

To the Honourable Senators involved in the projected enquiry:

I wish to make a contribution to this enquiry. After sixty-two years of relatively accident-free driving, I decided in November 2016 to stop driving a car, and to purchase two mobility scooters, one each for my wife and myself. I am now 88 years old, a Veteran of the Korean War, having served with distinction for 22 years in the RAAF, holding the rank of Warrant Officer on discharge in 1969.

In the last thirteen months I have driven my scooter over 1,600 km. Its normal speed, on the flat, is a fraction over 10 km/h. I have never had an accident, the only times I have come close to a collision is when people have backed out of shop doors without looking, or when people have driven at dangerously high speed from driveways.

I live in Sebastopol, an outer southern suburb of Ballarat, the Ballarat Central Business is 6-7 km away, a trip of typically 50-55 minutes. I have made the trip many times, the only danger being crossing busy intersections, of which there are several on the journey between Sebastopol and Ballarat CBD. Precise judgment is needed to cross any busy street, with vehicles approaching from both directions.

If, as some people have suggested, scooter speeds were to be restricted to 5-6 km/h, such crossings would become very much more dangerous. Also, in hot weather, the extension of travelling time that would result from slower speeds might well become life-threatening. I am the sole support for my sick wife, doing all the shopping, cooking, etc., along with other household duties.

Any vehicle requires careful driving, be it bicycle, scooter, motorcar or B-double transport. All are involved in accidents from time to time, sadly all have caused death or serious injury. Does anyone seriously suggest all should have their speed halved?

I rest my case.

Arthur Comer