

TRANSCRIPT

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Inquiry into the impact of road safety behaviours on vulnerable road users

Coburg—Wednesday 9 August 2023

MEMBERS

Alison Marchant—Chair

Kim O’Keeffe—Deputy Chair

Anthony Cianflone

Wayne Farnham

John Mullahy

Dylan Wight

Jess Wilson

WITNESSES

Alexander Diamis,

Rory Dickson,

Catherine Hall, and

Helen.

The CHAIR: Welcome to the forum for the Legislative Assembly Economy and Infrastructure Committee's Inquiry into the impact of road safety behaviours on vulnerable road users. Your participation today will help this Committee make recommendations to make our roads safe for everyone.

We will do this fairly informally, but it is being recorded by Hansard. While all evidence taken by the Committee is protected by parliamentary privilege, comments repeated outside this hearing, including on social media, may not be protected by this privilege.

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We feel like this is a bit more of a chat, and we are hoping to have a bit more back and forth with this part. We are really looking forward to hearing from you. When we saw your submissions, the Committee was really excited to hear your versions and your experiences as parents. If there is something that we have not covered today, though, because it will be a little bit more informal, you can put something further in writing. There is that opportunity to do that.

We will just quickly do an introduction. And for yourselves, maybe if you could tell us a little bit about your own family circumstances—maybe the children, your modes of transport, a little bit of background. Then we can unpick that. That would be helpful as well. I am Alison, the Member for Bellarine.

Anthony CIANFLONE: Anthony Cianflone, Member for Pascoe Vale.

Dylan WIGHT: Dylan Wight, the Member for Tarneit.

Wayne FARNHAM: Wayne Farnham, Member for Narracan.

Jess WILSON: Jess Wilson, Member for Kew.

John MULLAHY: John Mullahy, Member for Glen Waverley.

The CHAIR: I will hand to you.

HELEN: Thanks. My name is Helen. I am a member of Merri-Bek's Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee. It is my second term on that committee. My child attends a local primary school that participated in the Ride and Stride program through council and also Open Streets. For the last seven years I have led a campaign for pedestrian safety on Nicholson Street in Coburg. It is an arterial road. We have had three deaths on that road in a two-year period, and I have spent seven years documenting—photographing—collisions, so I have got a bit of road trauma and witnessed a bit of road trauma. I have also got lived experience with chronic mobility issues, which has provided me some solid insights on what Victorians may need when it comes to equity of road space. I am a multimodal transport user. I think yesterday we heard three in four Victorians are multimodal transport users.

My family uses active travel for transport. We walk and ride to most places that we go. We have a family e-cargo bike, which is parked outside, which I have shown some of you—it is pretty cool. We use our bike for school pick-up and drop-off. We travel to after-school activities in neighbouring suburbs, so on our bike. We do our shopping on our bike. We go to weekend sports on our bike. We ride to work. We ride to medical appointments. I have frequent appointments where I have to be admitted to hospital—I ride my bike there. We pretty much ride everywhere. We take our bikes when we go regionally on holidays. We love riding down at the Bellarine Peninsula—really good. We rarely use our car, because it is quicker and more convenient where we live to travel by bike. Using active transport also helps us connect with our community, which has got of course really wonderful benefits. It increases our physical activity levels, and it is really good for our physical and mental health—and the e-cargo bike has been really transformational in our lives.

I have got a really keen interest in active transport, road safety and liveable streets, and I really thank the Committee for undertaking this Inquiry and for providing me with the opportunity to speak with other parents today. I hope that the outcome of the parliamentary inquiry is that the State Government delivers tangible,

innovative change and adequate funding to protect vulnerable road users from the risk of death or serious injury, while creating really beautiful, healthy, liveable streets for all Victorians.

The CHAIR: Wonderful. Thank you, Helen.

Catherine HALL: My name is Cate, and we have one daughter. I do not drive, so I walk and ride and get public transport and my daughter does the same. We have one family car. I prepared a 2-minute statement—is that okay to still go ahead with that? My submission was pretty much a case study, but things have moved on.

Good afternoon, Chair and Committee, and thank you very much for this opportunity. It is fantastic. I am the Convener of a local campaign, Safe Walking and Riding for Murray Road, but for context I am also president of Our Children Our Schools, which is in hiatus now, but we did make many state government submissions on active travel to school over the years. And I am Coburg High School Walking and Riding Sub-Committee Chair.

Murray Road is a 60-k state government road. We have heard a lot about arterial roads today. Back in 2011 traffic lanes were added by VicRoads with no consultation with council, who wrote at the time that it was a priority bicycle route and a key east–west missing link. The result of the extra lanes is an intense, inhospitable and dangerous environment, with four lanes of fast traffic right up against a very narrow path. It is heavily used by families and children walking and riding to access schools; child care; shops; entertainment, including Pentridge; sporting facilities; and green spaces. Last year I asked VicRoads to come and do a site visit, and my understanding is that a DTP review is now underway.

Since my submission to the Committee and after a series of serious crashes—eight recorded by police in the first half of this year—we held a community meeting attended by 50 locals, and we have now formed a working group and launched a comprehensive community survey, which has had over 350 responses, representing 490 children. There are 125 written accounts of safety incidents, which are a powerful read. While the issue is local, the general safety concerns and solutions raised by the respondents could be universal, and it is really a lot of what we have already been hearing. The broader things people want are wider footpaths; separated bike lanes; safer crossings and intersections, especially due to the rampant red light running reported that I have experienced as well; and a reduced speed limit. With these changes, respondents say—I will not do all the percentages—they would walk more, ride more and be more comfortable with children walking and riding independently and would drive less and would walk and ride more with their young children, because sadly, 50% are saying they are uncomfortable with doing that. They will not even accompany their children walking and riding.

Also, importantly, we want a decent bus service. The half-hourly bus is the only PT. It does not run at night or on Sundays, and that raises issues for safety, because people have to walk at night down this arterial road but also because of isolation for elderly people if there is no bus. We believe the survey is timely and relevant, and after it closes this week we would be very happy to share the results with the Committee, if that is of interest.

The CHAIR: Lovely. Thank you.

Catherine HALL: Thanks.

Rory DICKSON: Thank you. Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Committee members. My name is Rory. I live in Glenroy with my wife and two primary school aged children. We live just over one kilometre from the primary school, and we now walk or ride every day to school. It is a favourite part of my day, not because I am getting rid of my kids but because of the joy they get from riding to school. I used to drive them, and it was quite transactional—get in the car, belts on, get out, off you go. But we talk now and we have a great time going to school, and it is a great way for them to start their day.

Prior to the pandemic I probably would not have been here, because I was a car enthusiast. I was someone who would have loved to have seen the American pick-up trucks come to Australia. I do not remember or recognise that person anymore. During one of the lockdowns I went for a walk, and it was along Pascoe Vale Road. It just struck me how quiet it was, because there was not a car on the road at all. And I was walking on Pascoe Vale Road. Normally it is incredibly hostile for anyone outside of a car. Then something just clicked, and since 2021 it is all I have been thinking about. Since this moment I have been impassioned with how we get around, how we design our towns, and it is why I am here today.

I still drive a car because there are times when I have to; we have made it the default mode of travel in this state, unfortunately. But I think by prioritising privately owned vehicles, it keeps us time poor, financially poor and in poor health. Since my mode shift—I am fine to say I had high blood pressure—I now ride or walk everywhere that I can, and I no longer need that medication because now I have lost weight and I am in much better health. But now I try to think: imagine a full state of active citizens. There would be no congestion and better health for citizens, and the state would save money.

I think we continue to make the same planning and design failures with our streets and roads as mistakes that were made in the 1950s. We continue to prioritise cars. We want to move as many as we can and maintain those speeds as much as possible. I am seeing it now. There is resurfacing happening in my area, and we are building in those sweeping corners that allow a car to maintain its speed. I think we need to make some substantial changes to make it better for people outside a car.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Rory. Hi. How are you?

Alexander DIAMIS: Hi. Good, thank you. I apologise that I am late.

The CHAIR: No, it is okay. That is fine.

Alexander DIAMIS: I was just taking a ride on my bike, but it was not safe to get here.

The CHAIR: Well, you are happy to share all that experience then.

Alexander DIAMIS: I would have taken my car if it was good, but every time I want to drive somewhere, I just feel uncomfortable because there is so much emission and so much money that goes into the car to use it. The second one is just that it is unhealthy for the environment, unhealthy for my neighbours and everyone I know too. There is just road rage—like every time I drive. I try to drive 40. I have kids in the back. I obey the speed limits, but I live in Pascoe Vale. Just to get here—every time someone is just passing next to me, changing lanes, doing something. I get stressed. My child does not understand it yet because he is two years old, but I feel it is the most dangerous way to go. It is just stressful.

I get to day care and then I drive home, because I work from home. Usually, I would prefer to use my bike, but if you know the local geography, the only way to avoid traffic is just to go zigzag. I will go to a Tour de France through the Merri Creek. But I have no options—that is what I do. Then my child care is on Bell Street in Preston. So I could go on Sydney Road, then turn left on Bell Street, which is the most straight. If I go by car, it is a 10-minute drive, but to go on a bike, it is a zigzag Tour de France. I have to go back into Coburg and Preston, crossing the very narrow bridge. I do not know if you know it. It is beautiful, but it is difficult to do it every day. I have to wait for the runners and pedestrians to get on that bridge, go up the hill and go back. So it is a big, big loop. I am happy to do it once or twice a week, but more than that is just impossible. Not just because of the bike—I have a cargo bike; I am a bike enthusiast and I am crazy about it. But it just feels more relaxed, safer. I love talking about my bike. I have not prepared a statement, so I am just talking from the heart.

Driving on the roads here is dangerous. I had one accident when someone just turned left and went into me right here on Bell Street, going to day care again. So the speeds are enormous—60 kilometres an hour. I do not walk or ride my bike anywhere that is crossing Bell Street, because it is just too scary. I got my bike and I want to convince my wife to ride it, but she says no way, it is just too dangerous. She would not feel safe, although she is fit and able; it is just crazy. It is the same thing with my child care. There were a few people who were not enthusiasts—that is fine. But unfortunately, currently I am saving up, and if I am able to I will try and move away from my council, away from Merri-bek, and closer to the city, somewhere in Collingwood or somewhere, so that I could walk to child care, walk to my work and enjoy that. It is unfortunate because I love my house and I enjoy it, but probably that is what is going to happen in the next few years if I am able to leave the council and go somewhere closer to the city.

The CHAIR: Okay. Thank you for that. That is a great variety of circumstances, so that is wonderful. We might ask a few questions of you. Wayne, we might start with you.

Wayne FARNHAM: Thank you, Chair.

The CHAIR: If Wayne raises something or if we want to jump in and make a bit more of a conversation, let us do that.

Wayne FARNHAM: Yes, sure.

The CHAIR: Yes.

Wayne FARNHAM: It is great to hear you all love riding your bikes. What do you think the Government can do to encourage more families, or even your own family, to get out there and ride more? What do you think would be a good first step from government?

HELEN: Okay, I will start.

Catherine HALL: It is a long list.

HELEN: You have heard—I sat yesterday and heard all the evidence—that people want protected, separated cycle lanes and reduced speed limits to 30 kilometres an hour, and I think we really want council to be able to roll those out without all the hoops they have to jump through. I think one way to really get families out there is to subsidise bikes and e-bikes. It is something that no-one has spoken about yet, but I think by subsidising bikes you will give people an opportunity to take the bike instead of the car. My family is evidence that it is possible. That will reduce traffic on the road, which I think will impact motorist behaviour, because they might be less annoyed because they are sitting in traffic. Denver started offering a rebate for residents to buy electric bikes. The city thought the funding would last for three years, and instead so many people wanted to participate that the funding was gone in six months. I think that is an innovative solution that perhaps the State Government could consider.

You have heard a lot about the Safe System approach. No-one has articulated ‘superblocks’ or modal filtering, which is where you can essentially close a street to vehicular traffic so that you do not have rat-running through grids, which does not necessarily just occur when there has been a crash or traffic congestion, because navigation apps direct people through our local streets, where we are trying to travel to school with our children, and motorists are going really, really fast. So I think they need to stick to arterials, and the State Government, where an arterial road meets a local street, is responsible for the street for perhaps 10 or 15 metres in or something; it is not the local council that is responsible for that. So I think modal filtering would be really good so that you stop this rat-running of people who are trying to get places faster, and that would make the road safer and more people get on their bikes.

Catherine HALL: I am just going to be a cracked record on the separated bike lanes—it is really just the main thing.

Dylan WIGHT: Can I jump in, Rory, and ask you a question, mainly because I loved what you said so much—it was pretty awesome. You have obviously started riding to school with your children in Glenroy. We are talking about separated usage of cars and bikes. Does that exist on your pathway to school? Is it a safe passage?

Rory DICKSON: Not at all. So I guess because of Pascoe Vale Road I could walk to the school within one k, but we have to take a much longer route along quieter streets. There are no bike lanes there, but it is a quiet street. It does not deter us. The worst part is eventually we have to cross Pascoe Vale Road. Actually, my submission included an incident that happened there, where cars were not stopping at the red light when my kids had a green man to cross. So, yes, it is a quiet street, but you get rat-running and you get people who are on the phone that pass closely. The reason I ride on the street with my kids is because I find it actually to be safer than going on the footpath when cars—the large SUVs—are coming out of the driveways. You are in much closer proximity with them intersecting, whereas on a road they can at least see you.

HELEN: Can I just add: it is absolutely in my experience safer to go on the road. Where I am—it is not quite within the terms of reference, but just to kind of help you understand—there are traffic management signs or building sites that do not have appropriate traffic management around them. There was one point last year when I was walking to school with my child and all the kids that were going to school on the street where the school is had to walk across a footpath that had a big muddy puddle with an electrical cord going across it and a cement mixer. A guy was half on the driveway, half on the footpath shovelling cement into the concrete mixer.

I had to call WorkSafe. They came out; they did a good job. But it is really quite frightening on the footpath, and the EVs of course do not make any noise.

The CHAIR: I might also jump in. Wayne's question was about how to encourage—you all talk about feeling safer and that more people would jump on a bike if they felt safer. But has your behaviour changed? You said you were a car enthusiast. When you jump in the car now, has your behaviour changed in the car because of your experience?

Rory DICKSON: Yes. I spend way more time outside of a car than in one. I mean, for anyone who is driving at 40 k an hour, just look to the left outside the passenger window and you will see how quick that actually is for someone outside of a car. I drive a lot slower now. I am calmer. If I have to stop at a light, I will stop, because it is usually a pedestrian that is crossing. If I am in a car, it is because I have got my whole family in it, so I am a lot more alert. When you are outside of a car, you have a chance to observe other drivers. It is endemic how many are on the phones and not paying attention. So, yes, I am just way more alert now as a result.

Jess WILSON: Can I just pick up on that? Just talking about behavioural change, your behaviour went in a certain direction, but what we have heard through evidence over the last day or so is that we have seen aggression pick up on the roads post COVID. One of our focuses with this Committee and the terms of reference is how driver behaviour has changed post COVID and what the impact is on vulnerable road users. Do you have a sense that that is the case—that post COVID people are more aggressive on the roads?

Rory DICKSON: Yes, 100%.

Jess WILSON: Any examples, particularly around schools, if you can give a view?

Rory DICKSON: If I can just reiterate what I wrote in my submission, Pascoe Vale Road—we have to cross it to go to the kids' school. A car was slowing and we had the green light to walk. My kids started to walk, but a car that did not want to stop went around the stopped car and just blasted through. Children dart, they dash, they are unpredictable. If my son, who is seven, did that, he would be dead. It is as simple as that. The car was doing, like, 60 k an hour. I do not know if it was because I was not alert or attuned to these, I guess, moral injuries that I see every day, but it is everywhere. All you have to do is go for a walk and you will see it within 30 seconds. It is endemic.

Catherine HALL: 'Moral injury' is a really good way to put it. We have a crossing—we call it the pool crossing—on Murray Road that is heavily used by Coburg High kids, so I will be talking about it later. One of the respondents in our survey said that drivers seem to just consider it optional whether to stop there. It is a pedestrian and bike crossing—it is not an intersection—and there are just so many stories of people going straight through. I have experienced it. I was halfway through a cross on my bike, and this person did not do it on purpose—he had his head down and did not even realise he had done it, and it is 60 k.

Alexander DIAMIS: Can I add something about the speed and the aggressiveness? On some matters, it is true: things have changed and people are kind of rushing more, and they want to do it. But it is not their fault. The problem is the road's design and the speed limit. Look at Sydney Road, which is where I would like to ride my bike. I do not know if you are familiar with it, but every two metres there is a sign which says '7 am to 7 pm, 40'. Then it goes to 50, then it goes to 60, then on the turn where there is a tram there are millions of signs. This is bad design that is absolutely incomprehensible in terms of sharing the road with pedestrians and cyclists.

I would like to be able to have as a principle—there are good principles, and I will happily point you to the New South Wales future of transport, which is a great policy, it is right in front of me; a google search will take you to it—but simply, I want to have the same mobility options as a car. But if you go on Sydney Road, a car can turn from one side of the street to the other every 50 to 100 metres. Pedestrians have to go—if I want to cross from one side of the bus station or the tram station to the other, usually I will have to go between 100 and 300 metres. This is completely unacceptable.

The speeds are too much—yes, that is true. But even 40 is too much. But I just want to have equal accessibility. If you drive on Sydney Road, cars, they have three lanes on every side. Pedestrians have, like—this is the table, this is exactly what the sidewalk is sometimes. I use a baby pram sometimes. It is very difficult for me to get on

the pathway. It is impossible for me to use the tram on Sydney Road and tram number 58, because the stops are not accessible for prams. So it is like—I do not know how much—20 to 30 centimetres just to get into the tram. It is impossible to use. So of course everyone would use a car and they would be aggressive. It is just inaccessible to pedestrians.

This is one of the reasons, myself, I would look into other options in the more liveable suburbs to live, even if the apartments are smaller or more inaccessible. But I am talking to you because I want your help in making suburban life safer and more comfortable. It is impossible for everyone to live in the CBD. That is not what we are after. We want to have a good suburban life and a safer life—just to use the tram. That is all we are asking.

HELEN: Jess, I have got a couple of examples—probably the ones that left me the most shaken—that I would like to articulate. To get to school on the to-and-from-school route for me, I basically cross an arterial road, go up a local street, turn left, turn right and I am at the school. That is it. I had dropped my child off at school, and the crossing supervisor had held up some traffic for some children to cross. I had turned and was riding my bike up the street and I passed a whole lot of cars, you know, waiting to get to the gate so they could drop the kids right at the gate—which is a no-standing zone where all the children go in all the time, quite problematic. Anyway, I was riding along, and I owned the lane because of car doors. All the kids were getting out—I have got an e-bike of course; it is fast; it is heavy; it is made of steel—so I am owning the lane to be out of the door zone, and then there is a whole lot of cars on the other side. A motorist had been held up by the crossing supervisor, and I came out of the street. Again, I had to turn left and then right, so I turned left—I indicated. I then owned the lane again, because it is only, I do not know, 50 metres, 100 metres to the roundabout, and of course the kerb is built out, right? It narrows at the entrance to the roundabout, so again, you have got to own the lane as someone on a bike, so a car does not try to get through and force you off the road.

So I own the lane; I am indicating right—and you know I am all about safety, so I am fully indicating right with lots of notice—and a woman, the female driver in this massive SUV, overtakes me on the other side of the roundabout—the solid white line was there before the traffic island that leads into the roundabout—and then just cuts right in front of me. I had to brake really hard, and she was yelling at me through the window—because I was using the road. And I find this a lot in the street where I live, because it is a rat run that motorists—like, they fully charge up the road, and then they might stop right in front of you. So that is one example.

Another one that I found just incredibly frightening—I live near Nicholson Street. Of course it is an arterial road, and we have campaigned as a community so hard to get the speed limit reduced. People do not really like driving slowly on the arterial road, particularly because they use it for through traffic. Removing the tolls off the freeway, to answer your question, would be really clever—if you could rip up that agreement with Transurban or whoever and just let people who want to go fast and get somewhere get on a freeway and do it instead of on our streets risking our lives. However, I digress. I am going along: there are parked cars, there are motorists backed up in traffic and then there is a pedestrian crossing. I am riding in between the two and a man in a van, who has his son in the front seat with the window down, starts to veer at me between the parked cars and the cars that are ahead stopped at the crossing. There must have been maybe three cars in front. So I am dinging my bell—now, I bought about a \$100 bell for my bike; it is really loud, it sounds quite friendly—and he could hear it. Then I have to yell out, ‘Oi!’, because it is my life, and he still comes at me. He had passed me earlier, not within the distance as well. It was deliberate intimidation on the road, and it left me so shaken. It took me so long to feel calm because your body goes into this fight-or-flight mode. I have had my child on the back where people have turned—like, I just cannot believe that. I do not know what it is that dehumanises people who ride bikes, but people have deliberately done things like this.

The CHAIR: The attitude to bike riders.

HELEN: I have got a child seat on the back. I follow all the road rules. I do not understand what it is that causes this sort of hate behaviour, which is what it is, which I know you would see on social media as well.

Rory DICKSON: It is because we are not stuck in traffic.

HELEN: Yes. I think so. Maybe they get angry.

Jess WILSON: Thank you for sharing that.

Alexander DIAMIS: There is also one component that makes my life difficult. It is actually bike lanes. Bike lanes—some of them are really, really stupid. Cars just do not care. I live in Pascoe Vale. I ride on Boundary Road. It is a 60-kilometre-an-hour road and there is a bike lane next to it. It is absolutely impossible—there are no children riding on it. They would ride through the cemetery. My wife would not even think of going there. I have my child on the back. I would not ride there; I just avoid it. Cars just go on it. They seem to be able to do it.

Rory DICKSON: Cars park in it.

Alexander DIAMIS: Yes, and cars park in it. But again, this is not a problem; this is legal. There is no sign that says, ‘No parking’. Boundary Road is an ideal artery from one side of Sydney Road to the other side of Pascoe Vale to the train station. There is a bike lane but there is not a bike lane. So I think council should just cancel the bike lanes, put it at 30-kilometres-an-hour, rip out the concrete, put—what do you call them?

Rory DICKSON: Separated bike –

Alexander DIAMIS: No, Dutch streets with paved stones—physical barriers to speed. That is what helps. If you want principles on how to design roads, the Dutch embassy have very good principles on roads. Again, New South Wales have good principles. But bike lanes are not safe. I think they should be removed. I think roads should be just 30 kilometres an hour. That would make our life very simple and safe.

Catherine HALL: I am not an expert, but I have heard that the painted ones are less safe than nothing.

Alexander DIAMIS: Yes. They just park in it. They do not care. If there is no physical barrier, they just drive on it. Pascoe Vale—you are familiar with it; you are a representative of Pascoe Vale.

Anthony CIANFLONE: Yes.

Alexander DIAMIS: You are familiar with it. If you go next to a school, they just park all over the bike lane in the morning because it is more convenient when they do the drop-offs. No-one cares. If there is no physical barrier, people just will not do anything different.

The CHAIR: I am really sorry; we have to close up this conversation. John, do you have a really burning question? Go, John, I will let you.

John MULLAHY: I asked for evidence earlier from the councils with regard to congestion around school zones. It sounds like all of you are reducing congestion around your schools. So I would like to get your opinion on what we could do, effective measures that we could put in place, around schools to reduce that congestion.

HELEN: The Open Streets program, which council is undertaking, is really helpful. Of course there is the modal filtering, which we discussed, and getting people out of their cars and onto bikes, but of course it is a whole network to school. In terms of the congestion at the school gate, we have got these super large, extra large SUVs that drive up into the ‘No standing’ area where there are children all congested on the footpath waiting for the gates to open. What I believe would be really beneficial and innovative for the State Government to do is to allow online reporting by people—members of the public to take photos of where motorists are doing the wrong thing and placing people in danger. We know that police cannot be everywhere. Police cannot do it. But we need compliance. You heard evidence from whoever the guy was who looks after the traffic cameras et cetera and how the compliance is really effective. People do not care. They go, ‘Oh, it doesn’t matter, I’m not going to get fined.’ But if people are fined and they are repeatedly fined for repeat offences, they will stop that behaviour, and they will never know who is going to do it. ‘Dob in a mate’ does not sound very Australian, but we really need to protect the lives of our children and keep roads safe. That is something I think would not be too difficult.

John MULLAHY: Depending on where the school is, it would be police or council that we could actually engage with to do that. I know at some of my schools they have a short period of time where they do that. Behaviours get better for a short period of time, and then they just go straight back to the way it was before. It is that ongoing sort of thing.

Rory DICKSON: Can I just add—15 seconds?

The CHAIR: I am being very generous today. We are going a bit over. It is okay.

Rory DICKSON: Let kids be independent. There will not need to be cars around schools if they can safely get themselves there—30-kilometre streets connected by bike lanes.

Alexander DIAMIS: Not just between 9 o'clock and 9:30 and 4 o'clock.

Rory DICKSON: All the time, yes.

Alexander DIAMIS: We live there. It is our neighbourhood. It is our streets. It is not roads that you can use for 60 kilometres. We are not a thoroughfare; we live there. We want our streets to be safe, period.

Rory DICKSON: And physically slow cars down too. No-one looks at a sign.

Catherine HALL: It is a great gift to children to give them independence. It is the best gift I gave my daughter: riding independently from the age of 10. It affects a lot of aspects of their life. They become great citizens.

The CHAIR: They do. Absolutely, I agree.

HELEN: My final comment—thank you—is yesterday people spoke about the emerging risks of SUVs. I have not heard anybody speak about automated vehicles at all, and I think that is something that the Committee should absolutely consider.

The CHAIR: Absolutely. Yes, thank you for putting that on our radar. Anthony, I am going to let you do the thankyou.

Anthony CIANFLONE: I just wanted to say thank you so much to each and every one of you and your community groups for the submissions and your efforts today. This is the reason why I was so keen for the Committee to come here. I have got a community that is so passionate and so active in this space. I appreciate it all, not just as the local member but also as a local dad and parent myself. We commute almost every day to our local school as well, like many of you too, through active transport—walking or cycling—so thank you. I genuinely mean that. With that, I hand back to the Chair.

The CHAIR: Thank you, and please provide anything further that you feel needed to be said today. We are more than happy for you to come back to us as well. Thank you for your time.

Witnesses withdrew.