

**Submission
No 13**

INQUIRY INTO VULNERABLE ROAD USERS

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Helmets should only be compulsory for children. Adults getting exercise will be healthier than living a sedentary lifestyle. Some people won't cycle if they have to wear a helmet.

Fully separated and segregated Copenhagen-style bike lanes should be installed for safety.

Speed limits reduced to 30km/hr local streets.

Urban design around a walkable city (push-bikes being a transitional transport way now), not around cars, trucks and highways. Sustainable cities. Congestion taxes for cars. Make driving socially unacceptable like smoking & drink driving has become. More taxes and pictures of car crashes or sick people on the sides of all cars (like cigarette packages).

Stop cars annoying you - some riding in traffic advice

Many people get scared off riding a bike on the road because cars are passing them too fast and too close. We are getting the same situation on shared walking/cycling paths as well (were people are getting scared by cyclists passing them too closely and too fast).

Q:What has caused this?

A: The council & RTA in Newcastle has put in the worst bike picture "lanes" on the roads that don't even meet the safety standards. Narrow bike picture "lanes" situated between parked cars & the left traffic lane is a recipe for disaster. If riding in them & a person opens their car door you will crash into them. And cars are passing you too close & too fast for comfort. Even though for adults cycling with safety skills is less crashes then driving in cars.

HOW DO WE SOLVE THIS?

Unfortunately a lot of research, different lane position riding and cycling experience is required to bust the myth that riding a bike as far left as possible is wrong. Please read the explanations below to expand your mind!

If you think riding a bike is too hard or too dangerous, then you are doing it wrong.

Stop getting annoyed by cars and stay out of the car door lane.

You really aren't being kind to motorists by getting out of their way/lane.

We are kind when we don't put kids jumping out of cars lives at risk.

Unsign-posted "bike picture lanes" are too narrow & Road Rules 153, 144 & 247 advise not to ride in them. They are car-door-opening-death lanes. When passing parked cars, 30m beforehand, check for cars, then move into the next lane safely, away from door opening zone.

Please never ride in the car door lane....

Even when Bicycle Victoria continues to publish crap about riding slowly, or checking for rear brake lights etc. I only heard/saw my 1st one last month and it was sickening. And one of my friends just got doored, lucky to be alive. Many Councils are encouraging car door death riding by placing bike pictures in the car door zone. They look like bike lanes and motorists and cyclists think they should ride there.

Yes I admit motorists get angry when you take the lane, but they don't know the dangers of car-door-death riding. Why don't I just make motorists happy, and ride in car door lane? Answer is I don't want to die. I'd rather be safe and ride in the traffic lane, and then other cars travel at safe speeds behind me. Win – Win situation for everyone!

Little Known Road Rule

When I talk about a right to ride safely my context is best summed up in an example: All vehicles should travel "as far left as practicable". But many Aussies think bicyclists should ride as far left as POSSIBLE. That's where we see most bicyclists ride, so it must be law right??

We have a right to bicycle as far left as safely practicable, including giving room for a car door that could open in front of us. And having road position to reduce the amount of motorists dangerously squeezing past us when overtaking.

I try to have this info in my auto signature so I don't need to answer these questions. But thanks for asking and maybe I will change my auto signature.

I think current bike lanes are way too narrow and there are too many car door opening and cars squeezing past too closely occurrences for them to be perfect. Many first time cyclists using these bike lanes still feel frightened. I agree for experienced cyclists that some bike lanes make you feel more safe. But when the first time cyclists still feel frightened in the "You beaut new bike lane" it is easy to see why they revert to cars.

Bike lanes are good when accompanied with education of safe bicycling. I would never separate these two things.

But a major reason Critical Mass exists is to assert our right to ride (safely) on the road. Until different solutions like Michael suggest exist we need to continue to assert our right to get from A to B safely and timely.

So Critical Mass is a celebration of cycling's good virtues (mostly enviro). And our right to ride on the road. We do NOT have a right to ride dangerously (running red lights, mowing down children, etc). We have a right to ride SAFELY on the roads. But as I said motorists are taking away this right for us to ride safely by passing many cyclists too closely. Many motorists say to get into the bike lane, but the bike picture lanes in Newcastle aren't mandatory because they are too narrow.

Many cyclists complain about cars or trucks passing them too closely when they ride on the very edge of the road or gutter. Most people are unaware that this riding style usually encourages cars to dangerously overtake, sharing the lane when there is not enough room to share. This further encouragement of the now socially acceptable practice of passing cyclists too close means when a cyclist rides in a different manner (Critical Mass style for example) it is socially unacceptable. I suggest to them to get a flag that sticks out in traffic (like me) OR learn safer cycling techniques, so we can be spared the whinging. Cyclists require 2m passing distance which usually means the car/truck would need to change lanes to overtake. That means the car/truck needs to wait until the other lane is clear. Or should the car/truck just force its way into the other lane, making on-coming traffic swerve to miss them??

Road Rule Rage

Council and RTA education needed about Bike pictures on roads.

Page 6 Section 1.3 of the NSW bicycle Guidelines RTA (V1.2 Issued July 2005): "no practitioner should design or install any facility that requires or encourages road users to contravene an Australian Road Rule". But this is happening with the encouragement of passing cyclists too closely. The following evidence in the road rules and RTA publications supports this assertion.

Road rule 247 - Riding in a bicycle lane on a road (\$44 fine)

- 1) The rider of a bicycle riding on a length of road with a bicycle lane designed for bicycles traveling in the same direction as the rider must ride in the bicycle lane unless it is impracticable to do so. NSW: Only applies where there is a bike lane sign (bike logo above 'LANE') beside the road. NOT where only bike logo on road.
- 2) In this rule road does not include a road-related area.

RTA Road Users Handbook OCT 2007: pg39 "When overtaking give bicycle riders a safe amount of space. This means at least 1 metre to the side in a 50km/hr zone". This is good. Congratulations!

RTA Road Users Handbook OCT 2007: pg40 "Allow ample room in case a car door is opened. Do not ride between and around parked vehicles". This is on the way to being good advice. But confusion is still there. Perhaps for the second sentence: Do not swerve in-between parked vehicles, and then out into the traffic lane without checking for other traffic.

RTA Road Users Handbook OCT 2007: pg88 "Bicycle lanes: When a bicycle lane is marked on the road, cyclists must use it". THIS IS CAUSING ROAD RAGE!!!!!!!!!!!! This is what people quote when they say bikes should be riding where the bike pictures are painted on the road. They are confused with the sign posted bike lanes, because it isn't explained in the handbook. The RTA needs to fix this straight away! I suggest: When a bike lane is signposted, cyclists must use it, unless impracticable to do so. Other non-sign posted bicycle picture lanes are narrower and usually don't give enough room when a car is also parked in it. Cyclists are not required to ride in non-sign posted bike lanes.

But that is happening with the application of "Advisory Treatments" (shared bike picture and car parking areas) and Bicycle Shoulder lanes Page 23 Section 5.1.2 of the NSW bicycle Guidelines RTA (V1.2 Issued July 2005) It says "riders still need to travel cautiously in the bicycle shoulder lane to avoid unexpected opening car doors".

How can you avoid a child opening a door when you can't see him from behind. Yes, the person opening the door is at fault, but tell that to the cyclist who got knocked over from the opening car door, and fell into a traffic lane, and a truck ran over him. So the safe option is to ride at the safe distance from an open door. Many cases this puts the cyclist into the traffic lane. Then motorists are encouraged to illegally overtake in the same lane, squeezing too close past the cyclist. They are encouraged because they past many other cyclists, without leaving their lane (even though these cyclists were riding very close to the parked cars, and so there was more room in-between them when the motorist overtook the cyclist.)

Conclusion:

The RTA handbook, with the combination of the location of bike pictures (not "bike lanes") on NSW roads is encouraging road users to contravene Australian Road Rule No. 144. They encourage in these ways:

- a) visually they think bicyclists should ride where the bike pictures are. The lane width still allows them to squeeze past them in the same lane.
- b) The practice of squeezing past bicyclists is continued on other roads without the bike pictures because they have been encouraged to do so in point a above
- c) The RTA handbook says "When a bicycle lane is marked on the road, cyclists must use it". Again motorists think the authorities say its OK to squeeze past cyclists
- d) Squeezing past cyclists is very dangerous. If defined as less than 1m room, than it's not enough, for a cyclist that needs some room to maneuvre. It also contravenes RTA's policy of promoting safe bicycling. Because people don't want to ride in the car-door lane, because people still open without checking.

Solutions

- a) The RTA handbook must be fixed ASAP.
- b) Education campaign must be done to fix this problem. TV, radio, newspapers, mail, posters, etc.
- c) The police should be apart of the education campaign, issuing fines
- d) Societies attitudes won't change quickly, so the education campaign must be comprehensive and long-lasting
- e) The bike pictures painted on the roads, encouraging road users to contravene an Australian Road Rules must be removed

- f) Only bike pictures painted on the roads that meet AUSTRROADS standards, and don't encourage breaking the rules should be implemented.

Some more road rule info:

The Road Transport (Safety & Traffic Management) Act 1999, came into force in NSW in Dec 1999. It incorporates the Australian Road Rules plus NSW specific provisions).

Road Rule 153 Bicycle lanes

1. A driver (except the rider of a bicycle) must not drive in a bicycle lane, unless the driver is permitted to drive in the bicycle lane under this rule or rule 158. (\$114 fine)
2. If stopping or parking is permitted at a place in a bicycle lane under another law of this jurisdiction, a driver may drive for up to 50 metres in the bicycle lane to stop or park at that place.
3. A driver may drive for up to 50 metres in a bicycle lane if:
 - a) the driver is driving a public bus, public minibus or taxi, and is dropping off or picking up, passengers; and
 - b) there is not another law of this jurisdiction prohibiting the driver from driving in the bicycle lane.
4. A bicycle lane is a marked lane, or the part of a marked lane:
 - a) beginning at a bicycle lane sign applying to the lane; and
 - b) ending at the nearest of the following:
 - i. an end bicycle lane sign applying to the lane;
 - ii. an intersection (unless the lane is at the unbroken side of the continuing road at a T–intersection or continued across the intersection by broken lines);
 - iii. if the road ends at a dead end — the end of the road.

144 Keeping a safe distance when overtaking (\$114 fine)

A driver overtaking a vehicle:

- a) must pass the vehicle at a sufficient distance to avoid a collision with the vehicle or obstructing the path of the vehicle; and
- b) must not return to the marked lane or line of traffic where the vehicle is travelling until the driver is a sufficient distance past the vehicle to avoid a collision with the vehicle or obstructing the path of the vehicle.

Note : The definition of overtake includes passing, while traveling in the adjacent marked lane. Which doesn't happen if motorists squeeze past a cyclist in the same lane