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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bike organisations call for new rules for drivers exiting vehicles

Australia's leading bike riding organisations are calling for road rule handbook and driver education changes in Victoria that will encourage safer driver behaviours when exiting a parked vehicle.

A submission, co-signed by Bicycle Network, Amy Gillet Foundation, We Ride Australia, AusCycling and RACV, proposes that a vehicle-exiting behaviour known as the 'Dutch Reach' be included in all road rule handbooks and learner driver materials.

[The Dutch Reach technique](#) involves a driver using their left hand when they turn to open the driver-side door. The movement forces the person to turn their head and recognise any vulnerable road users, such as bicyclists or motorcyclists, in the adjacent road space.

The technique has been recognised internationally as an important measure to prevent collisions between bikes and open vehicle doors, an incident commonly referred to as 'dooring'.

Dooring is one of the most common types of bike-related crashes in Australia, and in most cases is due to a misjudgment by the person exiting their vehicle. A 2020 survey by RACV found that 80 per cent of Victorian cyclists feared being doored during their ride.

RACV General Manager arevo Mobility, Elizabeth Kim, said that the key to encouraging more bike-riding in Victoria was to introduce important policies like the Dutch Reach, which can have a real impact on safety and confidence for bike riders.

"While we're excited by the increasing number of bike riders across the state, we have a real responsibility to ensure they feel safe on the roads," Ms Kim said.

"The Dutch Reach is a great example of a small change drivers can make that will have a big impact on bike-rider safety. We know, through our experience with RACV Drive School, that once the Dutch Reach is taught to learner drivers, they do see the safety benefits and start to use the process thereafter.

"RACV supports the call to recommend the technique in the road rules handbook and learner driver materials."

The United Kingdom recently revised their Highway Code to recommend that drivers use the Dutch Reach technique when exiting vehicles. The changes came into effect online this January and will be included in the updated printed version from April 2022.

In Australia, South Australia is only the state to recommend the technique in its state road rules.

Bicycle Network CEO Craig Richards said: "Dooring is a serious concern for bike riders, and the Dutch Reach is well known within the bike riding community. But most people who don't ride a bike have probably never heard of it. We need to change the Behaviour of every person exiting a vehicle and this is an important first step"

"It may seem like a small win, but if every new driver in Victoria comes out of the learning experience with a catchy way to remember to look out for bikes, it will make a massive difference to road safety for bike riders." [You can see the co-signed proposal here.](#)

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About Bicycle Network

- Bicycle Network works to make bike riding easier so more people can be active and healthy
- Represents almost 50,000 members across Australia
- Campaigns to build more places to ride and make bike riding safer for all Australians
- Conducts national behaviour change programs including Ride2School and Ride2Work
- Runs world class events including United Energy Around the Bay, Great Victorian Bike Ride, Newcrest Orange Challenge, Peaks Challenge Falls Creek and Gravel Grit
- For more information visit bicyclenetwork.com.au. Follow Bicycle Network on Twitter at [@Bicycle_Network](https://twitter.com/Bicycle_Network), Facebook at [/BicycleNetwork](https://www.facebook.com/BicycleNetwork) and Instagram at [@Bicycle_Network](https://www.instagram.com/Bicycle_Network)