

**Submission
No. 47**

DRIVER EDUCATION, TRAINING AND ROAD SAFETY

Name: Mr Ray Rice
Organisation: Bicycle NSW
Date Received: 20/02/2017

20 February, 2017

Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety
Parliament House
Macquarie St
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Mr Aplin,

RE: Inquiry into Driver Education, Training and Road Safety

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Driver Education, Training and Road Safety in NSW. Bicycle NSW is the peak bicycle advocacy organisation in NSW with over 25,000 members and supporters. We have been in operation in NSW since 1976. Over 30 local Bicycle User Groups across the State are affiliated with Bicycle NSW.

We recognise that great advances in Road Safety have been made in NSW since the mid 1970's. Fatalities are now at about one fifth the 1970 rate (on a population basis). However, the past two years have seen an upsurge in fatalities and therefore we must seek new ways of moving "Towards Zero". Just doing more of what we have done in the past will not suffice. New and innovative thinking will be required.

At Bicycle NSW we have a particular aim of protecting bicycle riders from injuries and fatalities. Our objective is to create a better environment for cycling. Safety forms a critical part of this, and this can be split into education and training, and the physical infrastructure in which bicycle riding occurs. In this submission we will concentrate on the education and training aspects, but will also mention the safety benefits of physical infrastructure.

1/ Learner Driver Education and Training:

Since the early 2000's in NSW, the Graduated Licensing Scheme has produced good results. However, there is still a huge disparity in fatality rates for Learners and Provisional Drivers. We are teaching Learners the practical skills and mechanics of driving, ie how to start, stop and steer, but we don't seem to be teaching them how to think for themselves and take responsibility.

The main cause of this deficiency must be due to the supervision and instruction given to Learners. At present, NSW overly relies on parents and untrained supervisors.

In NSW, we are also lagging other States in the content of education given to Learners about protecting Vulnerable Road users, ie pedestrians, bicycle riders, and motor cyclists. The recent upsurge in pedestrian fatalities is alarming.

Bicycle NSW recommends the following actions:

- That the majority of a Learner's supervised instruction be undertaken either by a Certified Driving Instructor, or by a person who has undertaken a course in instruction, eg the Commonwealth funded Keys 2 Drive course (see <https://www.keys2drive.com.au/>)
- That the credit hours given to using a Certified Driving Instructor be extended, and a minimum of 10 hours be mandatory.

- That Driver Education be included as a compulsory part of the Year 10 PDHPE curriculum in NSW High Schools.
- That time undertaken doing an approved, on-road, bicycle safety course be included in the Learner's total training hours. The aim of this is to increase awareness of Vulnerable Road Users, and increase bicycle rider safety. A maximum number of hours could be set to 10 hours.
- That a Vulnerable Road User component be included in the Learner rules testing and practical examination. Such a component has been in operation in the ACT since August 2016 (see https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/app/answers/detail/a_id/2984/~vulnerable-road-users)

2/ Ongoing Driver Education and Training:

In most skills requiring certification or licensing, ongoing training, education and testing is accepted as normal. In professional areas, Continuing Professional Development is also accepted as mandatory.

In NSW a driver can go from age 20 to age 85 without any need to undergo further training or (non-medical) assessment.

Unfortunately this has led to a generally poor knowledge of the Road Rules, especially new Rules, and an attitude that a Driver's Licence is a right rather than a skill to be improved. This then feeds back into poor instruction and attitudes given to Learners.

The poor knowledge of new Rules is illustrated by the need for the RMS and TfNSW campaign on the 10 Most Misunderstood Road Rules (see http://roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/downloads/campaigns/top10_misunderstood.html). While such campaigns are welcome, their effectiveness in getting the message across is questionable.

While there have been some recent effective road safety education campaigns (eg "Get Your Hand Off It", and "Ride to Live"), an example of a campaign with poor understanding and penetration is the "Go Together" campaign to implement the Minimum Passing Distance Rule for overtaking bicycle riders safely. Bicycle NSW observes that many drivers:

- Do not know the reason for a Minimum Passing Distance, ie protecting a Vulnerable Road User. A typical driver reaction is "why don't bicycle riders have to give 1 metre to a car", or more aggressively "I'll give bicycles a metre when they get a licence, registration, etc".
- Do not know that vehicles may overtake bicycles across unbroken lines when safe to do so. Typical reactions are "I'll be stuck behind bikes for hours", or "This will cause me to have a head on collision." Neither are true.

Bicycle NSW recommends:

- That all NSW drivers undergo the computer based Rules test every 5 years. This Rules test must include a component on protecting Vulnerable Road Users such as in the ACT.
- That the NSW Government give a higher priority to ongoing driver education through effective use of media. An initial subject must be the protection of Vulnerable Road Users.

3/ Physical Infrastructure:

Bicycle NSW wishes to remind the Inquiry that the safety of Vulnerable Road Users can be enhanced through the provision of better physical infrastructure. For bicycle riders this will often take the form of safe, separated bicycle paths.

The completion of connected networks of bicycle paths in our urban areas across the State must be given a higher priority in transport infrastructure spending. At present with a transport infrastructure budget of over \$10 billion per year, only about \$60 million is spent on bicycle infrastructure, ie less than 0.6%.

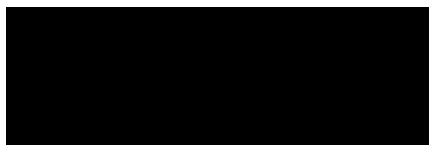
An increase in bicycle infrastructure spending will result in greater safety, with added benefits to transport, health and the environment.

Bicycle NSW recommends:

- That all transport infrastructure projects include a mandatory component for the Positive Provision of Active Transport Infrastructure.
- That the bicycle infrastructure component of the total transport infrastructure budget be raised to 5%.

We would be pleased to appear before the Inquiry, and further explain our recommendations.

Yours faithfully,



C.P.Eng. F.I.E.Aust.

Bicycle NSW