

**Submission
No 18**

DRIVER EDUCATION, TRAINING AND ROAD SAFETY

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If you are serious about this, then you will need to make road skills and knowledge of the road rules a formal part of every child's education. Obviously, this will be done on bicycles, not in cars! This is done in countries like Holland and Denmark, where school children have a formal bicycle test at years 3 and 9. We have had Bike Ed in the past, but it is always delivered in a desultory and random manner, and often by not very skilled teachers, sadly.

There is some evidence that children who ride a lot do better in both practical and theoretical tests for their car licence. I am very sorry that I do not have a link for that on hand, perhaps your research team would look into it. In any case it makes sense, because there is the practical experience in negotiating roads and traffic (even if it is only other bikes).

Of course, this will also require a change in government attitude towards bicycles as a viable and valid means of transport. That is no small task in NSW, and particularly Sydney, which has a nasty reputation as a dangerous city in which to ride.

Solutions lie in investing a much larger proportion of the transport budget in a system of safe connected, contiguous cycling routes to and around schools and other urban focal points like parks, shops and of course, the CBD. Road rules will have to be reviewed and made more positive for cyclists, and currently the road rules and fines system in NSW is specifically designed to discourage cyclists young or old from riding.

Laws and attitudes also need changing. Vulnerable Road User laws need to be brought in and Mandatory Helmet Laws repealed. There is no need to "reinvent the wheel" on a lot of this stuff, it has been done already by your estimable colleague in Queensland, Howard Hobbs:

<http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/documents/committees/thlqc/2013/inq-cyc/rp-39-29nov13.pdf>

To summarize, if people learn to use the roads from a young age on bicycles, they will be more skilled and responsible when they graduate as teenagers to motor vehicles.