



23 October 2013

The Committee Secretary

Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services
committees@parliament.act.gov.au

The Canberra Cycling Club (Club) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Committee on behalf of its members who cycle on ACT roads for exercise, competition and employment. Our Club members, and the wider cycling community, understand that we are all road users and need to share the road. Cyclists are active community members who are looking to undertake a healthy, active sporting pursuit and should not have to put their lives at risk to achieve this.

The Club would also like to endorse the submission made by Pedal Power ACT, recognising that all issues raised by them also have an impact on our members.

In this submission, the Club will focus on what it sees as four critical areas:

- Protection of Cyclists on Rural Roads
- Minimum Overtaking Distance
- Driver Training and Education
- Stromlo Forest Park

Protection of Cyclists on Rural Roads

Cycling as a recreational activity and sporting pastime has experienced a boom in the last few years, which has seen an increase in the number of cyclists on the roads in and around the ACT. Traditionally cycling on quiet, rural roads is the preferred option for a number of reasons – terrain, scenery, away from traffic – however with the ongoing sprawl of Canberra suburbs, these types of roads have become less accessible.

As a result, a small number of rural roads are used frequently and hostility between cyclists, other roads users and residents in these areas has increased. As an example, cyclists using the very popular “Cotter Uriarra Loop” (Cotter Rd, Brindabella Rd, Uriarra Rd) are often harassed. The level of threats is becoming more severe and the chances of a cyclist suffering serious harm as result is real.

We would welcome any moves to protect people cycling in these areas. The Club’s suggestion is for variable speed signs to be applied on rural ACT roads during periods of high usage. The speed could be reduced to 60km/h on weekends, when there are many cyclists on the roads, and revert to 80km/h on week days. This would be cost effective solution in sharing the roads.

Minimum Overtaking Distance

The Canberra Cycling Club is a long-term supporter of the Amy Gillett Foundation and their long-standing ‘a metre matters’ campaign. The Foundation is now advocating for the



establishment of *minimum overtaking distance* legislation in all States and Territories and is aiming to ultimately achieve an amendment to the model Australian Road Rules.

The Club supports any changes to the national road rules that would aim to protect cyclists by requiring drivers to keep a minimum distance from people cycling on roads.

Driver Education and Training

The Club is aware that cyclists in the ACT enjoy some of the best road infrastructure in Australia however there are still dangers posed to cyclists as a result of irresponsible and ignorant behaviour by motorists.

The Club believes that a better understanding of cyclist's requirements when cycling on the roads, especially in a group, would help alleviate some of the frustration felt by motorists. Driver training and testing currently pays little regard to informing new drivers about cyclists and how best to interact with them.

As a minimum, the Club would like to see the ACT Driver Handbook revised to include more detail and education on vulnerable road users, such as:

- mention the hierarchy of road users
- identify who vulnerable road users are
- ask drivers to allow at least 1m when overtaking person on a bicycle

The Club also believes it would be beneficial to include cycle training as part of the school curriculum. This would give all children the opportunity to learn to ride a bike properly and how to share the road with all forms of transport. They would then be better equipped when learning to drive a motor vehicle later in life.

Calls for cyclists to 'get off the road' and having items thrown at them from moving vehicles are commonplace. While Canberra has a great network of off-road cycle paths, these are not always a safe or practical option for a cyclist on a training ride due to the speed they are travelling.

Cyclists are often criticised for not paying vehicle registration and, therefore, not paying for the roads that they are using. Aside from the fact that the majority of Club members also own a car or motorcycle which they pay registration on, there is conflicting information about what registration fees pay for.

The Club would therefore like to suggest an education campaign for motorists on:

- Why cyclists do not always use off road cycle lanes
- Clarification and promotion of how motor vehicle registration fees are spent in relation to road maintenance



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Stromlo Forest Park

The Club would like to praise the ACT Government for the creation and continuing development of Stromlo Forest Park. We would like to see the continued growth of this facility with the inclusion of a sealed 10 – 15 kilometre road circuit within the Park to allow training and racing in an “off-road” environment. Whilst this would not remove the need to conduct road racing on public roads, the circuit would provide an alternative and also a safe location for the development of our Junior riders.

The Canberra Cycling Club would be happy to appear before the Committee to speak to the submission and respond to any queries the Committee may have.

Stuart Jones
President