

Presidential Ponderings:

Just a few thoughts, in no particular order of importance.

Riding two abreast

The law allows riders to ride two abreast no more than 1.5 meters apart.

That's fine, but we should consider other road users and our own safety before doing so.

There is enough anti-cyclist emotion out there in car land without unnecessarily adding to it.

What should we do as representatives of our BUG and the general cycling community?

- Only ride two abreast when this will not impede the smooth and safe flow of traffic.
- Always ride in single file on major roads.
- Always ride within the white line where a rideable shoulder is available. (If that means single file then so be it).
- Let other riders know if there is traffic approaching from the rear. – “Car Back” or maybe “Truck back”. Is the accepted call. On narrow roads cars approaching, which may not be seen by riders behind you, should be announced by “Car Up”. We should always get into single file when these calls are made.

Riding on Shared Cycleways

These paths are designed for both pedestrians and bikes.

The law says:

- Pedestrians have the right of way.
- A bell should be sounded when cyclists approach a pedestrian.

In practice this sometimes so shocks a walker that they jump aside – sometimes into the path of the approaching bike.

It also leads to anger on the part of the pedestrian arising from their fear.

- Riders of the age of our members are NOT permitted to ride on footpaths unless there are signs indicating permission.

What is the best approach? (No pun intended)

- Do not race past at speed unless the pedestrian has indicated awareness of your presence.
- We are a recreational group. Speed is not a criteria for our activities and so there is no reason to race past pedestrians.
- In addition, or in my view, instead of a loud bell ring slow down and call out in a moderately loud voice (Do not shout) something like “Is it okay if I/we come past?” Then pass when they indicate that it is safe to do so. It also helps if you advise that there are (n) cyclists coming behind you.

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- On the Urunga Bridge path cycling is actually not permitted and we are faced with the dangers of high speed traffic on the narrow roadway. If you opt to ride on the footpath, as many do, you need to be doubly aware of the rights of pedestrians and the dangers to both of you should one fall onto the roadway.

Responding to abuse from Motorists

Yes they are wrong!

Shouting back or showing “the finger” may well give us some momentary solace but will only entrench what is an anti-bike attitude already in existence.

What to do?

- Resist the urge to shout or give the finger. (Yes, I know I am guilty of one and sometimes both but will try to amend my own ways.)
- Do try to get the number of the vehicle. (In my experience that is usually impossible).
- Just ignore them and rest in the knowledge that they know no better. You are allowed to feel superior.

Indicating your intentions

The law requires us to adhere to normal traffic rules.

This includes giving turning signals and stopping signals.

What signals are acceptable amongst cyclists?

Basic Road rule requirements:

- Left Turn: Left hand and arm extended prior to making the turn.
- Right Turn: Right hand and arm extended right prior to making the turn.
- Stopping: Right arm extended with forearm vertical Palm facing front. When cycling in a group this should be accompanied by a loud call of “Stopping” or “Slowing”.

Other useful signals for use when riding in groups.

In a peloton riders behind are often unable to see approaching hazards and need to be clearly informed.

- Car Approaching from rear: Shout: “Car Back”
- Car approaching from the front: Shout: “Car up”
- Slowing or stopping: Shout: “Slowing” or “Stopping”.
- Indicating a narrowing of the path or track: Put hand and arm behind your back pointing to the need to follow directly behind you.
- Indicating object or danger: Point towards the object and call out a description of its nature: E.g. “Glass” or “Pot Hole”.

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General Cycling Behaviour

We are a clearly recognisable group and are, I think, justifiably proud of our reputation.

It is incumbent on us to set an example of responsible behaviour to both other cyclists and the community at large.

- **Be courteous** at all times.
- **Ride in a safe manner**, not only for us but all other road users.
- Try to **encourage the free flow of traffic**, motorised, bicycle, and pedestrian, by making way where safe to do so.
- **Acknowledge other people's courtesy**, by a wave or called out thanks when a motorist does the right thing towards us. (Such as waiting until it is safe to pass us.)
- **Do not be foolishly aggressive** in insisting on our "rights". Doing so simply reinforces the negative opinions already held by those opposed to cycling.
- **Clearly indicate** your intentions when moving in traffic.
- **Ride consistently**. That means: In a manner that approaching traffic and those riding behind us can be reasonably confident as to where we will be in the next few seconds.
 - It is a real problem for cyclists following if we vary speed and direction suddenly. – It can lead to the dreaded "touch of Wheels" with the attendant possibility of a fall into traffic with the real possibility of fatality. Any fall can lead to severe injury as many of our members can testify.

These are my thoughts. What do you think?

George