

From: office@greens.org.au on behalf of Andrew Kane via Australian Greens
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Sent: Thursday, 31 March 2016 8:49 PM
To: LCLC
Subject: Submission to Inquiry into the Road Safety Road Rules 2009 (Overtaking Bicycles) Bill 2015

This e-mail has been sent on behalf of Mr Andrew Kane, at [REDACTED]. They can be contacted by phone at [REDACTED] or by e-mail at [REDACTED]. The content of their submission is below.

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I happen to be a volunteer fire fighter in the Upper Yarra I am also licenced to drive heavy vehicles, and endorsed to drive emergency vehicles. In Melbourne, the fire fighters are all paid to do their shift, that is manning the fire station 24/7. In the outer metro regions, we are volunteer, based. This means, we don't man the fire station, but we carry a pager. When the pager activates, we travel to the fire station, and so on. While driving the fire truck, you are allowed to break some road laws. Your discretion is paramount, and you must at no time lead to damage or injury through your driving. I will say at this point, when driving under "light & bells" most motorists, and most bike riders do the right thing, and move out of the way. The problem is, the road from Warburton to Reefton, and the Reefton Spur is all one lane each way. A lot of this road is windy and narrow, with blind corners, many crests and miles of double white lines. When you look at the width of a fire truck, and the width of one lane, it does not leave much room to spare. Now put yourself in that fire truck, and in the middle of a corner you meet the school bus, or a log truck. Gets a bit tight. Understand what happens when a pushbike is in the same corner, you often don't see them until you are on top of them as they are traveling a lot slower than you. The next problem is getting to the fire station. 10 K/m I have to travel, in my own car, (not an emergency vehicle) therefore I must adhere to every road law, just like any body else. If I can't pass a push bike with out 1.5 mt clearance (80 K/ph zone here), I could be waiting several minutes, if they are two abreast (which is quite common) you only have a few safe places to pass at all. There is a 2 K/m section of road to the McMahons estate, where it is not safe to cross the white line, it is a series of switchback corners. There is another 1.5 K/m of corners just West of me, uphill, and double white lines all the way. I'm sure it doesn't say in the statute that you must not cross double white lines.....unless you want to pass a pushbike. This all puts the response time of an emergency vehicle behind. When it is an emergency, all time lost does count. The Upper Yarra of late has been inundated with push bike riders. It is a scenic place to be, but it also has a nasty motoring history. The push bike riders will tell you that they have a RIGHT to be on our roads, no argument. But those of us who live here, drive to work, run kids around, work in road transport, well we have a right too, and having an unhindered emergency service is one of those rights. I have been stuck behind push bikes going to the fire station, give them a toot, I got abused and slowed down further. Most do move over as best they can, but not 1.5 metres over. The blunt truth is, we have more cars, trucks, and bikes on the same old road here. The road NEEDS to be widened, then we can all go about what we need to do. This is the wrong road to handle the diverse traffic it now caters too at the moment. The passing law may work in areas where you have a lot of road to spare....but save a thought for me who has once already driven the fire truck off the road because a truck, a car and a pushbike do not all fit in the same corner....Explain that to my boss.