



Damien McFarline and Mitchell Rae would like to see a law giving cyclists greater protection from motorists.

Photo: BRENDAN RADKE

Cyclists see a gap in road safety law

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CLARIFYING how motorists and cyclists should share the road is the aim of a petition calling for a 1.5m minimum distance between bikes and other vehicles.

The change in legislation called for by the petition would require all motorists to maintain a minimum distance of 1.5m between their vehicle and a cyclist while overtaking, except at intersections where there would be a 30m exemption.

Safe Cycling Australia director David Sharp submitted the petition to the Queensland Parliament on Friday.

Last Monday, cement truck driver Luke Stevens was found not

guilty of causing the death of cyclist and gifted musician Richard Pollet. Mr Pollet, 25, died after being hit by the cement truck's rear tyres as the driver attempted to overtake him on a Brisbane road in 2011.

Mr Sharp said the not guilty verdict was proof a change in legislation was necessary.

"The current laws say you must allow distance while overtaking but it is so open to interpretation and so unenforceable that it is viewed as more of a recommendation than a law," he said.

"We'd like to see the existing penalties become more concrete and enforced by police."

Gold Coast Goldstars cycling club president Damien McFarline said the petition had received a lot

of interest. "There's a wide range of support from the cycling community and the public because it will make Queensland roads safer for cyclists and clarify the relationship between motorists and cyclists on the road," he said.

"(Close calls) between cyclists and motorists happen on a regular basis and as the Gold Coast is such an ideal place to be a cyclist, it would be great to see legislation introduced that further enhances road safety."

Mr McFarline said most bike lanes on the Gold Coast were about 1m wide and commonsense should play a big part in road safety.

"If you have a narrow road then the 1.5m rule wouldn't always be possible, but it's a matter of com-

monsense ... we might be cyclists but we also drive cars so we experience both sides of the situation," he said.

RACQ spokeswoman Lynda Schekoske said the law legislation would make roads safer for all.

"The RACQ supports the move for legislation to provide for a 1.5m gap between vehicles and cyclists ... we want to ensure all road users are protected and we think this will benefit everybody," she said.

"It should be the principle on all roads - all road users must drive and ride to the prevailing conditions, so if the road is particularly narrow and winding then obviously people must use commonsense."

The petition is expected to be tabled in Parliament on October 28.