me why I get abused for having my safety put at risk because of someone else storing their private property in public space, often for free. I also note that much of the urban congestion is related to restrictions related to on-street parking even when cyclists are not present. I contend that rationalization of on-street parking in situations that delay drivers and put cyclists at risk will result in greater safety and economic improvements than a potentially unenforceable road rule that juries will still be lead to believe is beyond the capability of a driver to perceive.

The concerning thing about people strongly opinionated that cyclists **shouldn't** be on the road is that it may result in these people not expecting and **failing to perceive** that cyclists when they are actually present on the road. "Looked but didn't see" crashes are a big problem for cyclists and motorcyclists, this 5 minute long video demonstrates how expectations influence perceptions, <http://youtu.be/PWeUhRXohME>

I contend that a well thought out and on-going advertising campaign that cyclists have a place on the road and should be respected may have greater influence over community attitudes than a road rules change.

3. Long term trends

Young adult transport behaviors are radically different to the baby boomer generation, owning a car is less desirable or necessary than it used to be. However engineers continue projecting old demands and promoting unsustainable transport patterns when we really need to be focusing on building sustainable and resilient transport networks. My children often demand lollies for dinner, as a responsible parent I know not every demand should be satisfied. Try and think of one country that solved congestion by providing more space for single occupant motor vehicles, many were better resourced than we ever will be and still didn't succeed. We need to change engineering paradigm of moving passenger car units to moving people, in the urban context the bicycle can be a mass transit mode

4. Conclusion

- Attitudes are unlikely to improve without government support and intervention that improves driver awareness and attitudes; and
- Makes transport networks that are safe and convenient to ride on.

Regards,

