

Background information: In the second half of 2020, five delivery riders working for various delivery apps, such as Uber and Deliveroo, died in road accidents in Australia. This spike in deaths sparked debate about who is responsible for the safety of riders.

1st Piece: The opinion piece is from *The Sydney Morning Herald*, a NSW based, general circulation newspaper, with a mainly moderate to progressive audience.

2nd piece: This piece was published on the online business news website *smartcompany.com.au*. This website is read mostly by people who are business owners or involved in business.

3rd piece: This is an image taken from news.com.au, a national news service that has a moderate to traditional audience

TEXT 1:

OPINION

Now is the time for all of us to consider our use of food delivery apps

Michael Koziol

Sun-Herald deputy editor

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Food delivery used to mean a teenager bringing a Domino's pizza to your house party in his clapped out hand-me-down Camry. In a few short years, thanks to Uber Eats and other platforms, it has become a ubiquitous, everyday feature of our lives. The pandemic only sealed the deal.

We've long been aware of the industry's issues. The arguments between operators and unions about whether to count drivers as employees. The dangerous incentives. The likelihood the person delivering your meal is a newly-arrived migrant, a student, a non-English speaker or a refugee.

It's easy to dismiss these concerns as matters for governments, regulators, courts and others. But now that a fifth food delivery driver has died on Australian roads in just three months - including two in Sydney in the past few days - the use of these apps has become a moral question for us all.

I am not a user of food delivery apps. I don't like the way they encourage solitude and laziness, and discourage social activity or participation in the public realm. If I'm going to get takeaway, I'll go for a walk and get it myself. But I'm in the minority, especially among my peers. I'm also fortunate enough to live close to restaurants, and I don't have kids to shepherd, elderly relatives to care for or other pressures on my after-work hours. There's a large middle class of people with disposable income and dwindling time. No wonder business is booming.

Encouraged by the tech titans who make billions along the way, we keep distancing ourselves further and further from supply chains and our fellow humans involved in them. "Contactless delivery", supposedly a lifesaver during the pandemic, means you don't even have to look your courier in the eye and say thank you. Your food just gets pumped in from the ether by a faceless, nameless force.

If a young rider were injured (or worse) delivering your dinner tonight, would you even know? Or would you just curse the delay and file a complaint?

Let's be real: it would be silly to assert that anyone who uses Uber Eats has blood on their hands. Truckies have faced poor conditions and perverse performance incentives for many years, but we can't all refuse to boycott goods and groceries. We should also recognise that for better or worse, food delivery is a source of income for people who may not have many other options and are also entitled to take pride in their work.

Nonetheless, now that bodies are piling up on the streets and the cruel reality of these working conditions has been made so stark, every person who cherishes the convenience of Uber Eats or Deliveroo owes the dead the courtesy of reflecting on how this happened, how it has been allowed to happen, and how we might change it for the better.

It should give us pause to consider using delivery apps less frequently, at the very least. Is your dollar really best spent endangering a low-paid cyclist to maximise your own leisure time? Is it really a norm you wish to encourage through your own repeated choices?

As we know all too well, just because some higher authority *should* take responsibility and fix the problem does not mean they *will*. That is all the more true in the absence of a groundswell of community outrage and action. More broadly, these tragedies should prompt us to question whether technological evangelists, hellbent on keeping us glued to our couches and divorced from the real world under the guise of convenience, have anyone's best interests at heart except their own - let alone the collective good.

TEXT 2:

Smart Company HOSPITALITY, OPINION, TECHNOLOGY

Mario Kart come to life: For the safety of delivery riders, it's time to regulate UberEats

IAN WHITWORTH OCTOBER 13, 2020

I've had it with our business, and most others, being the rule-abiding good guys, while arrogant global tech companies dodge all responsibility for keeping their staff safe and properly paid. Two food delivery riders died in late-September: UberEats rider Dede Frede and Hungry Panda worker Xiaojun Chen. It's a tragedy those two men died. But not at all surprising. This is the end result of tech companies' detached contempt for the people their algorithms control and the societies they operate in.

I live near a lot of restaurants. Every night, it's a scary night-vision driving test, trying not to run over weaving, wobbling food-cyclists. It's the full Mario Kart experience. All that's missing are giant banana peels on the road. Those riders are usually dressed in black, with minimal lights and reflectors. If they've had any safety training, it isn't working. They're steering with one hand, the other tapping away at a handlebar-mounted phone. No time to stop and read their messages because the app gamifies every minute.

Coders in California have worked out the optimum blend of digital rewards and threats to keep them moving. If the riders don't play the game, they earn zero instead of a sweet \$6-12 an hour. *At best* that's \$7 below the minimum wage. It's a miracle that dozens of delivery riders don't die every year. Meanwhile, tech companies happily expose their 'contractors' to industrial revolution-era workplace dangers. And cut away all the financial safety nets.

Business has come a long way with work safety. As a young audiovisual technician, my job involved hanging 35kg video projectors in hotel ballroom ceilings, directly above the audience, without safety chains. Back then, bending safety rules was the sign of a tough, brave worker willing to 'just get the job done'. Business safety laws have changed, and thank god. We're conscious of trip hazards, potential electrocution, and the dangers of professional

Both UberEats and Hungry Panda said they 'had offered support' to the dead riders' family. They didn't say if it was financial, or 'thoughts and prayers'. Either way, it's discretionary support.

We pay workers compensation insurance, like every company. If you die at work, your family gets a guaranteed \$834,200 plus other benefits. UberEats expects workers on below minimum wage to cover their own insurance. The tech company mindset is it's a game-changing strategic move to lower their cost structure, compared to the lumbering dinosaurs of regular commerce. Supporting your staff? Ha! What an outdated business model!

Oh, and despite the exploitation, UberEats is still losing a tonne of money. It lost US\$232 million last quarter. It's not even good at business. Why is it seen as *any* kind of business role model? Time to introduce these tech giants to the same regulation the rest of us deal with.

TEXT 3:



Image taken from: 'Delivery rider saw colleague die in car crash as industry death toll mounts' by Anton Nilsson published by [news.com.au](https://www.news.com.au) (24/11/20)