

CYCLE SAFETY AUDITS vs ROAD SAFETY AUDITS

Is there a difference?

Improving safety for cyclists on our road networks is a key challenge as cycling participation continues to increase throughout Australia. Road Safety Audits are commonly used by many road authorities to identify and evaluate road safety issues and consider options to resolve existing risks to ensure the best use of limited funds for infrastructure improvements. The auditing process is defined in *Austrroads: Guide to Road Safety Part 6: Road Safety Audits*.

Audits are **conventionally undertaken by driving or walking** the study area, and while auditors should always consider all road users (including cyclists), cycle based audits are relatively uncommon and require additional cost and expertise. When focusing on **specific cycling safety issues**, a cyclist's view is important and is likely to capture a range of issues that **may not be obvious from a driver's view**. There are important differences between normal cycling activities and undertaking a cycle audit. Currently no specific guidelines exist for undertaking audits on bicycles. Logistical details and workplace health & safety issues need to be carefully considered.

Some of the differences between the cyclist and driver perspectives are shown below. Takeaways are provided to outline key recommendations.

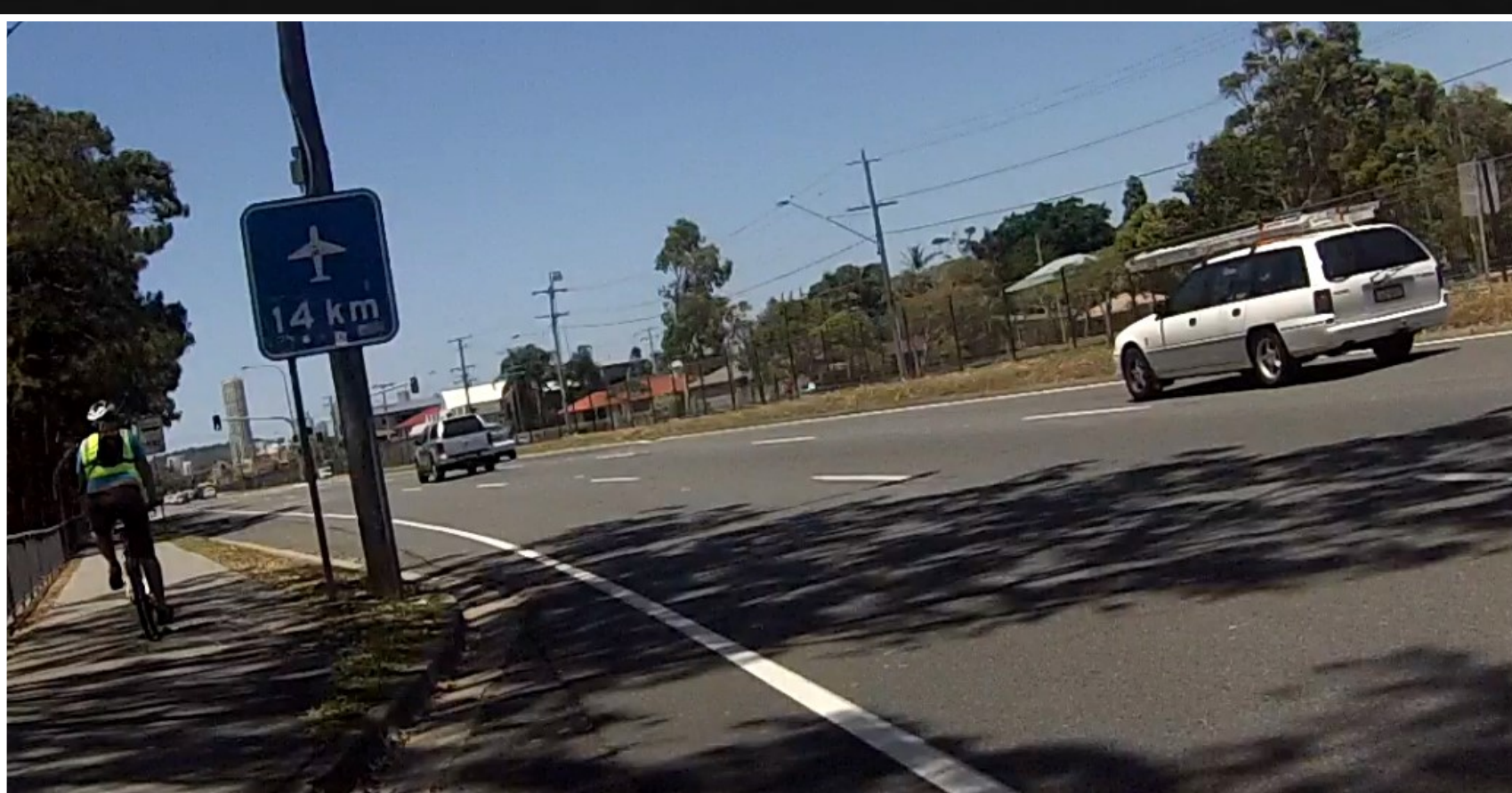
CYCLIST'S VIEW



Roadside Hazards

From the driver's position, cycling facilities are more likely to be assessed as being 'acceptable' even though a cyclist may perceive them as 'unsafe'.

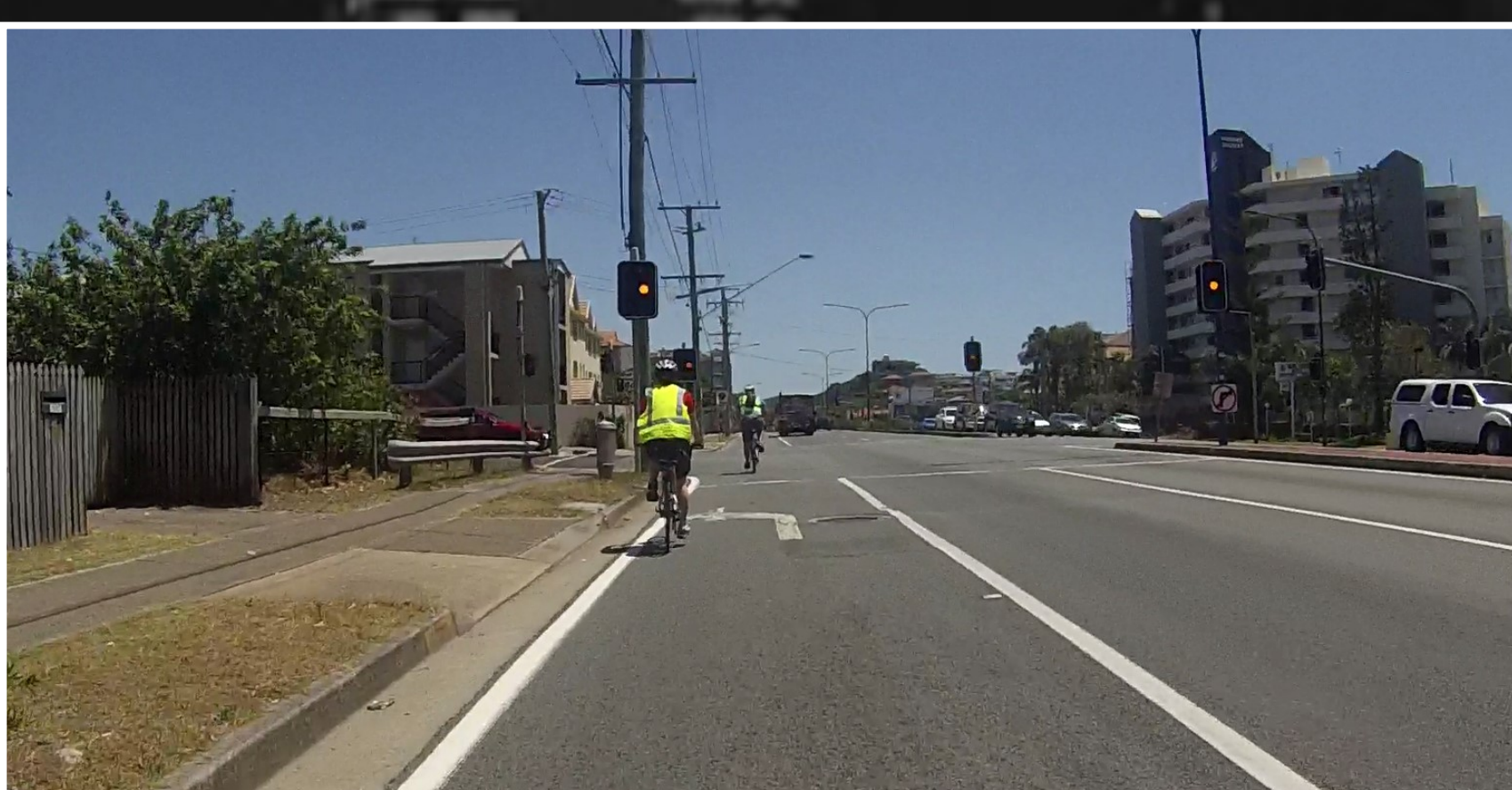
The cyclist is better able to assess risks associated with the width between the edge of traffic and hazards such as roadside drainage, proximity of fencing, utility poles, pavement roughness, pot-holes and overhanging vegetation.



Pinch Points

Due to the slower speeds of the cyclist, 'pinch point' safety issues are more readily identified by the cyclist as the perception of risk is greater.

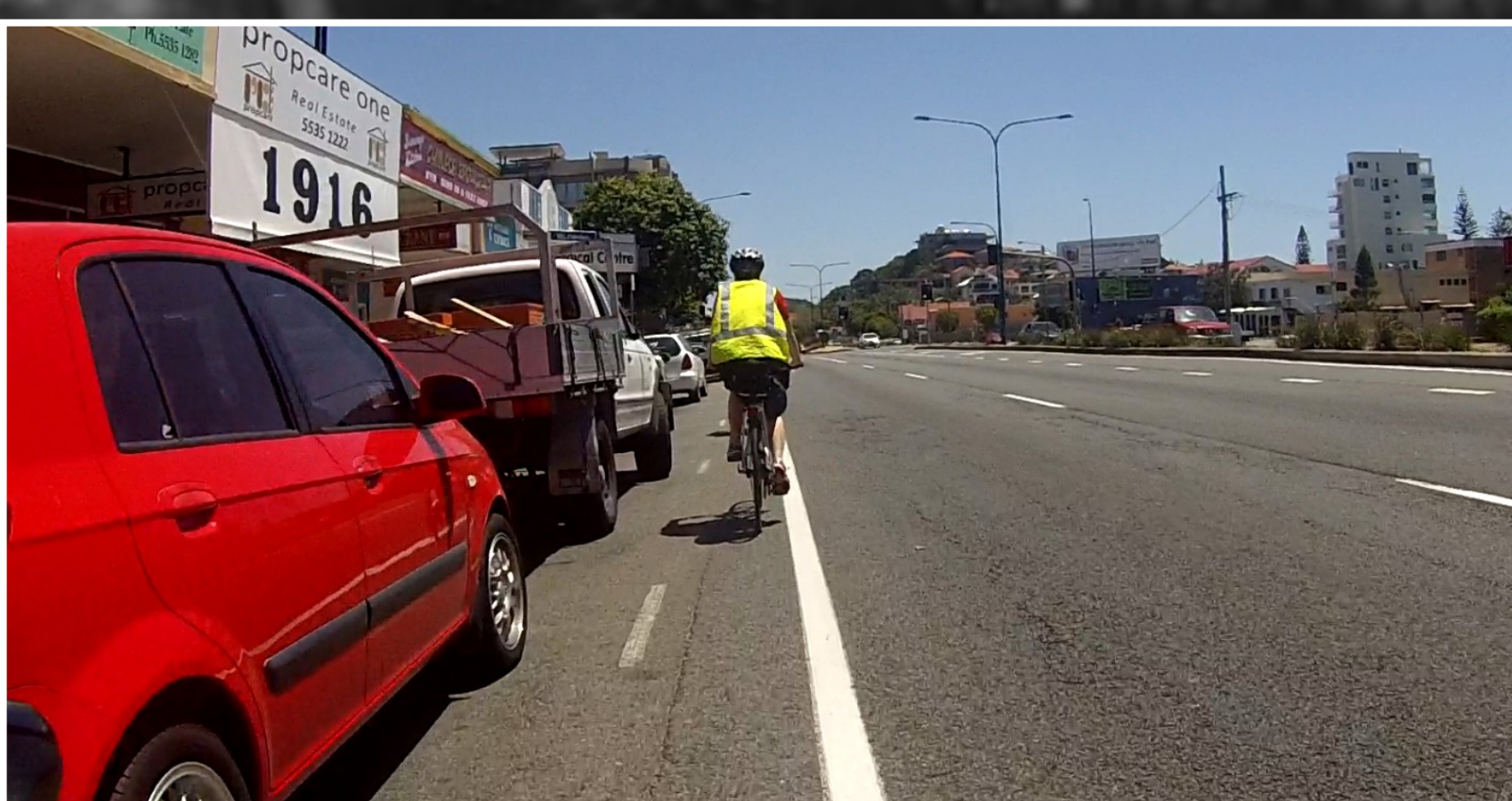
The driver is in a better position to assess whether a vehicle has sufficient sight distance to observe the cyclist at the pinch point and whether drivers have sufficient manoeuvring room to avoid a cyclist at the pinch point.



Positioning

Where no cycling lanes exist, the driver perspective is useful for identifying locations where the addition of dedicated cycle lanes and cycle storage areas would be beneficial in understanding a cyclist's direction of travel.

The driver may perceive the cyclist to be turning, rather than proceeding through the intersection, which may not be obvious from the cyclist perspective.



Dooring

When cyclists are required to ride adjacent to parked cars with very narrow separation from the traffic lane there is a risk of dooring: with a driver-side car door suddenly opening in the path of a cyclist.

The cyclist perspective is better able to judge the width between traffic and parked vehicles and the relative risk of dooring for a given location.

DRIVER'S VIEW



TAKEAWAYS

- Consider cycle inspections for urban arterials routes, popular commuter cycling routes, designated cycle corridors and where higher order cycling routes intersect with high traffic volume roads.
- Cycle based audits must **prioritise workplace health & safety** of the auditors. A comprehensive work method plan as well as equipment for communicating and recording information is needed.
- The audit team should have a **variety of cycling experience** while ensuring all riders are competent and comfortable enough to audit while riding. A team of three auditors is recommended for safety.
- Cycle audits should always be **complemented by a vehicle drive-through** for both users' perspectives. Both should be recorded using mounted video. Helmet mounted video is not recommended as it is less useful for capturing and reporting roadside issues.
- Both on-road and off-road cycling routes should be inspected by the cycle audit team where possible.
- Hazards identified in a cycle audit are likely be isolated and **require lower cost solutions** (for example potholes, overhanging vegetation, pinch-points and damaged fencing). Hazards associated with pavement surface, drainage and pinch points are **much more noticeable for the cyclist**
- A cycle safety audit is **not just "riding a bike"**

CONTACT

offices: 433 Logan Road,
Stones Corner QLD 4120
45 Nerang Street,
Southport QLD 4215

phone: 07 3040 9998
fax: 07 3103 4341
email: info@point8.com.au
web: point8.com.au