

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



July 26, 2013

## **Re. Inquiry into Cycling Issues**

### ***Triathlon Queensland***

Triathlon Queensland is the State Sporting Organisation responsible for the strategic development of the sport of triathlon within Queensland. Our mission is to ensure the existence of quality participation opportunities, servicing of members and the provision of pathways within triathlon for the whole community. Everything we do builds on our core values of providing *'healthy'* and *'enjoyable'* participation opportunities that encourage *'achievement'* and *'respect'* whilst giving our members a strong sense of *'belonging'* within the wider triathlon community.

### ***The Sport***

As a sport, Triathlon contains the three disciplines of swimming, cycling and running in a multitude of participation formats. Triathlon is a sport for all ages and stages with a multitude of distances catering for all levels of ability. Engaging the community in healthy activity through the provision of safe and enjoyable participation opportunities, has the potential to leave a lasting legacy for active lifestyles in the wider population. The sport of triathlon has grown significantly since its formation in Queensland in 1984 with over 45,000 participant entrants in triathlon events during the last season (as declared in post-race documents supplied to Triathlon Queensland by race providers). Triathlon is one of the fastest growing Olympic sports and is the fastest growing mass participation sport in Australia.

### ***Statistics***

Triathlon Queensland:

- Represents 50 affiliated member clubs spread across the state from Mt Isa to Cairns to Toowoomba to the Gold Coast and all parts in-between
- Has a representation within these clubs of over 4000 individual members
- Officially sanctions over 300 races held throughout Queensland
- Has a cycle component contained within 95% of these races
- Has this cycling component delivered on public roads in 97% of these races

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### *The Landscape*

Cycling on public roads in preparation (training) for a triathlon event exists in every one of the 45000 race participant entries aforementioned. This brings the participants in our sport in direct contact with the motoring public 365 days of the year. Our statistics show that over 70% of claims on the sports insurance policy are as a result of a cycling incident. Of these, over 55% are a result of an incident during the activity of training and 1 in every 2 involve a motor vehicle. It is an indictment on the nature of cycle / motor vehicle interaction that 18% of people seriously injured in all Australian land transport crashes are cyclists.

### *The Issues*

In asking our members for comment regarding making this submission the following are the most common issues that contribute to cycling / motor vehicle incidents:

- Motorists not allowing enough space between their vehicle and a cyclist
- Limited provision of road-sharing options for cyclists and motorists
- Existing road-sharing provisions including 'traffic furniture' being ill-conceived and in some instances actually contributing to more likely cyclist / motor vehicle interaction
- Driving behaviour exhibited by motorists that suggests:
  - A clear lack of understanding of cyclists road user rights and rules of the road in general
  - An 'us and them' mentality as exhibited by aggressive driving behaviour towards cyclists
- Cycle lanes having a bias towards 'recreational' cyclists through poor design including lack of width and predominance of curves and bends. This results in cyclists being forced on to roads thereby increasing the potential for cyclist v motorist incidents
- The predilection of councils favouring 'shared' cyclist / pedestrian options thereby increasing the potential for cyclist v pedestrian incidents
- Poor maintenance of cycle lanes and shoulders beside roads resulting in large amounts of debris including glass and metal. This forces cyclists to ride closer to the traffic lanes to avoid this debris
- Lack of connectivity and integration that sees cycle lanes come to an abrupt end leaving the cyclist on a road totally unsuited to sharing with motorists

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### ***Recommendations***

In analysing the above issues Triathlon Queensland would advocate for the following recommendations to improve cycle safety in Queensland:

- It should be mandatory by **LAW** that a motorist must keep a **MINIMUM** distance of **1 metre** between their vehicle and any cyclist
- It should be mandatory by **LAW** that the automatic default liability in an accident between a motorist and a cyclist should rest with the motorist. The burden of proof must rest with the motorist regarding negligence
- It should be mandatory by **LAW** that any new road constructed must contain the provision of cycle lanes in both directions
- A minimum spend should be enforceable at state and local government level for the provision of cycle lanes on existing roads
- A minimum spend should be enforceable at state and local government level for the maintenance and up-keep of road shoulders and cycle-lanes
- At every stage of the motor vehicle licensing process in Queensland there should be a minimum number of cycle-specific road rule questions and a minimum number of correct answers supplied for the applicant to progress
- Greater consideration should be given to the impact of 'traffic furniture' measures on the resultant interaction between cyclists and motorists
- A minimum spend should be enforceable at state government level on cycle safety promotion equivalent to the percentage of all Australian land transport crashes that involve cyclists

### ***Summary***

The current statistics regarding cyclists being injured, maimed and killed on our roads should be unacceptable to us all. Queensland has a unique opportunity through this inquiry and its resultant recommendations to lead the country in making a significant impact on reducing these statistics. The time for action is now and we look forward to this inquiry leading the way.

Regards,

Tony Compier  
CEO – Triathlon Queensland

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