

**Submission to the Standing Committee on Economy and Infrastructure  
Legislations Committee**

**Road Safety Road Rules (Overtaking Bicycles) Bill 2015**

**Submission by:**

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International leadership has seen in some 21 States in US have introduced minimum passing distance legislation. Several European countries have also introduced a 1 m rule including UK and France.

The current Victorian Legislation only requires cars to “provide sufficient distance” when passing a bike. The current rule (“sufficient” distance) is unenforceable and according to the police, it has never been enforced unless there has been a collision.

## **Recommendations**

### **Regulatory Responses**

1. Implementation of the minimum passing distance regulations of 1.5m for cars when over 60 km/h and 1m at or below 60km/h.

### **Education**

2. An education campaign that reminds all road users about their requirement for minimum passing distance similar to the ‘A Metre Matters’ campaign by the Amy Gillet Foundation ;
3. Alignment with work already undertaken domestically and overseas;
4. Mandatory Driver Training.

### **Enforcement**

1. Providing simple reporting solutions for cyclists;
2. Mandating Demerit Points;
3. Creating ‘Crack Down’ Periods.

## **5.0 Recommendations (Explained)**

### **5.1 Implementation of the minimum passing distance regulations of 1.5m for cars when over 60 km/h and 1m at or below 60km/h.**

The new laws will take the guess-work out of calculating a safe passing distance, so everyone can share the road. This has already been successfully implemented in Australia and overseas.

### **5.2 Support Education Initiatives**

A variety of educational support campaigns should be made available as part of the legislative change. The following section reviews these options.

#### **5.21 An education campaign that reminds all road users about their requirement for minimum passing distance similar to the ‘A Metre Matters’ campaign by the Amy Gillet Foundation**

Amongst the cycling community there is still little understanding of how serious a dooring incident can be. VicRoads has reported that on average, there are 1500 serious injuries and bike rider collisions which only a handful would be attributed to the car. It is also well-established that cycling serious injuries reported to Police.

The 'A Metre Matters' Campaign by the Amy Gillett Foundation has been highly successful in the message around safe cycling distances.

Additionally work by the TAC has been successful for campaigns for Motorcyclists since 2002 including:

- Vice Versa
- Protective Clothing
- The Ride
- Put Yourself in their Shoes
- Reconstruction

Each of these campaigns has raised awareness of motorcyclist safety and cars with great success.

There is a need for investment in critical media safety messages for both cyclists and drivers to share the road.

Additionally support messages for peak motoring bodies will be critical to ensure that all road users are aware of any road rule change.

## **5.22 Interstate and Road Safety Campaigns**

A number of jurisdictions throughout Australia have conducted campaigns around safe passing distance. Each of these has seen success and their learning should be incorporated in any planning.

This should also include:

- Public figures
- Sport Stars
- Every day people

Additionally road safety groups such as 'Bike Safe and Road Safe' have done a number of campaigns around

## **5.23 Educating Drivers**

Driver education and testing should include mandatory education and passing. This should both be theoretical and practical in nature to ensure that new drivers are well aware of the requirements when passing a cyclist. This should also connect with driver education centres to provide training of safe cyclist passing.

## **5.3 Enforcement**

While it is understood that minimum passing distance can be difficult to police it does not make it's implementation any less important. Recent data from South Australia has demonstrated that the law can be enforced and is more successful than previously 'vague' definitions of dangerous passing.

Some key factors in the implementation of the MPD include:

- Using available technology (e.g. bike cameras) to allow simple bike camera submissions by riders as evidence of breaches of the rules.
- ‘Crack-down’ periods on vehicles during operations like ‘Operation Halo’ in key areas;

Both of these enforcement tools will allow greater enforcement and education with all road users about the minimum passing distance and allow greater effectiveness of implementation.

## **6.0 Summary**

Representing 8,000 members and supported by 20,000 cyclist who take part in our programs annually support these amendments to the Road Safety Act proposed.

Cycling Victoria would strongly support an education and safety campaign for both drivers and cyclists to accompany this amendment to the Road Safety (2015).