



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND CITY SERVICES

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Submission No 8 - Mr Roger Bacon

Inquiry into the Road Transport (Safety and Traffic

Management) Amendment Bill 2021 (No 2)

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Hi

It's time for the law to show the community that cyclist safety is taken seriously. Penalties should reflect the gravity of traffic infringements that jeopardise the safety or even the life of people riding bikes.

Danger from traffic - or the perception of danger - is a major disincentive to cycling in the ACT, especially for women. Currently male cyclists outnumber females by about 2 to 1, and it is not hard to see why. Cycling conditions in many areas are suited only to the 'strong and fearless' - the other 60 per cent of the population who might be 'interested but concerned' are largely ignored. To demonstrate, I invite members of the Committee to try cycling from Gladstone St Fyshwick to the Canberra Hospital: ten kilometres of terror. The law should focus on minimising this perception of danger arising from treating cyclists as second-class road users.

Traffic speed

The current ACT default urban speed limits of 60 km/h (feeder streets) and 50 km/h (residential streets) are far too high. They may be fine for the almighty car, but they have created a motorised tarmac desert where ordinary people fear to tread. Children's movement has to be limited or closely supervised. The recent expansion of 40 km/h zones in 'business areas' is commendable but illogical. If permanent 40 km/h is needed there, why is 50 km/h or higher still allowed on every residential street in Canberra? Most cities in the developed world are now implementing 30 km/h (20 mph) limits in urban areas. The Welsh Government is now implementing this throughout the Principality. In the Netherlands, cyclists and vehicles are not allowed to mix on roads with a limit above 30 km/h; separation must be provided. Canberra needs to implement 50/40 km/h default limits as a matter of urgency in order to provide a safe cycling environment.

Cycling should have priority

Cycling is becoming more important to help deal with urgent challenges of road congestion, the climate emergency and public health. It should be given priority over vehicle traffic by default, unless exceptions can be justified in a particular case. That priority should be reflected in the legislation.

Regards

Roger Bacon

