

Sirs,

I have seen the terms of reference for your enquiry and am alarmed - although not entirely surprised - to see that "accuracy and adequacy of road collision data" is eighth.

Without accurate and reliable data, you simply cannot know what you are talking about. You can continue along historic lines and make some nice gestures based on a few assumptions, directed at young drivers and would-be drivers, most of whom can't yet vote, but you'll struggle to do anything effective.

Three examples.

Firstly, the current learner regime of 120 hours road experience is a noble idea; but it relies on the supervising drivers being both good and competent, which in many cases they are not. Bad habits are thus perpetuated and ingrained. The licensing process has become vastly more complex and expensive, creating many jobs, but I doubt that it has become any better. Driver education for all drivers, of all ages, is required. This could be as simple as frequent TV advertising of the correct way to use roundabouts, keeping left, pedestrian crossings, cycle lanes etc.

Secondly is the apparent preponderance in the available statistics, of people who should never have been on the road in the first place; the unlicensed, the disqualified, the unregistered vehicles. Usually we only read of this years after the event, after an issue has been decided by the courts. There's no point changing rules if a large proportion of offenders are ignoring them anyway; but as I see it, there's no way to know at the moment.

Thirdly, motorcycle statistics are gathered as if motorcycles behaved the same way as cars; they don't. There needs to be a specialised data collection process for motorcycle incidents. Sure "speed" is the answer most times, because if the motorcycle was not moving it would be less likely to crash, but a motorcycle is far more susceptible to road conditions than is a car. A motorcycle is also far more susceptible in a glancing collision, or even in collision avoidance situation, where the second vehicle is gone by the time police arrive.

Thank you.

John Ferguson  
