

References

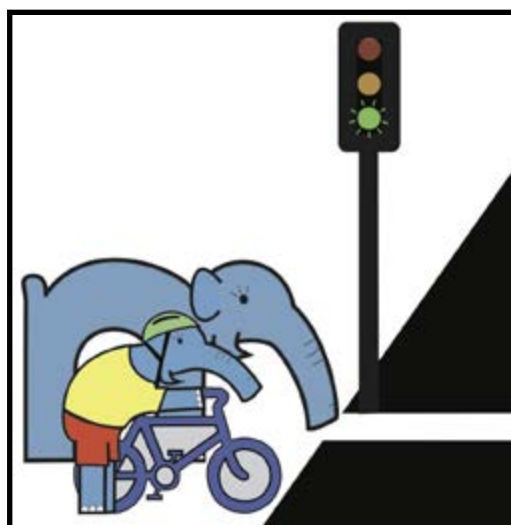
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Cycling and children

by Eric Chalmers
CEO, Kidsafe ACT

There are many good reasons to encourage children to cycle more, in part because of the great need to improve the level of physical activity and to reduce the health impacts of obesity in the community. Whilst we are encouraging children and adults to cycle more, there are a number of things we need to keep in mind.

Children are not small adults. They perceive danger and react quite differently to adults. Their perception of distance is not as developed and they tend to focus their vision quite tightly. They often assume that if they can see you, you can see them and have little understanding of the distances involved in stopping or changing direction in a moving vehicle or of the force of impact of being hit by a large vehicle.



Children observe a lot. Adults need to do what we expect children to do. For example, if we expect children to wear helmets, we need to do the same.

Adults need to ensure the environment in which we are asking children to ride is safe – e.g. riding to and from school. We cannot assume that they will be able to assess and address risk as adults do. If adults are going to encourage children to ride to school then we need to make sure the paths they take and the built environment around them are safe.

Other children do not make the environment safer. Younger children need to be under the supervision of an adult or someone who can exercise an adult's responsibilities effectively.

On the other hand there is safety in numbers, in more than one sense. One or two children riding along a footpath may not be seen, whereas 500 children walking and riding to a school will be noticed and will impact on the reaction and behaviour of vehicles' drivers nearby.

Kidsafe has access to good examples of programs from a variety of countries that have addressed some of these key issues. Riding a cycle is a great, healthy pastime. However, we as adults need to make sure we provide a safe environment in which children can enjoy riding. It is an important safety issue.

Safe cycling: all we need is 3, 2, 1 to reach zero

by Marilyn Johnson

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When it comes to riding bikes, Australia is not a world leader. While Australian champions such as Anna Meares, Cadel Evans and Ritchie Porte are leading world cycling, at home we have a long way to go for everyone to feel safe to choose to travel by bike. Creating a safe cycling environment in Australia is the mission of the Amy Gillett Foundation (AGF), Australia's national cycling safety organisation.

Amy Gillett Foundation

The AGF was created out of tragedy, the death of Amy Gillett, who was hit by an out of control motorist while cycling with her Australian National Cycling team mates in Germany. Since our inception we have been a catalyst for change, focused on what should be, rather than what is. That's why we have set ambitious aims and outcomes.



Our Mission: Safe cycling in Australia

Our Vision: Zero bike rider fatalities

The core values of the AGF honour Amy and her passion for life and sport, and focus on the change needed to keep bike riders safe:

- **Human:** a person is represented by every road trauma statistic. The AGF was created out of the tragedy of Amy Gillett's death and it connects us with the need to drive change.
- **Balanced perspective:** we look for the causes behind crashes and use that knowledge to drive our activity.
- **Safety is our priority:** safety sits above our love of cycling. Sometimes the right words to make people safe might not be the same words that promote cycling.
- **Shared respect:** we are positive about the future and believe that road users can use the road more harmoniously with shared respect for each other.
- **Collaborative:** the causes of crashes can be multi-faceted and the solutions are too. We work together with road, safety and concerned organisations to create safe solutions.
- **We are not – civil disobedience or protest:** we believe there are better ways to engage road users, the community and the decision makers to achieve safer cycling.

To achieve a safe cycling environment in Australia for everyone who wants to ride a bike, the AGF approach is structured into just three steps – 3, 2, 1 – to reach our goal of zero bike rider fatalities by 2020.