Inquiry into Motorcycle Safety

Prepared for the Parliament of Victoria Road Safety Committee

September 2011
Executive summary 3
Submission scope 4
Motorcycle industry representatives 5
VACC 6
VACC motorcycle retailers’ & industry recommendation summary 7
Terms of Reference
Terms of Reference comments 11
(a) Crash data
(b) The changing face of motorcycling 16
(c) Rider behaviour 18
(d) Rider & driver attitudes to each other 21
(e) Off road motorcycling 22
(f) Motorcycle licensing 26
(g) Countermeasures to reduce accidents 28
(h) New initiatives to reduce crashes & injuries 31
(i) TAC premiums 33
(j) Motorcycle safety levy 35
(k) Stakeholder contributions 36
Appendix 38

Contacts

Michael McKenna
Motorcycle Industry Division Manager
Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce
464 St Kilda Road
Melbourne VIC 3004

P 03 9829 1280
E mmckenna@vacc.com.au
W www.vacc.com.au

Stuart Strickland
Motorcycle Industry Consultant
P 0418 149 860
E sstrickl@bigpond.net.au

VACC gratefully acknowledges assistance and support from:
- VACC Motorcycle Industry Division Executive Committee members
- key motorcycle industry figures and
- FCAI

In preparing the following submission
Executive summary

Introduction

Motorcycles are an increasingly popular mode of transport; when motorcycles sales in 2000 are compared to 2010, there is a 65.6% growth in the total number of motorcycles sold in Australia\(^1\). As rider numbers rise, motorcycle safety becomes even more critical.

As part of the motorcycle community, motorcycle retailers view motorcycle safety as the key to increased rider confidence and enjoyment. Also, a greater understanding of rider types and models, safety issues, and Australia’s unique riding conditions contribute to safer riding environments and promotes motorcycles as a prime and sustainable, fuel efficient form of alternative transport for the future.

Motorcycle Dealers

Among the VACC membership, there are over 150 motorcycle retailers engaged in retailing new and used motorcycles, scooters, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and accessories.

Dealers also repair motorcycles, assemble motorcycles from imported kits while some also sell outdoor power equipment.

This submission comprises comments from dealers directly involved in day-to-day contact with motorcycle owners (customers).

Improve data collection

Firstly, while increasing knowledge and understanding of motorcycling with improved data collection are admirable undertakings, these activities have not been fully exploited to offer better motorcycle safety solutions.

Importance of off-road motorcycles

Off-road motorcycle activities have received little attention as noted in the Auditor-General’s report\(^2\). A significant proportion of motorcycle sales lie in off-road sectors, and these are not always included as registered motorcycles. Supporting safety options for this sector needs further scrutiny.

---

\(^1\) VFACTS total number of motorcycles sold in Australia (all types)

\(^2\) Motorcycle and Scooter Safety Programs Victorian Auditor-General’s Report, February 2011
Consider *total* motorcycle community safety needs

This submission considers views and outlines rider profiles from the *total* motorcycle community. The motorcycle community is very diverse; a fact which government agencies seem unwilling to accept when forming safety policy. Unlike the four-wheel vehicle community, one safety solution does not suit all.

Australia’s unique motorcycle landscape

Agencies tend to draw comparisons between Australian and overseas motorcycle markets; this has not achieved desirable results. Australia is the developed world’s largest market for recreational motorcycles per capita. And the Australian motorcycling landscape has unique characteristics; riders can ride all year round within a vast landmass and road infrastructure.

Instead of focusing on safer motorcycling solutions from overseas markets or academics, more knowledge can be gained through local riders and those in regular contact with ‘grass roots’ motorcycling activities. Agencies could increase their understanding of motorcycling safety issues by employing motorcycle specialists from each major use category to lead strategic safety policy direction.

Submission scope

The following submission refers to the Terms of Reference released by the Road Safety Committee as received from the Legislative Assembly on 10 February 2011.

The submission includes opinions and beliefs of experienced motorcycle retailers, collected during a series of interviews which focus on questions raised in the current inquiry. These retailers are also VACC Motorcycle Industry Division Executive Committee members.

Interviewed motorcycle dealers and industry representatives’ comments cover Terms of Reference (a) to (k).

In compiling the submission, Victoria’s Road Safety and Transport Strategic Action Plan for Powered Two Wheelers 2009 – 2013 and the Motorcycle and Scooter Safety Programs Victorian Auditor-General’s Report, February 2011 have been considered.
Motorcycle industry representatives

Motorcycle retailers interviewed for this submission include:

- **Kat Gordon** | VACC representative on Motorcycle Advisory Group | Principal - Sixty Degrees Motorcycles, Notting Hill | Motorcycle Service and accessory business | Specialises in road motorcycles | Active rider

- **John Buskes** | Chairman of Motorcycle Industry Division | Principal - A1 Motorcycles, Ringwood and Brighton | active rider | Owner of two large Franchise Dealerships covering all facets of motorcycling

- **Terry Kelly** | Company Representative Shell Australia | Long-term motorcycle industry experience

- **Don Brown** | Principal - Motorcycle Land, Wendouree, Ballarat | Franchised dealership of significant stature covering all facets of motorcycling | has provincial and rural customers

- **Robert Jenner** | Principal - Motorcycle Service Centre, Moolap, Geelong | Motorcycle Service business | Specialises in road and off-road motorcycles | Active rider

- **Brett McIntyre** | Principal - Warrnambool Motorcycle & Gardening Products | Franchised motorcycle and power equipment dealer | Specialises in agricultural and off-road motorcycles | Active rider

- **James Weston** | Principal - Moe Motorcycles | Franchised dealership covering all facets of motorcycling | Specialises in off-road and agricultural motorcycles | Active rider

- **John Bacon** | Principal - Right Line Motorcycle & Mower Service, Kyabram | Franchised motorcycle and power equipment dealer covering all facets of motorcycling | has large agricultural customer base | Active rider
Key motorcycle Industry representatives interviewed for this submission include:

- **Mark Collins** | Honda Australia Rider Training | National Manager | Australia’s largest rider training provider | Active rider

- **Rob Smith** | Motorcycling Australia (controlling body for motorcycle sport) | Manager Rider’s Division | Active rider

- **Rhys Griffiths** | Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries | Motorcycle Manager | Active rider

- **Rob Casson** | Owner Cassons | Australia’s largest importer and distributor of motorcycle accessories

These retailers and key industry figures collectively view the reduction of motorcycle safety issues as critical to a sustainable industry and viable form of alternative sustainable transport.

---

**VACC**

This submission is made on behalf of members of the Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce (VACC), a registered association of retail automotive industry business owners representing over 5,500 member businesses in Victoria and Tasmania.

VACC’s motorcycle members are an excellent, prime resource for information and communication with Victoria’s motorcycle community. It is hoped this submission offers value and insight to the Parliament of Victoria’s Road Safety Committee inquiry.
ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE

Terms of Reference

57th Parliament

Received from the Legislative Assembly on 10 February 2011

Inquiry into Motorcycle Safety

That under s 33 the Parliamentary Committees Act 2003, the Road Safety Committee is required to inquire into, consider and report no later than 30 June 2012 on motorcycle safety and the Committee is asked to consider:

(a) trends over time in crash types including on-road and off-road crashes, rural/urban breakdown, experience levels of riders (where known) and types of motorcycles being ridden;

(b) the changing face of motorcycling and in particular, patterns of motorcycle usage over time including the uptake of motorcycles as an alternative form of transport and its impact on road safety;

(c) the attitudes of riders to safety and risk taking including drugs, alcohol, travelling at inappropriate speeds, use of protective clothing and fatigue;

(d) riders and drivers attitudes to each other;

(e) responsibilities for improving the safety of off-road riders;

(f) the efficiency and effectiveness of the accredited provider scheme in the delivery and administration of motorcycle licensing;

(g) countermeasures used in Victoria, Australia and other comparable overseas jurisdictions to reduce the number and severity of motorcycle accidents with reference to road environment treatments, behavioural change programs and the design and technology of motorcycles and protective gear;

(h) new initiatives to reduce motorcycle crashes and injuries;

(i) the appropriateness of the TAC premium for motorcyclists in relation to covering all riders eligible to claim on the TAC scheme;

(j) the effectiveness of the Motorcycle Safety Levy in improving rider safety in Victoria; and

(k) the ways government can work with non-government stakeholders to achieve motorcycle safety outcomes.
Terms of Reference (a) CRASH DATA
VACC MOTORCYCLE RETAILERS RECOMMEND THAT:

1. More emphasis be placed on suitable data collection
2. Improved data accuracy within specific motorcycle categories, to target appropriate remedial action
3. Data content should include riders (licensed or unlicensed), age groups, motorcycle model/capacity, whether registered or unregistered, road type, where the accident happened i.e. on public roads, off-road or private land
4. Agencies should refrain from drawing assumptions based on inaccurate data; e.g. ‘single vehicle crashes’
5. Motorcycle levy funding should support data capturing initiatives
6. Share motorcycle crash data results with the motorcycle community
7. Scrutinise riders’ experience level when they are involved in accidents and link to training undertaken through the provider
8. Make rider training provider statistics available to the motorcycle community. Include the number of riders trained each month, level of training for each person, failure rates, retests and available courses from each provider. This information can be cross referenced against retail sales for the corresponding month. Also, retailers can refer clients to the appropriate provider for the level of training required.

Terms of Reference (b) THE CHANGING FACE OF MOTORCYCLING
VACC MOTORCYCLE RETAILERS RECOMMEND THAT:

1. Training and education are key challenges when consumers elect to purchase motorcycles and scooters for their daily commute. Rider training curriculum must ensure new riders are competent in traffic
2. Analysis should be conducted on a rider’s experience during the first three years of riding. Data obtained from this exercise would be useful in future rider training programs
3. The term ‘use it or lose it’ is critical in motorcycle riding. In this context, the existing system of retaining a motorcycle license for years without owning one needs review. Cross referencing registration with a motorcycle licence without huge expenditure should be possible as a positive first step
4. When referring to rider inexperience, there are two facets that must be addressed:
   a) rider competence with controls and appreciation of hazards (road craft)
   b) also an understanding of basic maintenance (refer to Terms of Reference (h))
Terms of Reference (c) RIDER BEHAVIOUR
VACC MOTORCYCLE RETAILERS RECOMMEND THAT:

1. Motorcycling is an adventurous pastime, especially with high performance sports motorcycles. ‘Track Days’ are very popular, yet the cost of participating at motor racing circuits can be prohibitive. Avenues that allow riders to test a bike’s full performance under controlled conditions, (which can also include training) should be provided. Consider establishing a specific motorcycle track within one hour of Melbourne’s CBD, funded jointly from the motorcycle levy and Victorian Government. A well-constructed facility could operate as a financial entity, catering for sports bike riders, off-road riders and conduct all types of motorcycle training including ATVs
2. Education and training are critical in addressing safe riding without drugs and alcohol while wearing good protective clothing. Social media can communicate the message effectively and economically
3. Expert advice could be sought on the effects of prescription medicine within the motorcycle community. Motorcycle retailers have limited understanding of the potential effects of prescription medicine while riding

Terms of Reference (d) RIDER & DRIVER ATTITUDES TO EACH OTHER
VACC MOTORCYCLE RETAILERS RECOMMEND THAT:

1. Continued education for motor vehicle drivers and motorcyclists is needed. However, powered two wheel riders must take responsibility for their own safety
2. New entrants (including returning riders) to riding must receive training in hazard perception techniques
3. Rider ‘filtering’ must be legalised. Riders should not be exposed to being hit by vehicles from behind, nor subject to vehicle emissions by being forced to sit behind emitting vehicles. Overseas research shows riders can increase safety by filtering. The only issue is the speed at which riders can filter between vehicles
4. Penalties should be increased for vehicles that hit vulnerable road users. A strong disincentive is required to curb aggressive behaviour from motor vehicle drivers. Overall, the judiciary is viewed as too lenient when handing out penalties to motorists who kill or injure motorcyclists.
Terms of Reference (e) OFF ROAD MOTORCYCLING
VACC MOTORCYCLE RETAILERS RECOMMEND THAT:

1. DSE should be encouraged to liaise with the off-road motorcycle community
2. Create junior off-road motorcycle licenses, attached to the parent or guardian’s licence. Child injury and death can be prevented by improved motorcycle riding skills. Naturally, riding skills should be developed under supervision
3. Extend recreational registration to cover junior motorcycles. This will stop illegal motorcycle use in restricted areas
4. Consider accepting international helmet standards, to provide more rider options and help lower initial purchase price
5. Introduce quality standards at Federal level, for off-road and ‘pocket’ [miniature motorcycles with an engine] imported motorcycles which are not covered by Australian Design Rule regulations

Terms of Reference (f) MOTORCYCLE LICENSING
VACC MOTORCYCLE RETAILERS RECOMMEND THAT:

1. Competency-based components be included in proposed GLS tests
2. Rider training providers should be subject to continuous auditing and penalised when contravening VicRoads’ guidelines
3. Obtain data on all riders’ on road experiences during the initial three years of riding (training history, motorcycles /model owned, crash history)
4. Create a specific licence for automatic motorcycles and scooters

Terms of Reference (g) COUNTERMEASURES TO REDUCE ACCIDENTS
VACC MOTORCYCLE RETAILERS RECOMMEND THAT:

1. Motorcycle safety should be considered in road design. Road furniture should not endanger motorcyclists’ lives
2. Legalise motorcycle filtering
3. Allow motorcycles to utilise all transit lanes
4. Motorcycle safety communication strategies can be created and distributed via social media
5. Implement a national rider-training curriculum.
6. Create a national data base to collect motorcycle statistics
Terms of Reference (h) NEW INITIATIVES TO REDUCE CRASHES & INJURIES
VACC MOTORCYCLE RETAILERS RECOMMEND THAT:

1. Implement a ‘five point’ motorcycle maintenance check. Introduce the check to riders through motorcycle retailers
2. Adopt a junior off-road licence scheme
3. TAC could consider a premium discount for riders who wear designated protective gear
4. ATV safe use material should be available for distribution to the farming community through rural motorcycle retailers
5. An off-road skills and safety DVD could be distributed through motorcycle retailers
6. ATV training to be mandatory for new riders

Terms of Reference (i) TAC PREMIUMS
VACC MOTORCYCLE RETAILERS RECOMMEND THAT:

1. TAC provides motorcycle industry data on motorcycle claims, to facilitate a complete understanding of the situation
2. Motorcycle retailers could workshop ideas for fair and reasonable motorcycle claims under the ‘no fault’ system
3. A six monthly registration/ premium option should be implemented, allowing continuous or part registration over a given year to align with seasonal motorcycle use and help rider communities who have reduced capacity to pay

Terms of Reference (j) MOTORCYCLE SAFETY LEVY
VACC MOTORCYCLE RETAILERS RECOMMEND THAT:

The Motorcycle Safety Levy should be discontinued

Terms of Reference (k) STAKEHOLDER CONTRIBUTIONS
VACC MOTORCYCLE RETAILERS RECOMMEND THAT:

1. Dialogue between Government and VACC on motorcycle safety strategy can be enhanced
2. Use rider training providers as a source of data collection.
3. Improve information dissemination to the motorcycle community through social media.
Road Safety Committee Terms of Reference (a) CRASH DATA
Trends over time in crash types including on-road and off-road crashes, rural/urban breakdown, experience levels of riders (where known) and types of motorcycles ridden

MOTORCYCLE RETAILER COMMENTS

Crash data

Crash data collection is a complex task as highlighted in Victoria’s Road Safety and Transport Strategic Action Plan for Powered Two Wheelers 2009 – 2013.

Most road safety experts would most likely view the current lack of crash data as the main factor limiting understanding of motorcycle safety issues.

Agencies struggle to deliver data that provides enough insight into causal factors that influence motorcycle crashes.

Motorcycle retailer comments made during interviews for this submission, reflect the disparate nature of motorcycling and the complexity involved in determining ‘what happened’.

To determine the best methods of collecting accident data, motorcycle use needs to be understood.

There are four broad motorcycle types in the Australian market:

- Road
- Off-Road
- ATV (all-terrain vehicle) and
- Scooter
Each of the four broad categories can be further defined:

Source FCAI
Rider profiles vary between each of these 15 categories. (Refer to appendix, for more details)
Retail motorcycle sales for a six month period (January to June) compares sales in 2011 to 2010. (Refer to chart below)

Total motorcycle sales have increased by 3.1% in the six months January to June 2011 compared to the same period last year.

ATV sales show a 29.1% increase and scooters a 14.3% increase when comparing 2011 and 2010 six month sales periods.

Source FCAI (Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries) January to June 2011 Retail Sales
Terms of Reference (a) CRASH DATA
VACC MOTORCYCLE RETAILERS RECOMMEND THAT:

1. More emphasis be placed on suitable data collection
2. Improved data accuracy within specific motorcycle categories, to target appropriate remedial action
3. Data content should include riders (licensed or unlicensed), age groups, motorcycle model/capacity, whether registered or unregistered, road type, where the accident happened i.e. on public roads, off-road or private land
4. Agencies should refrain from drawing assumptions based on inaccurate data; e.g. ‘single vehicle crashes’
5. Motorcycle levy funding should support data capturing initiatives
6. Share motorcycle crash data results with the motorcycle community
7. Scrutinise riders’ experience level when they are involved in accidents and link to training undertaken through the provider
8. Make rider training provider statistics available to the motorcycle community. Include the number of riders trained each month, level of training for each person, failure rates, retests and available courses from each provider. This information can be cross referenced against retail sales for the corresponding month. Also, retailers can refer clients to the appropriate provider for the level of training required.
Road Safety Committee Terms of Reference (b) THE CHANGING FACE OF MOTORCYCLING

The changing face of motorcycling and in particular, patterns of motorcycle usage over time including the uptake of motorcycles as an alternative form of transport and its impact on road safety

MOTORCYCLE RETAILER COMMENTS

The changing face of motorcycling

Several factors influence motorcycling uptake, particularly as an alternative form of transport.

- Petrol pricing. For example, an upsurge in scooter sales occurs when petrol approaches or passes $1.50 a litre
- Inner city vehicle congestion combined with the high cost of parking motivates people to purchase power two wheelers
- Economic pressures result in a scooter or motorcycle being a substitute for a second car
- Clean energy awareness is creating more interest in electric vehicles. Also, scooter technology is moving in this direction

Changes to model choice and rider profile within the motorcycle industry are impacted by:

- Punitive police action regarding speed, leading to a fall in sports bike sales and an increase in cruiser sales
- Returning riders purchasing new motorcycles
- Farmers moving from ATVs to MUVs (multi utility vehicles or side by side vehicles)

MUV image
State of the economy impacts recreational sales; discretionary expenditure falls during depressed economic conditions.

Generally, consumers who purchase power two wheelers for commuting have a responsible attitude and choose to ride safely. The only shortfall is encouraging them to wear motorcycle protective clothing.

Returning riders who buy expensive motorcycles with inadequate riding skills are more crash prone.

Rider inexperience; this is the biggest cause of crashes.

Terms of Reference (b) THE CHANGING FACE OF MOTORCYCLING

VACC MOTORCYCLE RETAILERS RECOMMEND THAT:

1. Training and education are key challenges when consumers elect to purchase motorcycles and scooters for their daily commute. Rider training curriculum must ensure new riders are competent in traffic

2. Analysis should be conducted on a rider’s experience during the first three years of riding. Data obtained from this exercise would be useful in future rider training programs

3. The term ‘use it or lose it’ is critical in motorcycle riding. In this context, the existing system of retaining a motorcycle license for years without owning one needs review. Cross referencing registration with a motorcycle licence without huge expenditure should be possible as a positive first step

4. When referring to rider inexperience, there are two facets that must be addressed:
   a) rider competence with controls and appreciation of hazards (road craft)  
   b) also an understanding of basic maintenance (refer to Terms of Reference (h))
Rider behaviour
The majority of riders are observed to have a responsible attitude towards safety and risk. However;

‘This highlights the current community attitude to any form of discipline or rules (i.e. they are for someone else to obey). The only difference here is the consequences of this public apathy are very painful both physically and financially.’

And conversely:

‘You don’t see maniac motorcyclists on the road anymore due to speed enforcement’.

Retailer comments are supported by the “Yellow Flag / Black Flag” initiative undertaken by Victoria Police with current motorcycle levy funding. Here motorcyclists had far less speeding incidents than cars and virtually no alcohol or drug related incidents.

Younger riders are more prone to take risks, and not seeing or acknowledging danger. Peer group pressure during in-group rides is another challenge when inexperienced riders try to keep up with their peers, but often end up crashing.

Then, a small proportion of riders use their bikes as a social outlet and join like-minded individuals to undertake high speed touring with many alcoholic breaks and a
‘joint’\(^3\). These are primarily older motorcyclists who disregard the outcomes of risk taking. Risk taking is something they have always done and will continue to do. **Inappropriate speed** however, does not sit well with motorcyclists. This term could be interpreted in many different ways; for example, riding the same road every day at normal speed could be inappropriate because of changes to road conditions due to diesel on a road or other factors. Too often, the term ‘inappropriate’ is used to describe motorcycle accidents when there is a lack of understanding of the exact causal factors. These are cases where the multitude of circumstances can only be identified by experienced motorcyclists.

While the consensus is most motorcyclists don’t take drugs and ride, there is little understanding amongst industry retailers about the effects of **prescription medicine**.

**Protective clothing is widely used** throughout the motorcycle community in Victoria **with two notable exceptions**.

The first are scooter riders. As many consumers buy very low cost scooters, resistance to purchasing protective clothing is mostly economic. Even if retailers can convince a new scooter owner to buy protective clothing, encouraging them to wear it during every ride is difficult. In a short commute, a rider will usually wear work attire an example being a factory worker wearing overalls. Another defence is ‘motorcycle clothing is not stylish’ or ‘I’m only travelling a short distance’. However, scooter enthusiasts belonging to scooter clubs generally have high quality protective clothing.

The second exception is the farming community who are reluctant to embrace any form of protective clothing, including helmets, due to the nature of farm work.

Good quality protective clothing is widely available for all motorcyclists through motorcycle retailers. Most sellers choose not to stock poor quality garments. Also technological advances have vastly improved protective equipment for road and off-road riders. Skilled sales people encourage the purchase of good quality clothing and there are many opportunities to promote quality protective clothing through retailers. However, retailer concerns focus around the ‘unable to vouch for’ quality of protective clothing purchased through the internet.

\(^3\) A cigarette containing the **drug** cannabis.
Fatigue seems well understood by the majority of motorcyclists, particularly hydration. Many social riders stop regularly to chat, stretch and refresh during a ride. The quality of motorcycle apparel has lessened fatigue issues, as clothing is now available for both cold and hot conditions. However, it is still important to educate riders about fatigue as part of the rider-training curriculum.

Terms of Reference (c) RIDER BEHAVIOUR
VACC MOTORCYCLE RETAILERS RECOMMEND THAT:

1. Motorcycling is an adventurous pastime, especially with high performance sports motorcycles. ‘Track Days’ are very popular, yet the cost of participating at motor racing circuits can be prohibitive. Avenues that allow riders to test a bike’s full performance under controlled conditions, (which can also include training) should be provided. Consider establishing a specific motorcycle track within one hour of Melbourne’s CBD, funded jointly from the motorcycle levy and Victorian Government. A well-constructed facility could operate as a financial entity, catering for sports bike riders, off-road riders and conduct all types of motorcycle training including ATVs

2. Education and training are critical in addressing safe riding without drugs and alcohol while wearing good protective clothing. Social media can communicate the message effectively and economically

3. Expert advice could be sought on the effects of prescription medicine within the motorcycle community. Motorcycle retailers have limited understanding of the potential effects of prescription medicine while riding
Rider and driver attitudes to each other

Most motorcyclists drive motor vehicles. Unfortunately, most motor vehicle drivers have not ridden motorcycles and herein lies the problem. While attitudes on both sides can be discussed, each party invariably ends up agreeing to disagree.

A new motor vehicle is well equipped with comfortable seating, air-conditioning, excellent sound system, GPS, telephone(s) and plenty of glass; it is effectively a sound protected ‘bubble’ with blind spots.

The latest motorcycle has rapid acceleration and good manoeuvrability. Combine these two factors and the potential exists for catastrophic circumstances.

Rural retailers think motor vehicle driver acknowledgement of riders has improved, but note the freer (i.e. less congested) pace of traffic compared to the city of Melbourne. City retailers believe the opposite view; congestion leads to aggression with dire consequences for minority road users (i.e. motorcycles, scooters, bicycles and pedestrians)

Terms of Reference (d) RIDER AND DRIVER ATTITUDES TO EACH OTHER
VACC MOTORCYCLE RETAILERS RECOMMEND THAT:

1. Continued education for motor vehicle drivers and motorcyclists is needed. However, powered two wheel riders must take responsibility for their own safety
2. New entrants (including returning riders) to riding must receive training in hazard perception techniques
3. Rider ‘filtering’ must be legalised. Riders should not be exposed to being hit by vehicles from behind, nor subject to vehicle emissions by being forced to sit behind emitting vehicles. Overseas research shows riders can increase safety by filtering. The only issue is the speed at which riders can filter between vehicles
4. Penalties should be increased for vehicles that hit vulnerable road users. A strong disincentive is required to curb aggressive behaviour from motor vehicle drivers. Overall, the judiciary is viewed as too lenient when handing out penalties to motorists who kill or injure motorcyclists.
Off Road motorcycling

The off-road motorcycle market in Australia is the largest segment (if agricultural motorcycles are included).\(^4\) Per capita, Australia is the largest off-road market amongst developed countries.

As shown in the chart below, in recent years, imports of off-road motorcycles have quadrupled, with large numbers of small, cubic capacity motorcycles arriving from China.

Source ABS Motorcycle imports by country 2000 to June 2011 YTD

\(^4\) Refer to FCAI graph Jan to June retails 2011 p6 of this document
Most of these motorcycles have not been imported through traditional channels. Importing off-road motorcycles, which are unsuitable for registration, is relatively easy as vehicle import approval is readily accessible.\(^5\)

These motorcycles can be described as virtually ‘disposable’, retailing for well under $2,000 and are ridden indiscriminately around metropolitan suburbs.

Furthermore, these motorcycles have the potential (and already probably have) to impact motorcycle safety data.

People importing these motorcycles are not part of the established motorcycle industry and are oblivious to rules, regulations and safety initiatives. Established motorcycle retailers holding recognised franchises are not involved in the sale of these motorcycles.

Over recent years, rider access to State Forests has been reduced. Why this has occurred is not understood as this reduces rider experience and safety knowledge. Children start riding small motorcycles from four years of age, usually at mini-bike clubs or on private land and continue up to around eight years of age. From the age of eight to 18 years, riding is restricted to private land; however illegal riding in State forests is commonplace. A wide range of motorcycles is available to suit children and teenagers. But these can only be used legally on private land.

\(^5\) Department of Infrastructure and Transport Vehicle Standard Bulletin VSB10
Under Australian Road Rules, bush tracks are designated as roads (capable of vehicular access) and off-road motorcycles must meet Australian Design Rules and able to be fully registered if a rider wishes to access major roads. Recreational registration is available for off-road motorcycles but this does not allow the rider to access major roads.

ATVs must be considered when improving the safety of off-road riders. Motorcycle safety equipment is not widely used on farms. Additionally, motorcycles, two and four wheel are commonly used on farms. Some are registered, while some are not.

The existing rider-training curriculum does not cater specifically for off-road riding skills. Generally, off-road riders have learnt off-road riding skills by using small motorcycles on private land. Therefore riders who purchase off-road motorcycles without any dirt bike experience are vulnerable.

The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) has previously taken the lead in managing off-road recreational riding; they are the ideal conduit between Government and the motorcycle community.

Off-road recreational riders are generally well equipped with rider apparel. Technology has improved considerably, with neck braces now a popular addition to a rider’s kit.

But, motorcycle retailers report increasing Internet purchases of motorcycle riding apparel with no control over quality or fit. Non-conforming helmets (i.e. helmets which don’t meet Australian Standards) for the general public bought via the Internet are well known. However, helmets which meet acknowledged International Standards are allowed in motorcycle competition.

Mechanical maintenance is an important factor in keeping off-road riders safe. Many riders elect to conduct their own maintenance or do not attend to regular maintenance. Off-road riding is strenuous for both rider and bike. Both need to be in optimum condition to minimise injuries caused by crashes.
Terms of Reference (e) OFF ROAD MOTORCYCLING
VACC MOTORCYCLE RETAILERS RECOMMEND THAT:

1. DSE should be encouraged to liaise with the off-road motorcycle community
2. Create junior off-road motorcycle licenses, attached to the parent or guardian's licence. Child injury and death can be prevented by improved motorcycle riding skills. Naturally, riding skills should be developed under supervision
3. Extend recreational registration to cover junior motorcycles. This will stop illegal motorcycle use in restricted areas
4. Consider accepting international helmet standards, to provide more rider options and help lower initial purchase price
5. Introduce quality standards at Federal level, for off-road 'pocket' [miniature motorcycles with an engine] imported motorcycles which are not covered by Australian Design Rule regulations
Road Safety Committee Terms of Reference (f) MOTORCYCLE LICENSING

The efficiency and effectiveness of the accredited provider scheme in delivery and administration of motorcycle licensing

MOTORCYCLE RETAILER COMMENTS

Motorcycle licensing

Overall, the accredited provider system is very good at handling and processing numbers.

However, one retailer stated his local provider ‘taught students to pass the test’ but did not necessarily impart a range of skills to train a fully competent rider. Many retailers focused on training (curriculum) inefficiencies. Comments included:

- Inadequate skills in busy traffic
- Limited braking competency on ‘pocket handkerchief’ training ranges [extremely small training ranges that don’t allow a rider to achieve competencies needed in normal traffic conditions]. The range size required by VicRoads is 35 X 70 metres.
- Concern about people trained in rural locations without sufficient skills to be considered safe in Melbourne traffic
- Training not stringent enough

Motorcycle retailers want quality rider training delivered at a reasonable price. Competent riders are happy riders willing to continue and enjoy their powered two wheeler experience.

The worst-case scenario for motorcycle retailers is a poorly trained rider on the road, who crashes and, as a result, stops riding.

Rider training providers are small businesses who profit from volume moving through the system. Processes must ensure training is not cut short, and prevent incompetent riders from being issued with licenses.

Proposed Graduated Licensing System (GLS) comments:

- Enhanced education and training for riders is fully supported. Some doubts surround the availability of factual data for the existing rider-training scheme, on which the new GLS is based. So far, such data has not been presented.
- Riders should be able to undertake training from 16 years of age, with a possible reduction in licensing age. Riders need time to develop cognitive skills. A young adult’s life at 18 is exceptionally busy. Behavioural issues related to riding and driving is better addressed at a younger age.
• Rider history over the first three years should be recorded with cross-reference to the training provider. Crash data should also link back to the training provider and motivate training organisations to train quality riders.
• There seems to be a shortfall in the proposed GLS system in identifying competency levels.
• A component of on road, in traffic testing is supported. Five to ten hours under instruction is considered ideal.
• There is no ATV training requirement, even though units are registered from time to time, at road and farm intersections.

Terms of Reference (f) MOTORCYCLE LICENSING
VACC MOTORCYCLE RETAILERS RECOMMEND THAT:

1. Competency-based components be included in proposed GLS tests
2. Rider training providers should be subject to continuous auditing and penalised when contravening VicRoads’ guidelines
3. Obtain data on all riders’ on road experiences during the initial three years of riding (training history, motorcycles /model owned, crash history)
4. Create a specific licence for automatic motorcycles and scooters
Countermeasures to reduce motorcycle accidents

Australia is the largest motorcycle market in the developed world per capita. This fact is raised in the context of safety policies being replicated in Australia from ‘comparable overseas jurisdictions’. This may be surprising, but the explanation is simple.

Australian motorcyclists can ride all year round. Australia doesn’t have the severe winters of Northern climates. Australia has vast areas of land and huge road infrastructures.

Yes, we can study and learn from overseas trends and initiatives however, a safety policy which works in a small European country doesn’t guarantee it will be viable in Australia. In many instances, Australia has unique challenges that need local solutions.

Usually, motorcycles must adapt to a car environment. When roads are modified to be user-friendly for motorcyclists, the road is improved for all vehicles.

Road design, including road furniture, present major obstacles for motorcyclists:

- Wire-rope barriers, now installed over thousands of kilometres of road are deadly for motorcyclists if contacted. Treatment (i.e. plastic protective strips) is available for WRB making it safer for motorcyclists. This has been trialled but not installed
- When wet, tram tracks are extremely dangerous for motorcycles and tram stop infrastructure also pose dangers for motorcyclists
- Pole signs are randomly installed by councils along roads and reduce safety

In observing Australian road design, it is fair to say motorcycles are ignored.

No accurate data is available to support claims made about road construction and road furniture contributing to too many motorcyclists’ deaths each year. Data must
be collected at all motorcycle crash sites to improve understanding of the impact of road design / furniture.

Legalising motorcycle filtering and allowing motorcycles to use transit lanes will increase motorcyclist safety. Motorcyclists like bicycle riders, are in danger when ‘boxed in’, lacking personal space within heavy traffic.

Motorcyclist education, which includes a thorough understanding of how motorcycles interact with traffic and the environment, are important factors in reducing motorcycle crashes.

Advertising which portrays motorcyclists as irresponsible, are not encouraging behavioural change.

Total reliance on enforcement measures is also counter-productive.

Several good initiatives have been undertaken in Victoria. Yellow flag, Black flag has provided good ‘grass roots’ feedback to Police and Agencies about motorcycle behaviour. Police, who may not normally ride motorcycles, benefit from training sessions related to specific motorcycle use.

With diverse ownership and use of motorcycles, effective communication with the total motorcycle community is difficult, but not impossible. The ‘Spokes’ web site is excellent. However, social media allows communication with each motorcycle sector economically and effectively; this should be fully utilised. Communication strategies covering motorcycle safety and behaviour should be undertaken by agencies and motorcycle representatives and introduced to riders via this medium.

The United Kingdom is one overseas jurisdiction where networking can start regarding motorcycling safety and rider training.

Motorcycle and scooter technology is accelerating; improvements to brakes, suspension, lights and tyres have made motorcycles safer. However, conceptual product design limits similar progress on motor vehicles.

Also, in the future, ABS is likely to be fitted to most road motorcycles. Negotiations between motorcycle manufacturers and safety authorities in the volume recreational markets (i.e. Europe and North America) are driving this change. Individual model design changes to incorporate ABS need to be ‘world market’ based as individual markets do not have sufficient volume to independently implement change in a cost

6 http://www.spokes.com.au/#/home
effective way. Historically, Australia’s best-selling motorcycle has been the Australia Post delivery motorcycle, with around 2,000 units per annum sold. However, Australia does not have enough volume to dictate any design features, even though they may benefit local riders.

Conversely, there should not be an over reliance on technology to make up for operator inadequacies. Rider training revolving around core competencies remains the most important factor in motorcycle safety.

Undoubtedly, value is gained from studying overseas rider training initiatives. Most value will come from looking at training techniques for road riders. Australia, as the leading market for dirt bikes and agricultural ATVs, must work on addressing training issues in this area.

The motorcycle market (total retail), is around 10% of the motor vehicle market. Approximately half of the total comprise of registered, on road motorcycles. Rider training and accident data collection would be far more valuable, if a higher statistical group is involved. To achieve this, a National Rider Training curriculum should be implemented to include statistical data covering motorcycles safety on a national basis. Currently, learner rider training analysis in Victoria is being affected because the required intake of participants cannot be obtained. This shows why a national approach is needed.

Motorcycle protective gear has changed vastly over recent years. New materials are used in garments to offer more rider protection. Responsible riders are well equipped in on road and off-road categories. Protective clothing should be a rider’s choice; however more promotion could be undertaken, and directed specifically to commuter riders and farmers.

Conspicuity concerns can be addressed through the use of reflective strips on motorcycle clothing.

Terms of Reference (g) COUNTERMEASURES TO REDUCE ACCIDENTS

VACC MOTORCYCLE RETAILERS RECOMMEND THAT:

1. Motorcycle safety should be considered in road design. Road furniture should not endanger motorcyclists’ lives
2. Legalise motorcycle filtering
3. Allow motorcycles to utilise all transit lanes
4. Motorcycle safety communication strategies can be created and distributed via social media
5. Implement a national rider-training curriculum.
6. Create a national data base to collect motorcycle statistics
Road Safety Committee Terms of reference (h) NEW INITIATIVES TO REDUCE CRASHES AND INJURIES

MOTORCYCLE RETAILER COMMENTS

New initiatives

In assessing how motorcycle crashes and injuries can be reduced, the overwhelming response amongst retailers is ‘data’. How can good initiatives be created without relevant data? An example; failure to look right could be addressed at licensing levels for drivers. Loss of control can be addressed through the training environment.

As motorcycle use is diverse, safety strategies should be structured around specific motorcycle categories such as road, off-road and commuter. One approach does not suit all.

Training and education is emphasised by industry; one suggestion involves improving large rider training sites which could comprise an area of dirt/ gravel to familiarise riders with motorcycle movement in different road conditions. Training ranges with dirt / gravel surfaces could cater for off-road riders.

Retailers emphasise the fact that current rider training does not cater for people without off-road riding experience but who want to ride off-road. The success enjoyed by recent Australian road racing champions comes from their dirt bike background where motorcycle-manoeuvring skills were learnt.

Situational awareness was mentioned as a key component of rider skill. Competency-based training was suggested as a way of ensuring correct skills have been mastered before riders are allowed to move into traffic.

Returning motorcyclists can’t simply buy a new bike and expect to survive. Ensuring motorcyclists are active, and willing to keep honing their skills (not ‘hibernate’ for a few years) will increase motorcycle safety.

Retailers repeatedly focused on motorcycle and scooter maintenance. Manufacturers are producing more sophisticated products with more complex technology. As a result, riders are less inclined to conduct service or maintenance. The motorcycle or scooter continues to be ridden with very little attention to basic, but important safety items. Scheduled major servicing is conducted, but daily/ weekly attention to tyre pressures, chain, lights and fitted accessories is lacking.
Of special concern is tyre pressure, as handling and braking are adversely affected when pressures are too low or too high. Introducing a low cost ‘five-point’ safety check delivered by a qualified technician to bike owners may encourage regular maintenance.

Introducing a junior off-road licence, annexed to the parent’s licence, would create safer riders. Riding skills learnt at a young age will be carried throughout the rider’s career and benefit both on road and off-road experiences. TAC could consider an incentive discount on a motorcyclist’s premium if a rider agrees to wear designated protective gear when riding.

ATVs are forgotten in motorcycle safety. Ride Safe DVD’s are not distributed widely throughout the agricultural community. In store safety flyers would be useful in getting the message out via rural retailers.

More innovative ways can be used to pass riding skill and safety messages to off-road riders. Motorcyclists are more likely to respond well to messages from their peers. Well-known rider, Shane Watts, has produced a DVD which covers technique. The DVD is highly regarded by the off-road community. An off-road skills and safety DVD could be made with endorsement from a respected identity and distributed through motorcycle retailers.

Terms of Reference (h) NEW INITIATIVES TO REDUCE CRASHES AND INJURIES
VACC MOTORCYCLE RETAILERS RECOMMEND THAT:

1. Implement a ‘five point’ motorcycle maintenance check. Introduce the check to riders through motorcycle retailers
2. Adopt a junior off-road licence scheme
3. TAC could consider a premium discount for riders who wear designated protective gear
4. ATV safe use material should be available for distribution to the farming community through rural motorcycle retailers
5. An off-road skills and safety DVD could be distributed through motorcycle retailers
6. ATV training to be mandatory for new riders
TAC premiums
More information on motorcycle claims is needed to fully respond to the appropriateness of the TAC premium for all rider claims on the scheme

Overall, the ‘no fault’ system was supported; however some retailers focused on minority riders ruining the system for most motorcyclists. Are there instances where blatant stupidity has resulted in large claims?

Another suggestion sought lower premiums for LAM motorcycle categories.

Other comments raised multiple motorcycle ownership with riders paying a TAC premium on each motorcycle;

‘You can’t have two policies valid for one vehicle, but TAC can charge multiple insurance premiums on my personal self.’

Also, multiple bike ownership is common in the motorcycle community, with seasonal factors influencing model category ownership. For example, an off-road motorcycle could be used in winter while a road motorcycle is used in summer.

Offering a six month registration payment option allows flexibility in motorcycle use. It also helps commuter categories with differing economic capacities to pay for registration, especially if a motorcycle is only used on a seasonal basis.

Finally, there is a lack of understanding within the motorcycle community regarding motorcycle premiums. One example reflected a 62% increase in premiums over seven years; the motorcycle premium was considerably more than the work van.
Terms of Reference (i) TAC PREMIUMS
VACC MOTORCYCLE RETAILERS RECOMMEND THAT:

1. TAC provides motorcycle industry data on motorcycle claims, to facilitate a complete understanding of the situation
2. Motorcycle retailers could workshop ideas for fair and reasonable motorcycle claims under the ‘no fault’ system
3. A six monthly registration/ premium option should be implemented, allowing continuous or part registration over a given year to align with seasonal motorcycle use and help rider communities who have reduced capacity to pay
Motorcycle safety levy

Motorcycle retailers do not support the Motorcycle Safety Levy; they believe it discriminates against motorcyclists.

A safety levy should be equitable and fair; it should be levied across all road users, and not targeted at one commuter sector.

Claimed safety benefits from the levy should be undertaken out of general revenue. Most of the funds have been spent on road rectification that has not considered motorcycles during the design phase.

Terms of Reference (j) MOTORCYCLE SAFETY LEVY
VACC MOTORCYCLE RETAILERS RECOMMEND THAT:

1. The Motorcycle Safety Levy should be discontinued.
Road Safety Committee Terms of Reference (k) STAKEHOLDER CONTRIBUTIONS
Ways government can work with non-government stakeholders to achieve motorcycle safety outcomes.

MOTORCYCLE RETAILER COMMENTS

Stakeholders’ contribution
Motorcycle community stakeholders are comprised of four main entities:

- The Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce (VACC). VACC represents Victorian automotive retail businesses and is a member of the Australian Motor Industry Federation (AMIF) representing all Motor Trades organisations nationally.
- The Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI) represents automotive manufacturers.
- Motorcycling Australia (MA) is the controlling body for motorcycle sport in Australia representing all competition riders.
- The Australian Motorcycle Council (AMC) represents all rider groups and clubs throughout Australia.

A fifth entity could be added; the Victorian Farmers Federation.

AMC’s long term goal is to represent motorcyclists in the agricultural community. However, until sufficient funding is obtained to expand AMC’s role, AMC does not have the current capacity to be included as a stakeholder.

Dialogue with all these stakeholders is valuable for Government, but the retail motorcycle trade is best placed to act as communications mediator between Government and riders as they regularly communicate with their customers.

**VACC disseminates information in a timely way to its members. This capacity has been under utilised by Government in regard to the motorcycle industry.**

Communication between Government and retail business is vital to the viability of both parties. However, in compiling VACC’s response to Victoria’s Road Safety Committee, it is clear retailers are not well briefed regarding motorcycle safety issues. Why?

Motorcycle retailers mostly function as small businesses. As such, they are busy competing in an exceptionally aggressive marketplace.
Also, motorcycle retailers must work long hours (sometimes up to a 60 hour week) to operate successfully. Motorcycle business principals are totally immersed in day-to-day activities and have little time to be sufficiently informed on industry matters. VACC could lead in improving industry information dissemination. Motorcycle training providers are effectively a ‘nursery’ for new riders and a great source for data collection if provided with simple systems that facilitate easy collection.

As previously mentioned, social media is an effective way of communicating with the motorcycle community. However, expertise should be sourced from a younger demographic than those currently representing Government to the motorcycle community to fully exploit the medium.

Motorcycle accessory importers and distributors can be accessed via AMIF.

And Government should be kept informed of improvements in motorcycle protective clothing.

The motorcycle community asks Government agencies to increase transparency regarding policy direction; consulting with the community prior to policy implementation is particularly critical. Motorcyclists are known as fiercely independent individuals, but this is also a community able to contribute extensive knowledge towards improving motorcycling safety. This will improve policy making and importantly, the safety of all motorcyclists.

Terms of Reference (k) STAKEHOLDER CONTRIBUTIONS
VACC MOTORCYCLE RETAILERS RECOMMEND THAT:

1. Dialogue between Government and VACC on motorcycle safety strategy can be enhanced
2. Use rider training providers as a source of data collection.
3. Improve information dissemination to the motorcycle community through social media.
Appendix

Motorcycle models – rider profiles
**ATV Fun**
Children’s models mostly used on private land. No recreational registration available for motorcycles suitable for 12 to 17 year olds. No license available for juniors, leading to illegal use. Age use 4 to 17 years.

**ATV sport**
Mainly competition use but also used for general purpose riding by those who like high performance. Ride areas are restricted with no recreational registration being available often leading to being used in unauthorised areas.

**ATV utility**
Widely used by farmers, farmers wives and farm employees. Rider profile 18 to 80.

**Cruisers**
Purchased by riders who want to enjoy a relaxed ride and an image best reflected by the Harley Davidson brand. Rider profile 40 to 60.

**Enduro**
The choice of committed off-road riders. Most bikes have full registration and some with recreational registration. Rider profile 18 to mid-fifties.

**Entry level, under 250cc**
Main market is an entry-level rider wanting a relatively easy motorcycle to ride. Australia Post motorcycles are included in this category. Rider profile 18 to 25 years.

**Farm**
Purpose built two wheel farm bikes. Not as popular with farmers now who find ATVs better for utility use. Rider profile junior to senior.

**Fun**
A full range of models is available for children and teenagers. Mostly used at mini bike clubs and on private land. Rider profile 4 to 17 years.

**Motorcross**
Primarily used in competition. Sometimes used illegally in the bush where excess noise is an issue. Not able to be recreational registered unless modified. Rider profile junior to mid-thirties.

**Naked**
Motorcycles without fairings (bodywork) generally from 400cc to 1200cc with reasonable performance. Purchased by riders for general-purpose use. Rider profile 18 to 60.
Scooters
Primarily purchased for commuting. Rider profile covers the entire community.

Super Motard
Niche market motorcycles purchased by riders who want motocross type looks on a road bike.

Supersport
High performance, state of the art models, purchased by riders who have an interest in motorsport. Widely used at ‘Track days’ conducted at racing circuits. Rider profile 20 to 50 years.

Adventure Touring
Generally large cubic capacity motorcycles used for touring in the outback or where a combination of tarmac and dirt roads exists. Rider profile 35 to 50 years.

Sport Touring
Large cubic capacity motorcycles suitable for high speed touring with luggage and pillion. Rider profile 40 to 60 years.

Touring
Large capacity purpose built motorcycles designed to carry two people in comfort with huge luggage capacity. Rider profile 40 to 60 years.

Trail
Bought by riders who want to ride on road but also want some ‘soft’ off-road capability. Have lost popularity over recent years as the range of Enduro bikes has grown. Sometimes bought by farmers. Rider profile 18 to 60 years.

These two wheeler profiles provide insight into the difficulties involved in identifying trends, especially in off-road environments.