



16<sup>th</sup> July 2011

The Executive Officer  
Road Safety Committee  
Parliament House  
East Melbourne, Vic 3002

Submission No. # 16  
Received  
Road Safety Committee

Dear Ms. Jenkins and fellow Committee members

Subject: Submission to the Road safety Committee Inquiry into Motorcycle Safety

I write to express my views in respect to the terms of reference detailed in your request set out in the Herald Sun newspaper of 11<sup>th</sup> June 2011

a.) I would refer to the fatality statistics set out on the Victorian Police web site and have reviewed these to gain a better understanding of the circumstances of motorcycle fatalities in the past 3 years. From what I see more than 75% of road rider fatalities are over 30 years old for each of the years 2008, 09 and 10. Remarkably, the younger riders 18 to 29 seem to be doing a lot better than the older riders; however this only deals with fatalities, not to injuries.

Understanding what the salient factors really are would help the average rider understand and better interpret the consequences of our road trauma, which at present need further expansion on the Victoria Police website. If these statistics could be updated to show for every event, age, sex, time of day, road conditions, wet, dry, winds, type and capacity of motorcycle, other vehicles, drugs, alcohol, other salient information of the accident then riders and drivers would gain a better understanding of what the real trends are. (As an example, in 2010, 11 fatalities do not identify the rider's age)

In October 2010 for example (the worst month for motorcycle fatalities that year) two riders died as a result of vehicles exiting driveways into the path of the motorcyclist. We could jump to the conclusion that both vehicles exiting the driveways were at fault. However, if it was at night and the motorcycle did not have a working headlight, a different percentage of blame would be attributed. How do we learn the truth or interpret operator failure accurately?

Certainly 2010 was a very bad year on the roads for motorcyclist given 46 male and 2 female riders died. Of these, 28 deaths were in the countryside and 20 in suburban areas. Twenty Eight occurred in daylight and 8 after dark, yet the accuracy of fault cannot be directly assessed. We need to make these statistics work for us to detail the accurate picture of how these deaths occur and learn what we can do to stop a recurrence in the future.

b.) The TAC identified last year (Report 2010) that 2/3 of motorcycle usage was recreational and growing, motorcycles sales data also shows that more people are buying motorcycles than ever before. So motorcycles are here to stay, public servants and authorities vested to rid our roads of motorcycles are just counterproductive. Indeed with the need to reduce our use of petrol etc. and unclog our road system, we should be encouraging more motorcycling thus reducing the physical road space demand of our traffic. Melbourne's traffic is far from desirable, neglected and bad roads, roads that seem to be on a path of endless maintenance. A high volume of trucks, yet we have the majority of road users as single car commuters. Every morning and evening, each in their own 2 tonnes of rolling metal, clogging the roads with very few motorcycles by comparison. Yet look at the traffic in Taipei, Taiwan for example. Twice the volume of people moving into the city by road, yet in the same time line as does Melbourne; how - a much heavier reliance on motorcycle/ motor-scooter transport.

c,d,f,g,h,) Mid last year some our motor-sport champions, namely Mark Skaife and Casey Stoner spoke out for a number of issues from banning parents teaching their children to drive, speed limits

etc. and particularly the need for greater emphasis on skills education. The key to good driving and riding, not just points and fines, is by providing advanced driver/rider educational that is affordable and engaging to the target road users.

The suggestion that poses to supplement or substitute fines with driver/rider training would be a good start to addressing a skill and attitude shortage that is swelling on our roads. For me, I've been riding for 35 years off and on, yet the returning phase gets more difficult, a far cry from when I was learning at the age of 18 and fearless. Now heavier traffic, certainly less road manners presents a congested and high risk environment for the new and returning rider.

We need to take a very different approach in how we educate and advance the skills of Victorian motorcycle riders, yet make it affordable and in the early stages of riding and make it desirable to take skills courses with an area set aside to practice these skills without traffic. You don't teach someone to swim by putting them in with the sharks; better you provide a swimming pool with a shallow end to learn in a safe and uncomplicated environment. Where is there the affordable opportunity to learn this way in Victoria? Certainly none that I could consider as "affordable" on a regular basis, if at all.

There are 3 race tracks that hold very expensive training courses spasmodically throughout the year, yet unaffordable to the average person. Then there are the skills courses run by commercial concerns that are again very expensive, but necessarily priced to be commercially viable.

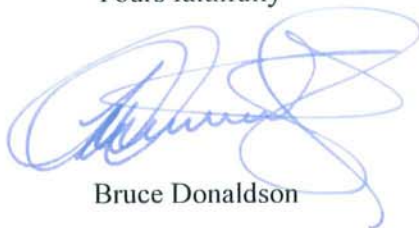
Clearly a co-operation between Government and motorcycle riders needs to be encouraged to develop a number of venues where motorcycle riders can partake in skills training and practice sessions that are on tarmac, yet not on the public road system. These venues would have a track type environment with mentoring and skills training advisers, run daily at an affordable fee that will encourage participation and generate greater skills and understanding of all road conditions for riders.

k&h.) As part of the group that has formed The Motorcycle Road Riders Co-operative Ltd in February this year (2011), we have a goal to meet this very demand. Having spent the last 18 months or so researching the various components necessary to establish such a venue, the Co-operative is ready to meet with the various stakeholders to engage funding to achieve the development of the project.

Recently the Co-operative has approached the MP for South Barwon, Mr. Andrew Katos (considered an appropriate area for the first pilot venue) to engage with Government for potential partnership in the development. At this stage Mr. Katos is assisting us to meeting with the appropriate Minister to further our progression; we are awaiting news for encouragement of our project.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide this feedback.

Yours faithfully



Bruce Donaldson