

The Secretary  
 Economy and Infrastructure Committee  
 Parliament House, Spring Street  
 EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

**Submission: Road Safety Road Rules 2009 (Overtaking Bicycles) Bill 2015**

Western Women's Bicycle User Group (WWBUG) was initiated by Linda Glucina to try to encourage more women to cycle. WWBUG supports safe passing distance laws. We believe these laws are very important in assisting cyclists to keep safe, drivers to share the road respectfully, and empowering other people to cycle who presently view it as too dangerous.

Your committee requests people make submissions about how these laws would be enforced and how people would find out about these laws. Below are some of our suggestions.

**Enforcement of Laws**

- Many cyclists (and car drivers) now have video cameras (GoPros etc) on their bikes and in their cars. Footage from the cameras could be used to verify if cars are too close.
- Cyclist and witness statements.
- When an accident caused by a car passing a cyclist does occur, the driver should receive heavy penalties and news stories should be written about it. This would act as a warning to other drivers to look out for, and steer clear of cyclists, or to wait for them to get out of the way.
- Ununiformed police officers on bicycles could patrol high conflict areas. There could even be specially trained people who are not police officers, but whose job it is to 'keep cyclists safer' by riding with them and enforcing traffic laws – a bit like PSOs on stations.

**How people find out about the Laws**

- TAC advertisements, for example showing traffic from a cyclists' perspective, an incident, the same incident (not necessarily accident, but close call) from the driver's perspective, and what a safe distance actually looks like.
- TAC Billboards showing a safe distance and a not safe distance – 'Is saving two minutes really worth killing for?'
- A requirement of obtaining a Learner's permit would be to either ride in traffic or ride in 'virtual traffic' via use of those virtual reality machines so that they understand the perspective of bicycle riders
- More questions about sharing the road with cyclists and keeping pedestrians safe in Learner Driver information booklets
- Advertisements on Facebook and other social media.
- Brochures about new traffic laws to be sent out with information our local members send every year.
- Information about new road rules when people renew their licence, or every time they get a traffic infringement notice.
- Local councils could remind people of new rules when they send rates notices
- Road signs specifying safe passing distances.

- Media articles about numbers of drivers getting fined for disobeying the rules; personal news stories about why these rules are important – showing drivers who are grateful for the rules because they stopped them hitting someone; and riders in both situations (maybe from the other states that have already implemented the rules).
  - Include pictures of drivers overtaking cyclists too close in hoon information.
  - Information given out at police stations
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WWBUG's desire to have a safe overtaking distance made law has recently intensified by the experience of one of WWBUG's members. Her story is as follows:

My partner was riding along the bike lane on Fitzgerald road on Friday 18th of March this year at about 3pm. A small truck passed him. The wood in the load had not been secured, and some had slid sideways. This plank of wood whacked him across the back of his head causing him to tumble over his handle bars and land face first on the road. He was knocked unconscious and sustained head injuries; facial lacerations, bruising on the brain and a small bleed. A witness to the accident thought my partner was dead until his eyelids started to flutter as the witness talked to him. The truck did not initially stop but further up the road, the driver stopped, adjusted his load and drove off. If my partner had not been wearing his helmet, he would have been killed; the helmet split in two with only the shell holding together. Had a safe passing distance been in place, the truck would probably have been driving further from the bicycle lane and my partner might not have been hit. Although he was only in hospital for 2 nights, he will be off work until after Easter, and there is still a chance that complications from the accident may occur. A legislated minimum distance for overtaking bicycles will save lives.