



11 June 2011



The Executive Officer
Road Safety Committee
Parliament House
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

**Road Safety Committee
Enquiry into Motor Cycle Safety**

For more than 20 years I have been driving from Ocean Grove to Melbourne daily for work. My last position was that of CEO of the Melbourne Market Authority that operates the Melbourne Fruit Vegetable and Flower Markets in Footscray Road. I travelled between 60,000 and 80,000 kilometres each year most of which was on the Geelong road. During tis time I witnessed numerous fatalities and other accidents many of which involved motor cyclists. The two things that scared me the most during my travels were B-Doubles/Semis and Motor Cyclists. Driving beside a fully laden B-Double scared hell out of me. Being passed by a high speed motor cycle often caught me off guard and the fright affect often seriously disrupted my concentration. (The concentration loss is similar to that you would experience driving with a mobile phone in your ear).

The two things that I believe will reduce the number of injuries and would save many motor cyclists lives annually are to make them more visible and slow them down. While I understand that it would be difficult to have motor cycle manufacturers govern motor cycle speeds. The only way to slow them down is to make them so visible and accountable that the become as visible as the cars and trucks they are sharing the road with. The majority of motor cyclists tend to wear black leather or similar colour clothing. The problem with this is that riders and their bikes **blend into the colour of the road surface** and often are not seen by drivers until it's too late. How many times have you heard "*I simply didn't see him*".

Many organisations in Australia have recognised the need to introduce visual safety rules to protect their employees. Victoria Police, Australia Post and heavy industry workers wear orange or green fluorescent night/day safety jackets to ensure they comply with Worksafe guidelines. The Melbourne Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable market is amongst the most dangerous work places in Australia. A blending of 3,000 people, 800 fork trucks and hundreds of cars, trucks, semis and B-Doubles is a recipe for disaster. We introduction of a buy-law six years ago enforcing the wearing of safety vests on site. I am sure that this action has not only reduced the number of serious injuries on site but saved some lives.

Over the past fifty years in Victoria the Government has introduced the following initiatives to reduce the road toll.

- Compulsory wearing of seatbelts in cars
- Improved vehicle breaking systems
- Governing speeds of heavy vehicles
- School Zone speed reductions
- Speed camera technology
- Compulsory wearing of motor cycle helmets
- Banning the use of hand held mobile phones
- Many others

While these initiatives have reduced the road toll, the one area where we are failing is with motor cyclists.

Recommendations to reduce the number and seriousness of Motor Cycle accidents

1. Legislate be put to the Parliament that all motor cyclists and their passengers wear Australian/NZ Standard approved Night/Day Jackets while riding motor cycles in Victoria.
2. Legislate that all motor cycles must have their lights turned on day and night while riding on Victorian roads.

Policing

I believe the **visibility** of these jackets and the policing of these laws will quickly change the **attitudes** of both bike riders and other vehicle users to need to be safe on our roads. Those that wish to flaunt these laws will pay the price.

Let's save some lives.

Yours



Peter G McLennan