

Queensland minimum overtaking distance trial: public opinion research May 2015

About the research

The Amy Gillett Foundation commissioned Crosby|Textor to conduct market research into community awareness and perceptions of the minimum overtaking distance trial in Queensland (commenced April 2014) whereby Queensland road rules require drivers to leave a minimum of one metre when overtaking bicycle riders at speeds of up to 60kph and 1.5 metres at speeds over 60kph.

The first tranche of public opinion research was conducted in October 2014, six months after the legislation was introduced and the second tranche (reported here) in April 2015, 12 months after the legislation was introduced.

An online survey was conducted between 7-12 April 2015 amongst 400 randomly-selected Queensland residents (living in both Brisbane and regional Queensland), including 'drivers', with quotas of 'frequent drivers' (who drive everyday) and 'only drivers' (who do not ride a bicycle at least once a month), and 'bicycle riders' who ride at least once a month or more. The sample included minimum quotas and data weighting on area, sex, age and bicycle riding to ensure accurate representation. The margin of error at 95% confidence is +/-4.9%.

Key findings:

- Three in four Queenslanders (76%) support the legislation, an increase of 9% since October 2014. Support is consistent across all groups surveyed, including 'all drivers' at 73% and 'frequent drivers' at 74%. Just 13% disagreed with the legislation, down from 16% in 2014, and 11% neither agreed nor disagreed, down from 16% in 2014.
- Compared with 12 months ago Brisbane 'bicycle riders' feel drivers are giving them more space on the road with 65% of bicycle riders observing an increase in space drivers give when they are overtaking, up from 58% in November 2014. This is more so the case in metropolitan areas with 71% of those surveyed perceiving drivers to be giving them more space, compared to the rest of Queensland at 59%.
- 'All road users' (drivers and bicycle riders) are more aware of bicycle riders on the road and are noticing drivers allowing more room when overtaking bicycle riders. 57% of all road users agree they are more aware of bicycle riders when driving on the road, 54% of all road users agree they have observed drivers giving bicycle riders more room when overtaking and 50% of all road users have observed more bicycle riders on the road. 34% of all road users reported more empathy towards bicycle riders and 29% of all road users observed fewer incidents of tension between drivers and bicycle riders.
- Amongst 'bicycle riders', the perception of increased space given by drivers has increased in 2015 with 65% of Brisbane bicycle riders reporting experiencing greater distance from overtaking drivers.

- More than two-thirds of Queenslanders (69%) were aware of the legislation and 36% had specific awareness of the required distance (one metre) for overtaking bicycle riders up to 60kph. 20% of all road users identified 1.5 metres as the recommended overtaking distance at speeds of more than 60kph.
- There has been an increase in the perception of the effectiveness of the *Stay Wider of the Rider* campaign amongst Queenslanders with 75% agreeing it communicated the legislation clearly, up from 67% in 2014. 49% of road users could recall the *Stay Wider of the Rider* campaign unprompted. Recall was higher in metropolitan (53%) compared with regional areas (45%). 33% of all road users recalled the *Stay Wider of the Rider* graphic with 69% saying it was effective at communicating the importance of giving adequate space between cars and bicycle riders. 38% of all road users recalled the *Stay Wider of the Rider* radio advertisement and 76% agreed that it was effective at communicating the message about adequate space for bicycle riders.