

From: [Robert Teunisse](#)
To: [Select Committee on Personal Choice and Community Safety](#)
Subject: Submission to nanny state
Date: Friday, 5 October 2018 9:40:06 AM

Dear commission

As president of the Townsville (Queensland) Bicycle User Group I am pleased to hear of your enquiry into the nanny state including cycling related to the mandatory helmet laws.

Although I am not a Western Australia resident, I do wish to point to an important consideration:

You refer to cycling as a recreational activity. I believe this view is too narrow minded. Cycling is promoted by the united nations and city planning organisations as a vital part of communities to reduce transportation footprint, improve traffic flow, increase local economic activity as well as reducing health expenditure and improving accessibility, which further boosts business and employment. **To see cycling as a recreational activity for a few enthusiasts is to miss the point completely.**

Improving the uptake of cycling as a means of transport is not optional fad; it is vital for growing urban centres with great benefits for local economy as well state and national healthcare budgets. We should be talking about utility cycling with 5km distances. Much the same as pedestrians would walk somewhere up to 2km. So we should bear in mind the people who currently travel 5km by private car and try to see what barriers can be reduced to get them to choose riding a bicycle. For that distance there is no need for lycra, no need for lightweight racing bikes. You wear the clothes fit for your destination, not transportation.

My submission would be to view cyclists as pedestrians and remove the blanket rule to treat them as dangerous racers. How are you going to improve uptake of bicycle riding when you label it as too dangerous to do without a helmet?

Regarding the impact of nanny state rules on riding bicycles my submission would be to consider why this rule is in place. It is to protect cyclists from injuring themselves. If it is so important to protect people from exposing themselves to dangers they chose expose themselves to, why stop at bicycle helmets? More head injuries happen in cars and I leave it to your own imagination what other activities should require more protective gear if we applied the same concern as to the mandatory helmet law.

Yes, cycling is safer with a helmet, but not using a bicycle to get around, especially getting around with a car is more dangerous for the individual as well as the local and state economy. I refer to the British Medical Journal April 2017 article of the results of a quarter million British commuters. Cyclists had 47% reduced risk of cardiovascular disease and 45% reduced risk of GI cancer.

Kind regards

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President of the Townsville Bicycle User Group