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13 February 2014

Mr Mick Gentleman MLA  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and  
Territory and Municipal Services  
ACT Legislative Assembly  
GPO Box 1020  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Mr Gentleman

### **Inquiry into Vulnerable Road Users**

This is a short, and very late, submission to your inquiry. It focusses on cycling and cyclists. I hope you might be willing to accept my submission, even though it is well outside the deadline.

Whilst I primarily am a motorist, I also cycle regularly, mainly for recreation and physical exercise, and am a member of Pedal Power ACT. I participate in activities such as the annual Ride to Work day.

It is widely claimed that cyclists are at or near the top of the list of vulnerable road users.

In my view, cyclists would be a lot less vulnerable if they observed three simple practices/behaviours:

- Obey the road and cycling rules;
- Observe cycling etiquette; and
- Use common sense.

In my observation, there are many who fail to follow one or more of these principles. I believe it is partly because there is very little education about them or even any level of awareness-raising of them. It is too easy for anyone to buy a bicycle and then simply get on it and ride.

Motorists are required to go through an extensive learning process and a comprehensive testing program. As well, motorists are required to hold a drivers licence and keep their vehicles registered and covered for compulsory third party insurance. There are no such requirements for cyclists, even though they also travel at speed, can be involved in accidents (including at-fault accidents causing personal injury and property damage) and must share transport infrastructure with other road users.

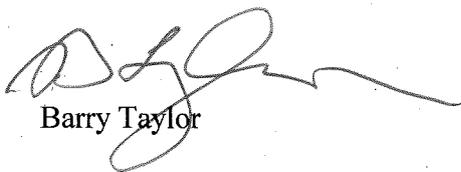
Whilst these motoring "hoops" are not the whole answer to road safety, they do go a long way to keeping our roads as safe as possible and creating a higher level of behavioural expectation.

Some of the advocacy groups, calling for changes, such as the abolition of the requirement for cyclists to dismount when using a pedestrian crossing, are simply irresponsible.

Whilst I accept this example is open to debate, removing that requirement completely would do little more than make pedestrian crossings abjectly unsafe, both for cyclists and pedestrians. Footage of a cyclist failing even to slow down on the approach to a pedestrian crossing, let alone dismounting the bicycle, shown in a news broadcast on WIN-TV on 7 October 2013 is a case in point. It would have been difficult for an approaching motorist firstly to observe the approach of the cyclist and secondly to stop quickly to avoid an accident. In my view, the cyclist was irresponsible and put his own safety at risk. If this rule is to change, there should, at the very least, be a requirement (with appropriate signage) that cyclists stop at the kerb before crossing.

Cyclists can be vulnerable, just as pedestrians and other road-users are, including motorists. But many cyclists need to change their behaviours and there needs to be a stronger focus on education programs and regulatory control.

Yours sincerely



Barry Taylor