

**From:** Dasborough, Joanne  
**To:** [Select Committee on Personal Choice and Community Safety](#)  
**Subject:** Reponse: Select Committee is to inquire into and report on the economic and social impact of measures introduced in Western Australia to restrict personal choice 'for the individual's own good',  
**Date:** Thursday, 20 September 2018 11:58:22 AM

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*The Select Committee is to inquire into and report on the economic and social impact of measures introduced in Western Australia to restrict personal choice 'for the individual's own good', with particular reference to —*

*(1) risk-reduction products such as e-cigarettes, e-liquids and heat-not-burn tobacco products, including any impact on the wellbeing, enjoyment and finances of users and non-users;*  
*(2) outdoor recreation such as cycling and aquatic leisure, including any impact on the wellbeing, enjoyment and finances of users and non-users; and*  
*(3) any other measures introduced to restrict personal choice for individuals as a means of preventing harm to themselves.*

I would like to offer a perspective on the enjoyment of cycling.

Currently I am required to wear a bike helmet when cycling, irrespective of any other factors involved in my journey.

I own a selection of bicycles, and use them for quite different purposes. For my own safety I would not consider riding my road bike without a helmet. This bike is designed for speed and maximum manoeuvrability, and at almost 60 years of age, I know that for my own protection I should, and do, wear a bike helmet.

I also own a "Dutch bike". A wonderful conveyance for nipping to the shops or enjoying a leisurely ride. It is built for comfort, and certainly not for speed. It is heavy, and perfectly balanced for carrying my groceries. In direct contravention of the laws, I opt not to wear a helmet when I ride this bike, and do not feel in anyway endangered because of my choice.

Until helmet laws were introduced I was an active cyclist, however the mandating of helmet use has put me off much more regular use of my bikes.

It is quite legal for me to indulge in a great many activities which present a good deal more risk to my individual safety, and I find it utterly regrettable that I cannot choose to exercise my own judgement when to, or not to, wear a bicycle helmet, and be responsible for my own health and safety.

The mandatory use of helmets is not supported in evidence in a plethora of international studies which I am certain those better acquainted with these reports will submit for consideration.

My own observations have led me to conclude that wearing a bike helmet because one is required to can create a false belief of safety, and a rider who has not been on a bike for many years suddenly becomes invincible when they don a helmet, irrespective of the fact that riding skills do not support this self-belief.

The greatest modern menace to cyclists, and indeed to the community at large is earphones – pedestrians plug themselves into their device and become oblivious to any danger around them as they meander whether their meandering be on roads, cycle paths or indeed in shopping centres. Road users, irrespective of their mode of transport plug themselves in and move into their own world and forget about their obligations to others. I would much rather see earplug users restricted to their homes in order to keep the community safe. The abolition of earplugs will keep the users and the community at large much safer.

To conclude – the more cyclists there are on the roads the safer the roads will become, and the healthier we will all become. Mandating of helmets has imposed a cost and a restriction on many would be cyclists who would all be much healthier if they eschewed motorised transport for short distance trips to the shops, schools etc without the mandated cycle helmet – leave it to

personal choice.

Joanne Dasborough

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