

Select Committee on Personal Choice and Community Safety

Subject: FW: Inquiry on Personal Choice and Community Safety

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 2 September 2019 10:18 AM
To: Stonehouse, Aaron <Aaron.Stonehouse@mp.wa.gov.au>
Subject: Fwd: Inquiry on Personal Choice and Community Safety

Hi Aaron ... if the final report has an extension to 5 December, there may be time to consider the fact that the Victorian Government last week scrapped its Melbourne bike share program introduced in 2010 ... <https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/goodbye-blue-bikes-melbourne-s-bike-share-scheme-canned-20190830-p52m9e.html>

Melbourne's bike share scheme has failed to justify its \$2 million per year expenditure because each bike is hired out on average once per day. The obvious disincentive is the mandatory helmet requirement, particularly for Melbourne tourists but also because locals find helmets inconvenient and discouraging. The private oBike scheme in Melbourne also closed last year because of the lack of cyclists.

The failure of bike share in almost all Australian cities, unlike in other countries, is among the reasons why their governments have chosen not to introduce mandatory helmet laws. It seems the only governments in the world that haven't recognised the injury and participation failures of Australia's helmet law experiment over the past 30 years are Australia's state governments.

Cheers!
Chris Gillham

[REDACTED]

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Begin forwarded message:

From: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Inquiry on Personal Choice and Community Safety
Date: 18 August 2019 at 12:48:31 PM AWST
To: "Stonehouse, Aaron" <Aaron.Stonehouse@mp.wa.gov.au>

Hi Aaron ... the Committee of Inquiry on Personal Choice and Community Safety has probably already reached its conclusions and written its final report, but just in case ...

A new paper has been published consolidating earlier studies showing that risk compensation is one of various explanations for the significant decline in WA and Australian cycling participation, but increased hospitalised injuries since mandatory helmet law enforcement.

Wearing a bike helmet leads to less cognitive control, revealed by lower frontal midline theta power and risk indifference

Abstract

A recent study claims that participants wearing a bike helmet behave riskier in a computer based risk task compared to control participants without a bike helmet. We hypothesized that wearing a bike helmet reduces cognitive control over risky behavior. To test our hypothesis, we recorded participants' EEG brain responses while they played a risk game developed in our laboratory. Previously, we found that, in this risk game, anxious participants showed greater levels of cognitive control as revealed by greater frontal midline theta power, which was associated with less risky decisions. Here, we predicted that cognitive control would be reduced in the helmet group, indicated by reduced frontal midline theta power, and that this group would prefer riskier options in the risk game. In line with our hypothesis, we found that participants in the helmet group showed significantly lower frontal midline theta power than participants in the control group, indicating less cognitive control. We did not replicate the finding of generally riskier behavior in the helmet group. Instead, we found that participants chose the riskier option in about half of trials, no matter how risky the other option was. Our results suggest that wearing a bike helmet reduces cognitive control, as revealed by reduced frontal midline theta power, leading to risk indifference when evaluating potential behaviors.

There are other reasons for the increased injury per cyclist trend, including greater traffic density and congestion caused by discouraged cyclists instead driving cars, but the attached study on risk compensation supports evidence submitted by myself and other researchers.

Cheers!
Chris Gillham

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

On 14 May 2019, at 3:19 PM, Stonehouse, Aaron
<Aaron.Stonehouse@mp.wa.gov.au> wrote:

Thank you Chris, I have forwarded this email on to the committee.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 10 May 2019 11:34 AM
To: Stonehouse, Aaron <Aaron.Stonehouse@mp.wa.gov.au>
Subject: Inquiry on Personal Choice and Community Safety

Hi Aaron ... in case the committee is unaware, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has just published a report titled *Pedal cyclist deaths and hospitalisations, 1999-00 to 2015-16*.

The report can be viewed and downloaded at <https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/fbff1344-6b3f-4b2a-8649-fb879dcd69ab/aihw-injcat-203.pdf.aspx?inline=true>

It confirms various points put to the committee re increasing injury rates per cyclist.

It should be noted that AIHW data shows there were 7,520 cyclist hospital admissions in Australia in 1990, pre law, and 12,027 admissions in 2015-16. This means Australia's all-age cyclist hospital admissions have increased 59.9% from pre-law 1990 to 2015-16.

The AIHW report confirms that from 1999 to 2016, pedal cyclist hospitalisations increased by an average 1.5% per year (vehicle occupants down 1.3% per year and pedestrians down 2.2% per year), and from 2010-11 to 2015-16, the hospitalisation rate for pedal cyclists soared to a 4.4% increase per year. The National Cycling Participation 2017 survey shows a substantial reduction in Australian cycling participation since 2011, as does the ABS Participation in Sport and Physical Activities surveys cited by the report that were conducted from 2005 to 2014.

This evidence supports the safety in numbers evidence put to the committee and is at odds with the contention that repeal of helmet laws would result in an increase in cyclist injuries.

Cheers!
Chris Gillham

