

**Submission
No. 42**

DRIVER EDUCATION, TRAINING AND ROAD SAFETY

Name: Mr Gilbert Grace
Date Received: 20/02/2017



Gilbert Grace



To: Staysafe Committee
Re: Enquiry into Driver Education, Training and Road Safety
Date: 18 February 2017

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the debate about driver education. I write this as a private citizen and not in my role as a representative of a Bicycle User Group and Incorporated Association, though I draw on my experience with those for the substance of my argument.

I am a avid cyclist, and have been car free since 1990. For the last fourteen years I have been involved in bicycle advocacy, dealing with the issues of cycling safety. I have just graduated a Master of Fine Art degree from Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney, and a major part of my research was the aesthetic and sensory experience of cycling in Sydney.

I can give you an unequivocal statement that Sydney drivers are the worst I have encountered in my limited world travels, but a statement that is backed up by numerous articles by internationally renowned cyclist and cycling advocates. Still I *chose* to ride a bicycle whenever and wherever I chose.

From my research and lived experience I have determined the applied strategies that produce positive results for cyclists and motor vehicles.

The attitudes of the Dutch and Danish is guided by a deeply conservative Calvinism that also promotes a positive view of gender equality, and diminishes vertical socio-economic hierarchies. Similar value systems have been espoused as integral to Catholic and Episcopalian institutions and the clubs of their esoteric brethren – I defer to ... and his greater knowledge of the power relations within the NSW police force on this issue.

There is a video titled “How the Dutch got their Bicycle Paths” that I would recommend to the Committee, firstly for the graphic way it outlines the relationship between affluence and car-centric planning that produced undesirable results – socially, commercially and environmentally, and for the remedy that is people-centric planning. Roads are about the business of moving people in whatever vehicles or modes they have at their disposal.

Given that four times as many people will be killed by petroleum powered vehicle exhaust that are killed in motor vehicle accidents, and that the tobacco industry has been reigned in with legislation regarding the life threatening issue of passive smoking, it is blatantly obvious that there needs to be legislation in place regarding the toxic effects of internal combustion engine emissions.

Getting more people out of cars and onto bicycles is a definite and positive step forward. It is a proven fact that the nations with a proactive policy to bicycle use increase the number of people cycling. It is a known fact that the nations in which cycling is normalised that cycling safety is increased. The current measures put in place by a recognised anti-cycling proponent – Duncan Gay – produced a drop in the numbers of people cycling. This is accounted for by the tacit legitimising of irresponsible opinions about the legitimacy of people on bicycles as having the right to free and safe passage on public roads. The data about cyclists provided by Bicycle New South Wales and overseas experience, defy and refute such hysterical assertions.

An evidence based approach is required as the consequences are counted in emotional pain as well as dollars to the public and private purse.

The problem is that cyclists are by law forced onto the NSW road network at age 12, with little or no training in how to deal with contemporary motorist attitudes and practises, something that still defies logic and rational understanding by a middle age male motorist/cyclist. Given that the current population of motorists will resist change the available option is to educate future motorists. The logic employed by the Dutch is simple, include learning the road rules in play, beginning with Kinder classes.

When the students are nearing the age at which it will be necessary for them to ride solo on public roads skill

them up and administer a fiets exam (cycling proficiency certificate – I did something similar with swimming while in primary school in Australia gaining a Bronze Medallion). This will ensure that not only are the candidates schooled in current road rules, they have a bridge to their next road user exam, that of a motor vehicle licence. Make it compulsory for everyone who applies for a motor-vehicle licence to have passed a cycling proficiency exam.

The beauty of this proposal is that potential road users will have installed and reinforced in their neural network the basis for safe and equitable road use they can carry to their graves, a that will not be the result of adolescent risk taking behaviours. The people applying for a motor-vehicle licence will have years of experience with practical lessons of road use to draw from and will see their bicycle use in relation to sharing the road with other road users. This will allay the fears of the ill-informed, vocal, minority who think all people on bicycles are ignorant of the road rules, when in fact it is predominantly the reverse.

If there is a safety revolution to be actioned it relies on the government to provide the correct positive and negative rewards to shape behaviour, the correct public announcements to inform people of their rights and responsibilities, and a comprehensive and tactful insertion into the school curriculum to introduce children to one of the most important skills they will have to address as pre-teens and young adults. Safety and mobility are too important to leave to chance.

I have ridden with the crowds in the 'rush hour' in Copenhagen and Amsterdam, wearing my Australian code cycling helmet. I was one in 100 of people doing so. An experience with a motorist encroaching onto cyclist space in Germany and the severe rebuke they received – and accepted – alerted me to the diffidence that cultural change can realise. Having travelled on the German Rural Train network with a deck of a double deck loco dedicated to wheeled vehicles, prams, strollers, mobility vehicles, and the diffidence that "normal", ambulant, pedestrian travellers showed to those from whom this facility was a luxury, I am at pains to find words to endorse a culture wide reversal in attitudes to mobility, active transport and human powered transport.

Yours sincerely,
Gilbert Grace
(Secretary, ARTcycle Inc.)

'How the Dutch Got their Cycle Paths'
<https://youtu.be/XuBdf9jYj7o>

'Bicycle Training in the Netherlands'
https://youtu.be/16AO0_08r3o

Dr. Ian Garrard, 'Driver behaviour around bicyclists as a function of perceived bicyclist experience'
http://s3.amazonaws.com/lcc_production_bucket/files/7715/original.pdf?1411989866