



Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group

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Minister for Transport and Main Roads
GPO Box 2644
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Dear Minister Bailey

We wrote to you concerning side underrun protection on trucks in November 2016.¹

Your January 2017 reply² mentioned a Heavy Vehicle Safety Working Group (HVSWG) and referred our suggestion to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator. We have not heard that the HVSWG has made any recommendations with respect to the safety of people riding bikes.

The NHVR reply³ referred to a 2009 study⁴ as the basis for rejecting side underrun protection. The study suffered from several serious deficiencies:

- The study period was from 1988-2003; the data used is now more than 15 years old
- The study did not consider cycling growth in Australia since then, nor plans by state and local government to increase cycling levels. For instance, the Connecting SEQ plan envisages that 11% of trips in South East Queensland will be by bike in 2031
- The study did not consider increasing rates of cycling crashes involving heavy vehicles (see attached article from Courier-Mail)
- The study used benefit-cost analysis. Governments that adopt truly “world class” and progressive road safety strategies (e.g. Sweden, New York City) have long since moved to “Vision Zero” strategies which do not perform economic analyses.⁵ To quote Matts-Åke Belin, Sweden’s top road safety strategist:

I would say that the main problems that we had in the beginning were not really political, they were more on the expert side. The largest resistance we got to the idea about Vision Zero was from those political economists that have built their whole career on cost-benefit analysis. For them it is very difficult to buy into “zero.” Because in their economic models, you have costs and benefits, and although they might not say it explicitly, the idea is that there is an optimum number of fatalities. A price that you have to pay for transport.

The problem is the whole transport sector is quite influenced by the whole utilitarianist mindset. Now we’re bringing in the idea that it’s not acceptable to be killed or seriously injured when you’re transporting. It’s more a civil-rights thing that you bring into the policy.

¹ <http://www.cbdbug.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/correspondence/CBD-BUG-To-TMR-Trucks-20161114.pdf>

² <http://www.cbdbug.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/correspondence/CBD-BUG-From-Main-Roads-Minister-Truck-Safety-20170129.pdf>

³ <http://www.cbdbug.org.au/wp-content/uploads/20180131-CBD-BUG-From-NHVR-Truck-Side-Guard.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2009L03609/Supporting%20Material/Text>

⁵ <https://www.citylab.com/transportation/2014/11/the-swedish-approach-to-road-safety-the-accident-is-not-the-major-problem/382995/>

The other group that had trouble with Vision Zero was our friends, our expert friends. Because most of the people in the safety community had invested in the idea that safety work is about changing human behavior. Vision Zero says instead that people make mistakes, they have a certain tolerance for external violence, let's create a system for the humans instead of trying to adjust the humans to the system.

Both your reply and the NHVR reply contained elements of this philosophy that signs and education can make a significant difference. For instance, the NHVR reply stated "Improving vehicle safety is not only achieved through mandatory standards, but can also be achieved by non-regulatory and voluntary adoption of safety features by vehicle operators, cyclists and pedestrians". If your government would like, for example, to encourage take-up of active school transport it is absurd to put the onus for safety around heavy vehicles on school children; or to put the emphasis on signs, one of the least effective measures in the well-known Hierarchy of Hazard Controls.

Given these points this study should be considered hopelessly invalid and outdated.

The death of father Ryan Goff in September 2018 should also be a catalyst for action in this case. Mr Goff was an experienced rider and in the road environment signs and education would not have protected him.

THE number of Queenslanders killed in crashes involving heavy vehicles has almost doubled since last year, and devoted Brisbane father Ryan Goff is the latest human face of this horror road toll.

Mr Goff was super excited when he left work early on a Friday afternoon and hopped on his bike to pick up his kids from school.

Tragically, he never made it to the school gates.

"Ryan had years of experience as a road cyclist – his death was a direct consequence of deadly infrastructure design and a truck that was poorly equipped to prevent him from being killed," Bicycle Queensland chief executive Anne Savage said.

"The road had no bike lane, no bicycle safety box, a hard kerb and a 90-degree corner.

"The truck was a flat-bed semi-trailer with no side underrun protection, limited side and peripheral vision, and no warning technology to mitigate blind-spot risks.

"He simply didn't stand a chance."

Considering the above, we ask that you have the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator conduct a new study on side under-run protection, preferably not involving benefit-cost analysis, or better: simply mandate its usage and rollout in Queensland.

I look forward to your response on this issue.

Yours faithfully

Dr Richard Bean
Co-convenor
Brisbane CBD BUG
10 December 2018



TAKEN TOO SOON: Ryan Goff with his wife Connie and (inset) floral tribute at the Albion crash site.

Do something to end cycle of heavy hearts

EXCLUSIVE
JACKIE SINNERTON

Ryan's tragedy adds to truck toll

THE number of Queenslanders killed in crashes involving heavy vehicles has almost doubled since last year and devoted Brisbane dad Ryan Goff is the human face of this horror road toll.

Ryan was excited when he left work early on a Friday afternoon and hopped on his bike to pick up his kids from school.

Tragically, he never made it to the school gates.

As his precious kids were left waiting for their dad who never came, Ryan's broken body was trapped under an

eight-wheeler heavy truck on the Albion Overpass.

Ryan was an Australian representative athlete and involved in Masters athletics.

He knew the spot where he died like the back of his hand, as he had run the road a thousand times while training with the Mayne Harriers.

His wife Connie, 10-year-old daughter Zara and eight-year-old Iggy's lives have been ripped apart.

There have been 40 fatalities in 2018 involving heavy vehicles, while there were 27 in the same time period last

year. There has been a 35 per cent increase over the past five years.

The shock crash has seen Bicycle Queensland step up calls for State Government action to amend heavy vehicle laws.

"Ryan had years of experience as a road cyclist - his death was a direct consequence of deadly infrastructure design and a truck that was poorly equipped to prevent him from being killed," chief executive of Bicycle Queensland Anne Savage said.

"The road had no bike lane, no bicycle safety box, a hard kerb, and a 90-degree corner.

"The truck was a flat-bed semi-trailer with no side underrun protection, limited side and peripheral vision and no warning technology to mitigate blind-spot risks.

"He simply didn't stand a chance."

BQ's recommendations include the creation of a Road Safety and Healthy Travel Commission, increased funding to enable audited compliance on a

statewide level with the State's Cycling Infrastructure Policy and improved truck safety measures such as side underrun protection skirts and bicycle safety boxes.

The last person to speak to Ryan at work on that tragic Friday last month was boss, friend and athletics coach, Greg Hallam.

"He died just two weeks short of his 37th birthday," Mr Hallam said.

"Ryan was a supreme athlete and all-round good man. He left work that Friday happy and full of life.

"His last words were 'I will bring the kids with me to training on Sunday'."