



Petition of Joanne Clendon – 2014/59

Submission from Brake, the road safety charity

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I do not wish to appear before the committee.

About Brake

Brake is a road safety charity with global interests, and branches in the UK and New Zealand. It approaches road safety and sustainable travel using the vision zero method. That is to say, the charity considers that all deaths and injuries on roads are unacceptable, and eliminating carbon emissions from transport, which is the largest contributing carbon sector, should be approached with equal zeal. Brake's vision is a world where people can move around in ways that are safe, sustainable, healthy and fair.

Brake promotes road safety awareness, safe and sustainable road use, and effective road safety policies. It does this through national campaigns, community activities, services for employers and fleet professionals, and coordination of national Road Safety Week.

Brake also cares for families bereaved and injured in road crashes. It does this by providing specialist support resources to families following a crash.

Background

Recent research shows that children want to get to school [using active travel](#) however the majority (57% of 5-12 year olds) are taken by car¹. In addition, cycling to school has seen a dramatic decline in the last 25 years, from 12% to 2% and 19% to 3% of primary and secondary school children respectively².

Increased levels of cycling provide significant health, environmental, economic, and community benefits. However, road danger poses a major barrier to active travel, not only to people choosing cycling as a transport choice to get from A to B, but also to people, particularly children and families, simply being able to 'get out and about' and cycle in their neighbourhood for leisure, exercise and social reasons.

If their local environment is safe, children are more likely to be allowed to travel actively and play outside³, making them more likely to be fit and healthy, and more likely to choose active travel for their shorter journeys when they are older⁴.

Over recent years a number of initiatives have helped to improve cycling in New Zealand, for example encouraging cycle tourism through the off-road NZ Cycle Trail, and the installation of some separated urban cycle routes such as Te Ara I Whiti in Auckland. However, New Zealand still lags far behind other nations in both promoting sustainable and active travel, and providing safe routes for these transport options.

There are also contrasts between what is being promoted and what is possible in relation to cycling. For example, there is a thriving Bikes in Schools programme, and local councils are encouraging children and parents to use active travel, particularly to get to and from school (see [Travelwise](#) and [Movin' March](#)), yet there are few areas where safe routes exist for children to cycle on-road, so most cannot safely cycle to school without breaking the law and cycling on the footpath.

Brake's response to petition 2014/59

Brake wishes to make the following key points in relation to petition number 2014/59 from Joanne Clendon:

Allow children aged 14 and under (and accompanying adults), seniors, and vulnerable users to ride on the footpath

Brake supports this proposal. Children should be able to ride safely to school, sports and around their neighbourhood. It should be easy to be active, but New Zealand's traffic-free cycle network is sparse, meaning families are discouraged from cycling as roads are too busy and dangerous for children's skill

¹ 25 years of New Zealand travel: New Zealand household travel 1989-2014 pg. 29, (2015), Ministry of Transport

² 25 years of New Zealand travel: New Zealand household travel 1989-2014 pgs. 29-31, (2015), Ministry of Transport

³ Brake and Bolt Burdon Kemp survey of parents on cycling, 2012, and Brake and Churchill survey of parents on walking, 2012

⁴ Timperio, A., Crawford, D., et al. 'Perceptions about the local neighbourhood and walking and cycling among children'. *Preventative Medicine*, 2004.

level and development. Those who want to cycle are often forced to load their bikes onto the car and drive to a dedicated facility, rather than be active in their local community.

New Zealand's cycle network needs urgently expanding to enable people to travel between homes, schools, places of work and amenities by bike. Other countries such as [Germany](#) and the [UK](#) are making huge investments in cycling, creating cycle super highways in urban centres and between urban centres which keep vehicles and bicycles separated. It is not an effective, safe solution to have on-road cycle lanes, only distinguished and separated by road paint. Brake urges government to invest more in addressing on-road cycle safety in urban areas, through separated cycle paths and widespread 30km/h speed limits in urban areas. Evidence shows that slowing down traffic makes cycling (and walking) safer⁵. Making whole communities welcoming for walkers and cyclists rather than simply providing safe routes from A to B will encourage people, particularly families, to get more active in their leisure time⁶.

Until such time as separated paths are commonplace, allowing those groups named above to cycle on footpaths will enable and encourage more people to cycle, and help protect them from death and injury on the road. Therefore, Brake supports this proposal.

Make bells compulsory for those riding on the footpath

Use of bells will help to alert pedestrians to cyclists' presence, and help both groups to share the path, therefore Brake supports this proposal. However, Brake recommends that care be taken in introducing this rule, particularly given recent experiences in [Australia](#) with cyclists' attitudes towards mandatory bells and the enforcement of them.

Concerns have been raised for pedestrians with hearing issues who aren't able to hear a bell. Brake recommends that the following rules are also considered, to also assist with pedestrian safety:

- cyclists using footpaths must give way to pedestrians
- cyclists using footpaths travel at a maximum speed of 8km/h (approximate jogging pace)

Teach "Share with Care" as part of bike training programmes

Brake feels this is an important part of cycle training programmes, particularly to help ensure pedestrian safety whilst cyclists are using footpaths, and to promote sharing on shared paths. This should also include details of the rules above regarding giving way to pedestrians and cycling slowly on footpaths.

Brake recommends that cycle skills training for children continue to be supported at a national level, and that such training includes sections on safe cycling on footpaths.

Allow local bodies to restrict cycling on the footpath in certain busy areas

Brake would support this as a measure to help keep people on foot and bicycle safe in busy environments. However, Brake notes that this could result in a situation where a cyclist's journey takes them through an area where they can cycle on the footpath, and then an area where they can't, on route to their destination. Many of these busy environments will also have high volume vehicle traffic, where on-road cycling is dangerous.

Brake suggests cyclists be encouraged to dismount in these areas and walk with their bicycles if on-road cycling is unsafe.

Encourage education for drivers on driveway safety

On average each year in New Zealand five children are killed in driveway run over incidents. Driveway safety should be a part of driver training for learner drivers and at-work drivers. There should also be regular awareness campaigns aimed at all drivers about the risk of driveway run over incidents and the impact they have, such as those run by Brake and Safekids, but also by government.

In particular, education should highlight that reversing is best avoided as far as possible, particularly reversing out of a driveway. Ideally there would be space in the driveway for a vehicle to turn rather than have to reverse, but where this is not possible vehicles should be parked on the road, or reversed in, after the driver has checked no children are on the driveway. This will also help to protect people on foot and bicycle on footpaths and shared paths at the end of the driveway.

Children and parents should also be reminded to look out for 'sneaky driveways' when they are walking and cycling, through school programmes such as walking school bus, and cycle skills training.

End/

⁵ Grundy, C., Steinbach, R., Edwards, P., Wilkinson, P. Et al. "20 mph zones and Road Safety in London" Report for Transport for London, 2009

⁶ Pucher, J. and Buehler, R., 'Making Cycling Irresistible: Lessons from the Netherlands, Denmark, and Germany.' *Transport Reviews*, 2008.