

LONG DISTANCE CYCLIST APPLAUDS TRUCKING INDUSTRY AT CANBERRA BOOK LAUNCH

Long distance cyclist, Kerry Dixon, applauded the trucking industry for its improved safety after a marathon ride through the centre of Australia.

Ms Dixon rode 3,900 kilometres from Geelong to Darwin in five weeks, with only glowing praise for truck drivers. She was in Canberra this evening to launch the Australian Trucking Association's 20th anniversary history, *Putting Safety First*.

Kerry began her trip hesitantly, after being told countless times that she would more than likely end up under the wheels of a road train, rather than riding along the highway taking in the scenery.

"I really did consider the dangers of riding that sort of distance and sharing the road with these huge machines, which is what it's like when you're on a push bike, Kerry said.

"My experience was utterly different to everything I had been told. Not only did I not have a negative experience with truck drivers, I only had positive ones. These guys were actually moving for me!"

Ms Dixon said she had two near misses with trucks but the drivers were not at fault, she was. These close calls highlight the importance of educating other road users of how to safely share the road with heavy vehicles, she said.

Ms Dixon said it was astounding to witness the huge improvements in road safety over the past 20 years, and said trucking operators should be proud of the progress they have made.

"I'm sure there are many road users who still have old school fears about being on the road with trucks, but as more and more people have experiences like mine, this will change," she said.

While there has been substantial progress with road safety, there are also challenges for the future, Ms Dixon said.

"For some years, I managed a program of safety talks by a former diesel mechanic, James Wood, who became a paraplegic after he was thrown out of the cab of the truck he was driving. He hadn't buckled up his seatbelt," she said.

"Trucks are no different to cars: the message is buckle up and live. It's that simple, but it really does save lives. For many it's breaking an age-old tradition, but we have safety equipment for a good reason – to keep drivers alive."

Putting Safety First was developed by a committee led by trucking industry legend Peter Rocke. He said the industry had overcome many challenges in the past 20 years and would face more in the coming 20 years.

"I travel on the Hume Highway regularly and am heartened by the safe driving behaviour of our industry's ambassadors – truck drivers", Mr Rocke said, but we all know that improving the reputation of the trucking industry is an ongoing challenge."

The other members of the committee were Mike Almond, Ron Bunker, Ron Finemore, Ross Fraser, Denis Robertson, and Noelene Watson.

About Kerry Dixon

Kerry Dixon long-distance cyclist and education advocate who is riding around Australia raising awareness for higher education for people of all ages. Kerry's recent trip from Geelong to Darwin was to attend her graduation and was the beginning of her 'pushing for education' program. For more information on Pushing for Education, click [here](#).

About Putting Safety First

'Putting Safety First: a history of the Australian Trucking Association is a first-hand account of the formation and growth of the ATA. A 176-page, full colour, hard cover book, it covers the key events, the issues and challenges faced by the trucking industry.

Pre-order copies of the book are available by downloading the order form at www.atatruck.net.au and faxing it to 02 6253 6999. Media copies are available by emailing boycer@atatruck.net.au.

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