

Inquest into the death of Timothy Ponde Kepui and Ian Christoffer Jensen

In October 2016, the central coroner held a joint inquest into the deaths of Timothy Ponde Kepui and Ian Christoffer Jensen. Dr Kepui died 1 June 2015 and Mr Jensen on 3 May 2014. Both were cyclists who died from injuries resulting from a collision with a motor vehicle in the Bundaberg area.

The coroner held a joint inquest due to the similarity of issues. The coroner investigated the circumstances of the collisions, whether the decision not to proceed with prosecutions was carried out in an appropriate manner, and the need to raise public awareness of current laws relating to cyclists on the road.

The coroner delivered his findings of inquest on 24 March 2017.

The Queensland Government responds to recommendations directed to government agencies at inquests by informing the community if a recommendation will be implemented or the reason why a recommendation is not supported.

Further information relating the implementation of recommendations can be obtained from the responsible agency named in the response.

Recommendation 1

There is a need for further education to raise public awareness of the safe passing distances for cyclists on the road. Of course the government department responsible will correctly point out that they already conduct general advertising of these issues to generate increased awareness, but I think it is desirable that when a driver renews, or applies for a driver's license, that some component of that renewal involves theoretical testing, even a simple 'question and answer' test for recent changes to traffic laws. This is not a difficult matter, nor involves any significant cost, as I envisage that when a person attends the Department of Transport (or renews online) they simply successfully complete a short quiz of recent rules.

Response and action: the recommendation was not implemented.

Responsible agency: Department of Transport and Main Roads.

On 26 February 2018 the Minister for Transport and Main Roads responded:

The Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) is committed to improving safety for vulnerable road users and ensuring all road users know the rules and understand how to share the road safely.

The existing road rules test for learner drivers were updated to include a number of questions about the required minimum distances for overtaking a bicycle rider and sharing the road with bicycle riders.

TMR is not currently exploring further re-testing at the time of licence renewal as research suggests that re-testing has limited use in accurately identifying people with unsafe driving habits, or translating into improved behaviour on the road. Instead, TMR is proactively communicating major road rule changes to a state-wide audience and has an ongoing communications program in place to remind all road users about key safety messages throughout the year.

TMR has recently developed a Queensland road rules communications action plan to more effectively communicate road rules information to the public. Key road rule topics, such as the

minimum passing distance for cyclists and sharing the road with vulnerable road users such as bicycle riders, will be a focus throughout delivery. A variety of mediums will be used to communicate information about the road rules, including the internet, publications and social media. TMR also continues to investigate ways to improve road safety outcomes for novice drivers through modernised learning processes.

TMR ran the Stay wider of the rider campaign to inform road users about the minimum passing distance rule when it first commenced as a two-year trial in April 2014. It included an online video, billboards, bus backs, and radio advertising. A survey of road users found that 73 per cent of Queensland drivers were aware of the rule, and 80 per cent were aware of the required passing distances. The campaign ran again from 10 April to 15 May 2016 to communicate the minimum passing distance rules and remind road users that the rules are here to stay. A survey of motorists and bicycle riders undertaken in June 2016 found that 94 per cent of motorists and 84 per cent of cyclists agreed that, since seeing the campaign, they know what the rule is.

TMR regularly posts Stay wider of the rider messaging on the Join the drive to save lives [Facebook](#) page. The campaign has also been shared with a number of stakeholders, including councils around Queensland. TMR will continue to look at ways to further promote and communicate the need to give bicycle riders space on the roads.