

**Submission
No 4**

INQUIRY INTO VULNERABLE ROAD USERS

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Riding a bicycle recreationally for 10-15 hours per week, I spend a lot of time on the road. In my opinion, the biggest issue is the education of motorists that we (cyclists) are allowed to ride on the road and we are afforded the same 'space' as cars and other vehicles. Lots of times we (cyclists) are abused for simply riding in small groups (two, to sixteen) for taking up a lane. In most cases there are 4 lanes available (2 in each direction). So traffic can get through in the second lane heading in that same direction. This builds up aggression in the drivers as they think we are 'in the way' resulting in objects thrown at cyclists, (Beer bottles) cars swerving to hit cyclists and people trying to use their car as a barrier to our access to the road (braking suddenly/aggressively). It goes without saying the instance of verbal abuse is very high - many times per ride. Of course this builds aggression in cyclists as well (it's hard not to take a beer bottle thrown at you personally).

Interestingly, on average my speed on a bike during these rides is the same as my average speed in my car; so we are not really slowing the traffic down, rather the acceleration is in different parts of the trip (we are slower to speed up but maintain a smooth speed at say 40kph to the next traffic lights).

There are many types of cyclists: recreational, commuters, mountain bike riders etc. Some are able to use bike paths others are not. For example, 25kph or higher is not achievable on a bike path safely with a combination of walkers, dogs, prams etc. also on these paths (rightly so). Regardless of the type of cyclist, if they ride on the road they need to be afforded the same respect as a vehicle.

As a result of this type of activity we are forced to start our training at 0445 in the morning to avoid both the traffic and the drivers. This is getting a little extreme. Clearly we cannot keep starting our rides earlier and earlier, so the impact on the local drivers is only going to get worse and therefore the incident rate will increase.

Educating drivers that we are entitled to a free lane in traffic and that the overall speed difference is small might help make our roads safer. Of course we are very vulnerable to severe damage if we collide with a vehicle - people seems to forget this (there is not much protection in lycra).

The lack of safety is a deterrent to many would-be cyclists/bike commuters.