

South Australia community attitudes towards bicycle riders and the minimum overtaking distance: benchmark research October 2015

The Amy Gillett Foundation commissioned Crosby|Textor to conduct baseline research in South Australia on community attitudes towards bicycle riders and the minimum overtaking distance road rule. The findings provide baseline data prior to the release of the changes to cycling laws in South Australia. From 25 October 2015, drivers must leave a minimum distance of one metre when overtaking bicycle riders at speeds of up to 60km/h and 1.5 metres at speeds over 60km/h.

An online survey of 400 South Australian residents was conducted between 28 September and 2 October 2015. The sample was randomly-selected and is representative by age, sex and area (maximum error margin of +/-4.9% at the 95% confidence level). The findings were reported by road user type (as below) and geographic breakdowns between Adelaide (metropolitan) and the Rest of South Australia (regional):

Bicycle Riders people who ride at least once a month

Only Drivers people who drive most days or weekdays and rarely cycle

Drivers and Riders people who are regular drivers who may cycle

Driving is much more prevalent in South Australia than riding, with half driving every day, as opposed to only 3% riding a bike. Nearly two thirds never ride a bike.

Among riders, recreational use is the most common (66%), though nearly one-fifth (18%) of riders in Adelaide commute on their bicycles.

Half of respondents know someone who rides a bicycle regularly (54%).

Key findings from the research highlighted:

- 65% of South Australians agree with the minimum overtaking distance rule.
- 64% of **South Australians agreed that this amended rule will make bike riders feel safer.**
- 80% said that the main reason for their support for the rule change was the **need for bike riders to be protected in order to make them feel safer.**
- One fifth of all respondents were 'definitely aware' of upcoming minimum overtaking amendment, increasing to one third of bike riders.
- 67% agreed that good communication and education are essential for this amended law to work.
- There is some concern around enforcement, with 43% saying it would be hard to enforce. 60% said that police must enforce it.
- However, there was also agreement with negative messages that bicycle riders: disobey road rules (66%), do not respect pedestrians (62%) and are unpredictable (63%).
- The issue of **safety on the road is a significant barrier to uptake (37%),** with the perception that riding is unsafe, a widespread concern.
- 47% of regular bicycle riders agreed that increased space would encourage them to ride more often.