

LUKE AZZOPARDI MEMORIAL RIDE AND FUNDRAISER

AGF
Media

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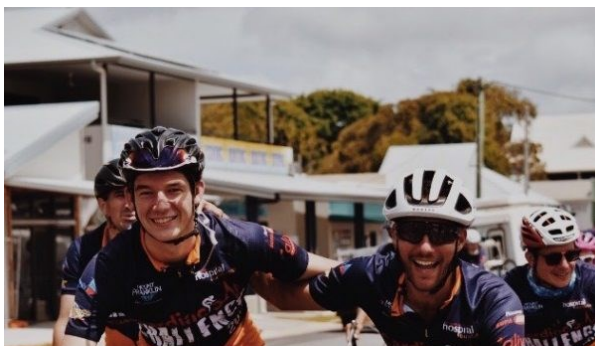
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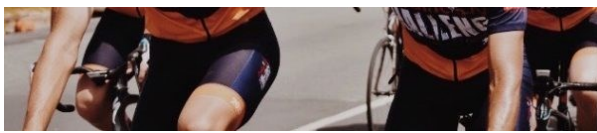


On Wednesday 10 February, our cycling community was shaken by the devastating news of Luke Azzopardi's death following a crash with a driver during a training ride near Cairns.

Luke, 19, is remembered as a beloved son, brother and friend. He was a talented state champion cyclist and endurance rider who made his mark in the cycling community through his dedication and passion for the sport.

The Amy Gillett Foundation's thoughts are with all who knew Luke and we extend our sincere condolences to all affected by this shocking loss.





As a family, we're grateful for everyone showing so much love for our son Luke. We are taking some comfort in the incredible outpouring of love for Luke and how many people he positively affected.

A lot of people have offered a donation and support. Below is a little background of how important cycling and cycling safety was for Luke. It is why we have chosen to work with the Amy Gillett Foundation to do a cycling safety fundraising campaign in Luke's memory.

Luke's passion for cycling developed before pre-school and continued into his adulthood. For Luke, the main mode of transport was his bike. It gave him independence. Being on the road daily - during his commute, training or racing - heightened his road safety awareness and bike handling skills.

When Luke was ten, his school did a survey on why so few kids cycled to school. The results showed it was because the parents thought cycling was unsafe. Luke worked with the school and the community to set up a bike training course at school. He helped secure a grant to obtain 30 bicycles so that every student could learn to ride safely and then proceeded to help build those bicycles. He encouraged the local sugar mill to build train tracks and bridges as these were of particular concern in our area. We are so proud that the program that Luke initiated is still part of the school curriculum today.

Sue, Ian and Jasmine Azzopardi

Luke's family

FUNDRAISING IN LUKE'S MEMORY

At the permission of Luke's family and the Cairns Cycling Club, AGF has proposed the following safety programs in Luke's memory. AGF is seeking to work with the Cairns Cycling Club to pilot the following cycling safety programs in the Cairns region.

Cycling Safety Campaign 1:

An awareness campaign that encourages respect and acknowledgement between drivers and cyclists.

Fundraising target: \$9,000

Cycling Safety Campaign 2:

A safety campaign to educate cyclists and drivers on safe behaviours and interactions while sharing the road.

Fundraising target: \$18,000

Safe Roads for Cairns:

A pilot program evaluating Cairns' roads to improve safety and stress levels for cyclists.

*Most of the animosity between cyclists and drivers is due to poorly designed roads. Councils aren't putting an adequate percentage of their transport budgets towards creating roads that are both; safe for cyclists and; give drivers sufficient space to pass safely. AGF will work with Cairns Cycling Club to pilot a program that maps and audits Cairns' road network. This data will enable AGF to pressure the local council to contribute a bigger percentage of their transport budget to build roads that are safe for cyclists.

Fundraising target: \$150,000

[Make a donation in Luke's memory](#)

There has been an outpouring of support from leading figures in Australian cycling since the tragic announcement:

Our club sends condolences to Luke's Family, Luke's extended family, and the whole cycling community. To everybody hurting, our thoughts are with you.

Luke Azzopardi remains as one of the bright lights of our beloved club.

Luke's achievements in this sport speak volumes with so much success despite his youthful age. Luke became a state junior champion of road racing and accomplished endurance rider. His love and passion of the sport is well known in all cycling circles, the club has received condolences from the Chair of AusCycling, the head of Queensland cycling and regional clubs around the country.

Luke availed himself to the junior ranks of our club, his dedication was tireless and selfless, he never sought nor wanted recognition for his deeds in sharing his passion for the sport, his love radiated through the club and inspired junior riders to enjoy just riding a bike.

Luke's selflessness is a trademark of his personality, he quietly went about his training with his many mates in a quiet and unassuming way, his demeanour was the same in victory and defeat, his smile shone through.

The Cairns Cycling club belongs to Luke and his Family just as much as Luke and his family belong to the Cairns Cycling club.

To Luke and your Family, you are one of the best, we share your grief, you will never be forgotten, your light will remain shining for all to follow.

Vale Luke Azzopardi, may you always ride with a tailwind.

James Mort, President, On behalf of the Cairns Cycling Club

 Tweet

Luke made Cairns Cycling Club a better place.

Luke had a high standard of values and behaviour. He was courteous and a great sportsman. He lived his life on the bike and made the most of every day. A talented racer with a very bright future, he won a state junior Championships at his first attempt, and was an exceptional competitor.

I was very fortunate to have him as a young cyclist come through my coaching and skills clinic. He became a very positive influence and a natural role model. It wasn't just the young kids who looked up to him but older riders as well.

A modest and unassuming young man, Luke never realised how loved and respected he was. Personal gain and recognition was not high on his agenda. But serving his community came naturally to him, and this was a trait he received from his wonderful parents.

This is not just a Cairns Cycling Club loss, it's a loss for the whole community, his school, his workplace and the charity rides that he was pack leader and raised money for.

Richie Bates, Cairns Cycling Club Junior Coach

 Tweet

Luke's death is a tragedy, and our thoughts are with his family and the Cairns and QLD cycling community. AusCycling, like the Amy Gillett Foundation, is deeply committed to working towards zero cycling fatalities and we encourage everyone to get behind 'Laps for Luke' - we're all in this together, and our thoughts are with you from all over the country.

Marne Fechner, CEO of AusCycling

 Tweet

Cairns is one of my two home towns. I miss it. The cycling community is very close and full of fabulous people. The roads of Cairns are beautiful, none more so than Coperlode. Luke passed away way, way too early. But I get a small amount of

solace knowing he passed doing what he loved. His passing will hurt, deeply, for a long time, and I'll grieve with all of you.

Duncan Murray, Chairman of AusCycling

[Tweet](#)

The Amy Gillett Foundation's mission is for zero cyclist deaths. It's always extremely difficult dealing with the death of a cyclist, but even harder when it's a young person like Luke who made such a deep impact on the cycling community.

I'm very grateful for the time Luke's mum, Sue, has given to chatting with me this week - the integrity of Luke and his family is evident. The outpouring of love after Luke's death emphasises his character and the influence he has had in FNQ and the wider cycling community.

The Amy Gillett Foundation was started from a similar tragedy; a preventable cycling death where the family directed their grief to make it safer for cyclists so that other families might not go through the same trauma. I'm very sorry that Sue, Ian and Jasmine have lost their son and brother and sorry that the Cairns Cycling club has lost someone who was very respected and loved.

We are very grateful and honoured that Luke's family has chosen to direct people to fundraise for cycling safety in his memory. We don't take that responsibility lightly and hope to work together with the family and Cairns Cycling Club to create safe cycling programs that honour Luke's memory and make it safer for all cyclists in Australia.

Dan Kneipp, CEO, Amy Gillett Foundation

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On Sunday 14 February, the **Cairns Cycling Club** will host a ride in memory of Luke Azzopardi, starting and finishing at home of Cairns Cycling Club, Smith Park.

While we understand that many in the community would like to join the ride, this is an **AusCycling** / Cairns Cycling Club members (AusCycling licence and insurance holders) ride only. Non-members are welcome to join us for support and camaraderie at the clubhouse on 4 Keeble Street from around 8am.

There will be barista brewed coffee and food.

The club will organise packs for various abilities (most likely using club grading) and more details in relation to the route etc will follow soon.

Visit the **Club Members Memorial Ride for Luke** event page for more information.



STAYING SAFE: Gordonvale State School students Heidi Osterburg, Blaze Knight and Jasmine Azzopardi, all 10, practice safe cycling at the school's road course. Picture: BRENDAN RADKE

Students driving road safety

A SPECIALLY-crafted "roadway", with intersections and roundabouts, will become a pivotal tool in encouraging more Gordonvale State School students to ride to class.

The school yesterday launched its "Travel Safely in the Tropics" program, coinciding with Ride2School Day, with the help of Cairns

ANIKA HUME

students, undertaken as a project promoting healthier ways to travel to school.

State Government funding provided 30 bikes towards the cause and transformed a double basketball court-sized bitumen area in the school grounds into a lined roadway

added a level crossing and footbridge to the track and Queensland Police-donated unclaimed stolen bikes from their lockup.

This term, the bikes and roadway will become a central focus of the students' physical education classes.

A total of 92 GSS students rode to school yesterday to

We encourage anyone in need of support to contact Road Trauma Services Queensland:

Road Trauma Services Queensland

www.roadtraumaservicesqld.org

0434 540 258



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