



Glass fragments on path by bus-shelter, Fremantle, just south-west of Traffic Bridge

**Deposits on bottles will greatly improve cycling.
Non-lacerating containers should have preference over glass**

A major problem for cyclists, both regular and occasional, is the serious prevalence of broken glass on our roads and bike-paths.

Firstly, this causes punctures. Regular cyclists carry a spare tube, tyre levers and a pump, so a puncture is a bloody nuisance and delays the trip. Many less regular cyclists probably neither know how to repair a puncture, nor have the necessary gear with them. Punctures from broken glass will be a major reason why some people give up bicycle use. The extra environmental, health and oil vulnerability problems caused by "lapsed cyclists" are very considerable in both economic and social terms.

Secondly, the patches of glass fragments on roads create serious safety risks. Cyclists have to concentrate on the details of the road surface just ahead, and this can partly distract them for watching for vehicles and other hazards. A cyclist suddenly confronted with a patch of glass fragments ahead by the side of the road will probably swerve out around the glass; risky if there is a car passing.

WA is the first State in Australia to be trying to follow the lead of South Australia which has had successful container deposit legislation, CDL, (5 cents per bottle or can) since 1975. This would be almost 25 cents now, if it had been adjusted for inflation. Anecdotal evidence suggests strongly that South Australia has much less broken glass on its roads.

However, there is a lot of opposition from the packaging industry, who want the costs of litter and landfill to be borne by the community as a whole, not by those who manufacture the containers or those who discard them.

Cyclists and bikeshops should get involved, by writing to their local member of State Parliament, or ringing to register their support. We should also contact our local councils and bicycle clubs to make sure our views are heard. There is far too much broken glass around, and CDL will make a big difference. As it is only glass containers that lacerate kids' feet and cause punctures, there is a good case for a CDL system which favours cans, plastic and cardboard containers, which do not shatter into hundreds of razor-sharp fragments when dropped or run over by cars.

The final report of the Stakeholder Advisory Group investigation on best practice container deposit systems for WA is at www.zerowastewa.com.au/documents/sag_cds_report.pdf

This focuses on reducing landfill and litter. While this is important, it is also vital that cyclists (and walkers, people with dogs, water-skiers, swimmers, etc) write to the relevant Ministers requesting they support the legislation particularly the use of containers that are non-lacerating. There should be a 25 cent deposit on cans and plastic bottles and 50 cents on glass containers.

Contact:

The Hon Alannah MacTiernan
Minister for Planning and Infrastructure
13th Floor, Dumas House
2 Havelock Street WEST PERTH WA 6005
e-Mail: alannah-mactiernan@dpc.wa.gov.au

The Hon David Templeman
Minister for the Environment
29th Floor, Allendale Square
77 St Georges Terrace PERTH WA 6000
e-Mail: david-templeman@dpc.wa.gov.au

The Bicycle Transportation Alliance is also joining the broken glass campaign
<http://www.btawa.org.au/%7Ebta/campaigns/current.shtml>

Hazard Reporting

Don't forget to keep reporting hazards when you find them – it is the only way that the relevant authorities know there is a problem and the most effective way of getting it fixed. In March, glass hazards made up almost half of the reports, but the number has been dropping steadily until now glass appears to comprise just over a quarter of all hazards. Is this because there is less glass around; because the authorities have become much more efficient in removing hazards before they affect users; or because we have become complacent and are reporting less? My money is on the latter

Send an e-mail describing the hazard, and its location (and perhaps a digital photo), and your contact details to Cycling@dpi.wa.gov.au (and a copy to BTA_WA@hotmail.com) or use the web hazard report form at <http://www.dpi.wa.gov.au/cycling/2345.asp>

for more information, contact Bruce Robinson 9384-7409 0427 398 708
Bruce.Robinson (at) Westnet.com.au