

Cycling Safety & Personal Values—by Mick Darlington

Most of us in the cycling community started in the sport of cycling for the health & physical benefits. There may have been times where we have put these benefits before our own personal safety, which doesn't make a lot of sense. Example of this could be riding with no lights or lights with poor batteries, riding on roads with heavy traffic flow, not staying left because you have a right to be there or riding into the sunrise or sunset.

We all know of examples where things can go tragically wrong through no fault of your own but there are many things we as cyclist's can do to minimise the exposure to these risks. Behavioural based safety has been the buzz word in the mining industry for many years but it can easily be related to any activity where the exposure to risk is high and the consequences can be disastrous. Many would agree cycling on our roads fits into this category. Behavioural based safety focuses on the human aspects, specifically our *behaviours* and our *attitudes* and most importantly our *VALUES*.

Our attitudes (thoughts and feelings) drive the corresponding behaviours. An example of this maybe "I have a legal right to ride on the road (attitudes) and therefore can ride 2 abreast even in peak hour traffic" (behaviours). Our *VALUES* are the things that are most important to us in life. Most common values for people are family, health, financial security, home, etc, etc.

Here's where it all ties together, if you think about what you most value in life then this will impact on your attitude which in turn will drive your behaviours. So if you're riding in peak hour traffic you will be thinking & feeling (attitude) some or all of my values can potentially be compromised if something goes wrong so I will ride single file or choose (behaviour) an alternate route.

An exercise: write down what you most value in your life, display it somewhere to remind yourself what's important to you (maybe near or on your bike) and think about what could impact those things most important to you. It may prompt you to check the battery condition of your lights before your head out on your ride, re-think your ride route due to the location of the sun or think about where you place yourself on the road in relation to other road users. i.e. not staying as far left as practically possible.

Always think & feel what could impact on your personal values and behave in ways to protect what you most value. Your family & love ones will be forever grateful and maybe more at ease when you head out on your next cycling journey.