

# TRANSCRIPT

## ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE

### Inquiry into motorcycle safety

Melbourne — 17 October 2011

#### Members

Mr A. Elsbury

Mr T. Languiller

Mr J. Perera

Mr M. Thompson

Mr B. Tilley

Chair: Mr M. Thompson  
Deputy Chair: Mr T. Languiller

#### Staff

Executive Officer: Ms K. Jenkins

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#### Witnesses

Mr D. Shelton, executive director, road safety and network access, and

Mr J. Holgate, director, road user safety, VicRoads.

**The CHAIR** — Welcome to this public hearing of the Victorian parliamentary inquiry into motorcycle safety. The committee has received 68 written submissions since releasing the terms of reference and inviting submissions. The purpose of these hearings is to obtain further evidence from selected witnesses covering the terms of reference. I thank the witnesses for attending, and I remind you that anything you say or publish before the committee today is protected by parliamentary privilege; however, once you leave these proceedings anything you say or publish outside this room is not so protected. Hansard will be recording the proceedings today and will provide a proof version of the transcript to witnesses so that typographical errors can be corrected.

I am also pleased to note that there are a number of other observers in the room, which indicates the high level of interest that has been part of the inquiry to date. I ask observers to respect the rights of witnesses, to not interject — while we, as members of Parliament, are used to interjections, those people giving evidence may not be so used to that — and to keep noise and movement to a minimum. I am also obliged to advise that the use of mobile telephones, cameras and recording devices is not permitted during proceedings. I ask people to turn their phones off.

The first witnesses are from VicRoads. I welcome Mr David Shelton and Mr James Holgate. We have had a brief preamble discussion, but you might jump to the chase in relation to the asking of questions at the start. When you speak I invite you to indicate your name to assist Hansard as they prepare the transcript. Once again, thank you for your attendance.

We will start with a couple of questions. The first question relates to what progress has been made towards addressing the recommendations made by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office in its report on motorcycle and scooter safety programs.

**Mr SHELTON** — I am David Shelton, VicRoads. The Auditor-General made a number of recommendations, and work has begun in some form on most of those. Unfortunately I do not have the specific list here in front of me, but I am happy to address those.

**Mr HOLGATE** — You have them there.

**Mr SHELTON** — Excellent. In relation to unreported and off-road crashes, we have had preliminary discussions with road safety partners about the work that is needed to determine roles and responsibilities to proceed in this area. It has generally been agreed that the current legislated roles of agencies do not satisfactorily define what each agency's specific responsibilities are in relation to road trauma that occurs off the public road network. An early step is to define those roles and responsibilities adequately and then actually develop strategies and programs to proceed.

In the area of data gathering, the Auditor-General made some observations about gaps in our data, and we have again started discussions with particularly the TAC in relation to how we might improve that data over time. There is also parallel work happening at VicRoads in relation to our registration and licensing data. This is tied in to a proposal for the replacement of our registration and licensing systems, and a definition of the technical requirements for the new system has included improvement in motorcycle, particularly registration, data.

Regarding the prioritisation of initiatives for road safety, the Auditor-General recommended that we review the strategic directions for the investment of the motorcycle levy, and we are working to provide a discussion with our new Motorcycle Advisory Group to try to shape those next terms of reference for the 2012 review of the current motorcycle safety and transport action plan.

In terms of measuring overall program effectiveness, we have started work on better understanding the overall exposure of motorcyclists, and that work will feed into our thinking for determining performance measures for the next action plan. It is being done at the same time as we are developing a new state road safety strategy. It is quite timely for us to do that. We are particularly interested, however, in the benefits that may come from having a specific set of targets for the reduction of motorcycle trauma. At the moment we have high-level targets for reducing fatalities and serious injuries. The current target is a 30 per cent reduction by 2017, and a similar level of performance is reflected in the national road safety strategy. Our interest is in whether or not there is benefit in having a set of targets specifically for motorcycle trauma to help us focus and drive our performance.

**The CHAIR** — The VicRoads and TAC submissions talk about an inter-agency data quality committee which the committee understands your organisation also sits on. Is this a new or an ongoing body? Can you explain the work it does and how often it meets and provide examples of the types of issues it has dealt with to date?

**Mr SHELTON** — I will have to take the detail on the issues that it has dealt with as a question on notice, Murray. I am happy to provide you with further detail on that. The group was actually formed several years ago around some specific concerns, and it has been suggested that it now put more focus into the motorcycling area. We are starting by asking ourselves whether in fact that group is indeed the best group to go forward with and if we need to augment it with anybody else in particular. At the moment the group does not actually have representatives from the hospital side of things, so we are wondering whether we might equip it a bit better by beefing it up.

**The CHAIR** — Thank you. We are meeting with some hospital organisations later today.

**Mr LANGUILLER** — Can you please tell us what the differences are between the Victorian Motorcycle Advisory Council and the Motorcycle Advisory Group in terms of function, role, powers, oversight, governance and membership? Could you tell us why the VMAC was disbanded and explain the thinking behind the changed governance arrangements, which mean the group no longer answers to the minister? What would you say to the following comment made by one of the individuals who provided a submission to the committee, who said that the terms of reference for the Motorcycle Advisory Group ‘lack accountability and transparency and will only reduce the credibility and increase the already high levels of cynicism amongst riders’? Would you care to comment?

**Mr SHELTON** — Certainly. The new Motorcycle Advisory Group is essentially a mirror group for a number of advisory groups that report through to the VicRoads Chief Executive. It is designed to provide strategic engagement and guidance for our thinking and policy development. It is also, in the case of motorcycling, used to provide similar advice to other road safety partners, so they are at the table and active parts of that process. As such, it is an advisory group. We essentially take to that group issues on which we feel they can help us provide some thinking, and we are similarly very open to that group actually setting some of the agenda items for us on things we may not be aware of. The group has only met once so far. It is due to meet again before the end of the year, so that first meeting, as you would expect, was largely formative in terms of its proceedings. However, there is a large body of work that we expect to be taking through to the next few meetings.

The membership of the group was hand selected to largely reflect the sorts of skills we believe we need at the table — people who actually have a good knowledge of motorcycling but a knowledge that can be taken and used to implement new countermeasures and a knowledge that might take our organisation to a different way of thinking about motorcycling. Skills that help us in that area include collaborative skills and the ability to work as a group. Certainly in the discussions with the Motorcycle Advisory Group we are very much looking for a collaborative approach to trying to find solutions to what is a very difficult challenge.

We have elected to have an independent chair of that group, David Hawker. We have previously had an independent chair of VMAC and found that to be a very effective way to provide perhaps less friction at these meetings. Quite often regulators and road users come together and there will be specific issues that will cause a certain amount of friction. Having an independent chair helps us work through some of those things.

**The CHAIR** — That is the former Speaker, David Hawker?

**Mr SHELTON** — That is correct. The new group differs in other ways in that we have attempted to provide a greater proportion of motorcyclists and road users and the manufacturing, retail and marketing side of motorcycling as well. To do that we have actually reduced the number of bureaucrats at the table, which I think will actually also assist discussion. We accept that we may well need to modify that membership over time. Indeed we discussed membership at our last meeting, and I expect we will discuss membership with the group again at our next meeting.

In terms of how the terms of reference differ in other ways from the Motorcycle Advisory Group, the Victorian Motorcycle Advisory Council had a specific role on behalf of the Minister to review and endorse programs and projects under the Motorcycle Levy. That role does not exist in the Motorcycle Advisory Group. The Minister

still holds the approval power for expenditures under that levy, and we still have discussions with the motorcycle advisory group and will indeed keep them up to speed as to what is happening with the levy.

The key reason that that function of the group has been removed is to provide greater flexibility for overall program management and to address a few areas where we believe there is very sound reason for us to be doing some work and seeking the approval of the Minister to use the motorcycle levy. We have actually had difficulty in getting that endorsement in a couple of areas in the past.

So far with our one meeting I would have to say I think it is working very well. I was just commenting in the foyer to one of our sort of long-time motorcyclists in Victoria who has had a lot to do with motorcycling that the group is well poised to do a lot. We have a very mature relationship with our motorcycling community at the moment, and indeed it is quite often cited with some envy by other jurisdictions. That is not to say we do not have issues that are difficult to work through at times. If we are not working on difficult things, then we are not making good progress. But I think we have a maturity in the relationship that sets us up quite well for achieving a lot in the coming years.

Have I answered your question, Telmo? I can certainly provide you with the specific — —

**Mr LANGUILLER** — Would you mind making a comment in relation to the assertion made about a lack of accountability and transparency?

**Mr SHELTON** — Of the new group? I have not actually had that complaint brought to me. In fact I would suggest, given that we have had only one meeting, that at this stage it may be a little early to make that judgement. We have provided information that we have through to the group about its governance arrangements and its terms of reference, and they were discussed at the last meeting of the group.

**Mr LANGUILLER** — Can you provide an update on the progress to date made by your agency against the initiatives in the *Road Safety and Transport Strategic Action Plan for Powered Two Wheelers 2009–2013* document? A number of initiatives due for completion in December 2010 appear, according to the first progress report on the PTW action plan, to have not yet commenced. Can you explain why this is the case?

**Mr SHELTON** — Firstly, Telmo, it is a very long document in terms of its actions, and I think I will probably need to get you a specific response to each action in there. I am happy to provide that to the committee. As for individual actions that may not have been initiated yet, we would probably need to talk about specific ones, but in general terms we set up a program of activity which, quite frankly, with an incoming government, we had to retest to ensure that some of our directions were indeed consistent with where we were going. That has been, again, a very fruitful process to question and ensure that priorities are actually right. But we have been progressing on the bulk of the actions within this document, and, as I say, I think I will need to get you the detail to enlighten us on that.

**Mr TILLEY** — Gentlemen, just to change the theme a little bit, I have two separate issues. The first one is in relation to off-road riding. What interests me in particular is any specific examples from VicRoads as an organisation of the works that have been undertaken by the agency specifically on off-road riding. I understand it is probably jumping a little bit from where we were just then.

**Mr SHELTON** — That is quite all right. I perhaps need to start by saying that by its very nature, conceptually off-road riding is not on the road and hence not the responsibility of VicRoads. Having said that, we do have a role to coordinate many of the stakeholders in road safety who do have accountabilities in this area, and there is a lot we do for on-road road safety that can benefit off-road road safety. As we speak, however, there is no real definition of off-road motorcycling, and that is one of the things that hampers us. Part of my response to you would be: ‘What are we doing for off-road riding? Well, everything we are doing about on-road riding is benefiting off-road riding, whether that is about improving the vehicles, improving the way they are ridden or improving access to off-road areas through the public road network’.

**Mr HOLGATE** — Just to clarify and amplify one of the points, we are doing work to try to understand what off-road riding is. It is a very broad term, but it in fact covers a whole host of different situations from what is in fact on-road riding but is on a non-sealed surface — some people would consider that off-road — to a forestry trail, to a public place, to a private paddock and even to a motocross stadium or something like that.

They are all off-road, and clearly the response and the responsibilities will be quite different for each of those. Part of our initial role is to try to clarify those different situations.

**Mr TILLEY** — Would it be fair to say that in the state of Victoria there are considerable amounts of unsealed surfaces — and you make mention of them, such as fire trails — which are still under the act and which we still refer to as road-related areas? Would it be fair to say that, as an organisation, there would be some responsibility for VicRoads?

**Mr SHELTON** — Yes. Unfortunately the act could probably be better worded in this area. The Road Safety Act actually refers to roads as being areas that are used by the public. Almost by definition of using the road, you are making it a public road. We believe it needs to be better defined than that to help us differentiate responsibilities. The dirt roads that you referred to earlier, Bill, I think are predominantly under the care and management of either DSE or local councils. We certainly have been working with the DSE, which, as you probably are aware, have been very active in the off-road space. I would commend them on the work they have done there and what they have achieved; it has been very well received. In particular, the work they have done to engage with the motorcycle group has been really quite exceptional, and we have all learnt a lot from that.

The opportunities to work together are quite substantial in this area. I have a question in my mind, though, about who ought to be the lead agency in this area. I think a lead agency in off-road is definitely required; however, if it means it is at the expense of our focus for on-road safety, I would question whether that is going to be a good thing in the long run. Importantly, also, the off-road group of riders includes a large proportion of unlicensed riders. By that I do not mean to infer that they should necessarily be licensed, but when children are riding off-road it is very difficult for us to have regulatory influence and control over that.

**Mr TILLEY** — Thanks for that. We are moving to another area, and no doubt the gallery here will be interested in some parts of this next question. It relates to wire rope barriers, just so you can put your mind to the question I am going to ask. There are a number of submissions to the committee covering the issue of wire rope barriers. Could you advise whether any studies have been undertaken by VicRoads on this issue and whether the findings have been released? If the findings have not been released at this stage, can you please explain to the committee why?

**Mr SHELTON** — What we have done in barriers generally is to have a look at what are the types of collisions with barriers that actually cause the most trauma. The results of that work have indicated that it is the upright posts on barriers that cause a problem for motorcyclists, and that is irrespective of barrier type. The response to that has been to trial and implement technologies like rub rail, which actually protects against collisions with upright barriers.

**The CHAIR** — Can you explain rub rail a bit further?

**Mr SHELTON** — If you imagine a solid barrier has got what is typically referred to as W-beam that runs at a height of, say, half a metre off the ground and between the beam and the ground you have got vertical posts which are exposed. A rub rail fits another extruded section longitudinally along those posts. When something hits it, it tends to slide along the barrier rather than collide straight into one of the uprights.

**Mr HOLGATE** — On the question of evaluation and reports, certainly we have done some evaluations of the overall effectiveness of wire rope barriers, and they show that generally they provide a significant benefit. We are obviously very conscious of the fact that there is a lot of interest nationally and internationally in this subject, and there has been work done in Sweden and in other jurisdictions looking at this issue. I guess our position is that we are not aware of any significant evidence to show that these barriers cause any greater problem to motorcyclists than would any other barrier, or indeed in many cases the lack of a barrier.

**Mr ELSBURY** — Going back to your submission, it states that locations included in the motorcycle black spot program funded by the Motorcycle Safety Levy would not have qualified for funding in other road infrastructure treatment programs. Can you explain why not?

**Mr SHELTON** — Our non-motorcycle black spot treatment programs have got a combination of criteria that has been established to identify the most needy sites in the state and to target funding at those. To do that they do either of two things, or sometimes both concurrently: they set a criteria around the historical crash history of the location, whether it is in terms of serious injury or fatal crashes, and they use that as a method of

identifying known crash spots. They then set up a benefit-cost assessment process for deciding how to prioritise those. The benefits are largely reflected by the sorts of treatments to address the sorts of problems that you have, and the costs are clearly the costs of implementing a treatment at that location, including the maintenance. When we do that, the predominance of non-motorcycle trauma means that locations that are motorcycle-only crashes tend to be lower down the pecking order, if you like. They simply do not get the level of return, and as a result they do not attract the funding.

**Mr ELSBURY** — I am afraid I have got a supplementary on that one. With regard to the non-motorcycle treatment programs, are motorcyclist issues taken care of in those programs, or is that something that is put to one side because it is not the focus of the treatment?

**Mr HOLGATE** — General road safety infrastructure programs are most effective when they tackle locations where there is a clustering of crashes. Where there is a significant number of crashes occurring at a location or along a road, it is more straightforward to find solutions in those locations. Motorcycles may or may not be part of that. Certainly we will look at all crashes occurring, and we will look at what treatments there are to address the areas where those crashes are clustering, but because motorcycle numbers are lower generally and therefore the crash numbers are lower generally they are less clustered than looking at totals. It is more challenging to apply funds generally to get the benefits if you are just looking at motorcycles.

**Mr SHELTON** — It is probably also worth noting that the sorts of treatments that we might do for a run-off-road location or for an intersection treatment are generically beneficial for all road users — they improve traffic flow by better defining where cars can be and where they should not be. They improve the delineation of the road overall. They will seal shoulders, which is always beneficial, and they might improve the conspicuity or the clarity of vision of an intersection when you are going through it looking at the signals.

**The CHAIR** — Could you spell that word, please? Conspicuity.

**Mr SHELTON** — Conspicuity. It is a lovely engineering term.

**Mr ELSBURY** — Hansard will have to reach for the dictionary, but we are good!

**Mr SHELTON** — Whilst those treatments might be installed to address specific run-off-road crashes, whether they be motorcyclists or cars, and the same with intersections — protected right-hand turns, for example — they will provide consequential benefits to any vehicle that is on the road.

**Mr ELSBURY** — My next question is more about licensing. Will a graduated licensing scheme mean that providers will be assessed on how well they train novice riders as opposed to how well they adhere to the policies and procedures? If so, how will this assessment be undertaken?

**Mr SHELTON** — Firstly, we do not yet have approval for a graduated licensing system for motorcycles or for reviewing that. We have done a large amount of work and we hope to be providing a proposal to government within the current year. The approach that we intend to use is to, again, use our outsource motorcycle licensers and trainers, which is an effective way of getting good service provision right across the state. That works well, but it does need adequate controls in place to ensure that we are getting quality products out of it. The way we would typically do that is to specify the programs that need to be delivered and the form in which they need to be delivered. We do not want to overregulate or overspecify. We really only want to regulate what needs to be done to get the outcomes that we need to achieve. Once we have done that we will certify deliverers to provide the training or the licence testing, whatever it happens to be, and then provide an audit process to ensure compliance with it. There is a lot of work still to do on what the training program might look like and how we actually specify it.

**The CHAIR** — In relation to the graduated licensing scheme, does the proposed scheme include a change to the current situation relating to license restrictions where a rider who has passed their learners permit test on an automatic bicycle or scooter is able to ride a manually geared motorcycle?

**Mr SHELTON** — Certainly one of the options we are looking at is whether if you get your licence on an automatic motorcycle, you should remain on an automatic motorcycle — a little bit like the car process. There are differing views on this. I think we will find that there is benefit in reflecting the way we do it in the car space so that you cannot immediately get off a scooter with an automatic clutch and get straight onto a motorcycle.

Unfortunately, as is quite often the case in motorcycling, as much as there is a lot of work happening, there is still a real shortage of sound data in some areas. We are going into the graduated licensing system really having to apply expert views about what we think is the best thing to do rather than being able to confidently draw on well-researched and well-founded results. This is one such area. What we have learnt in the car area is, I think, an indication that it probably is a good move, and it will be considered in what we put together.

**Mr LANGUILLER** — Can you advise the committee on how your agency is complying with the requirement under the new Multicultural Victoria Act that all government departments report annually on their achievements and initiatives in multicultural affairs?

**Mr SHELTON** — As it relates to motorcycling, Telmo?

**Mr LANGUILLER** — Yes, as it relates to the use of, for example, language services, multicultural communications and multicultural representation of government boards and committees. As somebody who listens to other radio programs, Spanish, Italian and French, I do not seem to get a message from your organisation. That could be a bit unfair because I do not always listen to the radio. I put on record that I have not asked SBS, 3ZZZ or various other community radio stations about whether they do any work with you or not, but there is now a requirement under the act of not just yourselves but every other government department.

**Mr SHELTON** — Very good question, Telmo. What we tend to do with our registration and licensing services is to survey the community that we are delivering our services to and determine how best to address their needs. We find that, for example, in the translation of all our products there is a high priority set of around six languages. There are another 18 or so languages that we translate a smaller number of our documents into. For those that fall outside those language groups we provide translation services. Translation services are high cost, so it is generally the case that we try to translate our documents before then. That is in the registration and licensing service space.

In terms of our road safety messaging and how we communicate with the public there, I would have to take that on notice, I am afraid. I am certainly aware that we do all that in English of course, but how much of that gets translated, I am sorry I could not actually comment on, Telmo. I am happy to get you that information.

**Mr TILLEY** — This is all part of the robust debate on road safety, and we have had quite a number of submissions to this inquiry. The question refers to responding particularly to some suggestions of an anti-motorcycling bias in some of the road safety agencies and how in particular VicRoads can respond to this suggested bias.

**Mr SHELTON** — Yes, I have heard that comment made, and I can understand how people come to that conclusion. We have a very strong focus on safety, which means addressing overrepresentation and looking at ways to improve that. When we look at motorcycling the overrepresentation is quite dramatic, and you will have seen that in submissions. I think one can then inappropriately interpret some of our actions as being anti-motorcycling. In fact our organisation has been quite deliberately focusing on improving our understanding of motorcycling as a transport mode. Our current strategic action plan is specifically about transport generally as well as safety. It was housed in those terms not only to respond to motorcyclists' views but in order to drive the thinking within our organisation.

The objectives of VicRoads as an agency do include both mobility and safety. They are given equal importance. We have to find a balance between those two — as an organisation that is required of us. We need to satisfy ourselves, and of course the government, in making any proposal for new initiatives, ensuring that it does actually find the right balance in that space. In our view the balance, at the moment, is quite heavily weighted in the wrong way in the safety area. Motorcyclists are dramatically overrepresented, and we need to do something about it.

**Mr TILLEY** — Can I just follow up there on what are generally group C of motorcyclists? You have got your passenger vehicles and motorcyclists. Are there any comments you might be able to provide the committee with in relation to lane splitting and filtering?

**Mr SHELTON** — There have been some really interesting discussions probably in the last 12 months, I would say. I would have to acknowledge some of the work of motorcyclists themselves in bringing forward the thinking in this space, which has been really good. On the surface, splitting and filtering are problematic for

safety; however, the position we are coming to increasingly is that with adequate controls there are many things we can do safely.

With that mind, particularly where cars in lanes are stationary and motorcyclists are moving through them, I think it is possible to imagine a way that that can be done safely. How we actually establish that in a way that can also be regulated, particularly in being enforced by police, is the next challenge for us.

As I was saying earlier about finding the balance, I think this is one area where VicRoads needs to look very seriously at whether in fact there is a different balance that needs to be struck.

**Mr ELSBURY** — Going back to the motorcycle safety levy and the use of its funds, are the results of research that is funded by the motorcycle safety levy publicly available, and if not, why not?

**Mr SHELTON** — The discussions we have previously had with the motorcycle advisory group are enlightening in this area. As a general rule everything is made available. There are a small number of instances where we have been concerned about whether some documents are genuinely useful for the public or whether they are in fact potentially misleading. I guess by that I am referring specifically to some work that was drafted and heavily critical of certain aspects of the registration data. To be honest, the report itself was really going off the mark in the view of VicRoads in dealing with matters which were not within scope. Having said that, we were able to actually extract a summary of that document and make that available. To address that in the future we have gone back and made sure that the scoping of this work — how we actually specify a brief for it to be done — ensures that we actually get products we can take straight to the public. Our intention in the future is that wherever we are generating reports they become public documents as soon as they are completed.

**The CHAIR** — Thank you, David. We have completed a range of questions that we want to ask you immediately this morning. We have probably 15 minutes to allow you to go through your presentation to us this morning as well. In the midst of a number of other segments we have for our working day, would you like to take us through the material that you have come along prepared to present?

**Mr SHELTON** — Yes, I would. Just respecting your time, I will be quick. I am just going to emphasise a few key things as we go through.

#### **Overheads shown.**

**Mr SHELTON** — My starting point is this data here, which is quite simple. I think you would have heard, certainly from us and from other road safety partners, time and time again that the mantra here is one of overrepresentation. We have had similar concerns amongst young drivers as we do amongst motorcyclists. The overrepresentation really obligates us to take some action. Motorcyclists are not only less than 1 per cent of our traffic volume, they are less than 4 per cent of our registered vehicles and yet 14 per cent of our road toll. That drives quite a bit of our thinking and my reflections earlier about the balance we describe.

The graph I have here essentially shows the performance we have had for motorcyclists since 2002 in terms of fatalities compared with other road users. Again, the performance we have been able to achieve in the non-motorcycling road use area has simply not been matched in motorcycling. It is in part because motorcycling, in terms of registrations, has been growing very rapidly, as have licences. However, we measure our performance based on absolute performance, not in terms of percentages. I think it is sort of indicative that we have a real challenge here, and it is going to require a very focused and determined approach to improve it.

**Mr LANGUILLER** — Just on that, do we have any numbers in terms of the growth in motorcycle users in the last decade?

**Mr SHELTON** — I do have that. That is coming up, Telmo. We will get to a bit of that.

**Mr LANGUILLER** — All right. Thanks.

**Mr SHELTON** — By the way, there have been 218 fatalities on Victoria's roads as of midnight last night. That is down by about 13 on last year. Importantly, motorcyclist fatalities are down by 7, which is encouraging.

I want to mention that Victoria's challenge is in fact, in an international context, mirrored right across the world. The comparisons I have here show that there are many countries facing similar challenges. Australia and

Victoria's performances are quite competitive against the performances of those other countries, but the graph also tells us there is a lot more we can do. We are certainly not the best performing country in that picture. I draw your attention to Sweden in particular, which I will come back to in a moment. You can see there that in 2009 its percentage of fatalities that were motorcyclists is comparable to Australia's. Victoria's in that year, by the way, was about 13, so it is a bit below the Australian figure there.

**Mr LANGUILLER** — How do we compare to New South Wales and other jurisdictions?

**Mr SHELTON** — I actually do not have that.

**Mr HOLGATE** — No. We can give you that information, but generally we are slightly below the Australian average, so logically they will be slightly greater than us.

**Mr SHELTON** — The very strong trend internationally is to set ambitious targets to drive road safety performance, and this comes back to a comment I made earlier. We believe there may be benefit to consider whether we should set specific targets for motorcycling road trauma reduction over and above what we might for road safety overall.

**Mr HOLGATE** — Perhaps if I can add something there, certainly VAGO made a comment that we need to have, I guess, greater account of exposure measures when developing targets. The international consensus is that an absolute number is what drives action and drives performance. Certainly when setting a target we need to take growth and exposure into account, and certainly the number of motorcycles is increasing, but to get action an absolute target is what is needed to make sure we focus on improvement.

**Mr SHELTON** — Just as an indication of Victoria's standing in international road safety of motorcyclists, there was recently formed a working group under the OECD to focus on motorcycle safety, and Victoria was specifically asked to put forward a representative to represent Australia. James is in fact the Australian representative in that group.

I mentioned Sweden earlier. If you look at the case study here, the sorts of things they are doing in Sweden, comparing this to the work program that is in our current action plan and the submissions you have received, there is a high level of commonality between what is happening in Sweden, which is highly regarded for its road safety performance, and what we are doing at the moment.

Just moving on, I mentioned the targets earlier. That is one of our recommendations. I will skip over the next couple of items. There was a mention earlier — Telmo asked us about licensing and registration. Motorcycle licences are up 37 per cent since 2002. The number of licences just as a general rule of thumb is about double the number of registered motorcycles. It is predominantly males with an average age of 43. I will not go through all of those statistics there. Interestingly, however, women are three times more likely to ride a scooter than men are, and that is also indicative of what are identifiable, different demographics within motorcycling generally.

One thing that we are increasingly learning and reflecting on in our countermeasures is that motorcycling is not one amorphous group of single activities; there are in fact a number of subtypes within that. In particular the three I think are notable would be the scooter riders, the recreational riders and the commuting riders.

**Mr LANGUILLER** — Do you have data in terms of injuries and fatalities that you can extrapolate from those groups?

**Mr SHELTON** — This is one of the issues that was really underneath what VAGO was telling us in their report, that we need to be much more agile and more intelligent in that space. Our systems are currently letting us down. We do need to do more work. We have some we generated, Telmo, by doing one-off studies of in-depth analysis of our data. It is a very expensive way of doing it, and you cannot get recurring up-to-date information about those different subgroups. We need to improve our data gathering to allow us to develop better countermeasures.

**Mr HOLGATE** — Perhaps further to that, we do look at crashes by crash type and crash locations. A higher speed crash on a rural road is obviously associated with a certain type of riding. A crash at an intersection in the middle of Melbourne is probably associated with a different type. There are different ways of cutting the data to get some understanding.

**Mr SHELTON** — That graph essentially represents double the number of licences than there are registrations and also shows the overall growth in both. This is just a further focus on the growth here, noting that a little over half of our motor cycles are 500 cc or over. Interestingly the very rapid growth that we have seen in the scooter registration area seems to have been falling away over the last few years, but it is certainly something that we need to keep an eye on both in terms of a transport and a safety sense. Scooters clearly offer some transport opportunities as well, which we are very much aware of. Notably the growth in registrations in Victoria is lower than the national average. I will not spend too much time on some of these graphs given that they are well covered in our submission.

Just in relation to crashes per 10 000 registrations and noting James's comment earlier that the international consensus is to measure road trauma in absolute terms rather than rates, this graph shows us some of the comparative performance. Noting that the car rates per 10 000 crashes are not shown in this graph, essentially both in terms of injury and fatality they are of an order of magnitude lower than we have here for motorbikes. Roughly the car crash rate per 10 000 registrations is of the order of about 35, so that is a comparison to the red line, which is all above 100. The fatality rate for cars is around the 0.6 level, again compared with the numbers there in the 3 to 5.

Crash rates by age have been important for us, so we have been conducting some work recently to better understand the returning-rider problem, as it is often returned to. That research has essentially found that the skills and attitudes of returning or older riders are similar to those of continuing riders. The increasing representation of older riders in our road trauma statistics is reflective of there being more licence-holders in that age group. We do, however, need to ask ourselves: if it is a poor conception to understand them as return riders, what is it that this group need? What is going to benefit their safety? Is there something special for that group that we need to do? I think again that will be one that will unfold as we better understand that group and their needs.

I want to mention a little bit here about day-of-the-week crashes. The graph on the left there that shows the metropolitan area is essentially similar for all vehicles as it is for motorbikes. There is nothing particularly unique about that shape. The unique part of this graph is really what is on the right for country Victoria. Again, the country Victoria picture for all road users matches broadly the pattern that you see in blue. However, when we look at country road motorcyclists, we get a very distinct focus on what is a recreational rider essentially on weekends.

With alcohol and motorcycling, again there is an important difference here with drivers. If you take the middle two columns there, which are alcohol-impaired fatalities at 0.05 and above, it is roughly 20 per cent of motorcycle fatalities. That figure is 27 per cent for cars and drivers overall, so there is less alcohol involvement for motorcyclists. The main shift is in fact the 9.1 figure for those over 0.15, which is actually 17 per cent for drivers.

**Mr LANGUILLER** — Your figures do not include the off-road fatalities or injuries, do they?

**Mr SHELTON** — No. I will not go through all of these recommendations; I do not think we have the time for that. I just want to note recommendation 20 here, that one-third of on-road casualty crashes involve injury to the lower extremity. Research shows that any boot reduces the likelihood of lower-limb injury by up to 53 per cent, and about one-quarter of riders report that they only sometimes or never wear boots. We think there is quite a lot that can be done in that particular area as a subgroup of the protective clothing safety opportunities overall.

Again, I will not go through all of these recommendations, as they are well covered in our submission. I have mentioned ABS at recommendation 22. There is quite a bit of international debate about ABS at the moment. Importantly, there has been some research in America that seems to be concluding that maybe the American crash experience is a little bit different to the European crash experience and questioning what the benefits of ABS might be. We are in the process of actually reviewing that research. It is highly statistical in nature, so we are getting an expert to have a look at that for us. It will be very important for us to make sure we understand the overall benefits of ABS, because it is quite a costly technology if one was to mandate it. But equally, there is some research that tells us it could also be a very high-return technology to have on motorcycles. As we speak, our position is to encourage its use, and we are working with the commonwealth on whether or not there is a need to regulate in this space. If there is, it is most likely to be done through commonwealth law.

We have already spoken about off-road; I do not think I will go over any more of that at this time unless there are any questions.

**Mr TILLEY** — Just in relation to the protective clothing that you raised briefly in the presentation, are you able to explain why VicRoads and the TAC are particularly investigating the feasibility of laboratory testing on protective clothing to provide independent advice to riders? Specifically, what is the aim of the investigation, how is it being funded and why not simply educate riders on the European standards?

**Mr HOLGATE** — I am happy to respond. Certainly the focus of the work we are doing with the TAC is to look at the European standards. We are conscious of the fact that there are certainly a number of local suppliers and certain climatic conditions that mean that if effective clothing is too hot, it will have other effects. Part of the work we are doing now is really to understand how the European standards are applied and what implications they might have. If in the future we are going to promote the benefit of different levels of protection, we will almost certainly base it on the European standard. The research now is to get some local understanding about how it works.

**Mr TILLEY** — The European standard and climatic conditions we experience in Australia particularly during the higher incidence of those good days or riding conditions — —

**Mr HOLGATE** — Certainly it is a concern in Europe. In countries like Spain, where motorcycling is significant, they have similar conditions.

**Mr SHELTON** — The star rating approach overall has been shown to be very successful in other areas, so we are really trying to mirror the influence that can have on consumer choice.

**Mr TILLEY** — Just in relation to ABS, when you were talking about pursuing it through commonwealth agencies, are you specifically talking about ADRs and having those addressed through regulation?

**Mr SHELTON** — That is right. We are committed to a national vehicle standard-setting process. We sit at the table with many other stakeholders and with the commonwealth to inform that process. However, as you would be aware, where it believes it is appropriate and necessary Victoria has chosen to implement its own regulations to bring in new safety standards, most recently the ESC in cars. Our starting point is to work with the commonwealth to make sure we can bring them in as soon as possible.

**Mr TILLEY** — Just in relation to braking and motorcycle operation, it is very different to passenger vehicles through driver training and education in particular versus ABS. Do you have any comment or experience to date with the information you are capturing at this stage through rider training, particularly the application and use of braking? As I understand it, the dynamics are completely different, and in my own experience — —

**Mr SHELTON** — Listen, yes. I do not have data that tells me about how car drivers benefit from ABS and whether or not that learning translates into the motorcycle space. Generally we just look at motorcycle crashes and whether ABS is actually beneficial to them. In terms of road craft and motorcycle safety and training more generally I think it is important that we look at motorcycling and the benefits of training differently to what we might conclude when looking at car drivers and the benefit of training. Road craft would appear to be a much higher order contributor to safety performance than the ability to drive a car. That is why we are interested in training under the GLS.

**Mr HOLGATE** — In relation to that, certainly our preference is that whether it is a rider or a driver, they never actually use ABS, so whatever we can do to make sure that people are operating in that envelope is the first priority. ABS may have a potential for riders who put themselves beyond that.

**Mr SHELTON** — Murray, how are we going for time?

**The CHAIR** — David, peripheral conspicuity indicates that the next group of people have arrived and we will need to keep moving. We have a couple more minutes if there are any concluding comments you would like to make.

I might add for the benefit of the committee that we will be continuing our deliberations over the next six months, and should there be some emerging issues or evidence that come to mind on your part, feel free to liaise with the secretariat to bring it to our attention, certainly in the light of any emerging trends in other jurisdictions.

**Mr SHELTON** — I will make two closing comments, if I may. The first is in relation to speed. We believe that the data makes a compelling case for us to have a hard look at how we can improve the safety of motorcyclists by better managing speed. I think we need to cast that net quite broadly, and I encourage the committee to give that very broad consideration. Finally, I simply again encourage the committee to look at a wide scope of countermeasures in motorcycling. We will make ourselves available to help you in any way that we might in your deliberations. Thank you.

**The CHAIR** — David Shelton and James Holgate, thank you very much for your evidence today and for the work that you have put into not only your submission but also the prior work that has come before the committee, which has been highly commended by our research staff.

**Mr HOLGATE** — Thank you.

**Mr SHELTON** — Thanks very much.

**Witnesses withdrew.**