

Martin Oliver submission

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Name: Martin Oliver

Organisation: N/A



Confidentiality status: I am happy for my submission to be published, but I would like my details to be anonymous.

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Dear Sir/Madam,

I do not support the use of driverless cars on Australia's roads. If they were to be introduced, then I support restricting them to special purpose-built 'smart' suburbs that are designed especially for driverless car use.

Some points I would like to make include:

- The safety of driverless cars cannot be assured, and these vehicles have regularly been involved in accidents in the San Francisco area where they have been trialled. They have hit pedestrians, crashed with vehicles, and blocked emergency vehicles.
- Driverless cars have the important and detrimental effect of reversing the greater onus of road safety precautions from drivers to pedestrians, who would be obliged to take a far more precautionary approach to walking across or near roads. Systems for pedestrians would need to be more controlled than at present, perhaps with pedestrians corralled away from roads on dedicated walkways that would be more sterile and would remove the traditional appeal of urban street life. Cyclists would need to be extra-cautious.
- The environmental benefits of driverless cars have been significantly overstated. The only environmental benefit I can think of is a reduced need for car parking. On the downside, the widespread use of these vehicles would most likely increase sprawl and congestion. In the case of sprawl, this is because longer driving times would become feasible. In the Australian context, sprawl is a negative trend that destroys farmland, nature, and biodiversity. In the case of congestion, the economics of urban parking would encourage driverless car owners to send their vehicles home, doubling travel distances. Otherwise, owners may leave their vehicles to drive around randomly while they are conducting their activities, clogging up the streets. This additional congestion could be relieved if shared vehicles were widely used in place of those that are privately owned. However, this would require a major cultural shift.
- Without strong rules in place, driverless cars could be a data-harvesting nightmare, as valuable data is funnelled into the hands of corporate interests.

- The high-tech aspect of driverless cars presents a hacking risk, and by inference a safety risk, unless the most stringent security is applied, and no secret 'back doors' are employed.
- Lidar sensors on driverless cars risk damage to the human eye, as a sweeping beam of laser light emits millions of pulses per second. This can occur at the 1550-nanometer frequency despite it being considered safer than 905 nanometers, and I understand that there has been at least one documented case of damage at 1550 nanometers.. Cheaper-built lidar units pose greater risks. The extent of eye damage would be multiplied exponentially if numerous driverless cars were on the road. The only way for people within sight of a road to be assured of their eye safety would be for everyone to wear expensive laser-protective eyewear, even while at home. Camera and road safety camera sensors are also at risk of damage.
- Radar sensors on driverless cars emit potentially harmful non-ionising radiation, and would be especially problematic for people with electrosensitivity. The field intensity would increase in proportion to the number of autonomous vehicles on the road.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Oliver