

ROAD SAFETY — CYCLISTS — MINIMUM SAFE PASSING RULES

579. Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE to the Minister for Road Safety:

I refer to the minimum safe passing rules announced on the weekend. Why are these rules needed; and how will they protect people on bikes?

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS replied:

I thank the member for his question and I commend him for his commitment to cycling and his advocacy on behalf of those who cycle. Often in this place we tell people to do as we say and then we do not do it ourselves, but in the member for Thornlie, we have someone who not only advocates the benefits of cycling, but also actually gets on with it and does it himself, and leads by example.

I am really pleased to announce that we have fulfilled another election commitment by putting in these safe passing laws for cyclists. These laws will apply as of 30 November. In a 60-kilometres-an-hour zone or lower, drivers will need to leave a one-metre passing space. If the zone is more than 60 kays, the passing space needs to be 1.5 metres. This really corrects an anomaly in the Road Traffic Code, which has required drivers to leave a safe distance but has not really specified what that safe distance is. This provides clear instruction to people on what a safe distance should be, and it is at least a metre if it is 60 kays or below, and at least 1.5 metres if a vehicle is travelling at more than 60 kays.

I heard some members opposite scoff about this; they no doubt have heard some of the people who do not think it works. I remind everyone in this house that already this year seven cyclists have died on our roads. I do not want to see any cyclists killed on our roads, and I think this clear guidance to road users will assist in the prevention of death and serious injury. That is actually what lays behind this election commitment and why we have moved relatively swiftly to enforce it.

I note that, at this time, Tasmania, South Australia, New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory and Queensland all have similar laws in place. Indeed, Queensland passed its legislation some three years ago, so these benefits have been in place in Queensland for three years.

Mrs L.M. Harvey interjected.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: The member for Scarborough is interjecting because she did not support this in government. She sought a bit of guidance and a bit of advice, but she did not support the one-metre rule or the 1.5-metre rule, and the previous government did not commit to this as an election commitment. We made this election commitment because it was the right thing to do, and now we have delivered.