

**Submission
No 3**

SUPPORT FOR RURAL AND REGIONAL LEARNER DRIVERS

Name: Mr James Steward

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I live in Northern NSW near Kyogle. I enjoy cycling and cycle regularly, and over what some may think are considerable distances. It is normal for me to cycle 100km in a single outing. I like road cycling more than off road, so I often end up riding on some busy high speed roads. Having cycled regularly for over 30 years and spending most of my life in and around Melbourne, I'm comfortable with traffic and I know that although I was at greater risk of a collision with another vehicle riding in the city, the result is less likely to be fatal than a single collision where I am hit from behind by someone driving a vehicle at 100km/h on a rural road. So on rural roads the risk of any collision is lower, but the result of any collision is almost certainly death.

This bothers me. NSW has a minimum passing distance law for motorised vehicles overtaking bicycles, and although safely passing a cyclist or cyclists isn't difficult, it is astounding how often drivers get it dangerously wrong. There are several modes of failure. Some drivers;

1. do not know that there exists a minimum passing distance law.
2. know there is a law but do not understand that they can cross unbroken centre lines to pass at a safe distance _when_it_is_safe_to_do_so_.
3. might know there is a law, but only manage to pass at a safe distance when there is nothing coming the other way, otherwise they may move a little to the right and often force drivers in oncoming vehicles to veer off the road.
4. if I'm lucky will slow and wait until they can safely pass, but a number don't wait and pass on blind corners or over the crest of a hill, for example.
5. might be willing to pass at a safe distance, but if there are two riders abreast the drivers often can't cope with this legal and safe bicycle riding (more visible than a single rider), and usually gesticulate wildly for us to be single file and sound their horn (illegally), and pass too close while hurling insults.

On quite a number of occasions I have also had drivers overtaking toward me, such that when we pass there are two vehicles approaching me, with one on the wrong side of the road at probably more than 100km/h. It is not satisfactory.

Stupidity, ignorance and impatience are what a lot of the problem boils down to, in my opinion.

There is clearly a lack of education, training, testing and enforcement, and it puts lives at risk. With parents and guardians instructing learner drivers, it is well known that instructors will pass on their bad habits to learners. It is imperative therefore to educate and train existing drivers, particularly those who instruct learners. I think parents should attend a refresher course to bring them up to date with law changes (as in the case of minimum passing distance law) before they can legally instruct a learner. Similarly driving instructors may need to be retrained in certain areas.

I would like an initiative to install signs at the entry and exit of every rural town where the speed limit changes from more than 60km/h to 60km/h or below, that shows the correct passing distance in the speed zone being entered. I.e. 1.0m when entering a 60km/h zone or less and 1.5m when entering a zone greater than 60km/h. These are used in Tasmania it seems, ref <https://www.rsac.tas.gov.au/road-users/cyclists/> and see attached.

I rarely have a video camera attached to my bicycle, but the last time I did I managed to capture an incident where a truck driver who could have seen me from hundreds of metres before, barged through while failing to give me the legally required space (I moved left of the fog line just before

the driver started to pass) and forced drivers in oncoming vehicles off the road. I've included a couple of screen shots for reference.

I haven't bothered taking the video to the police as I've seen a report of a cyclist doing similar and being charged for not riding as far left as practicable, or the police are very likely to ignore my complaint. I thought about sending an email to the truck company, but then it's possible I'd suffer retribution. The best way forward is for a change to road use behaviour. That begins with learner drivers.

Sincerely,

James Steward



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CYCLISTS
SAFELY**



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