

**Submission  
No 22**

## **DRIVER EDUCATION, TRAINING AND ROAD SAFETY**

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I use NSW roads as a pedestrian, a bicycle rider, and a motorist. I strongly feel that driver education and training in NSW does not adequately equip people with an appreciation of the impact of their car on bicycle riders (the most vulnerable users of traffic lanes) and empathy for bicycle riders.

My experience has been that bicycle riders in Sydney are far too frequently subjected to aggressive and/or unsafe motorist behaviour - by either malicious or simply ignorant motorists. This might include dangerously close overtaking by motorists; not giving way to bike riders where required (e.g. when turning from side streets or at roundabouts); and unnecessary overtaking by motorists (e.g. to then turn into a side street across the front of a bike rider travelling straight through).

These experiences not only discourage people from using a bicycle for short trips (NSW Government policy is to encourage bike riding for short trips because it can help reduce congestion, car dependency, demand for parking, and encourage healthier lifestyles), it is also incredibly dangerous.

Malicious/reckless motorist behaviour in Sydney is in complete contrast to my experiences travelling by bicycle in more "bicycle-friendly cities", such as Melbourne, Berlin, Copenhagen and Amsterdam. In my view, the courteous and patient behaviour of motorists in these cities when sharing the road with bicycle riders is a crucial factor in encouraging people to travel by bike in these cities. It allows less confident riders to use a bicycle and reduces the need for expensive bicycle paths to be constructed.

I believe this highly courteous motorist behaviour occurs in those cities because: (a) driver licence training requires a strong understanding of the responsibility to drive safely when sharing the road with bicycle riders i.e. "motorist responsibility for more vulnerable road users" (b) cycling rates are substantially higher, meaning that more motorists occasionally travel by bike or know somebody (such as a spouse, child, friend, colleague) that travels by bike and thus better understands the risks, concerns and fears of bicycle riders sharing the road with motor vehicles i.e. "motorist empathy for bicycle riders".

Based on these two principles, "motorist responsibility" and "motorist empathy", it is my view that driver education and training should be made more rigorous to help create a safer, more community-minded driving culture, particularly in residential areas.

Key suggested improvements:

- Establish a discrete component of learner driver theoretical testing about sharing the road with more vulnerable road users, to improve understanding of specific road rules affecting bicycle riders (and pedestrians)
- Establish a discrete component of practical driver testing to improve awareness of the vulnerability of bicycle riders and pedestrians, and teach measures to drive safely when sharing the road with bicycle riders e.g. appropriate speeds, safe distances, anticipating speeds
- Introduce/expand bicycle rider education in high schools to equip people with skills to ride a bicycle safely, encourage travel by bicycle, and increase empathy for bicycle riders by new (young) motorists
- Greater focus of NSW government and local council road safety messaging/advertising to educate the community about the impact of dangerous driver behaviour on more vulnerable users.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.

-- In these cities the main factor my journeys by bicycles have been characterised

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Driver education and training must better educate new and re-training drivers to understand the impact of their driving on more vulnerable users. For example:

-- when travelling in residential neighbourhoods, motorists should understand that slower, more patient and more conservative driving is important due to the increased likelihood of pedestrians

I urge the Committee to consider strongly urge driver education and training processes to better equip drivers.