

**\*\* UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 12.01AM WEDNESDAY 22 JANUARY 2020\*\***

**WEDNESDAY, 22 JAN 2020**

## **RACV CALLS ON VIC GOVT TO TRIAL MINIMUM PASSING DISTANCE RULE TO PROTECT CYCLISTS**

RACV is calling on the Victorian Government to undertake a trial of a minimum passing distance rule for motorists when overtaking cyclists to reduce an increasing number of bike rider deaths and injuries on Victorian roads

Official Transport Accident Commission (TAC) figures show 47 cyclists died and more than 2,100 were injured on Victorian roads in the five years between 2015 and 2019.

The trial would legally require motorists to leave at least 1 metre of space between themselves and cyclists when overtaking on roads less than 60km/h and 1.5 metres when overtaking on roads with speeds over 60 km/h, reflecting similar legislation in other states.

RACV Senior Manager Transport, Planning and Infrastructure, Peter Kartsidimas said Victoria is behind the rest of the country when it comes to minimum passing distance rules.

“Since the Safety Road Rules 2009 (Overtaking Bicycles) Bill 2015 was first tabled in the Victorian Parliament, every other Australian state and territory has passed legislation for a minimum passing distance rule.” he said.

“TAC figures show that cyclist death and injury are only increasing. The government needs to do more and that’s why we are calling for a trial of a minimum passing distance rule for motorists when overtaking cyclists.”

While other states were either trialling or legislating a minimum passing distance rule, Victoria launched the *Share the Road* education and awareness campaign in 2017. The results of which are detailed in a TAC confidential report yet to be released to the public.

“In March 2017, the government agreed to trial minimum passing if the community education campaign was ineffective in achieving safety benefits for cyclists. As well as a trial, RACV is also calling on the government to release the findings of the report, which should indicate whether the campaign was successful or not in changing driver behaviour,” Mr Kartsidimas said.

Meanwhile, published data from the ‘Trial of the Minimum Passing Distance Rule for drivers passing cyclists’ in NSW showed:

- Cyclist safety was improved.
- While driver response to the trial was mixed it was generally positive.
- No clear evidence of any negative unintended outcomes of the trial, despite initial concerns from police and some participants.
- Widespread support for retaining the rule.

“RACV would welcome the opportunity to work with government to establish a trial which considers some of the unique issues on Victorian roads,” Mr Kartsidimas said.

**##ENDS##**

For media enquiries, interviews or images, contact RACV’s Media & Communications team on 03 9790 2572 or 0417 041 398.

**About RACV**

*RACV’s Media & Communications team is available on 03 9790 2572 or 0417 041 398*

*Founded in 1903, RACV exists to improve the lives of Victorians by delivering valued benefits to members and their communities. RACV addresses the needs of Victorians by informing, advising and representing them through products and services spanning motoring, mobility, leisure, travel, insurance and the home. RACV seeks to help shape a smarter, safer and more connected future for Victoria.*