

19 November 2015

Fleur Maidment
Community Relations Coordinator
Engineering Services
City of Melbourne

Dear Fleur,

Re: AGF response to City of Melbourne Draft Bicycle Plan

The Amy Gillett Foundation welcomes the opportunity to provide a response to the City of Melbourne's Draft Bicycle Plan.

The Amy Gillett Foundation is a national organisation with a mission to reduce the incidence of serious injury and death of bike riders in Australia. We draw on evidence and international best practice, and collaborate with government, business and the community to create a safe environment for bike riders, while maintaining an efficient road network for all road users. We welcome engagement on issues related to bike rider safety and encourage the City of Melbourne to contact us directly to discuss our response or if additional information is required.

Our response focuses on Section 4, *A safer environment to ride bikes*, and Section 6, *Measuring our success*.

Recommendations

The Foundation strongly recommends that the following 8 additional actions be added to the existing actions in the City of Melbourne's Draft Bicycle Plan.

That the City of Melbourne:

1. Aims for zero deaths and serious injuries from bike rider crashes by 2020
2. Works with the Amy Gillett Foundation to provide 'learning to drive with bike riders' training for all drivers of City of Melbourne vehicles and City of Melbourne contractor vehicles, such as City Wide
3. Investigate new technologies for roll out to City of Melbourne and contractor vehicles, such as the 'Rider Reminder' door handle prompts, produced by the TAC, and 'Cycle Safety Shield'

being fitted to refuse collection vehicles in the UK, which helps drivers be more aware of vulnerable road users

4. Supports the amendment of Victoria's road rules (RR 144 and 139) to mandate minimum distance when drivers overtake bike riders:
 - 1 metre in speed zones up to and including 60kph
 - 1.5 metres in speed zones over 60kph
5. Adds '*education and legislation for a minimum distance when drivers overtake bike riders*' to the list of factors that increase actual and perceived safety (section 4, page 56)
6. Supports a safer cycling environment by pursuing speed limit reductions in the City of Melbourne
7. Conducts or commissions further analysis of biker rider crashes in the City of Melbourne, fatalities and serious injuries, to ensure the best possible understanding of these crashes in order to develop the most appropriate solutions
8. Works with TAC to assess existing online approaches for the self-reporting of bike rider crashes available in other Australian jurisdictions and consider if implementing something similar in the City of Melbourne would provide a better understanding of bike rider crashes.

Rationale

This section elaborates on each recommendation.

1. Aims for zero deaths and serious injuries from bike rider crashes by 2020

It is unacceptable for bike riders to die or be seriously injured in a crash on roads in the City of Melbourne or anywhere in Australia.

From 2009 to 2014 (inclusive), 16.6% of deaths from crashes in the City of Melbourne were bike riders (n=3). One-third of people injured from crashes were bike riders (n=1432).¹

The City of Melbourne ranks highly in our recent comprehensive analysis of Victorian bike rider crashes. One in five bike rider fatality crashes in Victoria from 2002 to 2012 occurred in four municipalities: Melbourne, Geelong, Whittlesea and the Mornington Peninsula. A third of all bike

¹ Data generated from query of CrashStats <http://crashstat1.roads.vic.gov.au/crashstats/crash.htm> (Query: Location is LGA(s): MELBOURNE; User-defined Query; Data range is 01/01/2009 to 3/12/2014)

rider crashes in Victoria occurred in five municipalities: Melbourne, Yarra, Port Phillip, Boroondara and Moreland.²

By adopting bold targets, the City of Melbourne can change this picture and move closer to making Melbourne a true cycling city.³

2. Works with the Amy Gillett Foundation to provide ‘learning to drive with bike riders’ training for all drivers of City of Melbourne vehicles and City of Melbourne contractor vehicles, such as City Wide

City of Melbourne staff and contractors can model safe driver behaviour around bike riders. Our research shows that it is possible to become a fully licensed driver in Victoria and not answer a single question about:

- How to safely interact with bike riders on the road
- The purpose of different cycling infrastructure
- Skills tests about safe driving behaviour in relation to bike riders

The Foundation would like to work with the City of Melbourne to develop a tailored ‘learning to drive with bike riders’ training for all drivers at the City of Melbourne and with its contractors, such as City Wide. Bike rider awareness training is essential for all professional drivers of large vehicles, including buses, coaches, delivery vans etc. to improve their knowledge about road cycling infrastructure and safe interaction with bike riders on the road.

We have undertaken such training with Toll, a leading Australian logistics company. As part of this partnership, the ‘a metre matters’ message has been added to Toll vehicles to create a moving billboard message to other road users. This could also be investigated for appropriate contractor and City of Melbourne vehicles.

3. Investigate new technologies for roll out to City of Melbourne and contractor vehicles, such as the ‘Rider Reminder’ door handle prompts, produced by the TAC, and ‘Cycle Safety Shield’ being fitted to refuse collection vehicles in the UK, which helps drivers be more aware of vulnerable road users

This would strengthen the City of Melbourne’s leadership in raising awareness among drivers about sharing the road and safe interaction with bike riders. The Foundation would be pleased to work with the City of Melbourne on evaluating the effectiveness of such technologies and investigating new initiatives.

² Garrett, M, Johnson, M and Cubis, J. *Road Crashes involving bike riders in Victoria, 2002-2012: an Amy Gillett Foundation Report* July 2015 <http://www.amygillett.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Road-crashes-AGF-Report-FINAL-Sept-2015.pdf>

³ Vision, *Draft Bicycle Plan 2016-2020*

4. Supports the amendment of Victoria's road rules (RR 144 and 139) to mandate minimum distance when drivers overtake bike riders:

- 1 metre in speed zones up to and including 60kph
- 1.5 metres in speed zones over 60kph

5. Adds 'legislation for and education about a minimum distance when drivers overtake bike riders' to the list of factors that increase actual and perceived safety (section 4, page 56)

We strongly encourage the City of Melbourne to add its influential voice to the calls for mandating the minimum overtaking distance, an immediate safety measure that would help to create a true cycling city.

The minimum overtaking distance is a simple, common sense measure to give bike riders a safe space. It helps to address the actual and perceived safety issues highlighted in the Draft Plan and supports the Victorian Government's strategy to get more people riding bikes safely.⁴

Amending the rules to mandate a minimum overtaking distance works. Almost two-thirds of bike riders in Queensland reported an increase in the space drivers give them since the minimum overtaking distance trial started in Queensland in April 2014.⁵ Fifty five percent of South Australian bike riders said drivers were respecting the rule to pass riders with at least one metre distance on streets with speed zones of 60km/h or less.⁶

Importantly, three-quarters of Queenslanders support the amended laws⁷. There is also strong support from Victorians, South Australians and the Australian Capital Territory residents⁸. These quantitative research findings are backed up by anecdotal evidence from key stakeholders. A senior Queensland Police representative said that his initial scepticism had been overturned and that he 'marvelled at the observable change in behaviour' he had seen on the roads.

⁴ Victorian Government *Updating Victoria's Cycling Strategy* October 2015
http://economicdevelopment.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1216239/Updating-Victorias-cycling-strategy-Information-brochure.pdf

⁵ Crosby & Textor, *Public opinion research into the Queensland Government's trial of the minimum overtaking distance legislation commissioned by the Amy Gillet Foundation*, October 2015

⁶ Bike SA survey, October 2015

⁷ Crosby & Textor, *Public opinion research into the Queensland Government's trial of the minimum overtaking distance legislation commissioned by the Amy Gillet Foundation*, October 2015

⁸ Online Victorian survey 2014, Tierney, P. *Review of Victorian Cycling Related Road Rules & Legislation: summary report for VicRoads*, March 2015. 73% of respondents to a SA Government survey supported the proposed minimum overtaking distances. 65% of South Australians agree with the minimum overtaking distance, Crosby & Textor, *South Australian community attitudes towards bicycle riders and the minimum overtaking distance: benchmark research October 2015*. 88% of ACT residents were at least 'somewhat supportive' of a minimum overtaking distance, ACT Government Cycling Reform Pre-Trial Study, Micromex Research, September 2015

There is momentum for change: following Queensland, a trial has commenced in the ACT; SA has mandated minimum overtaking distance rules; in Tasmania, drivers are now permitted to cross centre lines to pass a bike rider safely; and the Foundation remains optimistic that the NSW government will soon announce legislative change. All these jurisdictions have invested in public awareness campaigns about these amendments.

6. Supports a safer cycling environment by pursuing speed limit reductions in the City of Melbourne

The Foundation commends the City of Melbourne's suggested actions in relation to speed zones and recommends that it pursues speed limit reductions as soon as possible.

7. Conducts or commissions further analysis of biker rider crashes in the City of Melbourne, fatalities and serious injuries, to ensure the best possible understanding of these crashes in order to develop the most appropriate solutions

Bike rider crash analysis is an important component in understanding how to create a safe cycling environment. However, the insight offered by crash data analysis alone is limited and comprehensive data about cycling trip, or exposure data, is required to understand how changes in participation affect crash rates.

We encourage the City of Melbourne to consider the limitations of police-reported crashes in both the development and evaluation of the City of Melbourne's Bicycle Plan. While police data provides an important part of the solution, greater information is needed.

In Victoria, over the period from 2002 to 2012, 2.41 times more bike rider crashes were reported to hospitals compared to all police-reported bike rider crashes.⁹ Similar information around the magnitude of bike rider crashes, which can be determined by non-fatal hospital data, is critical to a meaningful Bicycle Plan for the City of Melbourne.

While Victorian law requires that injury road crashes be reported to police, research shows that not all bike rider crashes are reported to police. Reasons for non-reporting include: little or no property damage; perception of wasting scarce police resources; fear that a report may result in prosecution; crashes where the bike rider is the only injured party; misconception that crashes involving bike riders are not road traffic crashes; and misclassification of injury severity.

⁹ Garrett, M, Johnson, M and Cubis, J. *Road Crashes involving bike riders in Victoria, 2002-2012: an Amy Gillett Foundation Report* July 2015 <http://www.amygillett.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Road-crashes-AGF-Report-FINAL-Sept-2015.pdf>

As a result, police-reported crashes are highly likely to involve a motor vehicle, often considered the trigger for reporting the crash to police. This trigger for reporting crashes to police is an important context when analysing bike rider crashes in the CrashStats.

In addition, information about minor bike rider crashes that may be reported to General Practitioners and Allied Health practitioners is not consistently collected or available for analysis. This is a potentially large resource investment for marginal increase in understanding. However, the additional benefit is that the City of Melbourne would have an increased awareness of the problem areas.

8. Works with TAC to assess existing online approaches for the self-reporting of bike rider crashes available in other Australian jurisdictions and consider if implementing something similar in the City of Melbourne would provide a better understanding of bike rider crashes

One solution to enhancing awareness of the extent and nature of bike rider crashes in the City of Melbourne may be via an online registry. Online facilities for the public to self-report crashes are currently available in South Australia (South Australian Government 2014), Western Australia (Insurance Commission of Western Australia and Western Australia Police 2014) and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT Government 2014). This type of crowdsourced reporting option removes some of the barriers to reporting bike rider crashes, including waiting for police to attend the crash site and attending a police station. It would be valuable to evaluate these facilities to establish if they do capture more information than is currently being reported to police or hospitals.

In conclusion, the Foundation makes these recommendations in the interests of Melbourne becoming a true safe cycling city.

Yours sincerely,



Phoebe Dunn
Chief Executive Officer
Amy Gillett Foundation