

**Submission
No 25**

DRIVER EDUCATION, TRAINING AND ROAD SAFETY

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Staysafe Inquiry

Driver Education, Training and Road Safety

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Staysafe (Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety)

Parliament House

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About the Motorcycle Council of NSW Inc.

The Motorcycle Council of NSW Inc. (MCCofNSW) is an internationally recognised umbrella group for motorcycle clubs, associations and ride groups, in the state of New South Wales, representing over 50 clubs, with more than 41,000 riders.

Established in 1981, MCCofNSW is recognised as the peak motorcycle representative body in NSW and subject matter experts on many complex issues dealing with motorcycling including crash data and statistics, traffic data and congestion information.

MCCofNSW has published documentation that has been referenced worldwide by overseas motorcycling and traffic bodies and has produced video training films that have been utilised and referred to by many overseas trainers, researchers and ride associations.

We wish to thank the Staysafe Committee for the opportunity to present this submission and the views of our member clubs.

Should you require further information on the information contained within this submission please feel free to contact the MCCofNSW enquiries@mccofnsw.org.au or 1300 NSW MCC

Regards,

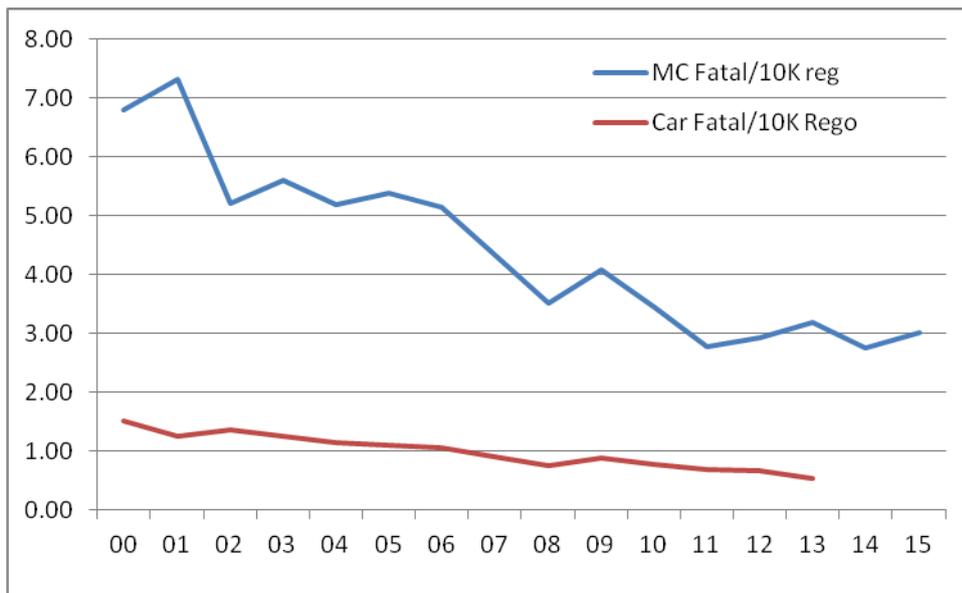
Brian Wood
Secretary

Terms of Reference a):- Trends in road safety research and crash statistics

While NSW has had a world class learner rider scheme since 1991, to the Motorcycle Council’s knowledge it has never been evaluated as to its effectiveness in reducing motorcycle crashes.

The MCC is therefore not able to provide crash data on trends direct associated with the introduction of compulsory rider training in NSW. The MCC acknowledges that it is difficult to evaluate a scheme that is compulsory for the majority of learner riders as it is not possible to use the case/control research method and there are difficulties in using other techniques to determine the effect of rider training separate from other confounding factors.

The MCC does however offer a graph illustrating the reduction in fatal crashes per 10,000 registered motorcycles, The trend has been downwards for at least the past ten years. It should be noted that this is without the benefits of post-crash protective vehicle engineering improvements such as air bags and crumple zones that benefit enclosed vehicles. The trend arises from less crashes rather than lower consequences of a crash.



Terms of Reference b):- Evaluating current driver training, including the effectiveness of refresher training and skills updating, and adaptation to changing vehicle technology

The MCC is not aware of any evaluations of rider training, either learner or post licence training, having been undertaken in NSW.

Any evaluations have been in either interstate or overseas jurisdictions.

A case control study in California on the effect of the introduction of mandatory learner training in 1987 found positive effects of reduced fatalities and crashes.¹

A review, conducted in 1993, of 20 evaluation reports from around the world on the safety benefits of motorcycle training courses concluded that the weight of evidence at the time failed to support motorcycle rider training as an effective road safety countermeasure.²

None-the-less the MCC supports having rider training and education as part of any comprehensive motorcycle safety strategy and that training should be a 'whole of life' experience with riders undertaking training throughout their riding career not just when they are novice riders.

Terms of Reference c):- The needs of any particular driver groups

Consideration should be given to the establishment of a 'return to riding' course within the RMS scheme. The Motor Accident Commission in South Australia has a Return to Riding course as part of the rider training scheme. A Masters Course is available in the ACT which is subsidised by the ACT Government. This Masters course is one of few that has a good take up rate amongst riders.

In addition to general messages to all vehicle operators such as watching out for vulnerable road users, driver training courses need to address the issue of inattentive blindness where a driver looks but fails to see. Research has shown that drivers who are also riders or have a social or familial connection to a rider, are involved in less crashes with motorcycles, as the presence of a motorcycle registers in their subconscious.

The use of mobile phones by drivers is of particular concern to riders as drivers are less likely to be watching out for motorcycles if they are distracted by the use of a mobile phone.

¹ Billheimer, J.W. (1998). Evaluation of California motorcyclist safety program. Transportation Research record 1640, 100-109.

² Austroads 2003, Road Safety Impact of Motorcycle Training and Licensing Schemes. Prepared by Jim Langford Monash University Accident Research Centre

Terms of Reference d):- The needs of driver trainers, both professional and non-professional

Potential rider trainers need to obtain industry based accreditation before they can start working as rider trainers, however, there is no provision for professional development after this initial accreditation.

There needs to be a professional development pathway by which trainers can update their knowledge of:-

- the causal factors of motorcycle crashes,
- adult education,
- improvements in motorcycle safety features,
- improvements in helmet and protective clothing design.

Terms of Reference e):- The needs of metropolitan, rural and regional drivers

A survey in 2002 by the MCC found that 54% of riders had undertaken some form of post licence training, the majority within the last 4 years. This survey however concentrated on motorcyclists who reside in the Sydney / Wollongong / Newcastle region and therefore have greater access to courses than riders in rural areas.

It is generally acknowledged that riders in rural areas have little access to post licence training and the MCC has sponsored training in rural areas and encourages others to provide training in rural areas whenever possible.

Terms of Reference f):- The needs and expectations of passengers and other road users

Carrying a pillion affects the stability of a motorcycle so advice needs to be made available to both riders and their pillioners on how the pillion should conduct themselves to minimise the effect on the stability of the motorcycle. As learner and 'red' provisional riders are not permitted to carry pillioners, this advice needs to be available when riders transition from their 'red' to their 'green' provisional licences.

Vulnerable road users have an expectation that drivers know how to interact with them. In the same way car drivers need to know how to interact safely with heavy vehicles such as allowing them extra space for turning and braking, car drivers need to know:-

- how to allow for the speed differential that exists between them and bicycles
- that motorcycles don't appear from nowhere
- due to their smaller size and different manoeuvrability, motorcycles use road space not available to larger vehicles and may appear to be in odd places

Terms of Reference g):- The cost of driver training standards and how the costs should be allocated

Unlicensed riders are over represented in fatal and serious crashes. Why these people chose to ride unlicensed is little researched or understood. The cost of compulsory learner rider training has been suggested as one factor that could influence unlicensed riding. The compulsory learner rider scheme needs to continue to be subsidised so riders don't ride unlicensed.

'Return to Riding' and other post licence training needs to be subsidised or structured to minimise the cost.

Terms of Reference h):- The experience of other jurisdictions, and interstate cross-border issues

Victoria has recently revised their learner rider scheme. The NSW scheme has not been revised for many years and needs to be reviewed as a matter of urgency to ensure it conforms to best practice in adult education.

Several years ago every rider in Tasmania was sent literature on a post licence training course; the take up rate of this course was extremely disappointing. The reasons for this poor take up rate needs to be investigated so the promotion of courses can be improved and another failure at rider engagement avoided.

Terms of Reference i):- Other related matters.

Approximately a quarter of riders attending the provisional rider course have done little or no on-road riding since completing the learner rider course. The compulsory period of 3 months to hold a learner permit is to encourage riders to gain experience before attending the provisional course. Consideration should be given to having riders carry a tracking device to establish how much riding they have completed while on a learner permit.

As an alternative to encouraging riders to attend training courses, it has been suggested that training riders to be mentors within their ride group could be an effective means of distributing safe riding tips to riders.

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