



FREESTYLECYCLISTS
E N J O Y T H E R I D E

MEDIA RELEASE

The Cycle of Reform – A Film by Geoff McLeod in association with Freestyle Cyclists Inc.

Freestyle Cyclists Inc was formed in 2012 to give a voice for everyday transport cycling in Australia. A cornerstone of our vision is reform of Australia's internationally rejected mandatory helmet laws. Geoff's film 'The Cycle of Reform' presents a compelling case for rethinking these laws in Australia. This is developed through a linked series of edited interviews with academics, doctors and cycling advocates.

Mandatory helmet laws led to an immediate and sustained drop in cycling participation. This was most marked in the lowest risk environment of low speed transport cycling – the sort most beneficial to public health. In Australia we have traded a negligible effect on cyclists' safety for a significant public health cost. We have tasked the police with punishing healthy low-risk behaviour, turning people away from everyday cycling and paying the price in increased rates of obesity, heart disease, and traffic congestion.

Chris Rissel, professor of Public Health at the University of Sydney, calls for a paradigm shift in how we approach active transport. Nick Dow, cycling advocate and Freestyle Cyclists founding member, rightly says that the helmet law is an anti-cycling law - you could only conceive of it in a country where everyone drives a car and bikes are just in the way.

Other interviewees include Dr. Paul Martin MBBS, FANZCA, an anaesthetist with considerable experience of trauma victims in the operating theatre, and also a passionate cycling advocate and Kathy Francis who found herself arrested and imprisoned when six months pregnant for failing to pay her helmet fines in Victoria.

Our politicians and a disturbing number of state transport "experts" continue to ignore or misrepresent the data – the scientific equivalent

according to Dr. Martin of “putting their fingers in their ears and saying la la la we can’t hear you”. The time for reform is well overdue. Geoff’s film is a call to action for anyone interested in promoting public health through active transport.

For further information on Freestyle Cyclists Inc and the film, contact:

Alan Todd - president Freestyle Cyclists Inc 0400 502 325

Geoff McLeod – filmmaker 0438 808 345

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