

TRANSCRIPT

ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE

Inquiry into motorcycle safety

Melbourne — 19 October 2011

Members

Mr A. Elsbury

Mr T. Languiller

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Witnesses

Mr M. Case, acting general manager, public policy, and
Ms M. Congiu, manager, road user behaviour, RACV.

The CHAIR — On behalf of the Victorian parliamentary Road Safety Committee, I welcome to this afternoon's hearings representatives of the RACV, Mr Michael Case and Ms Melinda Congiu. Thank you for attending. By way of preamble, you will have the benefit of parliamentary privilege for this afternoon's hearings. If you wish to give evidence in camera, you are welcome to do so, although I consider that unlikely at the moment. You will get a copy of your Hansard transcript of the hearing that is being recorded. It will be sent to you for you to correct any typos and then get the transcript back to our staff, whereupon it is envisaged that it will be placed on the Web as part of our committee working papers and documents. I invite you to speak to your submission, following which we will put some questions to you. So it is over to you, Michael and Melinda.

Ms CONGIU — I thought that I would work through the submission that we prepared and submitted to the parliamentary inquiry. I will just go through the introduction as an overview of RACV. We represent nearly 2 million members and this translates into an average of a member being in three out of every four households across Victoria. RACV has approximately 2000 members who ride motorcycles, and a total of 2000 subscriptions for emergency roadside assistance for motorcycles.

We then went on in our submission to give an overview of what we saw as issues affecting motorcycle safety in Victoria. Motorcyclists are at much higher risk than drivers of other vehicles, largely due to the fact that they do not have the same level of protection and stability that car occupants have and when they are in an accident they bear the full brunt of that collision and suffer more serious injuries. It is well established that they have been overrepresented in Victorian crash statistics. There does seem to be an uptake of motorcycling in Victoria, so it is unlikely that this will change in the future.

We structured our submission in relation to the terms of reference, so I will just go through those now. The first one spoke about crash types, including on-road and off-road motorcycling and what breakdown we could provide. We kept it fairly broad when we gave this data, as we were relying on other people's data to provide this information.

What we found is that riders are 38 times more likely to be seriously injured than motorists and they are overrepresented in the crash stats. Over the years in Victoria we have had a gradual reduction in road fatalities, but this has not had such a strong representation from motorcycling. Motorcycle fatalities have typically represented about 13 to 14 per cent of the road toll. In 2010 they represented 17 per cent of the road toll. This seems to be consistent in 2011, with them representing 18 per cent in the first six months of 2011. This is of particular concern as motorcycles represent only 4 per cent of registered vehicles in Victoria, and less than 1 per cent of vehicle kilometres travelled. RACV is concerned that motorcycle fatalities have remained overrepresented in the road toll and thinks that further efforts by the Victorian government are warranted to try to reduce these numbers.

Moving on to section 3.2, the changing face of motorcycling, we found that the uptake of motorcycling has increased in recent years. There have been increases in both sales and registration. This translates into an increase in the risk profile of travel overall and this has road safety implications. The use of motorcycling for commuting purposes appears to be growing, with motorcycles seeming to be cheaper to run, cheaper to park, and more flexible in avoiding traffic congestion. These all seem likely to be contributing to the appeal of motorcycling. While it is recognised that motorcyclists are part of the road-user system, they are more vulnerable than motorists and have a much greater risk of injury. As such, road safety efforts need to focus on improving the safety of motorcycling.

Moving on to section 3.3, the attitudes of riders to safety and risk taking, including drugs, alcohol, travelling at inappropriate speeds, use of protective clothing and fatigue, I will preface this by saying that most of the response relies on the *TAC Motorcycle Tracker* report from 2010. They surveyed 1755 motorcyclists on a range of topics. Our comments on this section rely heavily on this research.

For drugs and alcohol, the *TAC Motorcycle Tracker* report showed that motorcyclists generally believe there is a high crash risk for riding when they are affected by illegal drugs, and very few report riding under the influence. One thing that we thought was worth noting was that, compared to metropolitan motorcyclists, higher proportions of regional and off-road motorcyclists believe there is a low risk of being caught riding over the legal BAC limit. This may be because there is a perception that enforcement efforts in regional areas are less frequent than in metropolitan areas.

In relation to speed, it does seem that the attitudes of motorcyclists towards speeding is a slight concern, as a higher proportion of motorcyclists than motorists report that they will exceed the speed limit if they think they will not get caught: 26 per cent versus 17 per cent. Considering speed is considered a factor in a large proportion — 30 per cent — of all fatal crashes, it is a concern that 26 per cent would speed if they thought they would not be caught.

Moving on to protective clothing, the use of protective clothing by motorcyclists does seem to vary, depending on the item of protective clothing. Wearing a jacket or gloves at all times seems to be relatively common, but wearing boots or pants is slightly less common. The TAC report suggests that there are some main reasons for not owning protective clothing, such as expense, the belief that it is not needed, riding for only a short trip, that it is too hot or it is inconvenient. So a few reasons are listed.

These findings are concerning, because the injury reduction potential of motorcycle protective clothing has been well established over the years. Liz de Rome has done quite a bit of work in this area and has found that motorcyclists are significantly less likely to be admitted to hospital if they are wearing protective clothing such as motorcycle jackets, pants or gloves. We comment on protective clothing further on in our submission.

To summarise section 3.3, we want to point out that the important thing to note is that there is not a strong relationship between attitudes and behaviour, and road safety efforts should focus on changing behaviour, not simply attitudes. Two recommendations come out of this section. Firstly, enforcement efforts in regional areas should be strengthened to decrease the perception that there is a low risk of being detected when riding over the legal BAC level. Secondly, measures to increase the usage of protective clothing among riders are warranted to reduce their injury risk.

Coming to section 3.4, riders' and drivers' attitudes to each other, there have been a number of studies that have examined the attitudes of drivers towards motorcyclists. They have found some interesting results. They have found that generally dual drivers — those who drive cars and ride motorcycles — have the most positive attitudes towards motorcyclists, and car drivers with less experience have more negative attitudes towards motorcyclists. It is important to note that we did not identify any studies that examined riders' attitudes towards drivers. Following on from the previous section, while the findings are interesting, strategies that focus on improving rider and driver attitude is not seen as an effective road safety initiative. There is a low causal relationship between attitude and behaviour, including those relating to driving. As such, RACV will not support any intervention strategies that only target attitudes. It is unlikely that they would change on-road behaviour. While they might have other positive outcomes, it is unlikely they would have any road safety benefits, unless they are accompanied by other initiatives. Our recommendation under this term of reference is that in the absence of evidence to the contrary, efforts to improve the attitudes of riders and drivers to each other are not considered a priority as it is unlikely to be effective in improving the road safety of motorcyclists or other road users.

Section 3.5 is about responsibilities for improving the safety of off-road riders. Off-road motorcycling has a much lower fatality rate than on-road motorcycling, but the injury rates for on and off-road motorcycling is similar. This is despite data that reveals that on-road motorcycling is about 80 per cent of riding time and off-road data is only about 20 per cent of riding time. While the fatality rate for off-road riders is relatively low compared to on-road, the injury rate is of concern and more needs to be done to address this issue. We believe this would require coordination between Victorian government departments and local governments to develop a strategy that addresses the safety of off-road riders. We draw the committee's attention to a document that was put together by the Queensland government, by the sport and recreation services division of its Department of Communities, which has developed an off-road motorcycling management strategy that details how they will work together to better manage off-road motorcycling. We believe this provides a good example of an approach that could be modelled by the Victorian government. Our recommendation is that the Victorian government should establish and implement a statewide strategy for a coordinated and accountable whole-of-government approach to the management and safety of off-road motorcycle riding in Victoria.

Section 3.6 is about the efficiency and effectiveness of the accredited provider scheme. In Victoria motorcycle licence tests are administered by VicRoads' accredited providers, and they also provide voluntary training courses to help riders prepare for their licence tests. In a report done by MUARC in 2005, evidence found that there was variation between accredited providers in the training course. The report also raised concerns about whether there is consistency across the different providers in administering the licensing tests. Our

recommendation from this is that regular audits of the licence-testing scheme should be conducted to reduce any inconsistency across the providers.

Section 3.7 talks about countermeasures. We looked at some behavioural change. We are not aware of any behavioural change program that has been evaluated and shown to be effective in reducing the crash risks of motorcycling. So what we have looked at in this section is experience through practice and the evidence around post-licence rider training. We did prepare a submission on the GLS discussion paper that was released by VicRoads in 2010. From this we talked about the number of hours of experience that learner riders should have, as we are concerned that there is a very high number of motorcycle crashes that occur during the learner phase. We support a requirement for learner riders to obtain a minimum of 25 hours on-road riding experience and that this requirement should be supervised by a qualified instructor or a trained, fully licensed motorcyclist. We also thought there should be a second phase to the learner period where another 25 hours is required, and this could be supervised or unsupervised. We thought that this was the most appropriate option in the GLS discussion paper that was released last year and that the requirement for all learner riders to obtain a minimum level of riding experience and ensure that they have the right level of practical skills to minimise their crash risk while still being an achievable level to obtain.

I move on to post-licence rider training. There is a commonly held belief that post-licence driver training courses will improve driving skills and reduce crash risks, but there is little evidence to support this. In fact this type of training can actually lead to an increase in confidence and optimum bias, which is the perception that the driver is more skilful than they actually are, and can result in an increased crash risk for novice drivers. There is no evidence of a reduced crash risk for experienced drivers attending advanced or defensive driving courses, and overall the current evidence on motorcycle rider training as an effective road safety countermeasure does not support the idea that it is being effective either. It is consistent with the effectiveness of formal driver education as well.

Our recommendations from this are that there should be two phases to the learner period with a requirement that 25 hours of supervised on-road riding is completed prior to graduating to the second phase and that consideration should be given to mandating a further 25 hours in the second phase of the learning period, which could be supervised or unsupervised. Our other recommendation is that consideration should only be given to behaviour change programs if there is substantial evidence of the effectiveness of these programs. RACV does not support any post-licence rider training as it is extremely unlikely that any training program will reduce crash risk and have a positive road safety benefit.

Regarding the design and technology of motorcycles, RACV is supportive of technology that improves the safety of motorcycles and motorcycling. Research has found that motorcycles with anti-lock braking systems, also known as ABS, do have the potential to reduce fatal motorcycle crashes compared to motorcycles without ABS. We also note that there is some development going on in emerging technologies such as motorcycle airbags and airbag suits for motorcyclists, which has potential to increase motorcycling safety in the future. We are supportive of encouraging the uptake of ABS on motorcycles, but we would like to see more research on its effectiveness in reducing the road toll and crash risk. We also believe that mandating ABS technology should only be considered if there is strong research in support of its effectiveness and if there are investigations into how this would apply to different categories of motorcycles.

As I mentioned earlier, the injury reduction potential of motorcycle protective clothing has been quite well established over the years, and the increased use of protective clothing has the potential to greatly decrease the injury risk of motorcycles. In our submission to the discussion paper on graduated licensing last year we supported a requirement for all learner and intermediate motorcyclists to wear protective clothing while riding. This was because novice riders do have a high crash risk, and a requirement for them to wear protective clothing will reduce their injury risk. We also believe that requiring learner and intermediate riders to wear protective clothing may encourage good rider habits and may encourage the continued wearing of protective clothing once they are fully licensed.

In addition to this it is worth noting that the Australian manufacturers and importers of protective clothing are not subject to any mandatory standard for protective clothing other than that for helmets, so a system for riders to compare the safety of protective clothing for other items of motorcycle protective gear may help riders choose the safest item of protective clothing and may also help raise the profile of the importance of protective clothing. An example might be a star rating system for protective clothing. A system like this could be based on

the safety performance, weather protection and ergonomic performance of the gear. Our recommendations in relation to this are:

As part of the Victorian government's consideration of a graduated licensing system (GLS) a requirement for all learner and novice riders to wear protective clothing should be introduced.

Better consumer information for protective clothing developed in collaboration with industry should be encouraged to provide consumers with information to assist in purchasing the safest protective clothing possible.

The CHAIR — Melinda, in terms of time we only have until 1.45 p.m., and I would like to be able to get my colleagues on the record asking a number of questions. We have had a copy of your submission, and I was just wondering if you could talk us through a bit more quickly and highlight some of the key issues. I appreciate the thoroughness with which your submission has been prepared, but I also note the time now is designed to include some interaction between the committee members and yourselves as the composers of the report.

Ms CONGIU — Definitely. Section 3.8 in our submission focuses on new initiatives to reduce motorcycle crashes and injuries and comments on road infrastructure. We note that considerable work has been done under the European road assessment program, and there is a report that we would like to draw your attention to on improving road infrastructure for motorcyclists. That report is titled *Barriers to Change — Designing Safe Roads for Motorcyclists* and can be found on the iRAP website.

The CHAIR — I will just check that we have access to that.

Ms CONGIU — It is *Barriers to Change*. I have a hard copy with me.

The CHAIR — Good, thank you.

Ms CONGIU — The other new initiative we commented on is graduated licensing and we would like to see this implemented for motorcyclists. Section 3.9 is the appropriateness of the TAC premium for motorcyclists. The purpose of the TAC premium is to fund the no-fault compensation scheme, but there is some disparity in pricing between motorcyclists and motorists. That disparity is not one that is reflective of the road safety risks that motorcyclists face or their burden on the TAC compensation scheme and that motorists should not have to cross-subsidise motorcyclists.

The next point is the effectiveness of the motorcycle safety levy in improving road rider safety. The introduction of the levy was in 2002. We believe it is a genuine attempt to address an important safety issue for motorcycle and scooter riders. The funds go directly into projects that improve the safety of riders. One of the most important initiatives funded by the levy has been the road improvements at over 119 black spot locations. We strongly support the motorcycle black spot program and believe it has improved rider safety by reducing the number of motorcycle casualties at those locations. We believe the motorcycle safety levy should continue to operate in Victoria with the funds directed to targeted safety initiatives, engineering and technology, education and training, enhanced data collection and analysis, and enforcement.

The next point is the way government can work with non-government stakeholders to achieve motorcycle safety outcomes. RACV believes the most successful road safety interventions are those that have been developed on the best available evidence and in consultation with the relevant stakeholders and that the Victorian model of road safety reflects this approach. We believe it should continue. RACV is part of the Victorian government's motorcycle advisory group which aims to provide the state government with strategic advice on issues relating to motorcycling in Victoria. The group has recently been restructured to ensure the quality and efficiency of advice on motorcycling issues. We believe it is a key conduit between the roads and the peak bodies reporting to community and/or stakeholder groups. That is an overview of our submission.

The CHAIR — Thank you very much. Michael, have you any comments to make at the moment?

Mr CASE — No, I have nothing to add.

The CHAIR — Thank you for a very thorough and provocative submission in the sense of taking definitive positions on a range of issues which will enable us to consider and balance competing viewpoints. I might start by noting that in your submission you say the strategies that focus solely on improving rider and driver attitudes are not an effective road safety initiative. Can you elaborate on this statement?

Ms CONGIU — Yes. It goes broader than just driver behaviour, but there is a poor causal relationship between attitudes and behaviours. You can change someone's attitude but that does not necessarily translate to behaviour change. So strategies that are effective do more than just change attitudes; they have measures to also change behaviour. That could be such things as enforcement and things that target the actual behaviour rather than the attitude. You could have an attitude such as, 'I do not think it is safe to speed', but still speed.

The CHAIR — Just on that too, what is your background? You have acquired training?

Ms CONGIU — Yes, I have a psychology background. I have been at RACV for four years and prior to that I worked at the Monash University Accident Research Centre.

The CHAIR — So you are qualified to comment on the difference between attitude and behaviour?

Ms CONGIU — Yes.

Mr LANGUILLER — Incidentally, Chair, the RACV is the insurer of my home, car and various other things.

Mr ELSBURY — So you have called Jason?

Mr LANGUILLER — Having said that, can I quickly go through — —

The CHAIR — They know your points, Mr Languiller.

Mr LANGUILLER — Increasingly as I hear submissions and we receive evidence in this inquiry I am more and more interested in looking at systemic issues and institutional things in terms of culture, behaviour and/or prejudice in relation to the inquiry and motorcyclists. With that in mind, first of all can I ask whether any of you ride a bike?

Ms CONGIU — No.

Mr LANGUILLER — I note that the RACV has 16 directors, with a managing director and 15 non-executive directors. Nine are voted onto the board by ordinary club members and six by service members. Are there any directors on the RACV board who are directly associated with or have any experience or background with motorcycling, or who are licensed motorcyclists that you are aware of?

Mr CASE — Not to my — —

Mr LANGUILLER — Can you take that on notice and perhaps come back to us?

Mr CASE — Not to my knowledge, but I am prepared to take that on notice.

Ms CONGIU — Not to my knowledge either.

Mr LANGUILLER — Thank you very much for your strong submission. I note that you are very strong on evidence, research and data. The committee has received evidence from VicRoads, the Department of Health, TAC and various other agencies. Are you confident that the data that they have actually serves the purposes in terms of the services that you provide and are you confident in terms of the data that they provide? Quite honestly I have found inconsistencies in terms of the data provided by the TAC, VicRoads, the Department of Health, the Alfred hospital and so on. I get the impression — I am being frank with you and giving you the benefit of my presumption here — that they are not necessarily communicating with each other and in fact that, given the strength of your submission in relation to basing your recommendations on data, perhaps the transparency of that data is not necessarily at the level it should be in Victoria, given the very good work that these agencies do.

Ms CONGIU — Are you talking about crash data specifically?

Mr LANGUILLER — All sorts of data. Off-road issues, for example.

Ms CONGIU — Okay.

Mr LANGUILLER — And the breakdown and the variables that can apply to motorcyclists and so on.

Ms CONGIU — There can always be improvements in crash data. It is collected in different manners when it is a different type of crash. There is police reported data, there is hospital data and then there is fatality data, so it is always reported slightly differently and there probably could be improvements made to that because there can always be improvements made. The better data you have, the better understanding you have of the problems and the risks and you can then make better recommendations and efforts to reduce those risks.

Mr LANGUILLER — In your submission you say, ‘We do not support post-licence rider training’. Why not and what evidence or data supports that?

Ms CONGIU — We have commissioned a fair bit of work into post-licence driver training so that extends on that. I do have a copy of an RACV report here that I can leave for the committee. It is a report that was updated in 2011 so it does have current research in there. There is quite strong evidence that post-licence driver training does not reduce crash risk. In fact for novice drivers it actually increases crash risk. It seems to be that the reason for that is this overconfidence that once you do further training your confidence level does not match your skill level and optimism bias. It is that you feel very confident in your skills and that is not necessarily matched by the level of experience that you have or your ability to recognise a hazard and attend to it.

There is also some research that motorcycle rider training has the same lack of effectiveness in training. That is where our comments come from. The report is quite strong in its recommendations that post-licence driver training is not effective. It is consistent across all the research that has been done over the years. That report was first done in 2001, I think it was, and then updated in 2007 and 2011. The research has been consistent over that time that post-licence driver training does not reduce crash risk. It would be nice to think that it did, but the research does not support that.

Mr LANGUILLER — I understand that you are a member of the Motorcycle Advisory Group. How often do you meet and do you think it is adequate?

Ms CONGIU — It is another colleague of ours who is a member of that group. I am not sure if you know how often it meets, Michael?

Mr CASE — No.

Ms CONGIU — Ms Ellis, who is on it, advises me that it is four times a year.

Mr TILLEY — Just continuing on from my colleague about the RACV itself. You may not be able to answer this question but certainly can take it on notice. On a commercial basis what percentage of motorcycles form part of the business case of the RACV as far as representation is concerned?

Ms CONGIU — We have some numbers in the submission. It is about 2000 that subscribe to emergency roadside assistance for motorcycling. That is a separate product. We are able to identify a further 2000 members who have some relationship with RACV. There may be more members who have motorcycles, but it is not possible to identify them in this data if they do not have a specific motorcycling product with us.

Mr TILLEY — Sure. Where I am leading is to continue on from Telmo in relation to representation on the newly rebadged Motorcycle Advisory Group. It is the committee’s understanding that they have met only once since being rebadged under a new name. In giving advice to VicRoads and to the minister, there is some difficulty with advising MAG on motorcycling because it is my understanding, from the submissions and the evidence that the committee has been able to glean, that there is very limited motorcycle representation on the Motorcycle Advisory Group, user groups or other bodies. I take a lot of notice because you did advise us that you have another colleague — —

Ms CONGIU — It is another colleague who sits on that group; my understanding is that they are represented, but I am not sure how strongly that is.

Mr TILLEY — I will move onto vehicles themselves and how they relate to the compatibility of motorcycles and other motor vehicles. We have seen significant changes with vehicle design, and some of the things that we have heard over the last three days are about the thickened A, B and C pillars on motor vehicles

and about motor vehicle design in regard to motorcycle safety. Have these improvements in car safety made it harder for operators of motor vehicles to see motorcyclists?

Mr CASE — The short answer is yes. Certainly some newly designed vehicles do have thicker pillars, particularly the A pillar at the front of the vehicle, adjacent to the windscreen. That has the effect of improving the strength of the body of the motor vehicle in a rollover-type of collision, but it then has a compromised effect on visibility out of the front corner of the vehicle in either direction. That is an issue based on our observation of these vehicles during road testing, but we also recognise that there are compromises in the development of the safety performance of vehicles and the effect on other road users.

Mr TILLEY — It is good to see you again, Michael. Given the work you did with the electronic stability control and certainly the work you have done with the RACV and the motoring public, it is good to see you again.

I have one last question, and it relates to training. We are just looking for some suggestions in relation to novice riders crashing during the learner stage. Do you have any ideas that might be able to rectify this?

Ms CONGIU — I guess our submission to the GLS did draw on the driving experience for novice drivers, because there does not seem to be a lot of research evidence for riders specifically around that.

If you relate to the driving experience, it does seem that having a graduated approach to licensing is the most effective approach to take. Experience seems to be the key, not training per se; giving someone the experience to build up their skills as well as exposing them all the experiences they would encounter on the road seems to be the best strategy to prepare them for solo driving, and it seems a logical step that that would also relate to riding. Experience could be gained through increasing some on-road riding experience under some sort of supervision or restricted phase.

Part of the GLS for drivers involves introducing them to a road in a very restricted sense — that is, having more restrictions on the first phase of Ps and then reducing that for the second phase of Ps before they graduate to a full licence. That seems to have the most promise in Victoria for reducing crash risk at the moment — a gradual approach of increasing more risk to them as they gain more experience. A similar approach could be taken to motorcycle riding — having on-road riding experience as part of the learner phase and then maybe having some heavy restrictions in the novice-rider phase until that experience builds and they have got the skills and experience up to be a safer rider.

Mr ELSBURY — My question is more about your organisation. I am just wondering what proportion the 2000 motorcycle members you have comprise in terms of your total membership pool.

Ms CONGIU — We have 2 million members.

Mr ELSBURY — Whoa!

Mr CASE — In anticipation of that question I have worked out the percentage.

Mr ELSBURY — Did you see that? Bang!

Mr CASE — It is 0.1 per cent.

Mr ELSBURY — Okay.

The CHAIR — You are about to give more commentary.

Mr CASE — No, I was just commenting on what that translated into as a percentage. It is less than 1 per cent.

Ms CONGIU — I did mention earlier that we cannot identify members who might also have a motorcycle as that motorcycle might not be insured or have roadside assistance with us. So we could have members who have vehicle insurance or home insurance or some product with us, but their motorcycle might not be a product with us. It seems likely, considering that we have 2 million members, that that would be the case.

The CHAIR — Some of your members drive older style cars I think, don't they?

Mr CASE — They do.

Mr PERERA — Most of the members?

Mr ELSBURY — Not necessarily vintage but certainly older. If you do not support motorists cross-subsidising motorcyclists, what would you propose instead of the TAC premium?

Ms CONGIU — I do not think we are proposing something in place of the TAC premium. I guess it is about just having something that is reflective of the motorcyclist's risk and the burden on the TAC premium. It is about having something that is more representative of the burden they place on that scheme. Some of the motorcyclist premiums are much cheaper than the motorist premiums, and some are a little bit more. We would like to see the premium being more reflective of what the risk is — something that seems a little bit more fair and comparable.

Mr ELSBURY — In your answer earlier on about how many members you have — being 2 million, with 2000 being motorcyclists that we can identify — you have acknowledged that many riders are also motorists so therefore they are paying the TAC levies in both instances. Why would a further impact of the motorcycle levy be justified?

Ms CONGIU — Sorry, could you ask that again?

Mr ELSBURY — Sorry, I just came up with that mostly in my head. There is scribble here, but what it has got to do with what came out of my mouth is a totally separate thing. With regard to the fact that many riders are also motorists and they are paying the TAC levy in both instances, why would the further impost of a motorcycle levy be justified?

Mr LANGUILLER — I know it is unusual, but sometimes politicians cannot make sense.

Ms CONGIU — I am just not sure whether you are talking about the levy or the TAC premium or both.

Mr ELSBURY — Both. Basically you have two pools of money; you have a \$50 levy that gets paid by motorcyclists to be on the road, plus they are paying their TAC premiums as well because they are registering their vehicles.

Ms CONGIU — With the TAC premium, the funds are separate to the levy. The levy goes into programs to improve motorcycle safety, whereas the TAC premium is to fund the no-fault compensation scheme. So I see them as separate things. If you have more than one vehicle, you pay more than one TAC premium. My answer to that is that that it is fair; if you have more than one vehicle of any kind, then you need to pay the TAC premium for that vehicle, whatever it is.

Mr ELSBURY — Just as a bit of background, I have extensive experience on motorcycles. I have had a learners permit for 10 days, and in that time I received six hours of training in total. Now I am let loose on the roads — God help anyone who gets in my way! You have also said that you do not support post-licensing training going on once you have become a rider.

Ms CONGIU — Yes.

Mr ELSBURY — What about those who return to riding after having lapsed being a rider for a considerable amount of time — say, five or ten years?

Ms CONGIU — That is probably a slightly different situation. There are situations where training is necessary. To learn the basic skills and to learn how to handle a motorbike you definitely need training, and a returning rider probably needs a refresher on those skills. When I talk about the effectiveness of training for post-licence riders, it is more about people who have not had the riding experience in the past and it does not reduce the crash risk. My comments were in the context of that. For riders who are returning after some time, they would need to refresh their skills. The evidence in the driving sense is that it is more about experience rather than a training course. So I think for riders who are returning it would probably be that they need to gain

that experience, but a training course in that instance seems reasonable to refresh their skills that may have got a little bit rusty over time.

Mr ELSBURY — One last question: in relation to the safety equipment, you have said that you are quite happy for learners and probationary riders to have increased emphasis on their equipment. Given that the majority of equipment that I have had exposure to is black, gun metal grey, charcoal or grey, with slight red flashes, can you see any — —

Mr PERERA — Or pink.

Mr ELSBURY — Or pink. But given the predominance of darker colours, would the RACV support, as a way of making motorcyclists more visible on the roads, some sort of fluorescence or reflective component?

Ms CONGIU — We would need to see research evidence supporting that, but it does seem like a reasonable suggestion. It was something that was raised in the GLS discussion paper that VicRoads put out last year about having maybe a high-visibility vest for learners and novice riders, and perhaps something along those lines could be considered. It does seem reasonable to be able to have some sort of reflective tape or bright colours to be able to see motorcyclists a bit more clearly. I am not aware of what the evidence is around that and whether that does increase crash risk, so it would be interesting to see what the research is to support that.

Mr PERERA — Thank you very much for your presentation. I like the Jason advertisements, which we know offer a lot of good for you.

Mr ELSBURY — You are about the only person on the planet, but anyway.

Mr PERERA — On the advertisement, Jason goes past a big Harley Davidson and gets onto a scooter, so is it just a coincidence or is it designed to say that scooters are better transport?

Ms CONGIU — I think it is just a coincidence.

Mr ELSBURY — Blame the advertising company, mate.

Mr PERERA — What specific outcomes would you like to see from this committee's inquiry?

Ms CONGIU — I think we would like to see the GLS be developed and implemented in some form. There does seem to be an increased crash risk for learner and novice riders, and having some increase in riding experience before they are on the road and vulnerable out there with all the other vehicles seems like a way to make some really significant reductions in road trauma. Working on a GLS and implementing that in Victoria seems to be a priority, and improvements in enhancing and promoting protective clothing would be another area that would see gains in injury reduction. There does seem to be a strong amount of evidence saying that protective clothing can reduce the injury risks greatly, so I think encouraging riders to wear that or making it a requirement would have a big impact on injury. I think that is all I have as the two big issues.

Mr TILLEY — I just want to momentarily go back to the motorcycle safety levy. You may or may not be able to — you can take it on notice — but if you are able to, and you can even get back to the committee, are you aware of any projects that have been specifically funded that you think may have improved motorcycle safety?

Ms CONGIU — The black spot program has been funded through the motorcycle safety levy, and that has been evaluated and shown to reduce casualty crashes quite significantly. There was a MUARC report that evaluated the black spot program for motorcyclists, and it showed fairly significant reduction in crashes.

Mr LANGUILLER — There is an exclusive one for motorcycles, from recollection.

Ms CONGIU — As far as I am aware, yes, it was a motorcycle black spot program.

Mr TILLEY — So road infrastructure generally that cars use as well?

Ms CONGIU — Yes, and the report did say that there was improvement in motorcycle crashes but that it also flowed on to other vehicles as well. It was not just improvement in motorcycle crashes.

Mr TILLEY — This would be something that the RACV advocates and supports?

Ms CONGIU — Yes, if it is shown to be effective, we are quite supportive of it.

The CHAIR — Thank you very much for your time and your evidence before the committee. Should there be any other issues that you may wish to present to us, feel free to liaise with Kylie and John from our secretariat.

Ms CONGIU — Thank you very much.

Mr CASE — We would very much like to thank you for the opportunity to make this presentation to the committee.

Witnesses withdrew.