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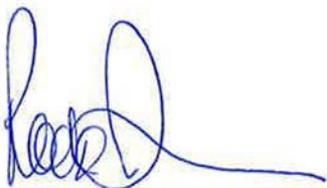
### **Amy Gillett Foundation response to ACCC Review of the Mandatory Safety Standard for Bicycle Helmets**

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the review of the Commonwealth mandatory safety standard for bicycle helmets. The Amy Gillett Foundation has a direct interest in contributing to the conversation around bicycle safety products, including helmets. Our position remains clearly in support of current standards for bicycles helmets and the following document will detail the evidence supporting this position.

Thank you also for providing us some additional time to provide this feedback. It has been a busy time for our organisation and we appreciate your flexibility.

Yours sincerely,



Phoebe Dunn  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Amy Gillett Foundation**

## Amy Gillett Foundation

The Amy Gillett Foundation (AGF) is a national organisation with a mission to reduce the incidence of serious injury and death of bicycle riders in Australia. We draw on evidence and international best practice, and collaborate with governments, business and the community to create a safer environment for cyclists, while maintaining an efficient road network for all road users.

## Response to consultation questions

1. *Do you support the ACCC's preliminary position that the Commonwealth supply standard for bicycle helmets be revoked?*

The Amy Gillett Foundation supports option 2, maintain the status quo.

The AGF position on bicycle helmets is based in the public health approach informed by Haddon's Matrix, both fundamental to injury prevention and recommended by the [World Health Organisation](#) as a framework to identify and analyse risk factors in road traffic injuries. Bicycle helmets are critical human factors that protect people during the 'crash phase'. Much like seat belts in motor vehicles, a bike helmet will not reduce crash risk, rather it will reduce the injury severity in the event of a crash.

In developing our response to the ACCC, we have consulted with leading Australian academics and we thank [Dr Andrew McIntosh](#) (Monash University Accident Research Centre) and [Dr Marilyn Johnson](#) (Institute of Transport Studies, Monash University and AGF Research and Policy Manager) for their contribution in preparing this response.

The [most recent scientific evidence](#) about cyclist injuries and bicycle helmet efficacy was published this year by A/Prof Olivier and Prudence Creighton in the International Journal of Epidemiology and presented at the World Health Organisation's 12<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion in Finland in September 2016. The authors conducted the largest ever systematic review and meta-analysis of cyclist injury, they reviewed 40 studies with data from over 64,000 injured cyclists and concluded that **helmet use** is associated with odds **reduction of 51% for head injury, 69% for serious head injury, 33% for face injury and 65% for fatal head injury.**

We also make the following observations:

- The Australian Standard serves to ensure a uniform quality of supply of helmets in Australia.
- The testing of helmets carried out for the Australian Standard is more rigorous in some respects than those in Europe and North America.
- The cost of testing helmets to satisfy the Australian Standard is not overly burdensome, particularly in light of the importance of the Australian market internationally.

2. *Are there any other policy options that the ACCC should consider?*

The ACCC should consider supporting an informational portal for consumers wishing to evaluate the relative effectiveness and value of helmets.

3. *Do you have any other comments?*

#### Fact

**Scientific evidence:** from a safety perspective, the medical and scientific evidence for the efficacy and effectiveness of bike helmets is extensive, has been peer-reviewed by scientists and published in world-leading scientific journals for decades. The most recent study by Olivier and Creighton is the most comprehensive analysis that critically analysed international data and clearly concluded that bicycle helmets are protective and reduce the risk of head injury.

#### Myth

**Bicycle helmets are a barrier to cycling in Australia:** this often used argument is not substantiated by the scientific research. For an in-depth discussion of the civil libertarian arguments we direct the ACCC to the peer-reviewed journal paper by Dr Paul Biegler and Dr Marilyn Johnson published in the [Journal of Medical Ethics](#).

The 'helmets are a barrier' argument is premised on the assumption that people who do not currently cycle are only being held back by the mandatory helmet use legislation. However, this view is not evidence based. While we recognise the argument that some people who currently cycle may take more incidental trips by bike if they were not required to wear a helmet, this is not the case for people who currently do not ride a bike.

The AGF recently commissioned Galaxy Research to undertake community attitude research towards cycling. For those who currently cycle less than once a month, **concerns about safety was the main reason people did not ride more regularly** (29%). Only 2% reported that having to wear a helmet was the reason they didn't ride more often.

Further information on this research can be found at the following [link](#).

#### Fact

**Concerns about safety is the major barrier to cycling in Australia:** to reach the levels of cycling participation needed to achieve the wide ranging benefits of cycling including improved health, reduced obesity, environmental benefits of reduced vehicle pollution and congestion, direct action must be taken to create a safer cycling environment in Australia.

Direct action needed to increase cycling safety includes:

- Minimum safe passing distances for all cyclists mandated in legislation nationally
- Compulsory skills and knowledge testing for all novice drivers about how to safely share the road with cyclists
- Installation of best practice cycling infrastructure
- Reduced speed limits in areas of high cyclist and pedestrian use
- Increase compliance of road rules by drivers and cyclists