

**Inquiry into the
Road Safety Road Rules
2009 (overtaking bicycles)
Bill 2015**

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RACV advocacy

- RACV believes **all road users** have a responsibility to ‘share the road’.
- RACV provides information through education campaigns to ensure all road users are aware of the road rules and their responsibilities, to ensure **everyone** is safe.
- RACV works with organisations such as Bicycle Network and the Amy Gillett Foundation.



Figure 1: Sharing roads and paths brochure

Minimum separation distance

- RACV supports education about a minimum separation distance between bicycle riders and other vehicles.
- RACV recommends leaving at least one metre when overtaking bicycle riders - more if travelling over 60km/h, but does not consider that a regulated minimum separation distance is practical.

Operational concerns

1. Dynamic measurement of a minimum separation
2. Transferring risk to other road users
3. Role of bicycle lanes
4. Width of bicycle and vehicle lanes
5. Conflict with other regulations

1. Dynamic measurement of a minimum separation

- There is no reliable evidentiary means to measure the minimum separation between two moving vehicles.
- Infringements will likely be challenged in court unless it can be conclusively proven.
- Places expectation on motorists to estimate minimum separation distance.

Recommendation:

The road rules should not be amended to specify a mandated minimum separation.

2. Transferring risk

- The proposed rule will allow motorists to pass bicycle riders by crossing road centrelines, in particular solid single and double white centrelines.
- This will undermine the intent of these lines which have been placed in locations where drivers cannot see far enough ahead to determine whether it is safe to overtake.

Recommendation:

The road rule not be amended to allow motorists to cross solid centrelines to pass bicycle riders.

3. Role of bicycle lanes

- The proposed mandated separation applies to vehicles passing riders in bicycle lanes. However, vehicles in adjacent traffic lanes are not overtaking; they are passing a vehicle in another lane.
- The proposed bicycle overtaking rules effectively widen every bicycle lane by at least one metre.
- As such, vehicles will not be able to use the left hand-lane.



Figure 2: St Kilda Road. The mandated separation will extend into the adjacent traffic lane (Google, 2016).

Recommendation:

The road rules are not amended to require motorists to allow a mandated minimum separation when passing bicycle riders in an adjacent bicycle lane.

4. Width of bicycle and vehicle lanes

- Bicycle and traffic lanes throughout Victoria are different widths which influences the speed at which a motorist passes a bicycle.
- RACV believes that some councils are reducing traffic lane widths and increasing bicycle lane widths, leaving little room for motorists to give riders a mandated minimum separation.

4. Width of bicycle and vehicle lanes



Figure 3: Collins Street, Melbourne (Google, 2016)



Figure 4: Collins Street, Melbourne. Drivers will be unable to pass riders at tram stops. (Google, 2016)



Figure 5: Mount Buffalo Road. (Google, 2016)

4. Width of bicycle and vehicle lanes

Recommendations:

- **Research should be undertaken into the relationship between perceived and actual separation of riders and motor vehicles, and the perceived and actual safety.**
- **VicRoads mandate and enforce minimum lane widths for bicycle and traffic lanes, for all public roads in Victoria.**
- **The State Government fund an ongoing program to construct off-road and on-road separated bicycle facilities. Where space is constrained, on-street parking should be removed so that traffic lanes can be retained.**



Figure 6: William Street, Melbourne

5. Conflict with other regulations

- Recent legislation changes enable motorcycle lane filtering between the kerb and a line of traffic.
- The widest point of a motorcycle is readily apparent to the rider.
- The proposed changes pertaining to bicycle clearance will prevent a motorcycle rider from filtering past a bicycle rider.

Recommendation:

If the road rules are amended, motorcycle riders should be exempt from a mandated minimum separation and only provide sufficient distance.

Recommendations

The road rules SHOULD NOT be amended to specify a mandated minimum separation and instead:

- The State Government fund an ongoing mass-media and online campaign about the road rules and road behaviours necessary for bicycle riders and other road users to safely share the roads.
- Research should be undertaken into the relationship between perceived and actual separation of riders and motor vehicles, and the perceived and actual safety.
- VicRoads mandate and enforce minimum lane widths for bicycle and traffic lanes, for all public roads in Victoria.
- The State Government fund an ongoing program to construct off-road and on-road separated bicycle facilities. Where space is constructed, on-street parking should be removed so that traffic lanes can be retained.

Recommendations

If the road rules are amended, we recommend:

- The rule not apply to roads with a solid centreline.
- The rule not apply to motorists when passing bicycle riders in an adjacent bicycle lane.
- Motorcycle riders should be exempt from a mandated minimum separation and only provide 'sufficient distance'.