

Reducing on-road harassment of cyclists

Jan Garrard and Lynn Gunning

Why promote cycling?

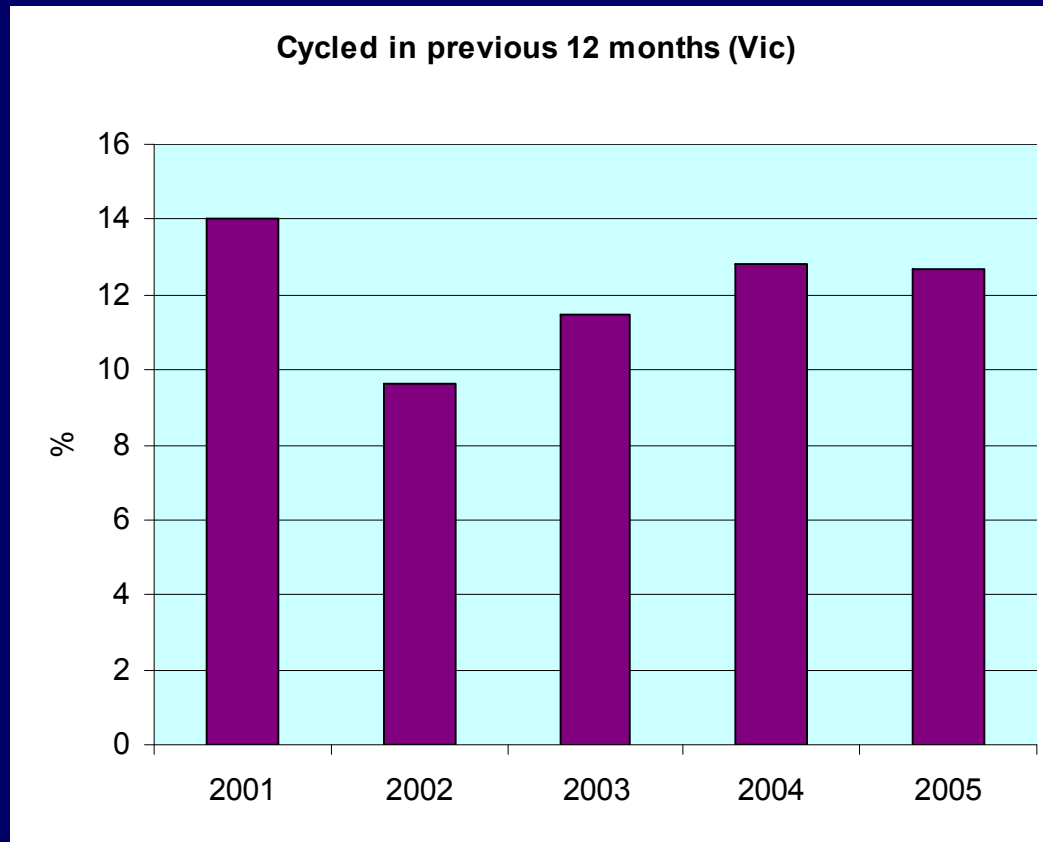
Cycling has many benefits across multiple sectors:

- ✓ health
- ✓ transport
- ✓ environment
- ✓ community liveability
- ✓ community safety ('peopled' places are safe places)

Who is promoting cycling?

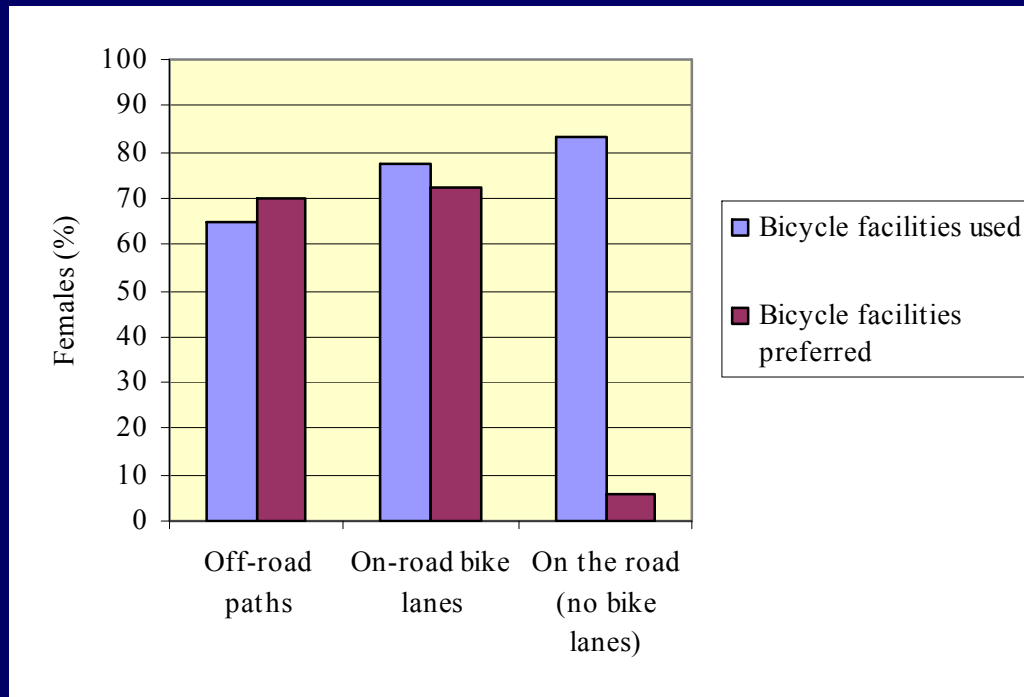
- Policies and programs within all three tiers of government (local, state, federal) across multiple sectors include the promotion of cycling for transport, recreation, sport, leisure and tourism
- And, increasingly, a range of NGOs (Bicycle Victoria, National Heart Foundation, Cancer Council, Diabetes Australia) and businesses/industries (CPF, corporate health promotion, fund-raising and networking)

Indications that cycling is increasing in Victoria



(Source: ASC 2006)

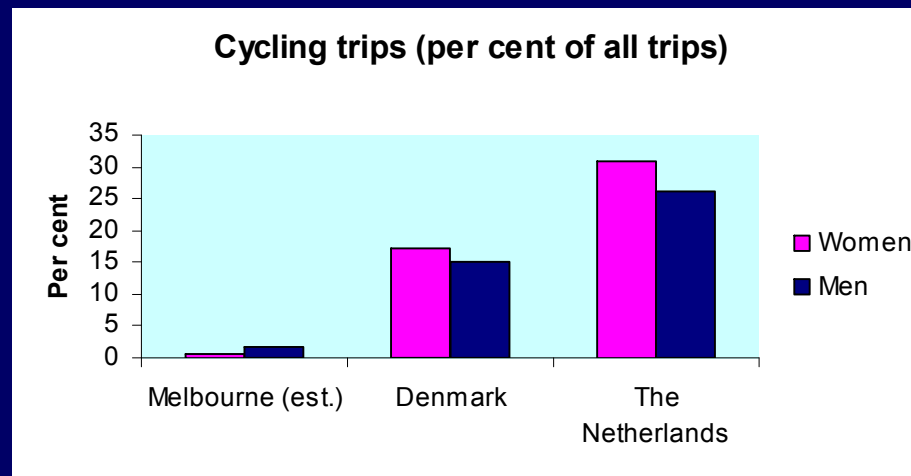
In the absence of an extensive network of interconnected off-road paths, more cyclists are riding on roads (with and without bicycle lanes)



(Source: Garrard et al 2006)

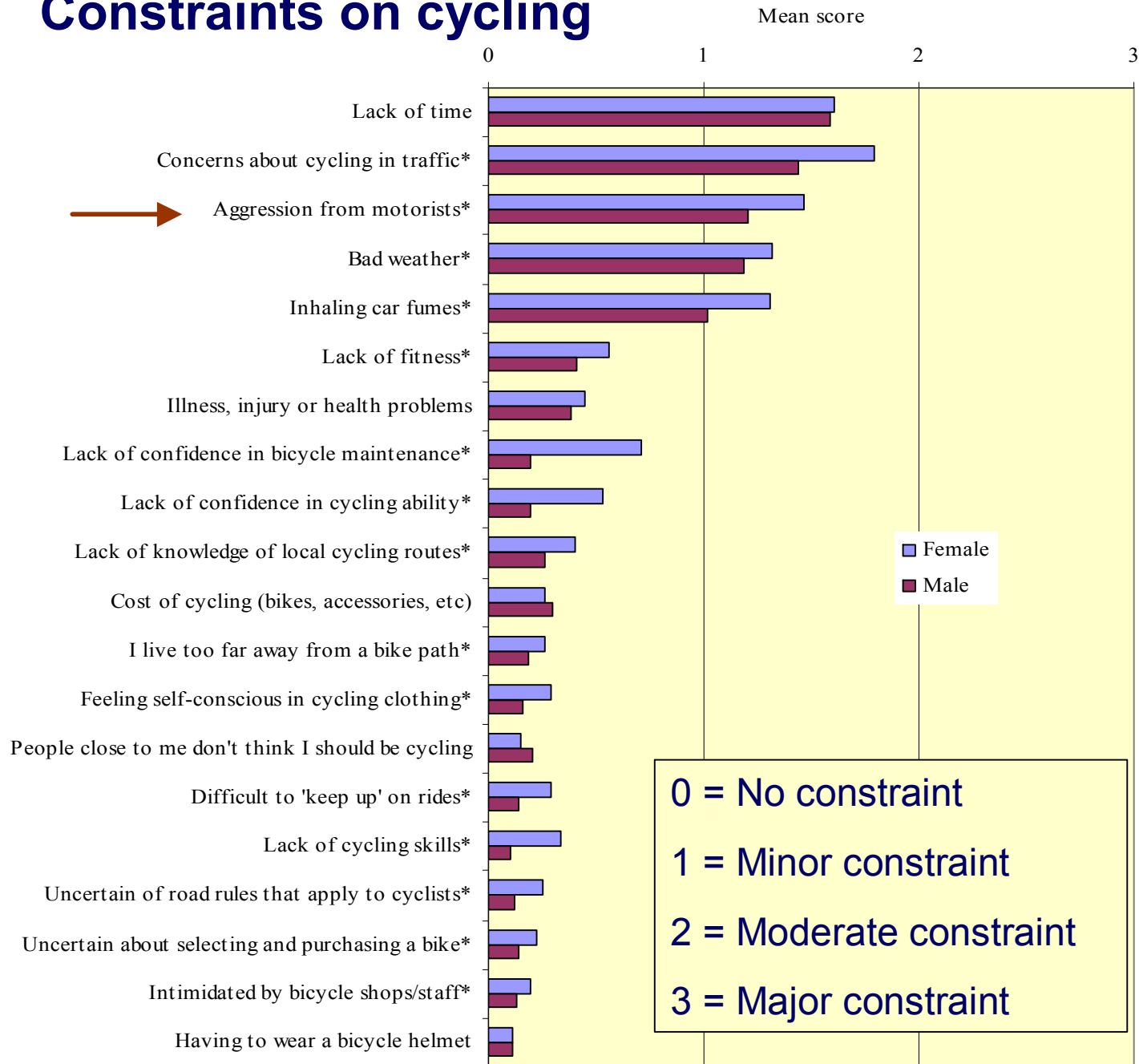
This increases the potential for conflict between cyclists and motorists.

- An avoidable form of conflict between cyclists and motorists is mild to severe on-road harassment directed at cyclists by motorists.
- This is potentially harmful in terms of risk of injury and psychological harm.
- It is also a major constraint on cycling, particularly for women, who are substantially under-represented in cycling in Australia (in contrast to other countries).



- Findings from a comprehensive online survey of cyclists in Victoria
- Random sample (10,000) from a database of Bicycle Victoria contacts and members (~120,000)
- 2403 respondents, questions included:
 - frequency and duration of cycling
 - use of, and preferences for different bicycle facilities
 - motivations, supports and **constraints on cycling**
 - experiences of **intentional harassment** from motor vehicle occupants
 - participation in cycling programs and events
 - physical activity levels

Constraints on cycling

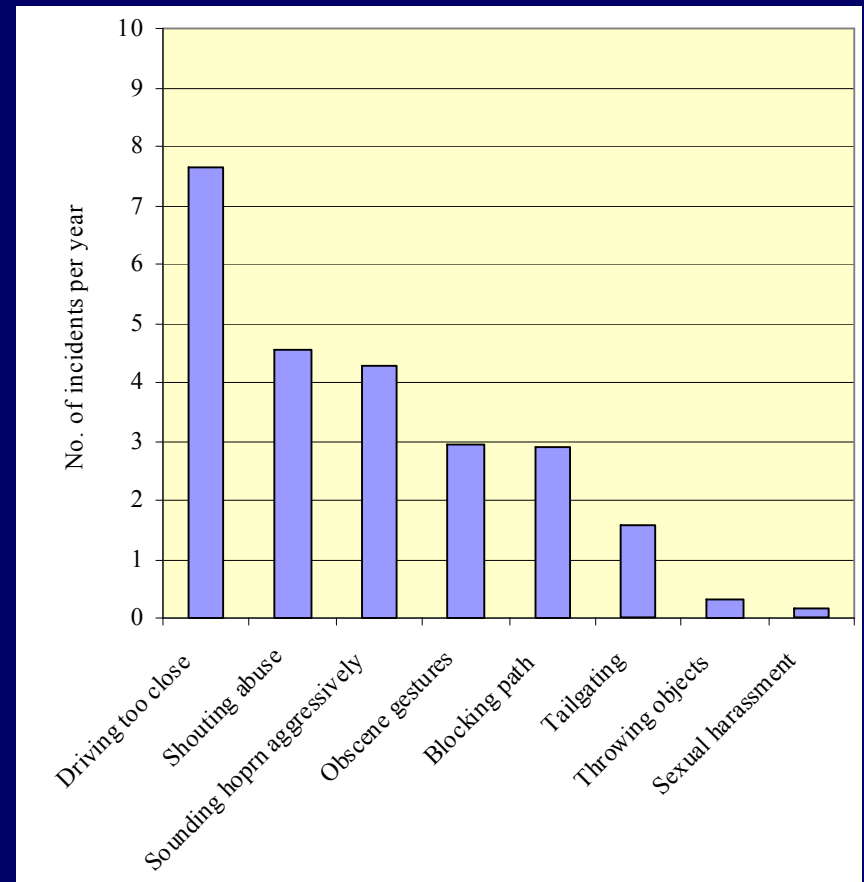


Intentional harassment from motor vehicle occupants

66% reported experiencing harassment in previous 12 months

Average of 24 incidents in past 12 months per survey respondent (approx once a fortnight)

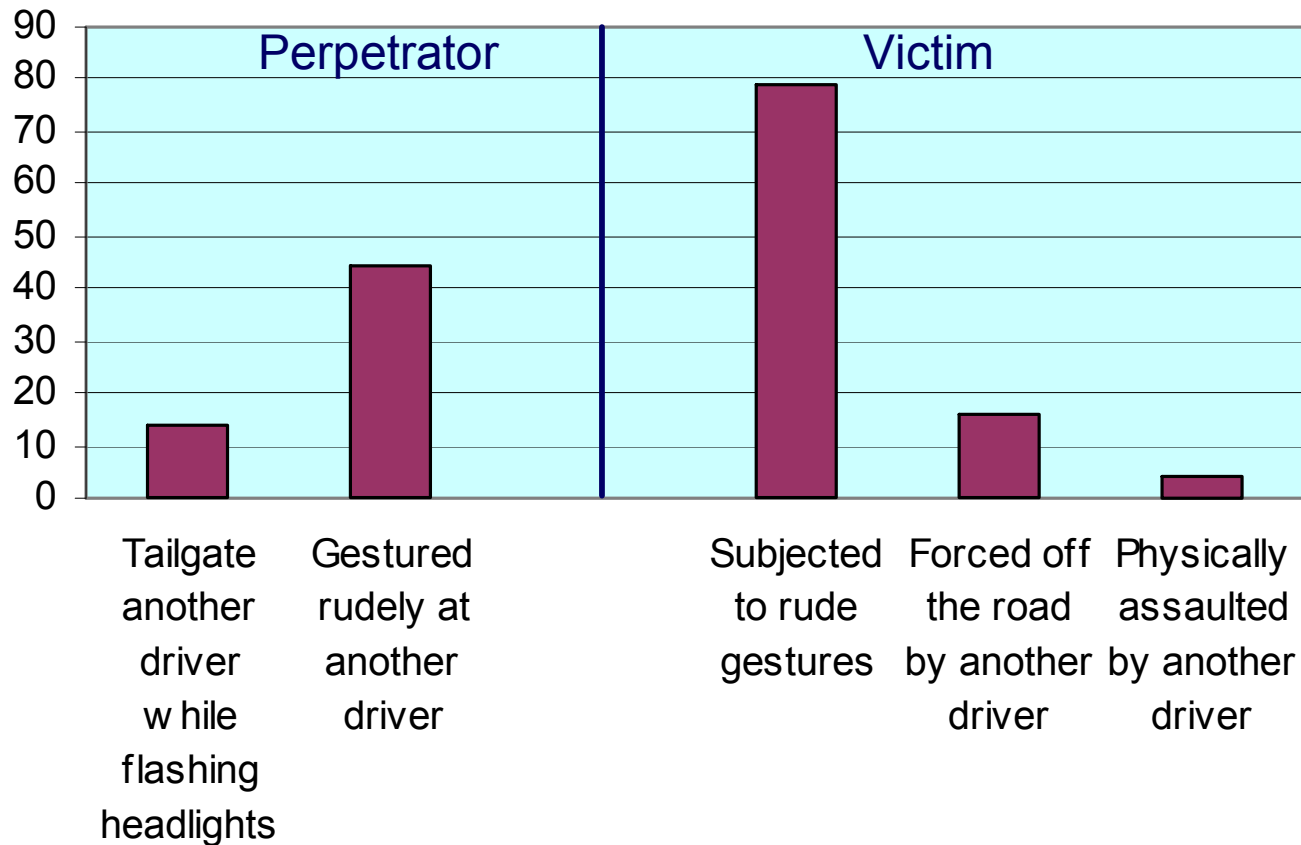
Average of 37 incidents in past 12 months among respondents who reported harassment (n = 1425) (approx 0.7 times a week)



Related findings

- SA cyclists (n = 71) (2003):
 - 67% experienced harassment in previous month (Brisco 2006)
- Australian adults (n = 1880) (2004):
 - 45% of females and 38% of males agreed that “Aggressive drivers put me off cycling or walking” (AAMI 2004)
- Victorian motorists (n = 801) (1999):
 - experienced ‘mild road rage’ (58%) and ‘severe road rage’ (14%) (VCCAV 1999)

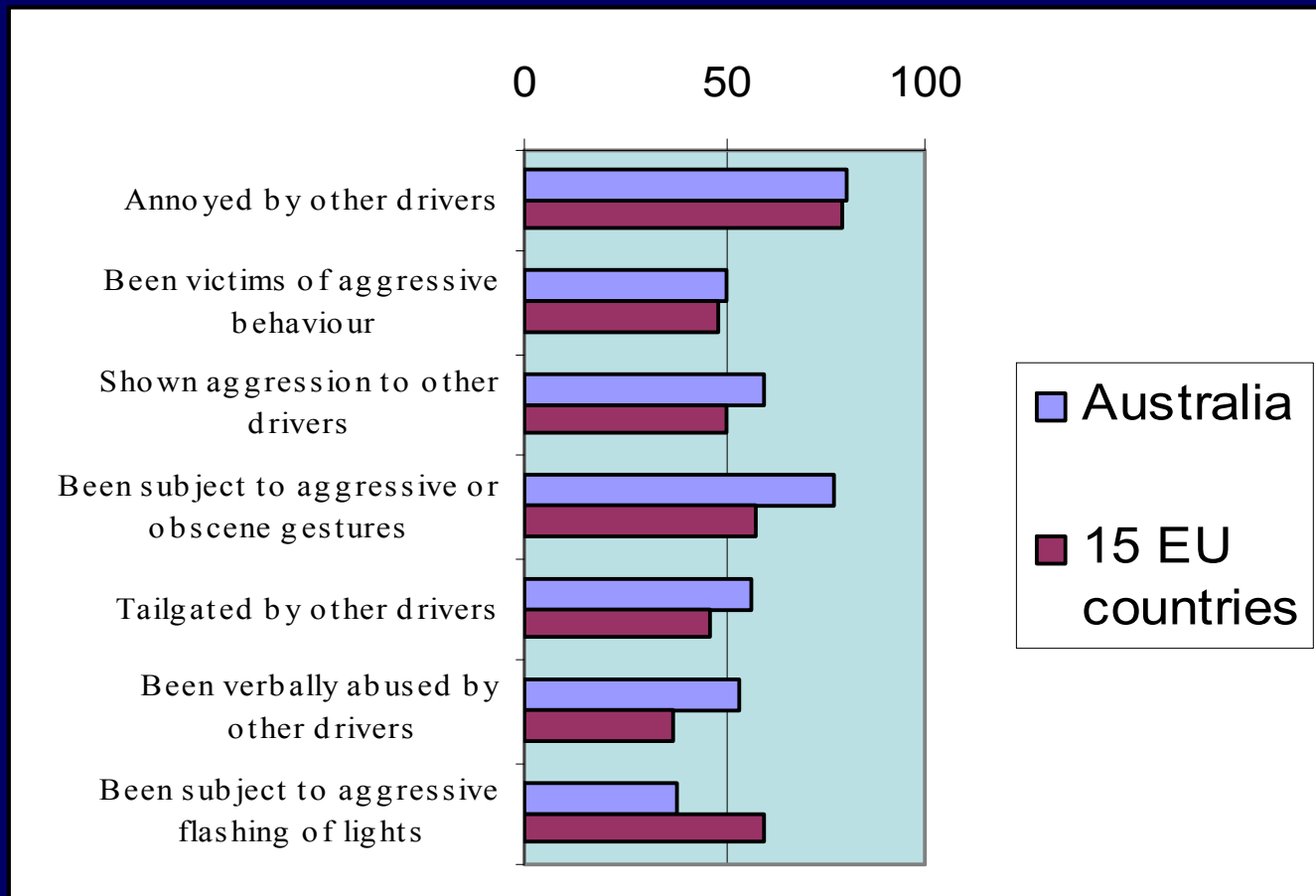
Aggressive driver behaviour, Australia, 2005



(Source: AAMI 2005)

Aggressive driver behaviour: Australia compared with European Union

(average of 15 member countries - % of respondents)
(Source: EOS Gallup Europe 2003)



Is harassment condoned?

Road violence and harassment directed at cyclists is prevalent, harmful and unacceptable, but tolerated and even supported and encouraged by some people in the media and general community.

Views from the media...

Sam Newman, Footy Show (25 May 2006) Commenting on cyclists on Beach Road:

“If I had an older model car, I’d just keep driving in the lane ... an old Valiant with a bull bar and drive straight over them.”

Herald Sun (31 Aug 2006) ‘Bike bullies ignore laws’:

“The riders.. will be very lucky if Bayside residents don't line the road at Mentone, armed with eggs, tacks and abuse.”

Neil Mitchell, 3AW (13 Sep 2006) Re: Cyclist victimisation

‘A guy tooted me, tried to run me off the road and yelled (out the car window) “That’s for Les and Neil Mitchell you lycra maniac”.’

And the judiciary...

Sydney Morning Herald (20 Sep 2006):

Driver's blood boiled when cyclists gave him the finger

"A driver who **deliberately** swerved in front of a pack of 20 cyclists was placed on a 12-month good behaviour bond. In finding Henry To guilty of driving in a manner dangerous and negligent, the magistrate admonished the riders for **triggering** the newsagent's anger:

There was real potential to cause harm. I find the offence proven. But Mr Maloney added: 'This is ***not a road-rage situation***. They ***should not have yelled out 'effing idiot'..***' "

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Murray Thompson is calling for tough action against hoon cyclists.
PHOTO: JARON RAMMON

Act on cycle hoons

MATTHEW BURGESS

HOON cyclists caught flouting the law could have their bicycles impounded for at least 48 hours under a tough new proposal. Sandringham state Liberal MP Murray Thompson wants to give police the power to seize or disable the bicycles of "dangerous or irresponsible cyclists". The bicycle groups have branded the plan as "extreme". The plan was aimed at the same

Shaw pleaded guilty in the Melbourne Magistrates Court to failing to stop at a traffic signal and was fined \$400.

In August last year, Robin Shaw's bike struck 77-year-old pensioner James Gould.

Mr Gould later died from his injuries.

Mr Thompson said under the plan, cyclists could have their bikes impounded for 48 hours on the first offence and be made to pay storage and other costs.

have a high level of cycling civic non-compliance," he said.

"I think police have some difficulties in enforcing the law, owing to the fact cyclists are not equipped with that they don't carry identification."

He said the law - similar to the vehicle impoundment legislation - could apply if a cyclist ignored a red light or rode at night without lighting.

Bayside rep Jeff Ferris questioned whether it was in line with

motorists were fined for such offences.

Bicycle Victoria chief executive Harry Barber said police had enough powers, but proper police use of red light offences was needed.

"I don't think there's been a systematic approach in bike policing and I don't think adding an extreme law is a way to fix it," he said.

Bayside Bicycle Riding Club secretary said Kingston Bicycle

Association said the proposal was "a little bit over the top".

The Sandringham Bicycle Users Group president Alan Sherlock said it "certainly could help".

Victoria Police spokeswoman Natalie Webster said police were not aware of any plans to impound bicycles.

Mr Thompson said the \$400 fine highlighted the consequences.

"The law needs to be reviewed in this area, as the penalty ramps matches the gravity of offences."

"...there has been a high level of cycling civic non-compliance..."

"...MP Murray Thompson wants to give police the power to seize or disable the bicycles of "dangerous or irresponsible Cyclists"

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Motorists seeing red

JON ANDREWS

DRIVERS are still being photographed at Cheltenham's Nepean Highway and Karen St/Bay rd intersection - at the rate of four cars an hour.

A half-hour survey by the *Leader* picked up two drivers being "pinged" for allegedly turning after the filter allowing traffic to turn right had gone red.

Last week, the *Bayside Leader* revealed irate motorists were threatening to challenge their fines, saying the camera was faulty.

The survey, taken on the morning of Friday, August 3, recorded 139 vehicles turning right at the intersection.

Two drivers were photographed during the 30 minute trial for allegedly turning on a red signal. A fine of \$210 and a penalty of three demerit points await them.

VicRoads safety website, "arrive alive", stated a vehicle would only be photographed if it crossed the stop line after the light changed to red.

It said the red light principle

dictated that if drivers crossed the white line to enter an intersection after a light has turned red, they would be photographed.

The recording process involved two pictures being taken 0.6 seconds apart.

The Traffic Camera Office then sends out infringement notices outlining details of the offence.

Drivers are allowed to view the photographs taken.

It is not an offence for a vehicle that has entered the intersection on a green signal to complete the turn after the light changed to red.

The State Government receives hundred of millions of dollars in fines from traffic infringements.

In the 2006-2006 State Budget, then Transport Minister Peter Batchelor pledged to return every dollar received from fines back into road funding and road safety initiatives.

If you believe you have been incorrectly fined at the Cheltenham intersection write to the *Leader* at bayside@leadernewspapers.com.au

About being 'pinged' by red light cameras

Seminar cancelled

MATTHEW BURGESS

A FREE Bayside Business Network seminar encouraging people to avoid paying speeding fines has been cancelled because of ethical concerns.

Bayside Council last week cancelled the September 3 seminar, promoted as teaching people "how and why you should never pay a speeding fine again", after an advertisement featured its logo.

But Aussie Speeding Fines, the group behind the 90-minute seminar, says it will host the event without the network's support and has slammed the council for intervening.

The seminar was scheduled as part of the 2007 Bayside Business Network seminar series.

But Mayor John Knight, who represents the council on the Bayside Business Board, said the council was "very concerned" about the content's ethics.

"We have spoken to Bayside Business Network. The seminar has been cancelled," he said. The council provides administrative

help to the network, and has budgeted \$75,000 this financial year to support its economic development activities.

Aussie Speeding Fines owner Mike Palmer said traffic fines were "unlawful" and more than 100 people had booked for the seminar, which was confirmed about two months ago.

"I am extremely disappointed Bayside Council has ordered it to be pulled," Mr Palmer said.

Victoria Police spokeswoman Natalie Webster said speed cameras were an important part of the overall road safety strategy.

Road Trauma Support Team Victoria chief executive Julie Parke said the seminar was "just crazy" and would have sent the wrong message.

Bayside Ratepayers' Association president George Reynolds said the council should be applauded for cancelling the "anti-social" event.

Leader Community Newspapers is also a sponsor of the network, but was not aware of the content of the seminars.

"A free Bayside Business Network seminar encouraging people to avoid paying speeding fines.."

"...100 people booked for seminar"

How can we reduce harassment?

- Highlight strategies for promoting the more courteous, harmonious and tolerant interactions between cyclists and motorists that exist in other countries - refreshing & promoting Share the Road
- Implement strategies around awareness raising (community, government, NGOs, media), education/skills (cyclists and motorists), and reporting/sanctions.

Recommendations

That the Victorian Bicycle Advisory Council develop an advocacy campaign to reduce on-road harassment as a contribution to increasing the prevalence and safety of cycling

Awareness raising strategies

1. Council write to newspaper editors, TV station managers and talkback/drive time radio hosts providing relevant information and highlighting the need to not condone intentional harassment and promote sharing the road by all road users.
2. That the Share the Road campaign be reviewed, revised and widely promoted.

Recommendations

Education/Skills (Cyclists and Motorists):

3. Council to receive a report on what cycling related questions are in the licence exam. Are these core or rotating questions? Review this and recommend what could be included.
4. Council to review driving instructor education/information. Do driving instructors have to pass a test and are there cycling related questions on that exam? Is there cycling information in the driving instructor's training manual?
5. Council to review what can be done to improve cycling education/skills. Bike education for primary school children is under review. Is there a program for secondary schools and adult beginners?

Recommendations

Reporting/Sanctions

6. Council to investigate a cyclist incident reporting system such as the EPA litter reporting model.
7. Victoria Police to report to Council on the best way to report harassment and how it can be addressed and monitored. Advise Council on how to inform the public about how to utilise the system.