

## INQUIRY INTO VULNERABLE ROAD USERS

**Organisation:** Private Citizen  
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## SUBMISSION TO THE STAYSAFE COMMITTEE BY PETER VAN DEN BERG

My submission concerns the attitude of, predominantly, drivers of motor vehicles towards cyclists.

I am a driver of a motor vehicle myself averaging approximately 20,000 kms per annum over the last 10 years and during this period incurred one traffic violation for exceeding the speed limit by less than 10 kms/hr.

I also ride a bicycle, including regularly commuting to work in East Sydney from my residence in Belrose prior to my retirement earlier this year. During the last 10 years I averaged 6,500 kms/annum on a bicycle. Since the late 1980's I have ridden well in excess of 100,000 kms on a bicycle and have been involved in one serious accident in late 2008 when an unsupervised dog ran into my path causing me to fall. I was hospitalised for 3 weeks. My full recovery took nearly 3 months.

Over the years, congestion on Sydney roads has increased the tolerance of motorists towards cyclist. The daily frustration of lengthy delays travelling from A to B is vented on other road users and cyclists are an easier target than other motorists. Unfair treatment indeed as other motorists and traffic lights would cause far more delays than the number of cyclists currently using major arteries during peak hour. One would suspect that tolerance towards others is less and less and human nature tends to pick on the vulnerable when something is placed in their way.

Education would be one way of improving this and I wonder how much emphasis is placed on the rights of cyclists when learner drivers are taught? How many questions in the test to obtain a driver's licence relate to situations involving cyclists? To obtain a licence one is required to pass a test in road

rules and driving skills. Is that enough? It seems to me that some people should not be allowed behind the wheel of a car period. Eg habitual offenders, people that drive without a licence, unregistered vehicles etc. The punishment meted out to such offenders appears far too lenient.

Attached hereto is an article and editorial from today's Manly Daily, the contents of which speaks for itself. I was involved in a similar incident years ago when I was tailgated by a concrete pumping truck on a road with 3 lanes and early in the morning when there was plenty of opportunity to move in another lane to pass me. When the truck finally did pass me, I was sprayed by an identified liquid.

Round-a-bouts in suburban back streets and speed humps are areas when extra vigilance is required. Often drivers will speed past at the last moment and then brake right in front of you as they are going too fast. Why do they not stay behind until the traffic "barrier" has been passed? I have experienced drivers going through a round-a-bout on the right hand side as they were too impatient to stay behind me!! I have had beer cans thrown at me, one is yelled at and all for no apparent reason.

The press does not always help much either. Often one will read about "lycra clad people" when writing about cyclists as if it is some kind of sin. Rather biased especially as one considers that for people to be clad in the same outfit starts at primary schools with the wearing of school uniforms, so what is so unusual about cyclist wearing gear that is comfortable?

Hopefully the foregoing observations assist in some small way to improve road safety in general but for cyclists in particular.

Peter van den Berg

RUN BY ACE COLLEGE WITH THE ADULT DRIVING Education Council, the program saw students combine their English grammar

While the visitors were required to complete 20 hours of English study a week, they also took part in surfing lessons, went

"The first week we have a very strong orientation where go through a lot of how

confident enough to give a presentation of their time here."

# Terror truckie apology

Jesse Phillips

THE boss of the truck driver accused of terrorising a 20-year-old woman in a road rage incident has apologised and forwarded all the necessary details to the police.

And he has warned that if the truckie is charged over the incident he will be sacked.

Richard Amadio, who owns the East Lindfield-based concrete wash-out collection business, PumperDump, yesterday con-

firmed it was one of his drivers who was involved in the incident.

Georgina, a P-plate driver from Mona Vale, said about 7.30am on July 20 the truckie became furious at her slow driving and then tailgated her for several kilometres before following her into her work parking lot, where she hid from him in a maintenance shed.

When she emerged from hiding the driver yelled and swore at her and called her a "crap driver".

Yesterday, *The Manly Daily* ran

a CCTV image of the truck in an effort to identify the driver responsible, which led to about 20 people from the construction industry contacting the paper with the business's name.

When the *Daily* contacted Mr Amadio he said he knew nothing of the incident but would investigate whether one of his drivers was involved. He later confirmed it was one of his employees and said he had forwarded the matter to police. "It's certainly not what I expect

from one of my drivers... and road rage is a serious offence. If he is charged, for sure, he will be sacked.

"I sincerely apologise. Being chased by a truck would not be a nice experience and being verbally abused would also not be nice, but I'm just reading her side in a newspaper, but I will be asking what happened."

Mr Amadio said the truckie had a different version of events and had taken his own notes. He will provide a statement to police and

Mr Amadio said he would wait to see the outcome of the investigation before making a final decision.

Georgina said she was grateful for the apology. "It's nice that he did apologise and that we found out who it was," she said.

■ Editorial, Page 21



Are you worried about road rage on our streets?  
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# Viewpoint

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## Truckie chose wrong time to lose plot

IN a city where traffic congestion frequently sends our stress levels through the roof, the issue of road rage has become a very real danger.

The sense of frustration many drivers feel getting to and from work each day can cause us to behave in a way that would be unacceptable in any other area of our lives.

Inexplicably, some drivers

— Editorial —  
The Manly Daily

choose the time when they're most dangerous — behind the wheel and travelling at speed — to lose the plot.

This appeared to be the case when a 20-year-old female P-plater was allegedly tailgated for 20 min-

utes by an enraged truck driver. The pursuit ended in a tight, Manly laneway, with the young woman forced to hide from the angry truckie. When confronted by his employer yesterday, the man denied he was the instigator. Whatever his excuses, the fact remains that this driver endangered the safety of a young girl and other drivers. He was driving a large truck, she was in a small

sedan. It would have been clear to him from the start that the object of his rage was a young woman. We wonder if his reaction would have been the same if the other driver had been, say, Steve Matal, from the Manly Sea Eagles.

The lesson here is that just because a fellow driver annoys you, it doesn't give you the right to behave like a maniac.

## quickview

■ SHAME on your reputation giving Austen Tayshus more than he deserves. Tayshus is the author of *Australiana* I was penned by Billy Blinn aka The Twelfth Man. Tayshus read from the script. Make then that Tayshus's voice appears to be limited to rant and attacks in profanities such as f--- will I

Nigel Wall, F

## Cold comfort for new mums and bubs

WONDERFUL news regarding Taronga Zoo's recent batch of baby hippos and elephants.

The baby animals certainly seem to have advanced prenatal and postnatal care, which is more than our health bureaucrats wish to give human babies ("Drive-thru mums", *MD*, Aug 5).

Sydney's expectant mothers must be wondering if they are better off birthing at our zoo.

The system that has been put in place for maternity by NSW Health is...

## Roads need colour codes

MUCH publicity has been given recently to the various means being used by authorities to detect and fine road users who exceed speed limits.

The difficulty I find is knowing the speed limit on the particular section of road I am travelling on.

Speed limits constantly vary in the range 10km/h to 110km/h and are shown by...

stripes either at the side or centre of the road. They would be readily seen, as you concentrate on the road ahead, avoiding having to take your eyes off the road, to search for the speed signs.

Such a scheme would assist us to know the speed limit on the section of road we are travelling on, and comply with it. Should we



■ I AM a very regular walker that very picturesque track Long Reef golf course and noticed an increasing incidence of little black doggie poo littering the walkway. It is mendable that people collecting droppings in the bags but what they think is going to pick discarded doggie droo doo along the walkway? Wahey, John Pozniak, Marr

■ SORRY to hear on the grounds, but I was interested