



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND CITY SERVICES
Jo Clay MLA (Chair), Suzanne Orr MLA (Deputy), Mark Parton MLA

Submission No 39 - We Ride Australia

Inquiry into the Road Transport (Safety and
Traffic Management) Amendment Bill 2021 (No 2)

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Standing Committee on Planning, Transport, and City Services

By email: LCommitteePTCS@parliament.act.gov.au

30 July 2021

We thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission in response to the Inquiry into Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Amendment Bill 2021 (No 2).

We Ride Australia supports the Pedal Power ACT submission

In addition to the comments that follow, we support the arguments and evidence contained in the detailed submission made by Pedal Power ACT to this Inquiry.

Context

While significant improvements in road safety in recent years have been most evident for those travelling in motor vehicles, road safety outcomes for vulnerable road users – people riding bicycles and pedestrians – is worse.

Major increases in walking and cycling by Australians occurred during the COVID pandemic and reinforce the importance of not only safe infrastructure, but also a regulatory framework that clearly places those road users generally considered the most vulnerable – pedestrians and cyclists, at the centre of our approach to road safety.

Increases in the participation in walking and cycling benefit the ACT Government through the health, environmental and community benefits, and to help manage growth in transport congestion and emissions.

The diversity of participation in walking and cycling across all ages and abilities is notable. One of the largest participation cohorts for bike riding are children, and both young and older Australians have high levels of participation in walking, but we are all pedestrians at various times. Many Australians who are unable to drive due to mobility issues rely on walking and riding for their mobility needs.

All aspects of the transport network must combine to ensure a safe transport system, with the regulatory framework bearing an over-arching role in both clearly articulating the public's expectations on the behaviour required to keep all road users safe and providing the clear signals of enforcement that will be applied to support safe behaviours on the road.

Submission

Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Amendment Bill 2021 (No 2)

As stated by Pedal Power in their submission:

“Our laws must recognise the vulnerability of unprotected road users, by including an offence for driving negligently and harming a person who is walking or riding on or across our roads. Our police must be equipped to issue infringement notices efficiently and effectively to people who break this law.”

We agree, and support Pedal Power’s assertions that a new offence is needed to recognise the responsibility vehicle drivers exercise with respect to vulnerable road users, and the bill’s goal to:

- “Make it an offence under the Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Act to drive negligently and harm a vulnerable road user.
- Introduce a traffic infringement notice penalty for this offence which is significantly higher than the current \$393 penalty for negligent driving. The proposed \$1600 penalty is quite appropriate. It sends the right message to the community that this is more serious than negligently damaging an object.”

Stephen Hodge
Director – National Advocacy
We Ride Australia*



(*The Australian Cycling Environmental and Health Foundation Limited, ACN 618 071 855)

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