

ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE

Inquiry into vehicle safety

Melbourne — 31 March 2008

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Witnesses

Mr R. Newland, motorcycle manager, and
Mr S. Strickland, executive committee member, Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries.

The CHAIR — Welcome to the public hearings of the Road Safety Committee's inquiry into vehicle safety. All evidence taken at this hearing is protected by parliamentary privilege as provided by the Constitution Act 1975 and further subject to the provisions of the Parliamentary Committees Act 2003. However, any comments you make outside the hearing may not be afforded such privilege. As you can see, we are recording the evidence today and will provide a proof version of the Hansard transcript at the earliest opportunity so you can correct it as appropriate. If you could proceed with your submission, and if we could ask questions along the way, that would be great.

Mr NEWLAND — Thanks very much, John. First of all I would just like to outline for you a little bit about the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries and its motorcycle group in particular. The FCAI represents the car manufacturers and the car importers in the country, and it also represents the motorcycle importers. My role is to look after the motorcycle group; I am motorcycle manager with the FCAI. In that capacity I represent quite a number of motorcycle companies that import product into this country. The brands that you might recognise, and there are 17 of them, are: Arquin, Aprilia, BMW, Cagiva, Ducati, Harley-Davidson/Buell, Honda, Husqvarna, Hyosung, Kawasaki, Moto Guzzi, MV Augusta, Suzuki, Triumph, Yamaha, and two companies that bring ATVs into the country at this point in time, Polaris and Bombardier.

As well as representing those companies as members of the chamber, there is also the Australian Scooter Federation, of which Holly Black is chairperson at the moment. She was asked to appear but could not do so and asked whether I would look after the scooter people on her behalf. The Australian Scooter Federation belongs to the FCAI as an associate member. The members of ASF are: Aprilia, Bolwell, Bug, Daelim, Gilera, Kymco, Peugeot, Piaggio, Sachs, SCP — that is, Stoney Creek Powersports — Suzuki, TGB, Vespa and Yamaha. You can see that we represent almost all of the product that comes into the country. There are a couple that we do not represent. One is KTM Motorcycles; that is not a member. And there are quite a number of Chinese importers that bring scooters in particular and off-road bikes into the country that are not currently members of the chamber.

Having gone through that, could I perhaps let you know that there are no motorcycles manufactured in Australia. That has been that way for many, many years now. But we rely on the importation of product into this country. That comes mainly from Japan, Europe and the USA, and to a lesser degree in the scooter area from China, Taiwan and some of those places. There are no Indian imports into here yet, except for the good old Royal Enfield, which is built the same as it was in Britain about 45 years ago.

The Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries belongs, as an associate member, to the International Motorcycle Manufacturers Association. That is the global representative body of the motorcycle industry, and IMMA, as it is known for short, comprises ACEM — and I understand that this committee has been to visit ACEM, the European manufacturers, which includes the UK in there since the common market. Australia joined IMMA in 1999 as an associate member; we cannot be a full member because we are not a manufacturing country. In 2005 India and Canada both joined IMMA, and in 2006 FAMI, the Federation of Asian Motorcycle Industries, joined, and that represents Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Taiwan.

I am not sure whether you are aware, but I need you to understand that IMMA represents the global manufacturers, and this includes the USA — USMMA, the United States Motorcycle Manufacturers Association — and it represents the motorcycle group at the United Nations, at APEC and at ISO, the International Standards Organisation, in promoting harmonisation for the world.

In particular the International Motorcycles Manufacturing Association (IMMA) represents the motorcycle industry on working party 29 at United Nations, and that is the party that generally looks after the development and the authorisation of global technical regulations, and these are annexed to the 1958 and the 1998 United Nations agreements, and Australia is a signatory to the 1958 agreement.

IMMA also represents the global industry on working party 1, which is the road safety committee at the UN, and just to round that out now, we are conducting, as an industry, a national summit into motorcycle and scooter safety in Canberra.

The FCAI is sharing that funding with what used to be known as the Australian Transport Safety Bureau and is now under the Department of Infrastructure, and that national summit will be conducted to explore safety measures for motorcycling, to be implemented into the national road safety strategy plan from 2010 forward.

At that summit that we will be co-hosting the Secretary-General of IMMA, Dr Nick Rogers, will be giving a keynote address, and his presentation will cover a range of issues, but certainly it will include developing technologies for motorcycles; and as I understand it from the brief, that is fairly much the area you are interested in today.

Mr KOCH — Ray, what are the technologies that are going to be pursued and when is this summit taking place?

Mr NEWLAND — The summit is scheduled for 10 and 11 April — two weeks from now. There will be jurisdictions from all of the states and territories invited, as will rider representatives, and industry. It is an attempt to try and find a way through the concern for the motorcycle crashes at the moment in the various locations around Australia.

Mr KOCH — That is fine, but what are you focusing on? That is very broad but there are some areas obviously you are looking at.

Mr NEWLAND — It is really a think-tank in a sense, David. It is not looking at any particular things. There will be no prepared papers. Invitations have gone out to MUARC (Monash University Accident Research Centre) to do a couple of presentations. They are looking at the enhanced motorcycle crash investigation as a presentation, and one on the road improvements under the black spot program.

After that we are looking at a collection of accurate and reliable crash data. That is very poor in this country at the present time. In terms of what was collected on the motorcyclist killed yesterday morning, we do not really know very much more about the crash than the fact that it happened on the Monash Freeway at 7.15 in the morning, and the motorcyclist appeared to collide with a car, fell down and died.

We really need to know a lot more in-depth information about the motorcycle crashes before we can truly tailor-make countermeasures to look at countering the problem. So the summit is fairly open in its operation, and it will take a lot of its direction from Nick Rogers' keynote presentation at the outset.

We have Tony Sharp also, from the United Kingdom, who has come in to do a presentation on the road improvements that have happened over there, and a third international participant will be a man named Kransky from NHTSA — that is, The National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration.

Mr KOCH — Ray, I only raise these couple of points from the point of view that you say the forum will relate to motorcycle safety beyond 2010. We are halfway through 2008, and we know from earlier presentations that incorporating some of these safety measures takes a lot more than 18 months, particularly that is why I raise that question, to see whether there is something in the process there at the minute that just needs signing off on so that the manufacturers can get in — —

Mr NEWLAND — No, that is not so. I do not believe there are any pre-determined issues that will be signed off at the summit. There will be recommendations coming forward. It is a presentation on one day, and the second day is a series of workshops. Out of those workshops we will try to synthesise and prioritise a number of issues that will go forward to be worked on by the states and territories for countermeasures.

Mr TREZISE — -Ray, will that conference also be looking at off-road or is it mainly road specific?

Mr NEWLAND — No, it is road specific. Because of the involvement of the Australian Transport Safety Bureau their major emphasis is on road crashes. What we do have as a statistic, seeing you have mentioned off-road, Ian, is that 50 per cent of our market coming into the country at the moment is off-road motorcycles. If we rely on road bikes alone we find that we are not really covering the full gamut, and it is quite amazing. People here ride off-road bikes in their sleep and the Europeans and the Japanese are quite amazed at the size of our off-road market.

That is diminishing a bit because there has been closure of a fair bit of the access to forests and parks where people have tended to ride, and, right at this point in time, one must have a registered vehicle and a licence of that category to legally operate in the bush.

Mr STRICKLAND — Ian, if I can clarify something for you too, in relation to off-road. Historically the established motorcycle manufacturers have imported motorcycles into Australia and set up distribution channels.

Over the last three years there has been a considerable uptake in the importing of Chinese motorcycles. The federal chamber captures detailed sales through established distribution lines. We have no way of capturing what sales are occurring with Chinese products.

The Chinese imports are really strong in the minibike area — 50 cc through to 125 cc area — even though they are moving into larger capacity motorcycles. But it is very difficult for the chamber to calculate what the retails are of these Chinese models. The Chinese now comprise the largest portion of imported motorcycles at very low value. For the last three years it is around 100 000 units per year and the average unit cost is I think, from memory, around \$350.

Mr TREZISE — Did I correctly hear Ray say before that not only off-road bikes are being imported from China but also the scooters we are now seeing prevail on local streets?

Mr NEWLAND — Not all, but the majority of those brands that I read out in the Australian Scooter Federation are Chinese, Taiwanese — —

Mr KOCH — Asian.

Mr NEWLAND — Asian sorts of products, yes. There are a few — Piaggio, Vespa and Gilara — that actually come from Italy, and Aprilia also comes from Italy, but beyond those ones the majority then come from the Asian countries.

Mr KOCH — Ray, from your chamber's membership, or particularly the motorcycle-buying public, is there demand being placed on manufacturers for more safety in relation to the manufacture of motorcycles generally? Or are they accepting of what is being produced?

Mr NEWLAND — I think the latter is very much the case at the moment, David. Consumers do not appear to be demanding the high level of safety issue that may be in the technologies that we are perhaps looking at today. There is more of a will to buy to a price than to afford the luxury fittings of some of the higher technologies. There are not many available at the moment, as you might well know from your previous investigations. ABS is perhaps the one that is most commonly understood and known, and that is on many cars these days. I understand you have spoken to Cameron Cuthill from BMW, and BMW does have most of its motorcycles currently on the market fitted with ABS, but BMWs in motorcycles are a bit like in their cars — not everybody can afford or owns a BMW, whether it be four wheels or two.

There is that realm of people in the upper age bracket who are returning to motorcycling after families, who are looking to buy what they believe to be a classy motorcycle at the top end of the economic scale, and they tend to lean towards BMW, towards Honda's Gold Wing or towards Honda's ST 1300. There is a range of fairly well-equipped and well-appointed touring bikes that are in that sort of bracket. Most of BMW's tend to fit within that realm.

Mr STRICKLAND — But, David, I also make the point that BMW only covers two segments of motorcycling — it covers road machines and dual-purpose, on-off road machines — so it actually only distributes motorcycles in a limited area of the market.

Mr KOCH — Thank you, Stuart. In raising that, I specifically want to know what the chamber does from an education point of view. Ray, heading up the motorcycle arena of the chamber, what do you do from a community or purchaser education program point of view specifically to promote further safety in motorbike science?

Mr NEWLAND — I represent the chamber at road safety committees in Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania and New South Wales, and the ACT at the federal level. There is a task force that operates in South Australia that has not invited me to be part of it at the moment. Western Australia is about to embark on developing its road safety program for motorcyclists, and it has me on stand-by after the summit to come and give it some assistance with its developments.

From the consumer point of view, that is really the responsibility of the companies. The FCAI does not sell the motorcycles, it just represents them. What we have done in one instance I can cite for you is that with ATVs — four-wheeled motorcycles — there was much concern about the safety of these and the number of fatalities

happening on farms in particular, and Paul probably well knows of that, because in a previous life he and I did have some interaction in dealing with the ATV inquest by the coroner.

Mr STRICKLAND — Specifically use.

Mr NEWLAND — Yes. What we did there was to develop *You and Your ATV*, a safety video in a DVD format, to give away free with every motorcycle sold. That was an initiative of the group, not just of an individual company, so it represented all the ATV importers.

Mr KOCH — In fairness to the industry, ATVs were getting knocked around a little bit in sales, and it certainly had to do some education in relation to the use of those products. I would have thought there was a correlation between the producers, the sellers and yourself — the chamber — who represent those people, and that there would be some onus on yourselves, not just on the manufacturers.

Mr NEWLAND — Yes. I am just coming to that, too, David. In the road bike situation we have almost finalised now a code of practice that we see fit for giving out through our dealer networks to ensure that dealers give appropriate advice to consumers, in particular about the size of motorcycle they are permitted to ride according to their licence category, and to prevent people who are not eligible to have larger sized machines in their first year of riding from accessing those through the sale situation. This code of practice will be ready to roll out by about June. We just did not quite get it ready to hit the road with the summit, but it is sitting on the sidelines now almost ready to go. Hand in hand with that will be the *Ride On DVD* that has been in existence under the ATSB for somewhere in the order of about eight or nine years now. We were instrumental — the FCAI and its member companies — in assisting with the script for that way back in the 1999 days and with the product to be filmed in it, and now we have requested and have permission from ATSB to freely make that available as a giveaway with every product that we sell.

We are trying to highlight the safety techniques of riding and not so much the safety technologies at this stage, David, because they are few and far between. The safety techniques of riding are contained in that *Ride On DVD*. It is a very good product, and that is what we are packaging up as our giveaway to consumers at the point of sale. This will be screened in the dealer networks and also available to all of the riders.

Mr STRICKLAND — David, if I could make the point, too, I think Ray does a valuable job in his position with the chamber in coordinating with the rider groups. Because motorcycles are very much a lifestyle, passionate-type product, I think governments around Australia have experienced the wrath of the rider groups from time to time — headlights on is a pretty good example of that. Ray coordinates and works with the rider groups, because if the rider groups are not behind certain initiatives it can be very difficult to get them working in the marketplace. In the coordination with the rider groups, Ray, who are you working with at the moment?

Mr NEWLAND — Thank you, Stuart; that is a very good point. It is through those rider groups that we see our liaison with the consumers. Most of the consumers belong to a rider group of one sort or another, and this consists of the motorcycle riders association; the Ulysses Club, which is the largest club in the land — there are something of the order of 30 000 members in the Ulysses Club nationally; the Motorcycle Council of New South Wales; and the Tasmanian Motorcycle Council. These councils in the various states belong to the national body called the Australian Motorcycle Council. Currently Shaun Lennard from Tasmania is the chairperson of that, and it is with those rider groups that I sit on those state-based bodies and the federal body of rider safety.

Mr WELLER — Do you have a group of scooter riders?

Mr NEWLAND — The Australian Scooter Federation does have that developing now, but they are fairly much the young people on the block, if you like, and that is now becoming much more developed. There is a scooter rider group in most of the states, and the ASF is liaising with them. The ASF has produced brochures to assist people in looking at the sorts of product available, and I think it has done a good job in the three years of the existence of the Australian Scooter Federation. I will point out to you one good thing that the ASF has done recently. A 50cc scooter, called a moped by definition under the Australian design rules, is limited to a 50 cubic centimetre capacity and to 50 kilometres an hour. They are the requirements. A lot of the dealers have been doctoring the 50cc moped to enable it to exceed 50 kilometres an hour, and in some cases these things can do 70 kilometres an hour. They are not designed to do that. The braking requirements under ADR for a 50cc 50 kilometre-an-hour scooter are less than that for the larger and higher speeds. In consultation with DOTARS — the Department of Transport and Regional Services — the ASF has put out a brochure to all of its dealers trying to

educate them and advising them, 'Do not do this. This is illegal. It carries a penalty under the DOTARS regime of \$13 400 per unit'. If a dealer were found to be doctoring 100 of these 50cc scooters before they went out of his door, he would be liable for 100 times \$13 400 under the DOTARS fine. We have advised them of this by newsletter and paperwork involved with the dealer network. They are contracted to us under the franchising code of practice, and under that scheme we can have some sort of control on their operation. The final thing, of course, from DOTARS's point of view is that if the education does not work and if the fine does not work, DOTARS will withdraw the compliance plate approval and they will no longer be able to operate.

Mr TREZISE — Ray, has anyone been fined under that?

Mr NEWLAND — Not yet. They know about it now, but it has only happened in the last few months.

The CHAIR — Just in relation to the 50 per cent of sales of off-road motorcycles now, is that a trend — that there are more people now riding in terms of leisure?

Mr NEWLAND — No.

The CHAIR — Or is it that people are going off the roads to off-road rather than riding on the roads? Is there a trend that there are less motorcycle riders now than there were, say, 10 years ago?

Mr NEWLAND — No. There is a trend that there are a lot more.

The CHAIR — On the road or off the road?

Mr NEWLAND — Both. In my time of 11 years with the chamber I have seen it grow from the order of 38 000 registrations in a year. We now record our sales by retail sales, which gives us the complete picture, because 38 000 in those days of registrations did not cover the 38 000 equivalent off-road bikes — we could not see them. Now we count them by retail sales, and we can count them, and I can tell you that at the end of last year there were 50 433 off-road bikes compared to 45 510 road bikes.

Scooters are included with road bikes and are shown separately in our data, so if you add another 14 000 to that, the number of road bikes out shadow just a little bit the off-road, but that is a lot of motorcycles off-road, and that has been growing, not abating yet, in the past 10 years.

Mr TREZISE — Of those figures, the 45 000 on-road, are you able to break it down to the percentage who on a Sunday ride down to Lorne?

Mr KOCH — Recreational versus commuters?

Mr TREZISE — As compared to the daily commuters?

Mr NEWLAND — One very important point I can tell you is that our market is recreation. It is no longer commuting. Very few people ride to commute. They ride for fun on weekends — whether it be off-road or on-road.

Mr TREZISE — Getting back to the scooters, would you see that due to the price of petrol and the traffic congestion that the use of scooters will start to increase our percentage of daily commuters, especially for young people?

Mr NEWLAND — My view is this: I do not believe that the petrol crisis is driving people towards two-wheeled vehicles. It may have a little influence in the area of urban mobility with 50 cc scooters, but I think it is more the point that people have disposable incomes, and they want a toy. They want to be able to get around simply and easily in the urban area. That is what happens with the elevation of scooters into the scheme.

Mr KOCH — And mopeds.

Mr NEWLAND — And the mopeds, yes.

Mr KOCH — I would not have thought the mopeds were a big recreational — —

Mr NEWLAND — The mopeds are. They are more so in the states where you can drive a moped on a car licence, but that is not the case in Victoria. But in answer to your question, it is a recreation situation in

motorcycling, both off-road and on-road. When you see surveys that are done by some of the road safety organisations, the results are that they do not ride much during the week. The riding happens on the weekends. That is when they go riding in the clubs and the bunches down to Lorne and so on, and up to the Yarra ranges — wherever they go — but off-road happens on weekends as well.

You will see them when you are out driving on a Saturday or Sunday — people towing their trailers with their utes or four-wheel drives up front and two or three bikes in the back and off they go to the bush for their ride. That is recreation.

Mr LEANE — Can I ask two questions? The first one is: when we spoke to motor car stakeholders probably there was a common theme regarding safety around electronic stability control to the point that some stakeholders were saying that it is the silver bullet and it is the way to go. Is there an emerging silver bullet in the motorcycle industry or a current technology that people are swearing by?

The second question is about ABS — and maybe, Stuart, you might know: when it is mass produced, what is the cost of ABS being installed on a bike compared to not being installed? How much does it cost for ABS to be installed?

Mr STRICKLAND — Our presentation will go into the actual technology behind ABS, so perhaps it is worthwhile looking at that when Greg helps because he can answer technical questions. Our presentation is very much around some technology that Honda has adopted on motorcycles that are related to safety, so we will talk about that and probably answer that.

In relation to safety of the silver bullet, there are a couple of things that I think need to be clearly understood, if they are not already, and that is that when you look at a car, a car is actually a car. The basic design of a motor vehicle is as it is. With motorcycles, we have huge variances in the designs of motorcycles in the various categories. If you look at, I suppose, a utility and a motor vehicle, they are a little different, but we have huge variations with motorcycles in terms of the motorcycles that are built for off-road use, for children's use, for touring use, the very heavy motorcycles that carry a lot of gear and pillion passengers compared to sports motorcycles — there are so many variations.

The technologies and all those variations tend to be different, and we will cover that. But probably something that has really changed over the years is the silver bullet. I would not refer to it exactly as a silver bullet. You have got to keep in mind that with motorcycling there are two components. There is the motorcycle unit itself and then there is the clothing and the gear that the person wears on the motorcycle.

Now, on that, there have been astronomical changes over the last 30 years — 10 years in particular — the helmet technology, the riding suit technology. The inbuilt safety equipment in these suits is fantastic. With Kevlar jeans you can actually fall off down the road and go sliding along and you do not chew out the Kevlar. There are a lot of things that have come on the market over recent years that have meant it is a lot safer in terms of if you do happen to get off the motorcycle, you are far better protected. Whether it is a silver bullet or not, it certainly is a huge difference. As a motorcycle rider, I ride with a backpack. A backpack now has an inbuilt back protector, because if you are carrying a backpack and you have got sharp things inside the backpack and you fall off on your back, it just gives you a lot more confidence.

The CHAIR — Just on that, you may have seen a fair few commercials on television in relation to motorcycle attire and some gruesome sort of shots.

Mr NEWLAND — The current TAC ads.

The CHAIR — The current TAC ads, and obviously those sorts of ads hit home, particularly to those people that ride motorcycles. But in terms of the attire, for example, in a car when you proceed to drive, you must put a seatbelt on — it is the law — do you think, like the helmet is compulsory, that there may be some need for some compulsory attire that needs to be worn when riding a motorcycle?

Mr STRICKLAND — I think Ray can probably follow up on this, but I think once again that gets back down to the rider groups individually. As a motorcyclist of probably too many years myself, I learnt when I was a young fellow riding on a farm and falling off and getting gravel rash, and once you have had severe gravel rash, you wake up that, hey, you really need to be wearing protective gear. We in the industry are aghast when we see

people riding around in shorts and thongs. It tends to happen more in the north than the south because of the weather and the gear. That is something that needs to be clearly understood from the point of view of Australia, in general, that the gear that is worn in the north is a lot different than the gear that is going to be worn in the south. Down here you will wear gear that is generally warmer. Up north, of course, you have got the very oppressive heat. If you are riding around in Darwin, it is very difficult to get the good gear, even though it is made — the gear that breathes well — but it is a different approach. Then you look at coloured gear. The visibility comes into it as well. It depends on individuals. I personally wear very visible clothing because I figure that I do not want anyone to say, 'I did not see him'. But I have been knocked off a couple of times over my career in motorcycling, and invariably the person says, 'I did not see you'. And I think that is negligence on behalf of the driver because in both instances they were doing turns in front of me. I think visibility is certainly an important part of it, but to answer that question about making it mandatory, I think perhaps yes is my personal view, but the rider groups have a different approach to that.

Mr WELLER — What is the approach of the rider groups?

Mr NEWLAND — The rider groups would say, 'Let those who ride decide'. I am not supportive one way or the other at this stage. I think there is reasonable evidence to suggest that a number of people do not wear appropriate trousers, pants, whichever we call them, and boots. They are the two things that seem to be missing most of the time. People will buy a leather jacket or a good fabric jacket and they wear a helmet because they have to. That I think, John, if I can say, really relates to your seatbelt. Your primary prevention thing is the helmet. That does a terrific job. The other ones are very useful, but I am not sure just how valuable they would be. I would see that there would be a lot better way to encourage, as via the TAC ad recently, than maybe to mandate it.

Again I emphasise that the lower legs — the pants and the boots — are something we would see as a focus because most everybody wears jacket, gloves, helmet. When you look at mandating, you then have to come to the fact and say, 'Well, what are we mandating it against?'. There is a standard for a helmet. There is a standard for seatbelts. There is not a standard for protective clothing, excepting the European standard.

The CHAIR — The basics would be that obviously you should not have shorts and thongs on.

Mr NEWLAND — Yes, and it is a bit like saying that an ice-cream bucket will protect your head more than nothing. The AS 1698 helmet approved under Australian standards is the better way.

Mr WELLER — You say that there are standards on clothing in Europe. They could be developed here in Australia; you could have Australian standards on clothing for bike riders?

Mr NEWLAND — You could do that. Two years ago a safety program on protective clothing was held in New South Wales and Standards Australia appeared and said, 'You'd be far better off to look at aligning with the European standard rather than developing an Australian standard'. They said it would take two to five years to get an Australian standard, which is a long time off. That is still doable, of course.

Mr STRICKLAND — If I can just cut in here, one of the things that is very difficult for industry in Australia is the lack of uniformity between states. Quite frankly, given the size of the motorcycle industry and the complexity in the various models, there is really no place for Australian standards. What we need to do is pick up on international standards because if we were to make an Australian standard on clothing, it would just increase the cost to the consumer.

We really need to pick up on what is happening internationally, and that is why the links with the International Motorcycle Manufacturers Association and other international bodies is really important. We have only 22 million people. When you look at 1 million cars being registered and around 50 000 motorcycles being registered each year for road use, you see that is the scale. We have different training regimes in each state with some different requirements for motorcyclists. In terms of retail volume, it makes life difficult and more expensive for the consumer if we go for exclusive standards that are particular to a state or a small country.

Mr NEWLAND — If I can just go back to that point I was making about helmets and clothing, currently with helmets we have an Australian standard. We do not manufacture helmets in this country. We used to, but we do not now. In other countries where there is no manufacturing, they accept a number of quality standards — the British standard, the US standard, the Japanese standard — as equivalents there.

If it bears that standard mark, it is accepted. Even though we have an Australian standard, there are lots of riders out there who do not wear an approved helmet and the enforcement of that is very difficult. These are really the bad boys, the blokes in their black helmets. You see that I have a black jacket on today, but I wear a white helmet. It makes me stand out from the crowd. Other guys wear black helmets. There is nothing illegal about a black helmet, but they wear no liner in them. They wear them as a skull cap. Where is the enforcement? What is happening? We have a standard, but is it working?

I am a little anxious about trying to mandate the clothing, because when the policeman pulls you up — in another state, not this one — and he has jodhpurs and a short-sleeved shirt on and he wants to know where your mandated protective clothing is, it is a case of, 'Officer, what are you wearing?'. I am not sure how simple and clear cut it would be to mandate the clothing. I think at this stage our better advice would be in the education factor. Nowhere in the world is it mandated at this point in time.

Then if we have the European standard accepted here, you have to have testing facilities, to test for seam strength, for burst strength, for tear and for abrasion resistance. They are complex and costly labs. In this country we have only one lab that tests for helmets — that is, the crash lab in New South Wales. There is no other. There is one in New Zealand. If we had mandated protective clothing, we would need to have test labs that could cope with all the product that would be sent to them for testing. I think it would be very difficult. They are just some of those barriers that we perhaps need to be aware of before we come in with the mandating of such a thing.

I would like to go back, if I could, to Shaun's question about stability control. Greg and Stuart will give you a good presentation on that shortly. In terms of stability control, it is not a silver bullet and at the moment, although BMW has what is called stability control, it truly is traction control; it just prevents the spinning of the rear wheel. It is not really true stability control. Stability control works when a four-wheel vehicle gets untidy and leans on the wheel that it is working towards, and adjustments are made to that. You have to have wheel sensors before you can run it. This is a single-track vehicle we are talking about, with one wheel in front of the other. There is not any outrigger to lean on, so the stability control just does not work very effectively at this point in time. We may get it developed in the future, and the people in the companies that build the motorcycles are working on all these developments right at this point in time. They do not sit twiddling their thumbs.

The CHAIR — What safety value would you put on ABS?

Mr NEWLAND — Again, ABS is not your magic bullet, because if you people imagine driving your car, have you ever experienced the ABS? Maybe, maybe not. ABS comes in only when you plant your foot on the footbrake, hold it there and do not move. It goes brp, brp, brp, as the ABS is coming in — releasing, grabbing, releasing, grabbing. Ordinarily people do not brake like that. On the motorcycle it will come in only when you give it that severe input. It really will work best when it is upright, travelling in a straight line.

Mr KOCH — Isn't that what ABS is all about? Isn't it about emergency stopping, not just stopping?

Mr NEWLAND — But you need to practise it because when you suddenly find that you are in an emergency and this is happening with your motorcycle, the first reaction is to let go of the brake controls. It really is. You think, 'What the hell's going on here?', you suddenly go, and you let go of the front brake — and the front brake is the one that is going to really stop you. It really needs to have riders trained in operating the ABS. I would say, John, that it is not really the answer yet. It is coming, and the number of the companies fitting them to a great number of models is increasing all the time. I think somebody asked before what was roughly the cost. I do not know, but my rough, back-of-the-envelope calculation would be somewhere in the vicinity of \$2500 additional to the motorcycle cost, to have ABS fitted.

Mr STRICKLAND — As we will explain, it works pretty well on large, heavy motorcycles — on large-capacity, touring-type motorcycles. For other motorcycles, it has limited or no value.

Mr NEWLAND — If anybody does need some further information, particularly to do with statistics, I will pass that on to Alex, and further statistics will be available on request.

The CHAIR — Thank you.

Witnesses withdrew.