

Minister for Infrastructure  
Minister for Police and Emergency Management

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Deputy Andrew Green MBE  
Housing Minister of Jersey

Dear Minister Green

Thank you for your letter dated 15 April 2014 regarding the use of cycle helmets in Tasmania. I am saddened to learn of your son's cycling incident some years ago, and his ongoing health problems.

Ensuring the safety of cyclists is a major focus of the Tasmanian Government, as is the protection of all vulnerable road users. We are committed to creating a safe, accessible and well-connected transport system that encourages cycling for everyday journeys.

Mandatory bicycle helmet wearing was introduced in Tasmania in 1991 and has since been adopted nationally by all jurisdictions in Australia. The requirement to wear a helmet is an important road safety initiative aimed at reducing the severity of crash outcomes and is based on strong research evidence.

Since the introduction of mandatory helmet wearing, there has been vigorous international debate on the effectiveness and desirability of helmet wearing. I acknowledge the argument that compulsory bicycle helmet wearing has or will lead to a decline in cycling, however the discomfort or inconvenience of wearing a helmet is considered a relatively small price to pay compared to the prospect of suffering a head injury.

Considerable medical research and statistical evidence exists to support that bicycle helmets substantially reduce the incidence and severity of head injury. A recent comprehensive study by Sydney's Royal Prince Alfred Hospital concluded cyclists who crashed without a helmet were five times more likely to suffer a serious head injury than those wearing an Australian Standards approved helmet. The study reviewed patients from 1991 to 2009 over the age of 16 who were admitted to the hospital trauma unit suffering from head injuries related to a bicycle incident on public roads. They found the number of cyclists sustaining severe head injuries has remained consistently low over the long term, with an apparent decline in the rate of severe head injuries in admitted patients since 2005. It is estimated that each new case of severe brain injury can cost \$12 million in care, support and medical fees over a lifetime.

Bicycle ownership statistics indicate there are now many more cyclists than a decade ago and cycling participation for commuters has grown in the major city centres. Yet serious casualty crashes for cyclists have been relatively static in Tasmania in recent years, which suggest current crash and injury prevention measures are working.

I believe the road safety and injury prevention benefits of compulsory bicycle helmet wearing outweigh other arguments in favour of optional helmet wearing. The Tasmanian Government has a responsibility to take action to minimise the cost to the community of road deaths and injuries, and the compulsory use of bicycle helmets has contributed significantly to meeting this responsibility.

I trust this information will be of use to you when considering instigating similar compulsory helmet legislation in Jersey and thank you for your interest in road safety.

Yours sincerely

Hon M.T.(Rene) Hidding MP  
**Minister for Infrastructure**