

RAA Member Panel

Bicycle Helmet Safety

Wearing a bicycle helmet was made compulsory in South Australia in 1991. Twenty five years on there is still ongoing debate as to the benefits of wearing a helmet when riding a bicycle. This survey seeks the views of our members on this issue.

Almost 680 Member Panel respondents completed the survey.

More than one in four respondents ride a bicycle at least every fortnight, however just over a third (34%) of respondents never ride a bicycle.

The most common reason respondents gave for not riding was their concerns about sharing the road with cars (18%), followed by being unable to ride (12%) and a lack of time (12%). Other reasons for not riding a bicycle included age, not owning a bike, a lack of fitness or weather conditions.

Helmets are not stopping people from riding

Only 13 per cent of respondents thought helmets shouldn't be compulsory when riding a bicycle, that's compared to 82 per cent who do support wearing helmets.

Only 11 per cent of respondents said they would ride more often if helmets were not compulsory.

If helmets were no longer compulsory, 15 per cent of respondents said they would stop wearing a helmet, but 77 per cent would still wear one.

When asked to consider alternate options, members suggested that helmets may not be necessary in safe zones, such as parks or designated car-free areas. However, they felt helmets should remain compulsory for children, but it could be optional for adults.

Consistent safety standards

The ACCC is currently consulting on the need to develop standards for the manufacturer of bicycle helmets, with a focus on consistency across Australia. Most (93%) of our members support this action.

Visibility issues

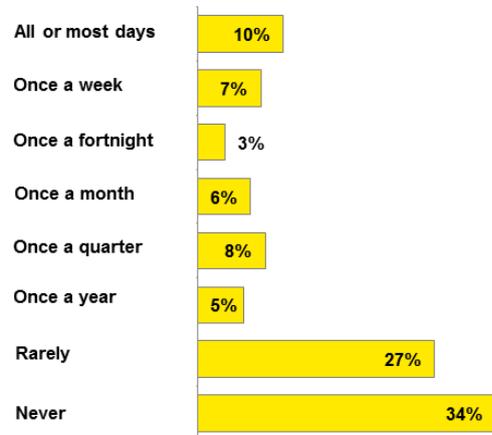
The most common collisions between motorists and bicycles happens when a car is turning left in front of a cyclist, and in nearly all cases neither the motorist nor the cyclist has broken a road rule.

To reduce the crash risk, 87 per cent of respondents believe that motorists are more likely to see cyclists if they are wearing high visibility clothing.

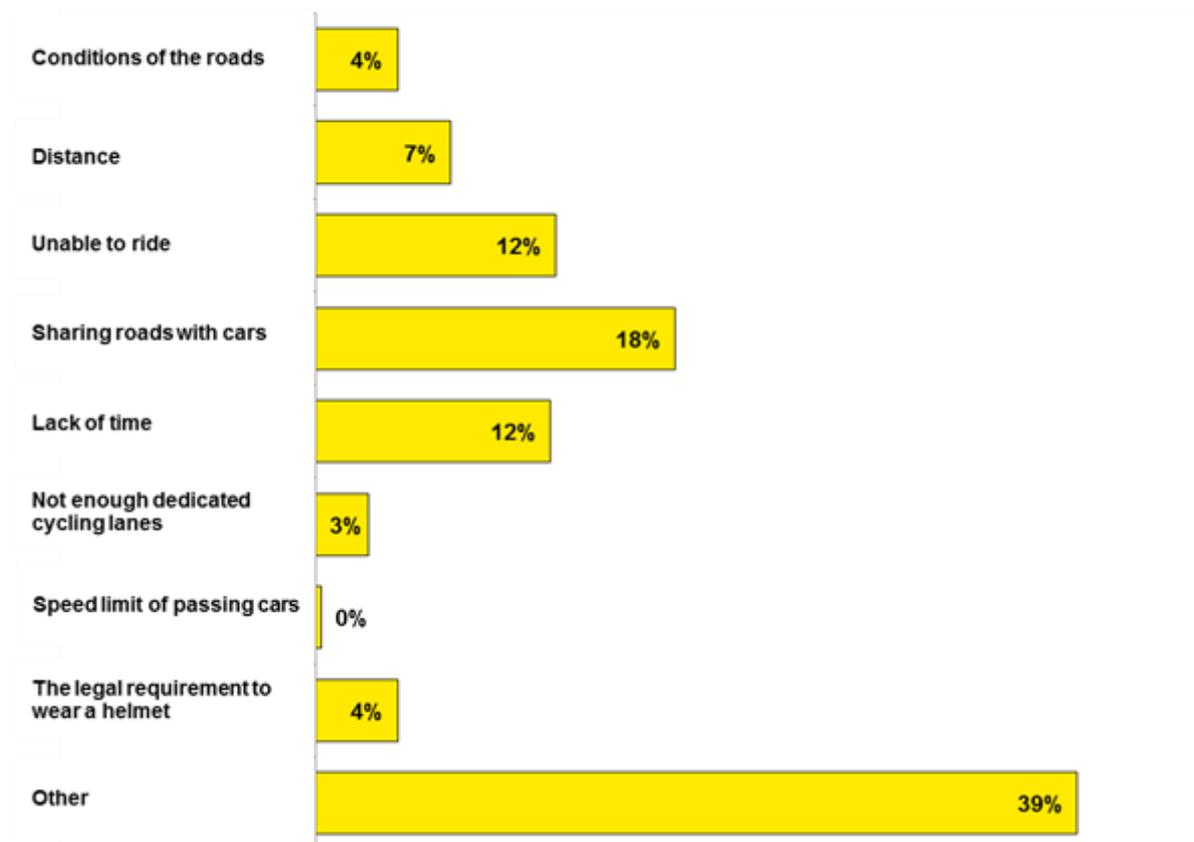


Appendix - Results

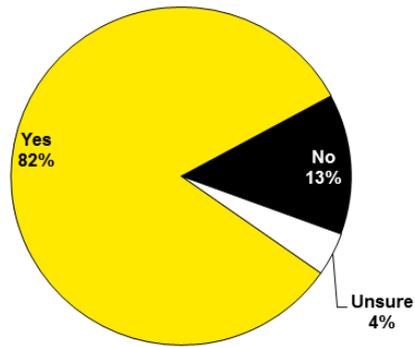
Please select the best option below that describes how often you ride a bicycle?



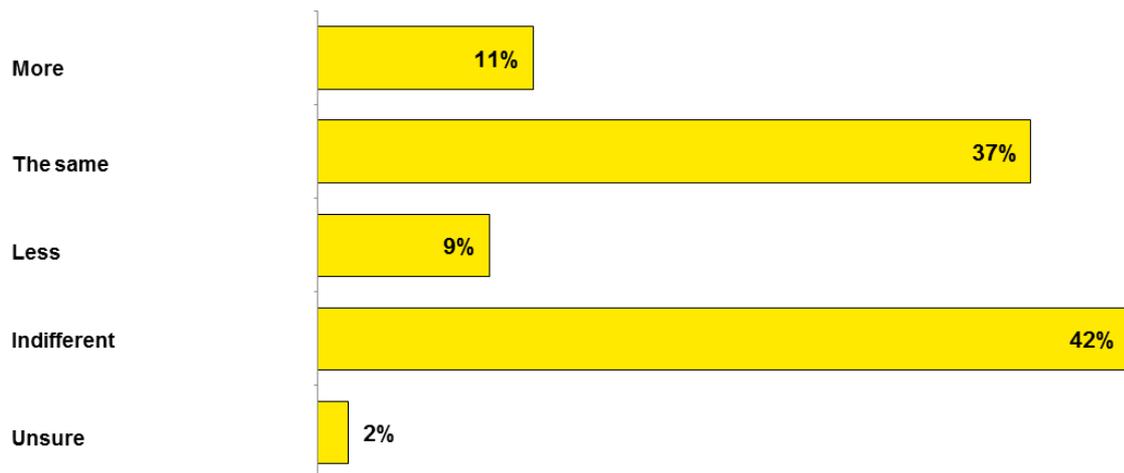
What is the primary reason that you don't ride a bicycle?



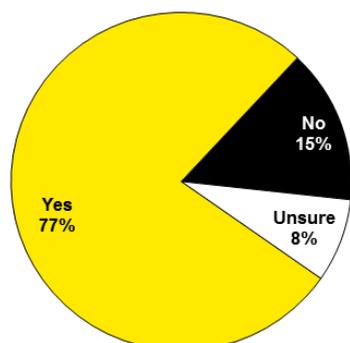
Do you believe bicycle helmets should always be worn when cycling?



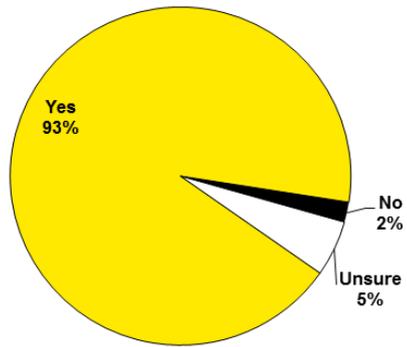
If bicycle helmet wearing was no longer compulsory, would you ride a bicycle more or less frequently?



If you were going to ride a bicycle and it was no longer compulsory to wear a helmet when riding, would you still wear a helmet anyway?



Do you believe standards for bicycle helmets should be consistent across Australia?



Do you believe that motorists are more likely to see cyclists if they were wearing high visibility clothing?

