

TRANSCRIPT

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Inquiry into the impact of road safety behaviours on vulnerable road users

Melbourne—Thursday 24 August 2023

(via videoconference)

MEMBERS

Alison Marchant—Chair

Kim O’Keeffe—Deputy Chair

Anthony Cianflone

Wayne Farnham

John Mullahy

Dylan Wight

Jess Wilson

WITNESSES

Simon Bailey, Director, Motorcycling Australia;

Stephen Bardsley, Rider Safety Officer, and

Damien Codognotto, Spokesperson, The Motorcycle Riders’ Association Australia; and

Rob Salvatore, Deputy Chair, Victorian Motorcycle Council.

The CHAIR: Welcome to this public hearing for the Legislative Assembly Economy and Infrastructure Committee's Inquiry into the impact of road safety behaviours on vulnerable road users. All mobile telephones should now be turned to silent.

All evidence given today is being recorded by Hansard and broadcast live on the Parliament's website.

While all evidence taken by the Committee is protected by parliamentary privilege, comments repeated outside of this hearing, including on social media, may not be protected by this privilege.

Witnesses will be provided with a proof version of the transcript to check. Verified transcripts and other documents provided to the Committee during the hearing will be published on the Committee's website. I will just remind witnesses and Members to mute their microphones when not speaking just to minimise that interference.

Thank you all for joining us today. Because we have got three organisations, all related to motorcycle riding though, we will allow each of those organisations to present for about 2 or 3 minutes. That would be great, and then we can get into unpicking your submissions and your expertise through questions through the Committee. So I might have to pull you up if we get a little bit over time with the opening statements just so we can get down to those questions. I might start, please, with Motorcycling Australia, which is Simon. If I could start with you, please, that would be great.

Simon BAILEY: Sure. Hi, Alison, and thank you. I am a board Director of Motorcycling Australia. Our primary purview is motorcycling sport in Australia—so more focused on recreational and competition motorcycling. However, the vast majority of our membership are also motorcycle riders outside of tracks and therefore are commuters, and there are tens of thousands of those around the country, so our opportunity to have a chat today and talk about that is something we really welcome. Thank you.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Simon, much appreciated. Motorcycle Riders Association Australia—we have got Damien and Steve. I am not sure who would like to speak or have maybe some opening statements.

Damien CODOGNOTTO: Hello. I am the Spokesman for the Motorcycle Riders Association Australia. I have been riding on Victorian roads and driving for 55 years. I am aware of the time limits, so over to you, Steve.

Visual presentation.

Steve BARDSLEY: Good afternoon. I am Stephen Bardsley, and I am the Road Safety Officer and a member of the executive committee of the Motorcycle Riders Association Australia. I would like to thank all responsible for this inquiry for providing me and the MRAA with the opportunity to make submissions and also address the inquiry today. I have been riding motorcycles and motor scooters for over 50 years, and for two years I was actually a member of the VicRoads Motorcycle Advisory Group. I am the author of many reports on motorcycles and road safety, and these all can be found free online at the Academia website.

My interest in motorcycle rider safety increased dramatically in 2011, and I will tell you why. A dear friend of mine, Lisa Heathcote, was killed when riding as a pillion passenger in a collision involving a scooter and a four-wheel drive. Lisa was just 43 years of age and a single parent of her young son Massey. The rider of the scooter, Walter, was also a friend. He lived but sustained life-changing serious injuries, and he will never be the same again. The accident inquiry found Walter was riding at a safe speed through an intersection controlled by traffic lights which were on green. His scooter was hit by a four-wheel drive travelling in the opposite direction and turning right into his path. Lisa was knocked off the scooter. She was wearing a helmet. Her head hit the ground, her neck snapped and she died instantly. This is something that I have had to live with for over a decade now, and this is why I am here today—to hopefully help ensure that the reasons and causes behind accidents involving motorcycles can be ascertained so countermeasures which will stop or reduce these accidents and save lives can be formulated and introduced. I hope this can be achieved with outcomes from this inquiry.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much for that. We will now go to Rob from Victorian Motorcycle Council. Do we have Wendy with us as well, or is it just you, Rob?

Visual presentation.

Rob SALVATORE: It is just me today. I have a quick presentation that introduces the Victorian Motorcycle Council. I am the Deputy Chair. Unfortunately, Wendy cannot be here today. She is feeling very unwell, which is a bit of a shame given her extensive road safety background as a well-experienced scooter rider. But I will carry on regardless.

If you would not mind going to the next page there, which is just introducing the VMC, we are Victoria's peak motorcycle advocacy body. We are networked with other state peak bodies under the umbrella of the Australian Motorcycle Council. Currently we represent directly five financial Victorian clubs, including the two largest clubs in Victoria, and some 250 individual rider members. We also have five to seven connected clubs that are currently not financial, so we are having a conversation with those guys as well. But the purpose of the VMC is to actively provide expert stakeholder input to government agencies—Victoria Police, VicRoads and whatnot—and non-government agencies as well: Centrelink, Transurban, RACV, Maurice Blackburn. We have a long association with MV.

If you flip one more page, the guiding principle of the VMC is to represent motorcycling and motorcyclists in a very credible, respectful, diplomatic, cooperative, collegiate, partner-building way. We want to be inside the tent rather than outside the tent. We are looking for combined, shared solutions. We are also all about promoting the benefits of motorcycling and its advantages, and some of the benefits include mental health, congestion, the environment and also the fun side of motorcycling, which is freedom and liberties. But it all needs to be balanced against road safety, so we try and weigh it all up.

There are two guiding fundamental principles of the VMC. Road safety is a shared responsibility by all road users. Another one is that the road safety of one road user should not come at the expense of the road safety of another road user. There is a long history of motorcycle safety being compromised or reduced for the advantage of some other road user, so we like to keep things in balance.

Personally, I have been with the VMC since very much the beginning. I have been riding for 25-odd years. As an engineer I have applied that to my motorcycling and to considering motorcycling aspects, issues, research and statistics. I am here to help the Committee understand how VRUs have been impacted by the post-COVID traffic situation that we find ourselves in, so thank you for the opportunity.

The CHAIR: Wonderful. Thank you very much, Rob, for that as well. What we might do is we will ask a Committee member to ask all of you a question. If you would like to respond to it, there is a little 'raise your hand' part. You will see it on the Zoom there. You can do that if you would like to answer it, or if you need to just jump in I am sure we can manage that as well. We may not get to everyone to answer every question. We will just try and get a variety of questions because we have got a short amount of time with you. I might ask Anthony to start us off with a question. Thank you.

Anthony CIANFLONE: Thanks, Chair. Thanks to each of you for your really comprehensive submissions and your presentations. We really appreciate it. I just wanted to draw the attention in forming my question to some of the stats in the Motorcycle Riders Association submission, which says that there are about 200,000 registered motorcycles across Australia, which has increased quite a bit since 2010, by about 50,000. But then we have also received a submission from the Transport Accident Commission in Victoria, TAC, who say that in Victoria motorcycles make up 4% of the overall registered vehicles in our state but account for 17% of deaths or serious injuries on our roads. That is about 2,500 people in Victoria injured as a result of motorcycle accidents. I guess my question in that context is: what can the Victorian Government do specifically in your respective views to address this major issue, and what has the impact of the pandemic been on compounding these issues for motorcycle commuters on our roads?

The CHAIR: Thanks, Stephen.

Steve BARDSLEY: First of all I would like to say that that statistic that has been quoted actually, yes, is true. But it does not tell the full story, because the reality is that around 65% of accidents involve a motorcycle and another vehicle, and around 60% of those have actually been found, evidence shows, to be the fault of the driver, not the rider. So just quoting that statistic is in fact very misleading. It is something that the TAC do far too often, and it does not tell the full story. What we should be about is not quoting that statistic but finding out why so many drivers are colliding with motorcycles and what we can do about it.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Stephen. Simon.

Simon BAILEY: There are a couple of things there. One is just in terms of statistics generally to understand that comparing motorcycle fatalities to four-wheel vehicle fatalities is kind of a bit crazy, because we do not have the level of protection, so something that would give you a hospitalisation in the case of a car driver might kill a motorcyclist. So I think the stats are a bit strange. The other thing, however, that is definitely true is that, of the fatalities on motorcycles, we see the data showing that a significant number are actually recidivist offenders. So there are a large number of people who keep doing stupid things until they get killed. I think the focus for us has got to be on, for all the rest of the ones who are not doing crazy things, increasing awareness, trying to actually make sure that the sort of demonisation that has taken place of motorcycle riders is not continued in terms of the public face to the media, the various things that are put out there in the world. To some extent through COVID with people becoming more insular and more distracted, lots of people listening to stuff, watching stuff and not paying attention, we have seen motorcyclists and other vulnerable road users heavily impacted because that inattention when you are not big and visible and when you are not protected has the potential to cause significant harm for us. So I think the big thing there is really two parts for us. One is distraction. I think that is a key one. The other one is just the fact that people somehow feel it is justifiable if a motorcyclist is on the receiving end of their aggression because we are a bunch of terrible people.

The CHAIR: Thanks, Simon. Rob, I will come to you, and then, Damien, I will come to you after Rob. Thanks, Rob.

Rob SALVATORE: Thank you, Alison. Both Stephen's and my presentations included the fatality stats, and the fatality stats were also in Damien's introduction. You will see it is almost a horizontal line, the general trend. The quoted 17% today is not really a great KPI for motorcycle road safety, because if the number of the rest of road user fatalities go up next year and we are still a horizontal line, our percentage goes down. So it is not a great KPI. The per capita number has actually reduced over time as the numbers of motorcycles increase. I also think that 200,000 is the number of registered motorcycles in Victoria, not Australia-wide—it was mentioned as Australia-wide.

In terms of countermeasures, in our submission we talk about three things predominately, one being some additional or improved training for riders. The other very key thing to improve is other road users' awareness of motorcyclists so that they better share the roads with us, and the third one is better, improved roads. A road that has been designed to be motorcycle friendly is in fact safer for every other road user, and that has been proven time and time again. Whilst the roads have become a bit more congested, because everyone has still not returned to public transport, there seems to be a higher level of agitation on the roads, which we reported in our submission and Simon has just mentioned as well. With those things in hand, I honestly do not have a countermeasure except for helping motorcyclists be better jugglers. Before COVID they were juggling three or four balls in the air; now we have got to juggle five or six. There is an end limit to how much they can juggle, so the sooner we can get a better-feeling society and less aggressive, less distracted road users on the road, I think the safer it will be for motorcycling. There is work to be done in those three pillars, in the VMC's view at least anyway.

The CHAIR: Thanks, Rob. Distraction has certainly been highlighted throughout the hearing. Damien, did you have something else to add to that?

Damien CODOGNOTTO: I do. The 17% figure is a distorted statistic, because it is loaded with what we call 'unriders'—that is, the recidivists and so on that were mentioned before. It is often used, the 17% figure, as a vilification. Whilst they say, 'Oh, dear, isn't it terrible; you are all so dangerous,' they never go into why the statistic occurs. They do not tell you that they add in everything on two wheels with a motor regardless of whether it is registered or whether the rider is licensed. So that is a big problem. It is a problem that has been highlighted recently by the AAA, the RACV and the engineers. We think that one of the ways to address this problem is to improve crash investigations and to improve data collection and assessment. Until you do that, you cannot really measure the problem, and if you cannot measure it, you cannot fix it.

The CHAIR: Yes, thanks, Damien. Again, you have highlighted something that we have heard as well about that data collection. Thank you for that. John, I might go to you, please.

John MULLAHY: That leads directly to the question that I was going to ask. Damien and Steve, you provided a PowerPoint presentation with the method of data processing for road accidents in Victoria, which you sourced from our Legislative Council's Economy and Infrastructure Committee. Obviously, Damien, you have just mentioned data collection. I was just wanting to know what you think the Victorian Government could do to improve its data collection on motorcycle accidents and what types of data you would like to see reported—to all three of you.

Damien CODOGNOTTO: I would like to see them adopt the recommendation from the 2012 parliamentary Inquiry into road safety for an independent crash data authority that is independent of Victoria's road safety partners, because their policies clearly are not working. Everyone from pedestrians to truck drivers is getting hurt on our roads. Their policies are not working, and the place to start is with solid data.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Stephen.

Steve BARDSLEY: I think it is shameful that for over two decades it has been known that there is a requirement to better collate, interpret and distribute road safety data, yet the road safety authorities have resisted this. There was a recommendation, as has been mentioned, in the 2012 parliamentary Inquiry into motorcycle safety that they needed an independent body of road safety data to be established. This was in fact supported by the response from the road safety partner agencies. But then in the next sentence they did say that the functions did not require the establishment of a new office, so the reality was they actually rejected that. It is my opinion and that of many other motorcyclists that until the responsibility for collecting, interpreting and distributing road safety data is taken away from the Transport Accident Commission and VicRoads, then it will continue to be, as we say here, incomplete, tardy and just not up to the task of helping us create countermeasures that can prevent accidents involving motorcycles.

The CHAIR: Simon, do you want to add to that?

Simon BAILEY: Yes, sure. Thanks, Alison. I am aware of, within Vic gov and in collaboration with all of the road-related authorities, significant work being undertaken which is doing just this: looking at the data in a more complex way and a more comprehensive, three-dimensional way, and that is a collaboration with Victoria Police in terms of investigation as well as TAC and DTP. It is really encouraging. It is early days and there has been a lot of input from riders into exactly that, which is what we really need to understand so there can be some pull-through in terms of change of policy or regulatory or whatever that looks like. So there are those things going on at the moment, which is highly encouraging.

The CHAIR: Thanks, Simon. Just to get a variety of questions, I might go to the next question—sorry Rob, I know you had your hand up there. Kim, I might head to you for the next question, thanks.

Kim O'KEEFFE: Thank you. Hello, everyone, and thank you so much for your submission, it is really important. I think with motorbikes it is just always that moment of, 'Where are they? Can I see it?' I think there is so much nervousness around drivers as well when it comes to motorbikes, and I am one of those. Particularly driving in Melbourne more these days, I am very mindful of just looking for different people on different types of vehicles. I think one of the things I would like to touch on, Stephen—and thank you, Stephen, for your personal story with Lisa because it is such a sad one, but it is a real-life experience; I think they are the ones that often are the most powerful. So with the submissions, you did mention the need to humanise motorcyclists and their passengers, and you have absolutely done that. How would you like to see this happen more broadly? I mean, how is it happening?

Steve BARDSLEY: Well, I think what has happened is—it has been mentioned before today—we have been demonised, in particular by many of the so-called road safety campaigns from the Transport Accident Commission. Indeed the most recent one was the perfect ride for a trip to the hospital, and what that suggested—well, to motorcycle riders at least—was that motorcycle riders are dangerous and they are likely to have an accident. But again, it never mentioned of course that most accidents involve another vehicle, and the driver is usually found to be responsible for the accident. I think this is what the TAC should be promoting: making drivers more aware, as you mentioned earlier, about motorcycles.

There are things that can be done in this regard; observation skills can definitely be improved. I in fact have prepared a drivers guide to motorcycle awareness. It assists drivers to better understand the importance of sharing roads. It explains to drivers how a rider's life can depend on their actions and reactions. It involves

drivers—what are the causes of many accidents involving motorcycles? It provides drivers with tips regarding motorcycle awareness, observation and safety. And it shows drivers how improved motorcycle awareness and observation can save lives and prevent serious injuries to motorcycle riders. I have to say, I sent this to the Department of Transport and I have sent it to the Transport Accident Commission, and neither of them have even bothered to respond and say that they have even received it.

I think this is the attitude that we face as motorcycle riders. It is just not fair, the way the authorities treat us. We want to help. I do not want to see anyone else killed, as per Lisa. I will do anything I can. If I can save just one life, then it is all worthwhile. So it is time that the Transport Accident Commission actually started to listen and did a proper method of consultation with riders, because the business they have got going now is merely, in my opinion—and I have been a member of these authorities, including the Motorcycle Advisory Group—riders in these groups are just used to rubberstamp predetermined outcomes made by the Transport Accident Commission and VicRoads. So we have got to be serious about road safety, in particular motorcycle safety, and it has got to start with the TAC.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Stephen. Rob, did you want to add to that?

Rob SALVATORE: Yes. As a 10-year member of these ministerial advisory panels I have a somewhat different view to Steve. Steve did leave the VMAG back in 2012, 2013, 2014 or whenever it was. But the amount of collaboration, cooperation that is going on at this present time—and in the previous MEAP—is quite extensive, and you can see that in the change of the TAC ads.

But leaving that aside, the fundamental thing I think to help with motorcycle safety on the roads is actually improving driver awareness, which is a very difficult thing to do, but you can leverage a concept called the circle of care. It is reported in cycling circles—when someone starts cycling in the family or in the friendship circle, suddenly bicycles start appearing in the drivers' awareness. They are seeing them on the roads. And I can share my own personal story. When I started motorcycling suddenly my relatives all went, 'Well, you've got a death wish.' No, I do not have a death wish, I have a life wish, which is why I am riding a bike. But suddenly they said, 'Oh, now I'm seeing motorcycles everywhere.' And they were always there, it is just their brains were tuning them out, and that awareness has helped change the filters in their mind.

Now, 92% of licence-holders do not have a motorcycle endorsement. They have no physical or visceral experience of what motorcycling is. It is difficult to understand. You can buy an experience to go for a ride on a motorbike on RedBalloon. For some people it is aspirational to have a ride on the back of a Harley, whereas I get to experience riding my motorcycle every day.

You have to improve that awareness—and I have listed a number of strategies in our submission—and by doing that bikes are more likely to be understood and seen and then dealt with and the roads shared more appropriately. It is going to take some effort. I would like to see a continuous PSA just drip-feeding and normalising motorcyclists and motorcycles on the roads—big call, but I think that is the sort of thing that needs to happen going forward.

The CHAIR: Thanks, Rob. Simon, I am sorry—I will go to another question just so we can get a variety of topics. Dylan, I might go to you. Thank you.

Dylan WIGHT: Thanks, Alison. Throughout this Inquiry we have heard from a lot of organisations that provide driver training. Do you have any sorts of examples from interstate, overseas, of programs that provide driver training that might be able to be really tailored to driver education around motorcycles and safety around motorcycles?

The CHAIR: Thanks. Damien, I will let you speak to that.

Damien CODOGNOTTO: Yes. From what we have been able to see, there are several programs around Australia that are useful. They are generally small and underfunded. The most successful that we have seen to get young riders off the roads and into licence programs is—it is very difficult for young people to get a motorbike licence—the Tasmanian Full Gear program, which is really a good program. I have been out there. They get older, more experienced riders to mentor young riders that have generally been referred to the program by police, who catch them doing the wrong thing and say, 'You've got a choice: go and do this program or face the consequences of what you've just done.' The program is fantastic. It really works. What

they do is book time on local racetracks, and then the riding is at street pace. It is not racing. And the kids really pay attention. It is a very, very good program in our opinion, and more money should be put into it.

If I can just mention that, regarding money going into motorbike programs, the TAC does things like give 150 grand a year to the Melbourne comedy festival. They give \$50,000 a year to the Winemakers of Rutherglen. I mean, these are extraordinary amounts of money that could be used to subsidise licence training and training programs and to subsidise protective clothing. The protective clothing TV ad that TAC have just made was around 2 million bucks to make, and that would buy a lot of helmets and gloves and boots. So, you know, they really have to look at not just the data but what they are doing with our premiums.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Damien. Simon.

Simon BAILEY: Thanks, Alison. I think there are a couple of things there. Rider training—probably anecdotally what we know is that the people who do rider training do a lot of it and continue to do it, so you do not get a broad spread. The safe gear thing is critical, but you can give people safe gear and they do not necessarily wear it, which is why that recent TAC campaign was the most successful ever in terms of pull-through and re-views and online discussion. It was designed specifically not to demonise riders but to point out the fact that they were vulnerable, which was really important because previous ones had.

I think the other part of that though is the driver education, and I think that is the bit that is so hard, where you have got to try and get into the public domain with messages that are consistently ‘Look around. Stay alert. Understand the difference.’ In fact there have been a couple that were quite good. The TAC did one some years ago which actually showed the difference in perception of a motorcyclist and a car driver in the same issue when there were accidents where somebody was forced off the road or whatever. That was very good because a lot of car drivers thought, ‘Wow, okay, it’s quite different, my perspective from the motorcyclist.’ The other one which is one of my faves, which I know Rob is aware of, is one in the UK which just basically introduces the people under the helmet—this is a mum, this is a dad, it is a brother, it is a sister, it is somebody’s child. So it is this lovely personal face as people took off the helmet and there they were—a real human being. That of course has an impact on the general attitude of people, and that is among the most important things for riders, I think.

The CHAIR: Thanks. Rob, do you want to add to that?

Rob SALVATORE: I am personally not aware of a specific road user or driver education campaign somewhere else in the world that deals with motorcycle safety, but I have got a suggestion that I often hear when I speak to motorcycle groups about road safety. By the way, I endorse every comment that Simon has made there. I just make that point. The comment I often get from riders in the chats that I do is we should make every driver sit and learn how to ride a motorcycle. It is not very practical, but the intuitive nature of that is just self-evident. That direct experience then improves their understanding—because we are all pedestrians and most of us, if not all, have ridden a bicycle as a kid or even currently as I do sometimes, but that motorcycle experience is somewhat different.

The CHAIR: Yes, absolutely. Thanks, Rob. Jess, I might get to you.

Jess WILSON: Thank you, Chair. And thank you, everyone, for your contributions today. We are yet to get your thoughts on, I suppose, driver-assist technology and how that could be encouraged or mandated when it comes to motorcycle users and how you think the State Government could play a role in that.

The CHAIR: Simon, thanks.

Simon BAILEY: It is a really interesting space, and I think we are starting to see as motorcyclists more of that technology. Predominantly it has been in cars. In fact now for the first time this year the ANCAP program is being expanded so that cars will have safety features that will actually become bike aware. They have not been in the past. So there is a whole raft of new work being done there.

At the expensive end, we have now got those kinds of warning systems on motorbikes, which are really good. I was quite negative about them. I had them on a new motorbike and said, ‘Look, this is just crap. Why do we need it on a motorbike?’ The funny bit is—and this is basically an indication of vehicle proximity in blind spot or approaching quickly, the sort of stuff we have had in cars for quite some time—it is actually very, very

useful. The real problem for riders is that unless you have got a lot of money—I mean, the bikes that are wearing this kind of technology are probably \$40,000 up. So if you are wealthy, it is okay, but it is not so good if you are at an entry level or if you have got an older bike.

The corollary to that though—and my observation of drivers—is that the more they have got stuff that is telling them what is going on around them, the less they are looking. One of the biggest issues for us is that peripheral awareness. If people do not look—you know, if you are driving a truck, or for a lot of people in SUVs, if you do not want to hit a motorcyclist, you need to look down, not sideways, because we actually do not appear in the rearview mirrors of those. So again, it is partially education and partially understanding, but I think a lot of it is about getting people to be aware. So some of the driver-assist stuff which makes people lazy—it contraindicates in one sense in terms of motorcycle safety.

The CHAIR: Stephen, I am happy for you to have a chat to that.

Steve BARDSLEY: Yes, certainly. Look, some driver assistance technologies are definitely capable of reducing crashes, including the front crash prevention, which helps prevent the rear-ending of motorcycles—I have been rear-ended, many motorcyclists have—lane departure warnings and blind spot detection. They are all going to help motorists identify and know where a motorcycle is. As previously has been said, though, motorcycles are hard to see. In my motorcycle drivers guide I did a diagram which helps to show drivers how you can see a motorcycle and where you should look. It is surprising that stuff like this is not shown. This is actually taken from a very good program in the United States of America, which helps to train drivers to be motorcycle aware. The United States has some very excellent programs in that regard, and that is really what I based my drivers guide to motorcycle awareness upon.

They have now got dooring technology, where if a driver opens the door, then of course an alarm will sound and you will have to close it. It will also sense a motorcycle or a bicycle coming in if a door is open. So these are excellent technologies that are already being used today. But at the end of the day, the secret is: it does not matter how much technology is loaded into a car. If a driver is impatient and he does not want a motorcycle or a bicycle to pass him and he opens the door, no technology can stop that. That is all, and that is the end of it. The key is to educate drivers that motorcycle riders are entitled to use the road. We are legitimate road users, and road safety is a shared responsibility of all road users.

The CHAIR: Yes, that shared responsibility is certainly a theme that we are seeing across the hearings that we are doing, Stephen, so thank you. I am just mindful of time, so I am going to try and squeeze in one more question. I might head to Wayne to ask that. Thank you.

Wayne FARNHAM: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, all, for your submissions. I am sorry to hear about Lisa. I lost an aunty the same way, so I can really sympathise with you. Through your submission you mention that in the past, road safety Inquiry recommendations have been ignored.

Steve BARDSLEY: Yes.

Wayne FARNHAM: Which previous recommendations relating to motorcycle safety should the Victorian Government implement as a matter of priority, urgency and safety?

The CHAIR: Thanks. Damien, I will go to you. Thank you.

Damien CODOGNOTTO: The problem you have with recommendations from Parliamentary inquiries—and since 2000 there have been a lot of them—is that the very people who need to change, write the Government responses. Now, what should happen is, when your Committee makes its recommendations, then you are hands off, according to the rules, but another committee should have resources to write the responses that affect the departments that the recommendations will affect—because there is a massive conflict of interest. For example, things like the recommendation to establish an independent road crash data authority was shot down because the people that were doing it already did not want that, and they got to write the responses. It is the same with the recommendation to abolish the, what is now, about \$78 a year discriminatory tax on motorbikes. That was quite clear: abolish the motorcycle safety tax with the TAC. And guess who wrote the response that it did not need to be abolished? So I think, really, the onus is on you to make sure that the people affected do not have a conflict of interest when they are writing the responses to your recommendations.

The CHAIR: Thanks, Damien. Rob?

Rob SALVATORE: The 2012 PIMS is a really important document for motorcycle safety. It was setting the world-best benchmark of research into motorcycle safety of the day. The recommendation that was not followed, and it still sticks in my craw, is the same one Damien has mentioned. It was the number one recommendation: setting up the office of road safety data. That same recommendation was reinforced in the vulnerable road user Parliamentary inquiry several years after that as well. Now, the government agencies say that they are collecting all the data that needs to be collected and they can cooperate amongst themselves, and I think they are trying to make great strides towards that, but with 18 different databases, which your Committee heard about on the very first day of hearings, in five or six different departments, that is a lot of coordination.

An office of road safety data would be able to take a helicopter view and depoliticise the data and also help guide what data collection is needed, because, for example, when the police investigate a crash, they only investigate fatal crashes of motorcycles, not every crash, so there are a lot of learnings that are going missing. But in the fatal crashes they predominantly have a legality focus. They are looking at who did the illegal action and who perhaps to infringe, whereas the office of road safety data might say, 'Well, let's look at all the causal factors involved in a particular crash and what we can learn and how we might be able to improve training, GLS—so the graduated licensing scheme—or other policies.' The rest of those recommendations—I think there were 64 in total—most of them have had at least some application, but that number one recommendation still sticks in my craw all these years later. I hope that there may be something that you guys can encourage the road safety partners to implement.

The CHAIR: Thanks, Rob. I think we could probably speak to you all afternoon, because there are lots of other questions we did have for you, but I am sorry, we will have to finish it there. Thank you so much for your submissions and giving us a perspective that the hearings have not had so far, so I really do appreciate your time in answering our questions today. If there is anything that has been raised or has triggered something that you would like to add further, please do not hesitate. You can come back to the Committee with something in writing if you would like to, and we encourage you to do that. Thank you again for all your time.

Witnesses withdrew.