



Motor Cycle Riders Association of South Australia Inc.

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THE MRASA RESPONSE TO THE DISCUSSION PAPER ON PROPOSED MOTORCYCLE LICENSING CHANGES

The Motorcycle Riders Association of South Australia Inc congratulates the Minister for Road Safety, the Honourable Jennifer Rankin, for consulting with the riding community on rider safety.

Many riders have hard learnt opinions on what it takes to ride safely and are concerned whenever a fellow rider doesn't arrive at journeys end. There is a bond between riders, both inside and outside of organised clubs, and this deserves to be recognised when there is a discussion on how to assist new riders in navigating their first few years on two wheels.

The MRASA is honoured to be a representative for the riders of South Australia and offers the following comment on each of the six proposed initiatives.

- 1. Requiring a car licence to be held for at least 12 months before being eligible to apply for a motorcycle learner's permit.**

This proposal is not supported by the MRASA.

The basis for this approach is flawed. The intention to have new riders gain road skills prior to applying for a motorcycle license does not appear to take into account the average age of novice riders. Research from a Queensland study found 'novice riders' does not necessarily mean 'young' riders as the average age at the time of obtaining a learner licence was 33 years old.

(Based on analysis of crash and licensing data from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 – range 18-71yrs by N. Haworth, P. Rowden, and A. Schramm, 2010, *Motorcycle Rider Safety Project; Analysis of crash and licensing data for learner motorcyclists*, CARRS-Q report to TMR, August 2012.)

Of the younger riders who do apply for a motorcycle licence, their choice is often based on financial reasons. They include apprentices, trainees and university students. The purchase and ongoing costs of running a car are far greater than the equivalent motorcycle cost. These riders and their career prospects would be unfairly disadvantaged under this proposal.

- 2. A compulsory six months period between the Basic and Advanced Rider Safe training courses.**

This proposal is not supported by the MRASA.

The test has a competency element. The existing recommendation for six months separation between levels is supported. This does not need to be made into a mandatory minimum time frame. Riders who have not acquired the riding skills to pass the competency test will not be able to progress.

3. Require all licence holders endorsed with R-Date to have a zero blood alcohol concentration (BAC) while riding a motorcycle.

This proposal is supported by the MRASA.

4. Introduce specific licensing and training requirements for riders of mopeds (motorcycles with an engine capacity not exceeding 50 millilitres).

This proposal is supported by the MRASA.

The MRASA is a supporter of rider training. We were instrumental in having rider training introduced in South Australia in 1987 when rider fatalities and serious injuries were at an alarmingly high level, and the result was an almost immediate and significant reduction in casualties.

The feedback today is as relevant as it was then. Riders learn more than they expect and are safer with these skills and knowledge. Knowing how to drive a car does not enable a road user to safely ride a motorcycle. The NSW system is a good example for South Australia. It is based on a one day specific scooter course that enables an automatic motorcycle of up to 160 millilitres to be ridden for around half the price of the full course. The option of undertaking a further one day course at a later date to upgrade to a full motorcycle licence would be highly worthwhile.

5. Riders with an R-Date licence endorsement (including riders of mopeds) to be banned from carrying a pillion passenger.

This proposal is supported by the MRASA.

6. Explore options for a Motorcycle Safety Fund dedicated to motorcycle safety initiatives to address high and disproportionate risks.

This proposal is not supported by the MRASA.

The MRASA agrees with the Australian Motorcycle Council (AMC) that a levy on motorcyclists is discriminatory.

We do not believe a levy is required to improve rider safety.

Many of the successful Victorian levy initiatives are able to be adopted here at low cost to South Australia.

An increased focus on education, training and sharing the road would benefit all road users, not only motorcycle riders.

These, and many other worthy programs, do not require a levy.

If more funding is needed, the MRASA would support the Ulysses alternative funding model of money raised from fines being directly allocated to motorcycle safety initiatives.

Alternative suggestions for consideration

South Australia was the first state to introduce a consultancy group consisting of motorcycling representatives, motorcycling industry representatives and various State Government departments, all working to improve rider safety. Disappointingly, since the abolition of the Motorcycle Safety Taskforce, South Australia is now the only state without a dedicated motorcycling safety working group. We encourage the SA Government to re-establish a permanent advisory body focused exclusively on motorcycle safety. The MRASA would like to take this opportunity to praise the Motor Accident Commission for their outstanding programs featuring Mick Doohan. The best motorcycle safety programs have rider input and Mick Doohan is a stand out rider.

Rider Safe needs to be competitive with private suppliers of rider training. South Australia has the most expensive rider training in Australia.

How can the South Australian Government justify owning and operating this operation?

The cost of training in South Australia is over \$430.
The next most expensive state is Victoria at \$200 to \$300.
The Northern Territory is only \$18, Western Australia is \$88 and NSW \$110.

There are many private training businesses that could be accredited to operate in SA. Let competition drive down pricing and increase training options.

We need an "On Road" training element. Training is currently conducted in a glorified car park. Students gain approval and then go play in the traffic. What would our road toll be if car drivers (who have less to learn) were trained in a car park and never taken out to learn in the real world?

We need to find a way to encourage existing licence holders to undertake refresher and advanced training. The vast majority of our licensed riders have never had any training as they obtained their licence prior to the introduction of formalised training. Returning riders have not ridden for many years with some away from motorcycles for over 10 years.

On behalf of the MRASA
Philip McClelland
President