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**Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group  
(CBD BUG)**

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The Honourable Daniel Purdie MP  
Minister for Police and Emergency Services  
PO Box 15195  
CITY EAST QLD 4002

Via email: [police@ministerial.qld.gov.au](mailto:police@ministerial.qld.gov.au)

Dear Minister

**Inappropriate police reporting of crashes**

We are writing to express our concerns about the inaccurate and biased way in which the Queensland Police Service reports on traffic crashes. In particular, the lack of human agency on the part of the motor vehicle driver.

As recent examples we draw your attention to the following post (4 Jan 2025 @ 1:52pm) on the myPolice Queensland Police News website:

“Around 7am, a grey Holden Captiva was travelling on Manchester Road in Kholo when it struck a bicycle at the intersection of Kholo Road.

The cyclist, a 34-year-old Bardon man, died at the scene.

The driver and sole occupant, a 19-year-old Yarrabilba woman, was not physically injured.”

And this post (19 Jan 2025 @ 1:19am)

“Initial investigations indicate at about 10:00pm a white Mazda 3 hatchback was travelling South along Gympie Road when it has struck a pedestrian crossing the road.”

In both examples the motor vehicles are reported as driving themselves. The description of the car driver is completely disconnected from the description of the vehicle and its operation. In Example 1 ... “a car struck a bicycle”. Example 2 indicates a Mazda hatchback .... struck a pedestrian”.

The horror to both the vehicle driver and the vulnerable road user who is the victim of the crash is totally absent. This approach, along with the use of the passive voice dulls the emotional impact of crashes on the public. In using this inappropriate and incorrect terminology vehicle drivers are not invited to see themselves as potential agents of these crashes, and instead see themselves as absolved.

A more accurate rendering of both examples would include the vehicle driver as the primary agent. For example:

“Around 7am, a 19 year old Yarrabilba woman driving a grey Holden Captiva along Manchester Road in Kholo struck and killed a 34-year-old Bardon man riding a bicycle.

The female driver of the motor vehicle was not physically injured.”

We draw your attention to the “Road Collision Reporting Guidelines” that were released in the United Kingdom (UK) on 18 May 2021 and backed by their National Union of Journalists. You can find details of the exhaustive process by which the guidelines were developed and more explanation of the rationale here: <https://www.rc-rq.com/guidelines>. Australia is no different to the United Kingdom in these regards. We understand that the Associated Press changed their style guide in 2016 in a similar manner.

However, we have not been able to find reporting guidelines or a style guide for Queensland Police. If the Queensland Police Service has such a document, we call for the UK’s “Road Collision Reporting Guidelines” to be incorporated into that document.

We look forward to hearing on how you will ensure more accurate and impactful reporting of traffic crashes by the Queensland Police Service.

Yours sincerely

*Paul French*

Paul French  
Co-convenor  
Brisbane CBD BUG  
23 January 2025

Cc: Mr Glenn Butcher, Shadow Minister for Police and Crime Prevention  
Bicycle Queensland  
Space for Cycling Brisbane  
Queensland Walks