

INQUIRY INTO PEDESTRIAN SAFETY (MINISTERIAL REFERENCE)

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Chairman
Staysafe Committee
Parliament House
Sydney 2000.

(C/- Mr. Bjarne Nordin, staysafe@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Sir / Madam,

INQUIRY INTO PEDESTRIAN SAFETY - SUBMISSION

Pedestrians have been an endangered species since moderately priced cars became widely accessible in the middle of the last century. We all know that many "licensed" drivers are incompetent to control a motor vehicle, for a variety of reasons. We also know that many motor vehicle drivers are simply unlicensed. The problem has become a cultural one, where the role of driving a motor vehicle is considered by some to be a right rather than a privilege.

A pedestrian has as much right to use a public space, the road, as does a motorist.

I challenge the Staysafe Committee to devise rules and conditions which guarantee pedestrians safe use of the roads while ever incompetent or inconsiderate drivers are in control (and sometimes out of control) of the lethal weapon which is a motor vehicle.

One option might be the much more widespread adoption of pedestrian-priority techniques for pedestrian plazas, as used in urban design in Europe, where standards of civil behaviour seem to be more refined than here in Australia. There is no reason why pedestrian-priority in the use of road space should be restricted to shopping malls.

The RTA's widespread use of "turn left on red after stopping" signs at signalised intersections should be severely curtailed. The justification for this lies in the widespread abuse of such innovations by irresponsible motorists.

Finally, I draw the Committee's attention to a news item in the Sydney Morning Herald of 18 June 2009 (p 17)-

"Pedestrians at risk

Almost half of the estimated 1.27 million people who die in road accidents each year are pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists, says a World Health Organisation report. The first global analysis of road safety in 178 countries concludes that not enough is being done to protect more vulnerable road users."

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19 June 2009.