

From: Don & Perry Burns [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 24 October 2013 4:22 PM
To: Committees
Subject: Inquiry into Vulnerable Road Users

Committee Secretary
Inquiry into Vulnerable Road Users.

I admire progress made by the ACT Government toward improving safety for cyclists; thereby encouraging more citizens of all ages to enjoy living in or visiting the ACT along with the freedom and the health benefits associated with cycling.

Perhaps the greatest remaining hurdle to safe and superb cycling in the ACT is our mindset. Sadly, there remains an uncaring, impatient or aggressive attitude toward vulnerable road users by some drivers who have difficulty in appreciating the heavy responsibility they have when trusted with a lethal weapon on a public thoroughfare. ACT drivers have a particularly aggressive reputation down here on the south coast, so perhaps more emphasis is needed on driver education.

Cyclists will sometimes make foolish mistakes, but not even the State has authority to inflict capital punishment.

We are frequently told that drivers in Europe have a far more mature and considerate attitude toward vulnerable road users. Australian drivers like to think their skills are second to none, so perhaps consideration, courtesy and maturity should be emphasised in driver certification and in public promotion of admirable driving qualities.

Reward is a more effective incentive than punishment – perhaps there is scope for recognition of drivers who maintain excellent records with inexpensive bronze, silver and gold colour coded licences? To balance the negative aspect of their duties, maybe police officers should have authority to recommend some drivers be upgraded when police witness conduct that other drivers should be encouraged to emulate.

Many years ago a series of TV ads carried the message "courtesy is catching". Surely it would be worthwhile for the government to engage clever marketing people to produce short, sharp messages that make it honourable to apply driving skills with patience, maturity and consideration for others.

Below is a letter to some editors that attempts to lift respect for the contribution vulnerable road users make toward national aspirations.

Respectfully, Don Burns

From: Don & Perry Burns [REDACTED]

Date: Thursday, 24 October 2013 2:35 PM

To: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear Editor

Australia has deep cycling roots that pre-date Gallipoli and our ANZAC values. So it is disappointing when letters and radio talkback flush out snipers who oppose making life easier for folk to get around by bicycle.

Fair dinkum recognition should acknowledge what our cobbers on bicycles do for 'Oz'. Most of them own cars and pay taxes, but they do us all a favour when they leave their cars at home.

We really should rally help for those energetic enough to reduce road congestion, reduce wear and tear on our roads, reduce competition for parking, reduce demand for fuel and reduce pollution. Not to mention reducing our bloated national health bill. Everybody will benefit when we shrink the vast queues of obese citizens vying for attention from medical practitioners and hospitals.

Our country traditionally supports people who will 'have a go', under-dogs and mateship. "Make room for someone doing you a favour" could be our most constructive thought for the road.

Respectfully, Don Burns