

Parliament of Australia

Joint Select Committee on Road Safety

Submission

January 2020

MOTORCYCLE COUNCIL
OF NEW SOUTH WALES
INCORPORATED



Attn: Secretary

Joint Select Committee on Road Safety

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About the Motorcycle Council of NSW Inc.

The Motorcycle Council of NSW Inc. (MCC) is an internationally recognised umbrella group for motorcycle clubs, associations and ride groups in the state of New South Wales, representing over 60 clubs, with more than 41,000 riders.

Established in 1981, MCC 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.

MCC 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.

The MCC wishes to thank the Joint Select Committee on Road Safety for this opportunity to make a submission.

Should you require further information on the information contained within this submission, please feel free to contact the MCC enquiries@mccofnsw.org.au or 1300 NSW MCC (1300 679 622).

Regards,

Brian Wood
Secretary

General Comments:-

Motorcycle crashes account for about 16 to 18% of fatalities and serious injuries yet receive little in the way of resources to implement countermeasures to achieve zero fatalities and serious injuries by 2050.

Motorcycle safety is always an afterthought and as a result motorcycle road safety is not improving at the same rate as other road user groups.

It is assumed that general countermeasures are as effective for motorcyclists as they are other road users yet there is evidence to the contrary.

- The National Action Road Safety Action Plan 2005 – 2006 used a star rating system for 'Expected Benefits' of the Action Plan. Car Occupants received 12 three stars and 3 two stars, a total of 42 stars compared with Motorcyclists who received 6 three stars, 4 two stars, 4 one stars and 1 no stars, a total of 30 stars. So the expected improvement for motorcycle safety as a result of this Action Plan lagged well behind that for car occupants.
- Similarly the Action Plan 2009 and 2010 used a similar expected benefit rating system using 'boxes'. International Visitors and Rural Road Users received 18 'boxes' each whereas motorcyclists only received 12.

Issues

National Motorcycle Road Safety Strategy

Actions in the national road safety strategies to address motorcycle safety are not the result of a well developed strategy but the result of what seems like a good idea at the time.

It is 15 years since the Senate road safety inquiry 'Eyes on the Road Ahead' recommended that a national motorcycle road safety strategy be developed, this recommendation was not supported.

Since this inquiry, it appears all States and Territories have developed motorcycle safety strategies.

It is time for the Federal Government to reassess the need to develop a national motorcycle road safety strategy.

Motorcycle Safety Consultative Committee

The Australian Government's Motorcycle Safety Consultative Committee which was disbanded in 2010 needs to be reformed. This committee had representation from a number of motorcycle rider groups from around the country as well as motorcycle industry representation.

The terms of reference need to include:-

- 1/ provide a forum for constructive consultation between the Government and other major stakeholders in national motorcycle rider safety.

2/ focus on issues of strategic importance to the national goal of reducing the number of serious injuries and fatalities resulting from motorcycle crashes.

3/ provide a forum where relevant issues not being addressed in other consultative arrangements can be canvassed by participating parties.

This committee needs to be reformed so motorcycle road safety can improve at the same rate as other road user groups.

ABS

Antilock Braking Systems (ABS) has been mandated for all new motorcycles over 125cc from November 2019. The Regulation Impact Statement (RIS) for mandating motorcycle ABS expects ABS would be 33 per cent effective in reducing injury crashes and 39 per cent effective in reducing serious and fatal motorcycle crashes.

In road safety terms, countermeasures with potential for such a significant reduction in road trauma are called 'silver bullets'. Not since the introduction of helmets has there been a countermeasure with such potential to reduce motorcycle road trauma.

For these reductions in crashes to be realised it is essential that the riders braking technique is appropriate. Yet there is no funding for educational campaigns so riders are confident to gradually apply full braking force knowing that the ABS will prevent wheel lock and skidding which can result in the motorcycle capsizing. If riders aren't confident to use the full braking potential of their motorcycle, the ABS won't activate and the full benefits of ABS not realised.

Educational campaigns to educate riders about the use of ABS are urgently needed.

Protective Clothing

The Motorcycle Clothing Assessment Program, known as MotoCAP, is an independent Australian/New Zealand rating scheme for motorcycle protective clothing to enable riders to make informed decisions about what they buy and wear, and to encourage manufacturers to increase the availability of effective protective clothing in the market.

Since the launch in September 2018 there have been over 22,000 unique users to the MotoCAP website with over 1300 subscribed to receive updates when more garments are added to the site. 78% of visitors originate from the target countries of Australia and New Zealand, with the remainder visiting from other countries. Almost 8% of visitors originate from Europe.

During the first year of operation 150 garments representing 10% of jackets, pants and gloves available across the two countries were tested.

On the 1st December 2019, MotoCAP won the prestigious Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme (FIM) award for Road Safety.

Funding is only available to test 10% of the garment available in the market each year. Additional funding needs to be made available so a larger percentage of the market can be tested.

Autonomous Vehicles

There should be no reduction in motorcycle safety as a result of the introduction of automated vehicles.

Systems need to be able to detect motorcycles just as well as other vehicles. However, there is evidence that currently available Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) do not detect motorcycles as well as they do other vehicles.

Test procedures, such as those developed in Europe by Motorcycle Users Safety Enhancement Project <https://www.utacceram.com/testing-expertise/safety/active/muse-project> need to be further developed so they are suitable for use in the mandatory self certification process that has been adopted in Australia for the introduction of automated vehicles.

Specific questions raised in the Terms of Reference

- a. the effectiveness of existing road safety support services and programs, including opportunities to integrate Safe System principles into health, education, industry and transport policy;**

Response:- The rate of improvement in motorcycle safety lags behind that of other road users as a result of motorcycle specific countermeasures not being included in road safety programs.

While the Safe System approach was adopted nationally 8 years ago, very few Local Councils have adopted the approach. Those that have appear to have little understanding that under the Safe System approach they have a responsibility to be pro-active in removing hazards, instead they are still relying on the conventional approach of examining crash histories. Relying on crash histories for motorcycle hazards is a flawed approach as only half of motorcycle hospital presentations can be linked to a Police report so many motorcycle crashes are not captured in crash histories.

Local Councils also claim they are unable to remove hazards due to funding constraints yet nowhere in the Safe System approach is it stated that this approach is conditional on funding.

- b. the impact of road trauma on the nation, including the importance of achieving zero deaths and serious injuries in remote and regional areas;**

Response:- Tourism is considered one of Australia's top five super-growth sectors and motorcycle tourism by overseas visitors is said to be worth at least \$350m annually.

In addition to overseas visitors many city riders enjoy riding in remote and regional areas, much of this is on adventure bikes.

As riders need to purchase food, fuel and accommodation as they go, unlike grey nomads who can purchase food and fuel in large regions and don't need accommodation, riders inject much needed money into small businesses in remote areas.

It is therefore important to address motorcycle safety in remote and regional not only to reduce road trauma but to also protect the tourism economy in these areas.

c. the possible establishment of a future parliamentary Standing Committee on Road Safety and its functions;

Response:- The Motorcycle Council of NSW regularly makes submissions to and appears before Staysafe, the NSW Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety on a range of issues affecting motorcycle safety.

The establishment of a national Standing Committee on Road Safety would provide organisations such as the Australian Motorcycle Council, an opportunity to contribute to the debate on how achieve zero fatalities and serious injuries by 2050.

d. measures to ensure state, territory and local government road infrastructure investment incorporates the Safe System principles;

Response:- Motorcycle specific road safety audits need to be included at stages road construction.

e. road trauma and incident data collection and coordination across Australia;

Response:- Police reports are usually prepared by General Duties Police who are not trained specialist crash investigators. Such reports, whilst ensuring an accurate outline of what happened in a crash, often fail to discover why the crash happened. Consequently little or no reliable crash causal data is gleaned from police attendance at road crashes.

Police attend crashes to gather basic evidence of any traffic offences that have occurred in the crash. Thus the purpose and extent of any 'investigation' that takes place at a crash is designed to suit traffic offence prosecutions rather than any effort to determine and/or better understand actual crash causation.

Dedicated Crash Investigation teams need to be established that would follow the Safe System approach to road safety and investigate the crash without looking for any blame but rather the causal factors of the crash, in a true Towards Zero approach.

f. recommending strategies, performance measures and targets for the next National Road Safety Strategy;

Response:- the next National Road Safety Strategy needs to treat motorcycle safety not as an afterthought but as a forethought with performance measures and targets to achieve zero motorcycle fatalities and serious injuries by 2050.

g. recommendations for the role of the newly established Office of Road Safety;

Response:- Convene the re-establish Motorcycle Safety Consultative Committee

h. other measures to support the Australian Parliament’s ongoing resolve to reduce incidents on our roads, with a focus on the recommendations from the Inquiry into the effectiveness of the National Road Safety Strategy 2011–2020.

No response

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