

Submission  
No 25

## INQUIRY INTO VULNERABLE ROAD USERS

**Organisation:** Private Citizen  
**Name:** Mr Kevin Eadie  
**Date Received:** 3/08/2010

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Mr Geoff Corrigan MP  
Chair  
Inquiry into Vulnerable Road Users  
Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety (Staysafe)  
Parliament House  
Sydney 2000.

Attention - Mr Bjarne Nordin, Senior Committee Officer,

Dear Sirs,

This submission is in response to a display advertisement which appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald of 23 June 2010.

### **OVERVIEW**

I live in Drummoyne. I am 72 years old, and semi-retired. I adopted cycling as my preferred mode of transport about 5 years ago, on doctor's advice regarding the need for more exercise. My second choice for transport is public transport. I also own a motor vehicle, but rarely use it.

I regularly cycle to work at Redfern (7 km each way) about 3 days per week. I also cycle locally on most days. Longer trips are usually done by combining cycling with rail travel. In inclement weather, I revert to public transport.

Out of my interest in road safety, I am a keen observer of the behaviour of other road users. My assessment of their competence is so low, I consciously minimise placing myself, at any time, in a position where it is possible for a motor vehicle to collide with me. This requires the adoption of a number of tactics, including riding on the footpath and riding counter-flow in one-way streets. Contrary to the rhetoric from the police, the Roads & Traffic Authority, politicians, and other commentators, the current road regulations do not protect me from injury or death. On the contrary, as a cyclist, I need to repeatedly ignore the regulations, just to ensure my own survival.

### **MY RESPONSE TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE INQUIRY**

My response to the particular terms of reference is as follows-

#### **Term c** - "underlying factors in injuries" -

In my opinion, the law requiring the compulsory wearing of helmets lulls cyclists into a false sense of security. I place the emphasis on primary, not secondary safety. I do not wear a helmet. Instead, I concentrate on totally avoiding those situations in which a helmet might have afforded some protection against head injury.

The compulsory wearing of helmets is ill-advised. The law should be abolished.

#### **Term d** - "future strategies to address safety"-

Present regulations and education programs pertaining to cyclists are too intent on shifting the blame for the road toll from government to the road user. Government policy seems to be - "We have told you about the risks. We have developed road rules to protect you. Abide by the rules and you will be safe".

Nothing could be further from the truth!

Instead of lulling cyclists into a false sense of security with "share the road" campaigns, ineffective (read ignored) road "rules", and glossy brochures, the government should inform cyclists of the *real*

risks of sharing the roads with motorists, who may very well be drunk, drugged, inattentive, unlicensed, uninsured, ignorant, arrogant, incompetent, inexperienced, or simply not interested in their driving responsibilities.

**Term e** - "integration of cycling into planning and management of roads" -

This is a rather "chicken and egg" issue. Until cyclists are separated from other road users they will not be safe. Until cycling is safe, cyclists (and especially parents of child cyclists) will be reluctant to so travel. But until cycling becomes much more popular, politicians may be reluctant to fund better cycling facilities.

One solution to this problem deserves much more attention - the conversion of "back streets" into "cycle streets". It would enable the large-scale separation of cyclists from fast moving traffic at minimal cost. I have developed my own back street network, in which I avoid fast moving traffic almost entirely. The penalty in travel time, compared to using arterial roads, is negligible.

**Term f** - safety in other jurisdictions -

There are many cities around the world with good, safe, cycling facilities and low crash rates. I believe the high levels of safety may sometimes be the result of the local road "culture" - the long-standing understood relationship between the many classes of road users. The active development of such a culture might be a cost-effective way of improving cycling safety in NSW.

For further information, please contact the writer on 9819 6052.

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Kevin Eadie  
21 St Georges Cres.  
Drummoyne, NSW, 2047.

3 August 2010.