

TRANSCRIPT

ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE

Inquiry into motorcycle safety

Melbourne — 18 October 2011

Members

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Ms H. Black, general manager, Select Scootas Pty Ltd.

The CHAIR — Welcome to the afternoon proceedings of the Road Safety Committee public hearing in relation to its inquiry into motorcycle safety. I point out for the benefit of those people who are giving evidence that your comments will be recorded by Hansard and will have the benefit of parliamentary privilege. Statements made outside this room do not have that benefit. The Hansard transcript of your comments will be sent to you, and you are kindly asked to correct any typos and return them to the committee, whereupon they will be placed on the committee's website. Should there be any evidence you would like to give in camera we can arrange that as well.

The committee has been the beneficiary of 68 written submissions, and we are embarking upon the inquiry process with people giving viva voce evidence to expand upon a number of issues. We are grateful for the time that people have put into their contributions, and I am pleased to welcome Ms Hollie Black to the inquiry this afternoon. She will be representing the perspective of Select Scootas. Hollie, do you have a visual presentation?

Ms BLACK — I do.

The CHAIR — If you would like to take us through your material, following which we will ask a number of questions of you. Thank you.

Ms BLACK — By way of introduction, my name is Hollie Black, and I am the general manager of Select Scootas. We are a company that is based in Melbourne, and we have been importing and distributing scooters for the last 12 years. During this time I have held positions as the chair of the Australian Scooter Federation and seats on the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries and VMAC. As well, I have been involved in numerous state and federally based safety committees and in much discussion, federal and state, of motorcycle safety. My specialisation has always been scooters on Australian roads, and as such I have been heavily focused on the analysis of this form of transport throughout Australia and internationally.

Like so many cities, Melbourne faces a future of clogged roads, high-density living, stretched public transport systems, population growth and environmental concerns. Congestion is one of the biggest problems facing our beautiful city. As part of the transport mix, scooters can solve many of these infrastructure problems, as they do successfully in other cities around Australia and the world over.

Understanding that this inquiry is specific to motorcycle safety, every suggestion must have evidence-based research to back any changes as being safe decisions. Having held a seat at the VMAC table for six years, I would like to present the data I have been privileged enough to see, which I believe supports a change to legislation and an opportunity to find a solution to our congestion problems.

Overheads shown.

Ms BLACK — Firstly, a quick explanation of the difference between powered two-wheelers. There are motorcycles, scooters and mopeds. All are defined and held accountable by Australian design rules — that is, ADR. These are some of the strictest quality standards in the world. A motorcycle is generally a vehicle which has a manual gearbox and the rider is in a seated position whereby they wrap their legs around the vehicle and the power can vary from vehicle to vehicle. The scooter and the moped are very different. They both have automatic transmissions; the rider is in a seated position with their feet on a floor pad, and there is a windshield or front panel protecting the legs. The automatic transmission is extremely simple to operate: it is simply a throttle and brakes. A scooter is powered above 50cc, and in Australia there are some models that go up to 650cc. All are still automatic. The moped, to differentiate, is a 50cc vehicle speed limited to 50 kilometres an hour. Legally, by ADR, they cannot exceed this speed, which makes them a perfect city commuter.

So how does this help with clogged roads, high-density living, a stretched public transport system, population growth and environmental concerns? Some of the most crowded cities in the world can thank powered two-wheelers for reducing their congestion to manageable levels. Imagine if even half the cars in that picture were powered two-wheelers. If car drivers understood that for every scooter on the road there was one less car in front of them, I would imagine that they would become much more open to sharing the road. The beauty of scooters is that drivers seem to be more receptive to them. People view them to be without aggression and to be less invasive and risk-inclined. They are familiar with them from overseas trips, they wind down their windows at traffic lights to talk to us, and these attributes enable them to present a positive perception of powered two-wheelers to the community overall.

I know the guys have already spoken to this, but I will just run over it again, because a recent study by the *Age* — and I have a copy here for you — showed eight Melbourne commuters travelling to work one morning and the time of their journey. This is not the first time this experiment has been conducted in a capital city and the results are always the same — the scooter saved the most time. I will not go into all the details, because I know the guys did before, but what I will say is that whilst scootering has proved its practicality in helping to ease the stress on our roads, how does it fare in safety? Part of the problem seems to be an awareness of powered two-wheelers. ‘I didn’t see you’ seems to be a mantra for car drivers running into us. If there were more powered two-wheelers on the road, would awareness increase?

In four states in Australia you can ride a moped on a drivers licence, and in Western Australia they encourage 16-year-olds to get a moped licence prior to obtaining their car licence. Both Western Australia and Queensland have conducted in-depth safety research into motorcycles, scooters and mopeds in recent years. Results are slowly being released. However, both states have categorically stated that neither has seen any evidence-based research to support changing the moped on a drivers licence situation in either state. I would encourage members of this committee to please see my submission for greater detail into this research and the results. In New South Wales they have created an automatic licence. Most scooter riders have little desire to ever ride anything other than their automatic scooter and commute. They are therefore happy with a 160cc automatic licence, which requires less time, because they do not need instruction on riding a manual vehicle.

There are three pieces of evidence-based research that stand out. This is about mopeds in particular. Western Australia, Queensland and New Zealand are all areas that allow car drivers to ride a moped on a drivers licence. It is worth mentioning that whilst this research is a decade old, it stands up due to this being a very high growth period for scooters and mopeds. In Western Australia in 2000, when moped sales were beginning to boom, there were no fatalities and only two hospitalisations among 22 powered two-wheeler fatalities and 232 hospitalisations — that is, 0.9 per cent of powered two-wheeler hospitalisations were on mopeds. In Queensland between 2001 and 2005 there was a 468 per cent increase in scooter registrations, with 569 per cent growth in moped registrations. By comparison the percentage of accidents against registrations had dropped from 4.8 per cent to 3 per cent. Finally, like Australia, New Zealand had a huge growth in scooters between 2001 and 2006 of 570 per cent. However, they also had a drop in fatalities on mopeds. In 2000 there was one fatality, in 2001 there were two and there were none in 2002. Could this be because road users saw increased numbers on the road, they noticed them more and got better at sharing road space?

In 1993 the Victorian Road Safety Committee recommended that moped riders should not be subject to the training and licensing requirements imposed on other motorcycle riders and that a car driver’s learners permit would be a sufficient licensing requirement. This recommendation was never pursued.

Could we suggest that if there were more mopeds on the road, the safer they would be? All riders know — and we have spoken about this already this morning — that they are far better drivers once they have ridden a powered two-wheeler. If more car drivers rode mopeds, they would be better drivers and have greater perception and appreciation of other vehicles on the road. Additionally, if family members have relatives riding, this will also increase their awareness and consideration of other vehicles sharing our roads. We must also remember that a car driver who gets on a moped already has an understanding of road craft and law, and that riding a moped would simply be an extension of this already learned behaviour. Furthermore, if we encourage 16-year-olds to train and acquire a moped licence — that is, a vehicle speed-restricted to 50 kilometres an hour — this will lead to better drivers getting behind the wheel of more powerful vehicles in the future. They will have greater experience of the road and its laws as well as a far more increased understanding of and respect for all road users.

Having sat on VMAC for six years, I was a very vocal supporter of more evidence-based research to base decisions on, especially in the area of scooters. As an industry we had an inkling that scooters were getting different accident results on the road; however, we did not have that evidence until recently. These reports conducted with levy funding are still waiting to be publicly released by VicRoads. However, the results have been, as thought, very positive. Between 2001 and 2006 there were only 337 accidents. There was a huge increase in new registrations in Victoria in this five years, from 549 to 1887 units per year. There were nearly 5000 new scooters registered in this period. The research concluded that scooters made up a very small sample of crashes, and in terms of damage 38 per cent were only minor, with only 22 per cent requiring towing. This confirmed our belief that scooters were sustaining minimal damage. Of the riders in these 337 incidents — and this is interesting — 93 per cent were licensed in Victoria and 55 per cent had full licences, begging the

question: what were the circumstances of the accidents and how effective was the training and licensing process? Only 39 per cent were serious and less than 1 per cent were fatal — that is, of the 5000 new registrations during this period there were 0.06 per cent fatalities. Does this make them one of the safest forms of transport?

When comparing accidents of scooters, motorcycles and cars, there are large discrepancies. Cars are 400 times more likely to be in an accident than scooters. Obviously there is a huge gap between how many are on the road and the level of exposure. However, if the previous evidence is anything to go by, it is worth discussing the growth in registrations versus accidents. In scooters and mopeds the trend seemed to be reversed. Additionally, more Victorian research came to light showing the picture between 2003 and 2007, and this showed that the percentage of accidents in relation to the increase in registrations had fallen dramatically from 15.1 per cent to 5 per cent, which is similar to the results that the Honda guys were talking about.

It is worth remembering that Queensland, Western Australia and New Zealand data showed the same results — the more scooters on the road, the fewer accidents there are in comparison. We are still waiting on the completion of a second piece of research on scooters approved by VMAC and due for completion last month. I hope this research is made publicly available for review by industry and independent user groups. There does seem to be a big difference between not only riding a scooter but also the accident data — it appears scooters are safer.

Would training and licensing make a difference to the accident data in places where moped licensing is already happening? The Netherlands and Portugal recently undertook some research into this area, with more positive results. In the Netherlands they conducted compulsory training and testing and found that whilst there were some short-term benefits they were eroded over an 11-month period during follow-up testing — we are talking about mopeds only here. It also came to light that this testing showed no reduction in the number of crashes over subsequent years.

Portugal had similar results. In 1999 they implemented an 18-hour training program which had theory and practical components as well as a psychological intervention. In the following four years, contrary to popular belief, 52 per cent of those who undertook the 18 hours of training were involved in a crash whilst only 31 per cent of those who received no training were involved in a crash. Training and testing had not lessened the chance of being involved in an accident on a moped.

So what model is best? I believe there is an existing mix of best practice which will become a national model for moped and scooter licensing in Australia. Western Australia's giving 16-year-olds the opportunity to have mopeds available to them is one model that works and helps create better drivers for the future. This model could be adopted as part of school curriculum and give drivers the best understanding of road craft and law on a 50-kilometre-an-hour vehicle before they graduate to something much more powerful. Additionally, four states in Australia already allow car drivers use of a moped without additional training and testing. The risk of this has already been heavily investigated, and these jurisdictions have seen no evidence-based research to support changing any laws.

New South Wales has had in place an automatic licence for years, again with no need for change. Riders can train and test on an automatic scooter up to 160cc. Most drivers own scooters to commute and have no inclination to ride anything larger or move on to a motorcycle. This law change would help considerably towards lessening the cost of congestion to government, business and the community.

I would also like to take the opportunity to quickly address a couple of the other issues in my submission. Firstly, I believe the issue and understanding of the area of protective clothing is very important. The TAC presented data to VMAC earlier this year relating to in-depth interviews with 500 of their clients from 2008. These were people who had been in crashes and required care and compensation payments from the TAC. As you can see, the results showed a much higher than first expected uptake of protective clothing. Riders are being more cautious than people give them credit for. There are relatively few head injuries, due to high helmet adoption; however, body fractures were high at 58 per cent.

The report also explained that the wearing of protective clothing was beneficial for preventing open wounds, which represented the lowest number of injuries at 37 per cent, but interestingly there was no evidence that fractures were mitigated by the wearing of protective clothing. It seems that any decision regarding the

mandating of protective clothing would be unnecessary; however, I firmly believe in continuing to educate riders about good gear and the already existing CE standards from Europe. Not only would initiating an Australian-only standard be a waste of time and money, it would also substantially increase the cost of protective clothing in Australia, making it cost prohibitive for retailers to stock and consumers to buy protective clothing. Governments should continue good education messages but move away from any thinking towards the mandating of protective clothing.

Research was conducted in Queensland regarding moped riders' view of protective clothing. They had a healthy perception. I think it was Marcus who said that we all understand our position on the road. They had a healthy perception of the dangers they faced being a vulnerable road user and believed that they took ample precautions to avoid as much danger as possible. They were also aware that there is some evidence that the speed of the vehicle is closely associated with fracture injuries. To them 50-kilometre-an-hour mopeds were an extremely safe choice of transport.

Unfortunately a lot of people riding mopeds are doing so because of financial constraints. This is the only transport they can afford. As a result, this sometimes makes protective clothing cost prohibitive. Whilst this is unfortunate, governments could still be relaying a positive message to riders about making the best of what they can afford. It is also an opportunity to discuss the possibility of making safety equipment GST-free and therefore more available.

Research from Victoria showed that scooter riders enjoy riding more often in warmer months than in winter. As such, riders are often in very warm conditions and comfort plays a large part in concentration levels. On a 40-degree day you need to dress not only for protection but for comfort. To remain a good defensive rider you must have full concentration and not be in danger of overheating. It is a balance that only an individual can judge for themselves. Having said all that, I believe that Victorians, from the evidence shown just before, should be given credit for showing some common sense. It appears that the TAC research shows that is exactly what they are doing.

I would like to briefly mention the motorcycle graduated licensing system discussion paper. Government must audit the current system and have a clear understanding of what is wrong with the existing graduated licensing system before proceeding with any change. If there are changes, they must come from evidence-based research and have measurable outcomes. There are many proposals in the discussion paper regarding protective clothing, yet the evidence from government departments seems to suggest that riders are doing the right thing already. Does it need changing, or is this just a presumption that something is wrong?

I also find extremely upsetting the suggestions regarding supervision and restriction of learner riders. This is a discriminatory suggestion that will impact on people in our community for whom commuting on powered two-wheelers is their only financially viable option. The suggestion of \$13 763.10 of assisted rider training is ridiculous and seems to be more about discouraging people from taking up riding rather than embracing a form of transport that could help the community.

Additionally we must face a discussion regarding the safety levy. The safety levy discriminates against one road user group. However, if it is to stay, I believe that it should be administered by an independent government-appointed committee, and moneys raised from the levy need to be used solely for motorcycle safety initiatives. Having spent six years on VMAC and having a clear understanding regarding the lack of evidence-based research available, I believe that funds should immediately be directed towards more research. VMAC has been conducting some research in recent years, which is not yet available but is being finalised and reported on now. This will also present opportunities for focused expenditure of this very important tax.

There is one piece of research in particular that has yielded extremely positive results and was due for completion earlier this year. I am surprised it has not received any media coverage, because it is a good news story. Yellow Flag, Black Flag was conducted by Victoria Police and funded by the safety levy as a community education and enforcement project. The intermediate results consistently showed that the behaviour of motorcyclists was exceptional when compared to other road users. Why haven't we been able to publicise this yet and reinforce the benefits of powered two-wheelers and riders' good behaviour?

I return to where we began. The importance of evidence-based research is the single most important thing this committee can take from the inquiry. Any change must be able to be backed by credible research and be able to

stand up to public scrutiny and peer review. I believe that all research must be conducted independent of government stakeholders and that the process must be able to show measurable results. We must be accountable to change, to expenditure of the levy and to its positive impact on the community.

It is an acceptable conclusion that moped and scooter riders are perceived as part of the most vulnerable road user groups. Their high level of physical exposure alone lends itself to this conclusion. What needs to happen is that other road users need to be better trained to recognise and accept alternative forms of transport. mopeds and scooters are an excellent opportunity to begin this process. They lay the foundation for more experience in road craft and road laws and promote consideration and courtesy for the future. Additionally any change in legislation would help ease congestion, promote a smaller environmental footprint and create better educated drivers in the future. The opportunity to embrace powered two-wheelers as part of the future transport strategy for Victoria is invaluable, and this inquiry is giving those involved a great chance to participate.

The CHAIR — Thanks very much. Before we proceed to questions — and we appreciate your expertise and skill and also your academic work in the field — can you tell us a little about your business, Select Scootas, and what led you to become involved in a business of that nature?

Ms BLACK — It started 13 years ago. We were looking for a new business opportunity. My father had been an importer previously, and it is a family business. They had been on a farm for the previous eight years as primary producers. My mum woke up in the middle of the night and said, ‘What about lightweight motorcycles?’. We went down that path and realised it was not really the area we wanted to go to. Mum, bless her little cotton socks, in 1998, when she used to only play solitaire on her computer, stayed up one night, got onto the internet and found scooters. She suggested there might be an opportunity there because the next decade was going to have high congestion, high fuel prices, increased population and high-density living, which are all things we have seen happen.

The CHAIR — Did you learn to ride at a young age on a farm?

Ms BLACK — Yes. I have been riding since I was 10 years old. I have ridden on private property from 10 years old — ATVs and motorcycles. I have had my licence for the last 13 years. I have even done cross-country riding in Cambodia.

Mr PERERA — Some submissions have proposed different licensing training for scooters. Your submissions states that it is unnecessary. Can you explain why?

Ms BLACK — I believe it is unnecessary for there to be a separate licence on a moped, but I believe there is a case for having a separate licence on an automatic scooter. I agree with the submissions; I just go a step further with the moped side of things.

Mr PERERA — If there were a separate licence, it would be much easier for moped and scooter users to get it, wouldn't it?

Ms BLACK — Yes, because they would not need to learn how to use gearing. In New South Wales it is a slightly shorter course, but they still go through the same because they are on something that can do 110 and can go on a freeway. They still go through all the same road craft and positioning on the road — the same test. It is just a different level of learning because they are not required to learn gears, just like a car.

Mr PERERA — Wouldn't a separate licence be beneficial for scooter users?

Ms BLACK — Absolutely. I think it will encourage people onto the road on a very easy-to-use form of transport that, as we have seen from the *Age* article, is one of the most cost-efficient and fastest ways to get around a busy city.

Mr ELSBURY — You state that car drivers are sometimes more receptive to a moped or a scooter than they are to a motorcycle. Would you care to elaborate a little more on that?

Ms BLACK — I say that just from riding. I think anyone here who has ridden both vehicles can probably back me up.

The CHAIR — I do not think you would get a Harley Davidson rider who rides a moped, would you?

Ms BLACK — No, you would not. A motorcyclist quite often will have a full-face helmet, be dressed in leathers and be on a sports bike that is really loud, and car drivers have it in their head that it is an aggressive form of transport. Most often it is not; there could be anyone under that helmet. It is a wrong assumption, but it is an assumption nevertheless.

Mr ELSBURY — Is it perhaps because they cannot see the face?

Ms BLACK — No, I think it is to do with the vehicle. I think it is the seat position. When you sit on a scooter like you do on a chair, it is not very aggressive. I think there are more females. We have 18-year-olds to 78-year-olds.

Mr ELSBURY — That could be why they wind down their window to have a chat.

Ms BLACK — It could be, but I have seen them do it with guys as well. Quite often they say, 'Where did you get it from, and how fast does it go?', because they presume it totters along. It is just a different riding environment.

Mr LANGUILLER — Thank you for your submission and your very good suggestions. How do you suggest that drivers be made more aware of powered two-wheelers as vulnerable road users? I think you already know my position, because my recollection is that you were here for earlier submissions. If I may complement my question, we heard from the TAC yesterday in relation to some research it appears to have conducted where some 80 per cent of drivers pretty much said, 'We can't see riders'. I think you heard my contribution that, by extension, if you cannot see a rider then how can you see a child or a person and so on and so forth. I wonder whether you care to comment on that, given your extensive experience.

Ms BLACK — I think car drivers do not look. I do not think it is that they cannot see them; they do not look. Let us consider motorcycles. The perception of motorcycles is that they are fast enough to get out of trouble if they need to, so they will take care of themselves. People drive around in cars all the time thinking that car drivers will take care of themselves, let alone a motorcyclist or a bicycle rider — 'I'm here for me'. They live in their own little world. You can attest to this: if you put a car driver with a drivers licence on a moped — and statistically the evidence has shown that there is no change in any of the other jurisdictions in Australia or worldwide from a safety perspective or different laws — they will become a better driver and will start looking out for more scooters and mopeds on the road. It is like when you buy a red car — suddenly you notice all the other red cars on the road.

Mr LANGUILLER — Does that apply to the red safety gear?

Mr ELSBURY — No, blue, Telmo. I keep telling you.

Mr LANGUILLER — He is about to purchase a red one.

Ms BLACK — Talking about that — I had a red jacket on, I was on a red scooter and I still had a car driver behave aggressively towards me and wind down his window and say, 'I did not see you'. I said, 'I was in front of you. You overtook me. I was bright red'. They choose not to look out for anyone else outside of their own vehicle. The more people who experience two-wheelers, the more courteous the drivers on Victorian roads will become to bicycle riders, motorcyclists, moped riders, scooter riders, and pedestrians probably.

Mr LANGUILLER — I accept all of that, except the following. I am a driver and I drive a Ford Territory. I want to question just a little bit of that idea that drivers do not see riders. I concur generally with that, but I do believe there is somewhat of a blind spot. I have paid for it; I have had cops on my side who I did not see. The only reason why I question this is that we heard Honda today suggesting that perhaps more research needs to be done in order to improve that issue, to ensure that cars are designed better so you actually can see what is behind or what is on your side — —

Ms BLACK — One hundred per cent.

Mr LANGUILLER — I am not sure about this. It is only anecdotal experience, but I reckon that there is a bit of a blind spot that could potentially be improved by better design of the frame of a vehicle.

Ms BLACK — That is so big picture stuff. As an importer, you go to a manufacturer overseas and say you want to change the design of something — we are this much a part of the world. It is a great idea, but it is an idea that will evolve through safety measures by car companies over the years. That will not be fixed immediately because car designs really probably are not going to change over the next few years to fix these blind spots. As any rider will attest, they move around. When I am in my car there are no blind spots, because the first thing I do is I do that and then I do that and then I change lanes. I remove my blind spot completely. If people move in their car, they can remove that blind spot.

Mr LANGUILLER — Just to clarify, I accept that, and I do not want my query about that subject to undermine in any way whatsoever the notion that I certainly have that it is up to drivers to see riders and other people. I do not wish for anyone to get off the hook lightly on that; I just had a query about the technical and design aspects of it.

Ms BLACK — I would love that pillar to be, you know — —

Mr TILLEY — My question relates to crash reporting by VicRoads, the TAC and Victoria Police. We know that, according to currently existing legislation in Victoria, you must report a crash leading to injury, an offence or alternatively property damage. That leaves a whole range of other possibilities for why crashes may or may not or should or should not be reported to the police. Could you expand on your statement that improvements are required to allow decision-makers to make informed judgements?

Ms BLACK — Yes, I can give you a great example. VMAC finished up in April this year. Towards the end of last year the VMAC members who were still involved — and it was a core group of very active members — came together and with the help of one particular member of the group went and worked with the police and looked at the 38 fatalities. She created a spreadsheet. You would think that a spreadsheet for 38 fatalities would not be difficult to do. It outlined speed, what they were wearing, where it was — as much information as she could glean about those 38 fatalities as possible. That was the first time that piece of work had been done. For only — and I say ‘only’ with great respect — but for 38 fatalities, which is less than one a week, as a levy payer I would be quite happy for my levy money to go towards a full-time, professional accident researcher to come to a conclusive reason behind that accident. That is not being done. We sit blindly with these millions of dollars of levy money and make decisions about stuff without the evidence-based research to back it. The stuff that came out of the spreadsheet that she put together was quite extraordinary. We had to take it with a grain of salt because we had not had an expert put it together, but there were trends in there that we would have loved to have brought to the table for VMAC and could not.

Mr TILLEY — As a supplementary on that, while you were a member with VMAC, which is now being replaced, did those discussions include the coroners? Because each death in Victoria owing to the presence of a motor vehicle is a fatality and there is an inquest brief prepared. Did it incorporate any of the data or information coming from the Coroners Court?

Ms BLACK — Yes, it did where it was available.

Mr TILLEY — Was it well?

Ms BLACK — Yes, but the information and the gathering process of the information can sometimes be someone who is not very experienced in that area. That is the problem. It is not one person looking at it consistently, and there are always variables if X looks at it and then A looks at it and how they view what they see. If it is a policeman, he may not be experienced enough or have the education to gather as much data as might be available there.

Mr TILLEY — Sure.

Mr PERERA — Your submission states VicRoads often goes straight to the solution rather than defining the problem first. That is a strong statement. Can you elaborate on this?

Ms BLACK — I think the GLS is a prime example. They went straight to what they think is the core of the problem. When they first did the draft of the GLS — —

Mr LANGUILLER — Can you explain what that is for the purposes of the record, given that the public will be reading your submission?

Ms BLACK — The graduated licensing system. I have no problem with explaining that; I am not on MAG any more! When the graduated licensing system was first put through in draft form, VMAC members got an opportunity to go through it. I went through it and made, I think, a suggestion for wording on each page. Some of those changes were made and some were not. The way it is presented and the way things are worded sometimes when they come through either to government or through on submissions like the GLS or through research questions, they are sometimes worded in a way that an outcome is already thought of. The GLS is an example of that. I do not believe that the GLS has evidence-based research to support the submission.

Mr PERERA — There is a lack of understanding of the problem.

Ms BLACK — Yes. We currently have a graduated licensing system, but we already have a graduated process for motorcycling. Nobody has gone in and done in-depth research to find out what is broken. The groups this morning — the trainers themselves — were saying, ‘We get audited on administration’.

Mr PERERA — So in those documents they do not define the problem, is that what you are saying?

Ms BLACK — I think they are defined and suggested in ways that are already suggesting an outcome. I know that is a big statement.

Mr TILLEY — In relation to your submission, I will be the devil’s advocate, and I am not being a black cloud on mopeds and motor scooters. We discussed in your submission younger operators. We experience our youth today riding bicycles; not only youth but also mature adults. You had the Road Safety Act 1986 in front of you before. We see often in the experience of bicycle riders, and this is not raining on their parade either but the same act applies to them, often you see bicycle riders not wearing helmets, not stopping at orange or red lights, you see them riding across pedestrian crossings — all those penalties. Probably what I am leading to is behaviour and attitude. As another user group introducing mopeds and scooters — and taking away other countries’ experiences and keeping it unique to Australia’s attitudes and experiences — can you talk about your submission in relation to being able to access and use bus lanes, traffic light boxes and sharing bicycle lanes? In the state of Victoria we have some attitudinal and behavioural responses that we have to address. With a large uptake of mopeds and scooters, can you give a response in relation to that? As I said, it is certainly not to black cloud or anything — —

Ms BLACK — No, that is fine. It already exists and works in other states. That is the first thing you have to remember. The uptake of safety clothing and the sharing of bus lanes in Sydney work. There are already jurisdictions around Australia — not overseas — where all of those things work. The bus lanes are being trialled and tested at the moment; from memory that got VMAC approval last year, so we are trialling something like that. I am not suggesting mopeds be allowed on freeways, because they are not allowed on them in Queensland and it is not where they belong: mopeds belong in inner city living to help ease the congestion. We can park on the footpath in Melbourne. It will make a tremendous difference to the public.

I will address each one. In terms of bicycle lanes, a 50-kilometre-an-hour speed-restricted moped should be able to share bicycle lanes. I live adjacent to a bicycle lane and pull out past a bicycle lane every morning, and seeing the speed that they go past at, we would be just fine sharing. I am happy to trial giving way to bicycle riders, because there will be an uproar from Bicycle Victoria.

But you also have to understand the discrepancy between the government spending over \$100 million on bicycle lanes and motorcyclists and scooter riders being taxed to use the roads. Is there an opportunity there? The government recently took a lane out on St Kilda Road for public transport. I caught the tram in this morning, and I tell you: it was not a very pleasant experience. Could a lane be put aside for powered two-wheelers like it is for bicycles or public transport? Do you want to eliminate cars on St Kilda Road? There is an idea.

We have to look at the models that are working, and the models are available worldwide. The boxes at the front of traffic lights exist in most European and Asian cities, and they work. I go to Taiwan regularly, and I can tell you that every driver on the road is grateful for the scooters that zoom up the side of them, land at the box at the front of the traffic lights and take off ahead of them.

Mr LANGUILLER — Can you explain that further? I am not aware of that.

Ms BLACK — The traffic light box? It is a box in front of the traffic lights at the stop position and it is a box that in Taiwan is probably nearly the size of this room; the scooter riders are encouraged, when the lights go red, to come around the vehicles, accumulate at the front of all of the cars in this box, which is about two car positions back from the red lights, and when the lights change to green, the scooters take off and the car drivers follow. It is the safest place for the scooter riders to be. Every car driver understands that if every one of those scooter riders was in a car, they would never get to work.

Mr TILLEY — Hollie, one thing I left off there is that in your submission you are seeking to legalise filtering.

Ms BLACK — Yes.

Mr TILLEY — As a user group, in deference to higher capacity motorcycle groups, the issue of them versus us exists in regard to the road use, and once again it leads a bit to the subject of behaviour and attitude. By favouring one particular user group over another — —

Ms BLACK — Bicycles already are. The bicycle riders — this morning I watched them — all filter through the cars on St Kilda Road, come to the front and take off in front of the traffic, and they have the boxes there to do it. It is already being done on our roads.

Mr PERERA — But it is illegal.

Ms BLACK — There are bicycle boxes at the front of the traffic lights. So I am not actually suggesting anything new.

Mr TILLEY — No, I appreciate that.

Ms BLACK — I am just saying let us expand our thinking. At the same time what might come about from it is a greater understanding and courtesy on our roads of vulnerable road users as an entirety and using scooters and mopeds to do it.

Mr TILLEY — At this stage probably an unrelated issue, but if there is a massive, huge uptake, is addressing the congestion problems. You were talking about being able to park anywhere.

Ms BLACK — Yes.

Mr TILLEY — It is a separate issue from how we deal with it from the road safety side.

Ms BLACK — I can address it. I sit on the City of Melbourne motorcycle group, and it has done research twice in the last four years to find out whether there was one motorcycle that was parked incorrectly and causing a problem in the inner city grid, and there was one in two submissions in three or four years. Motorcycle parking in the city of Melbourne is not a problem. The City of Melbourne has put in extra motorcycle places. They talked to industry about it, which was terrific. They looked at where a car cannot have another car park in front of it because of a corner: there is actually a triangular area available that does not obscure your view if you are in the other car, so they use that spot; now you can park a motorcycle there. There are so many places where motorcycles and scooters will fit that other vehicles will not.

The CHAIR — Hollie, thank you very much for your time and your evidence. You will get a copy of the Hansard transcript; amend the typos and get them back to us for lodgement on our website. We appreciate your time. Thank you.

Ms BLACK — Thanks.

Witness withdrew.