

*Road Safety Amendment (Car Doors) Bill 2012*

*Submission for the committee tabled by Robert Cook*

The Committee seeks input on whether it is appropriate to:

- increase the penalty from 3 penalty units to 10 penalty units; and
- attach demerit points to the offence of 'car dooring'.

This submission is in two parts,

1. My personal experience.
2. Observations in undesirable behaviour change.
3. Specific input.

**My personal experience.**

I was made very aware of the risks of a door strike many years ago and have drawn on this experience to be very cautious of doors opening unexpectedly. This caution is exercised by riding outside the swing zone of the doors belonging to parked cars.

My awareness arose when I was riding along Nepean Hwy, when the driver of a parked truck opened his door in my path. Fortunately with a combination of reflex and luck, I was able to duck and my head passed through the arc in the truck door that is designed to accommodate the front wheel of the truck.

**Observations in undesirable behaviour change.**

Historically, before the roll-out of bicycle lanes, anyone opening a car door was at considerable risk of it being hit by a passing car. In this era, the awareness of the risks and hence the accompanying caution associated with opening a door were quite high and the repercussions of such actions significant in terms of damage to the offending vehicle.

With the roll-out of bicycle lanes that require cars to be more central on the road, the risk of a door strike from another vehicle is greatly reduced which has led to a corresponding reduction in caution when opening a car door. This is further compounded by the fact that a cyclist is perceived to be not capable of making significant damage to a car. Not surprisingly, car doors are now opened with a significant degree of recklessness.

**Specific Input**

The pre bike lane awareness and caution associated with opening a car door can be restored by increasing the penalty from 3 penalty units to 10 penalty units and attaching demerit points to the offence of 'car dooring'. This will drive home the message that acts of recklessly opening a car door will have quite high repercussions, repercussions that would be best to avoid.

Submission to the car door bill tabled by Robert Cook