



Macedon Ranges Cycling Club

29 March 2016

Economy and Infrastructure Committee
 Parliament House,
 Spring Street, Melbourne Victoria 3002

Re: Inquiry into the Road Safety Road Rules 2009 (Overtaking Bicycles) Bill 2015

The Macedon Ranges Cycling Club is a social cycling club that is based in the Macedon Ranges north west of Melbourne. One of the aims of the club is to promote safe cycling for new and experienced cyclists, men and women, young and old, throughout our region. We routinely attract up to 30 riders to our Sunday and Thursday rides. The rides have structured distances of between 20 and 60+ km's to cater for differing fitness and skill levels. Most of the roads that are travelled are 80 or 100km speed zones, with limited or minimal edges. Overtaking of our riders by cars, cars with trailers/horse floats etc, and large trucks, is a constant issue given both the speed of the vehicles and narrowness of the roads, and is of particular concern given that we wish to encourage new riders to enjoy cycling in the region.

With regards to the **outcomes and experience of implementing similar laws in other States** and territories we believe there are better sources than ourselves to provide input. That being said, we have examined the legislations regarding overtaking bicycles from the other States and the proposed Victorian changes, and we fully support the legislation as currently proposed for Victoria.

With regards to the **educational campaign** that would be required to effectively implement the Bill in Victoria, we believe a significant amount of education of drivers (and cyclists) is required in general. As a club, and as individual cyclists, we have had numerous instances of drivers who refuse to believe cyclists have any legal right to be on the road, and in particular that cyclists can legally ride two abreast. Over the years members have been subject to verbal abuse and argument, deliberate driving at high speed past cyclists with minimal passing distance and the aggressive use of car horns when overtaking cyclists. Despite these instances we find the majority of drivers kind, courteous and considerate of our members.

For our country cycling the educational campaign is going to require a co-ordinated approach of

- Signage on 80 and 100km roads describing visually the 1.5m requirement and possibly a statement along the lines of "It's now the Law"
- Because of the complexity of getting the message across of a driver's ability and responsibilities with regards to overtaking across continuous white lines we believe a well-constructed TAC campaign (newspaper and TV) is required. This campaign should not only

focus on the 1 or 1.5m overtaking zone, but also the benefit to drivers of being able to legally cross the continuous white lines if safe. This campaign could also focus on other aspects of cycle and driver interactions, such as the right of two cyclists to ride abreast, and the benefits of having cyclists in the city being less car traffic in front of drivers.

- Funding for local or regional safety messages through groups such as Bike Safe, regional cycling clubs and local councils. These groups often understand the local conditions and requirements of certain roads, and are best placed to get maximum benefit for dollar spent.

Importantly, we believe emphasis should be placed on the fact that cyclists are just a part of the road-using community, a vulnerable part, but not a separate part.

With regards to the **enforcement policies and strategies that would be required to implement the Bill in Victoria** we believe the police have the legal powers to enforce the law with regards to cycling and motorists, but in many cases seem reluctant to pursue complaints. Equally, we don't wish to see further development of the 'us-and-them' mentality where every minor infraction or possible encroachment into the 1 or 1.5m zone is reported. Obviously, we would like to see any motorist crashing into a cyclist, deliberately or by accident, dealt with in the strongest of terms. The issue though does tend to become one of how to handle narrow misses, or perceived narrow misses, again both accidental and deliberate.

As cyclists are arming themselves these days with rear mounted video cameras, one option for a narrow miss may that if it is recorded and demonstrable, and the vehicle registration is available or if the cyclist is prepared to sign a statutory declaration, that a formal warning of the narrow miss is issued to the driver of the vehicle, along with the relevant sections of the law. This formal warning is then recorded on the police database with the vehicle ownership and registration. Any subsequent notification of near misses associated with that vehicle and owner are then dealt with under the penalty points system.

In conclusion, we support the introduction of these legislative changes and wish the committee well in their deliberations.

Kind Regards

Brett Ellis

MRCC President