

Submission to the Inquiry into the Road Safety Road Rules 2009 (Overtaking Bicycles) Bill 2015

Submission by David Reid

I am making this submission as an individual and I am not affiliated with any group which may have an interest in this inquiry.

I am a cyclist who rides 80-100 kilometres per week on roads and bike paths around Melbourne's inner northern suburbs and CBD. I cycle as a means of general transport. This includes riding to work. Cycling is my preferred means of transport for any journey less than ten kilometres even though I own a car and live in an area well serviced by public transport.

I support the introduction of a minimum passing distance law for motorists when overtaking cyclists in Victoria. It would establish a clear standard for motorists to drive more safely when overtaking cyclists. It would also allow police to more easily take action against motorists who have caused an accident by passing a cyclist in an unsafe manner.

One problem I can foresee with this law is that on some narrow streets it may be difficult for motorists to pass cyclists while observing the minimum distance. How will police deal with cases like this? I believe it could partly be addressed through lowering speed limits, displaying signs or other measures that encourage safe behaviours by both cyclists and motorists under these conditions.

While this new law would be important it should not be seen as a panacea. This law would only improve one aspect of bicycle safety. There needs to be continuing efforts put into a range of areas including better infrastructure and public education (of both cyclists and motorists).