

TRANSCRIPT

ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE

Inquiry into motorcycle safety

Ballarat — 16 November 2011

Members

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Mr T. Languiller

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Witness

Mr D. Hyatt, Wendouree.

The CHAIR — As we resume proceedings I would like to acknowledge the attendance of a number of people in the room, including some members of the Ulysses motorcycle club, who will be giving evidence later this afternoon, and Mr Damien Codognotto, who has taken the trouble to travel from Melbourne to Ballarat, I and note also that he was at the hearing yesterday in Geelong.

I will ask our next witness to introduce himself with full name and address in a moment, but just by way of background preamble I indicate that we have the benefit of parliamentary privilege here, which means that what you say is broadly immune from legal proceedings. I trust that we do not get to that point where we have to pull out the rule book. If there is any commentary you would like to make off the Hansard record in camera, we can make arrangements for that as well.

We thank you very much for coming along here today to give evidence. You were here earlier in the day, I think, when you heard the commencing commentary regarding the inquiry which has as its objective to reduce the number of deaths and injuries on Victorian roads, more particularly as they relate to motorcycle riding and motorcycle safety, and we are anxious to take on board evidence from every different stakeholder perspective, and in that arena I welcome you here today, David. Just for the Hansard record please introduce yourself by way of your name and address, make some general comments to get us going and then I will invite, again from our right, Mr Bill Tilley to start with questions, followed by my colleagues moving along.

Mr HYATT — My name is David Hyatt. I live at <confidential> here in Ballarat, postcode 3355. I heard about the meeting on the radio this morning after I dropped my wife to work, and I thought I would like to attend. I had no idea — I expected a forum where everyone would just be sitting and talking. I did not really know what was going to happen, so I just thought I would listen with interest.

I have been riding about 20 years. I currently drive a public transport bus here in Ballarat. I have been doing that for six years. I ride my cycle to work to try to keep fit, and I want to be around for a long, long time to come and keep riding bikes, so any safety initiatives I think are good things. I listened to Sergeant Humphrey speak before, and I did not really disagree with anything that he had to say. He spoke well and he answered the questions he was asked. My feeling is that Victorians all, and not just motorcyclists, need to be responsible for their own safety and for their own selves.

You talked earlier about making initiatives to help with motorcycle safety, and I think that as a nation people are always looking for someone else to take the blame for things that they have done wrong. As a motorcyclist, my safety is my responsibility, and therefore when I am riding down the road it is up to me to be completely aware of what is going on around me, to be 100 per cent in the moment riding my bike and to be aware of that woman up there and the guy over there in the car that is backing out. The person who is driving along slowly looking around clearly does not know where he is going; I need to be ready for him to do a U-turn without indicating, just to be in the moment. So when I ride my bike that is all I am doing. I am not thinking about home or thinking about work or thinking about anything else.

Motorcycling is something I have to do. It is not something I want to do. If I do not get to go for a ride for a few weeks, I get grumpy and edgy. It is in me. If someone asks me who I am, I am a motorcyclist. I am also a father and I drive a bus, but essentially I am a motorcyclist and it has been my whole life. When I was going up to the pool as a kid I used to cycle with my friends past the Suzuki dealer that used to be in Wendouree, and we stopped and we sat on the bikes and we looked at them. I have always been attracted to them, and it is something I do.

When I ride, I try to ride within my own abilities and the way my dad taught me when he was teaching me to drive — that I should drive to suit the conditions. So for the first few weeks when I was on my Ls and we would head off down the street after he got home from work and I would accelerate up to — in the car we had then it said 38 miles an hour, which was about 60 kilometres — he would tell me to slow down, and I would say, ‘But the speed limit is 60’, and he would say, ‘But it doesn’t matter; you drive to suit the conditions. It’s dark, it’s a bit wet. Slow down a bit’. Eventually that sank in, and so that is how I treat the way I ride and drive now. Sometimes the conditions are beautiful and you travel at a faster rate; sometimes they are not so good and you travel slowly. I think that I am responsible for myself. I will finish there for now and answer questions as best I can.

The CHAIR — Thank you. You have made some outstanding remarks.

Mr TILLEY — David, thanks for that. You are a professional driver. You probably see a lot of things that happen whilst you are at work driving a bus, and you often no doubt shake your head at some of the things that drivers, motorcyclists, truck drivers, all areas — —

Mr HYATT — Pedestrians.

Mr TILLEY — Pedestrians.

Mr HYATT — Pedestrians, and I say that as a bus driver more than a motorcyclist. I reckon we need to make pedestrians responsible for themselves. If you go and sit out the front here when you are having lunch or having a cup of coffee, watch how many people get to the traffic lights here, see that the lights are against them and so walk 10 feet away from them and walk into the traffic. They will see the bus coming and they will walk in front of it anyway and expect the bus to stop. If the bus has got time to stop, that is all well and good, but what if the driver has not, or the follow-on effect is there is the old lady standing up in the bus and the driver has to slam the brakes on and she falls over. You have to be responsible for yourself; that is the main thing I would say.

Mr TILLEY — You make a very good point, because probably a large percentage of those pedestrians are also motor vehicle drivers or possibly motorcycle riders as well, and the transformation from a pedestrian to an operator of a motor vehicle or a motorcycle on our roads is certainly a behavioural and attitudinal issue that really has not been greatly addressed during this part of the committee. But certainly, as I said, it is very refreshing to hear that you are taking individual responsibility for what you do when you are riding a motorcycle or operating in your workplace as a bus driver.

I probably want to talk a little bit more on your experiences, being a rider for many years, and how you got to where you are today, and I want to talk to some extent in relation to what training you may or may not have done over those years and how you transform your experiences to your roadcraft.

Mr HYATT — When I first got my learners when I was 17 — I am 45 now — at that time all I had to do was a written test. I went in, I did the test, I came out and I went riding. When I turned 18 I got a car, and I could not afford to run a car and a bike so I let my learners permit lapse. Somewhere in my early 20s the bug bit again, and that time I had to do a riding course to get my Ls. I did that, and it was a half-day course which covered a few basics, and then I got my Ls. It was the same thing. I just went out, muddled around and rode around. When it came time, I did the same for my Ps. The course was a little bit longer and it was a little bit harder. They taught me a few more things and then I had my Ps. Then I waited 12 months, bought a larger motorcycle, went out and rode it around, and I learnt from my friends who rode. They followed me and I followed them.

I have had a couple of accidents. I had one accident where I accelerated to the head of the bunch. For the first time ever I thought, 'I'm going to be the one in front'. I was in front, I was coming along Miller Street here in Ballarat, and the woman coming the other way turned in front of me. I jumped off the brakes, hit the road and slid. I thought, 'I'm going to go under that car. That is not so good'. So I lifted my legs up, went into the back, and I broke my ankle. That took the shock. That was a learning experience for me, and so from that point on I very rarely led the pack anymore. I am happy enough to be the guy at the back.

I just kept riding. I rode a lot with the local Ulysses Club and slowly learnt more and more. Then last year other things in my life and my wife's and daughter's lives all started to click finally. We had money to spend. So I went away and I did an advanced riding course through HART Australia. I learnt more in one day riding with them than I have learnt the whole time I have been on a motorcycle. They looked at some of the things that I did and said, 'Why are you doing it this way? What don't you try doing it that way?'. I would advocate that somehow we make advanced riding a part of getting a licence. It is very expensive — it is \$400 a day, which is a lot of money to find — but it is the best \$400 I have spent. Sometime next year I will go back and I will do the next level of a course.

With HART Australia there are two levels, and then probably for the rest of my riding life I will repeat those courses year after year because it is like a refresher course. You drop into habits. They taught me things like looking as far ahead as possible, exercises in throttle control, braking — a myriad of things that were not taught when I got my learners. As for my roadcraft, that has just come from my whole life driving a car. When I got my learners in the car, I drove backwards and forwards to Melbourne each weekend and every day my dad took me out and drove with me. He was a good driver, so he taught me to be a good driver.

Mr TILLEY — Statistically in the state of Victoria we have substantially more licensed motorcycle riders than we do registered motorcycles. We are seeing a heightened incidence of returning motorcyclists being involved in injury crashes, and, heaven forbid, some of those are fatalities. You spoke about good practice that you do yourself and going back and doing further training. Taking in mind personal responsibility, if you are not the holder or you currently do not have a motorcycle and you are retaining your motorcycle licence, something should be looked at there. I am one of those people. I have many years of motorcycling. I love riding. I am an advocate for motorcycling.

Mr HYATT — I do not think you will get anywhere telling people what to do, because if I tell you that you are doing your job wrong, you are just going to get your back up straightaway. You need to encourage people — I am getting that way myself now — to go and get some training. There are some people who think they really know everything, and you will never get through to them, but the people who are open to new experiences and learning, if you can somehow make it easier for them to do it, then perhaps they will do it.

I had to ride to the Lindsay Fox facility, which is out the back of Anglesea somewhere, to do the training course that I did. The ride in on the dirt road was horrible. When I do it next time I will ride the extra half-hour and go to Broadford, because the ride on the dirt road was atrocious. But that is where the place is, so I made the effort of going there, because my friends who I ride with had consistently told myself and other members of the forum that I am part of that the best money you can spend is on rider training. How you convince other people to do that — well, that is a job for the advertising gurus perhaps. I do not know.

Mr TILLEY — Thanks, David. What are you riding at the moment?

Mr HYATT — I have got a Suzuki GSX 1400.

Mr TILLEY — Nice. Thank you.

Mr LANGUILLER — Thank you for your submission, and thank you for making the time to come and meet with the parliamentary committee. In your contribution you talked about two things: you talked about riding, taking into account road conditions and the fact that there are other road users. With your knowledge and experience in this region — presumably you ride in this region — how do you rate our road conditions?

Mr HYATT — They're crap.

Mr LANGUILLER — Do you think they are built for motorcyclists?

Mr HYATT — I would love to see roads built for motorcycles, but the roads are roads. The roads primarily are to get people from one place to another. Over the last 15 years the conditions of my favourite roads have deteriorated.

Mr LANGUILLER — Can you provide some examples? Any particular junctions or issues that you — —

Mr HYATT — Yesterday I went for a ride to Bendigo. I have had two days off. The road between Daylesford and Castlemaine — it is just getting rougher. It is slowly undulating. There are potholes. We have had all the rain and it has not helped because it has been dry for so long. The job is getting away from whoever it is who fixes the roads. I took a road that I have never rode along before on the way home, and it took me from — I don't know — just outside of Bendigo across to Maldon. It was a lovely windy road, great for the bike and no traffic; you could see heaps, but it was bouncy as. So I rode in an inappropriate place because it was just too bouncy.

If you want to make roads safer for motorbikes, get rid of the signs. There is a sign every 10 feet telling you something you do not really need to know. If you have a sign that says that a corner possibly should be rated at whatever speed you might think it is for a truck — a 45-kilometre bend or whatever — you have those signs, but you do not need signs telling you — —

There just seems to be 1 million signs that do not really need to be there.

The CHAIR — And you present that as a road hazard?

Mr HYATT — Yes, I think they are, because one of the things that you get taught is that you go where you look, whether that is riding a bike or driving a car. What they taught me at the course is that you look through the corner and you look to the vanishing point of the road. Any hazard you should pick up in your peripheral vision. I am sure you have come across situations where there is a paddock, a bend and there is a tree in the middle of the paddock and it is the only tree and the car has hit it or the bike has hit it. That is because you fixate on something and that is where you go. So you are coming around the corner and you go, ‘Oh, there’s a big tree!’, and you look straight at it. You do not look here, where you are trying to go next, and you end up in a tree. There is too much road furniture. You need the bare minimum. You do not need a sign for Sovereign Hill or a sign for this or a sign for that. If you are in an 80 zone and there is a 60 zone here, why do you need another sign in the middle in yellow telling you there is a 60 zone approaching? It just seems like a sign for no reason.

Going out to Daylesford, they have dropped the speed limit from 100 kilometres to 80 kilometres on the approach into Daylesford. I noticed this yesterday. You come around the left-hand bend at 100 kilometres. Just at the apex of the bend, the 80 sign pops up. On a bike, if you back off going around a corner, the first thing the bike does is stand up and run wide. If you are coming around a bend, you have got to drop 20 kilometres off or you will run straight into the oncoming traffic. That sign needs to be either 200 metres that way out of the bend or 200 metres this way in front of the bend — not in the middle of the bend. It just seems basic.

Mr LANGUILLER — David, further if I may, given your many years experience in riding and given your engagement with a very significant club, as I understand it, have you seen the TAC ads?

Mr HYATT — Yes.

Mr LANGUILLER — What you think of them? Do they send a message to your fraternity? Would that help to prevent — —

Mr HYATT — I don’t think so.

Mr LANGUILLER — Why not?

Mr HYATT — Well, because as motorcyclists we already accept these risks. Risk is part of life. If we stopped doing it, then why leave the house? The risks — we know about them. For instance, the other week Marco Simoncelli was killed in a motorcycle accident. They announced that he died in the MotoGP race, and the first thing that came on was that TAC ad where the guy falls off and bounces into the car. My daughter and I had been out riding all day. We came home and we watched the race. Ruby was horrified that the guy had been killed, and then they popped up this ad. Then there was another ad and then the same ad came up again straight afterwards. I do not think they make any difference. All I believe those ads do is alienate motorcyclists to people who are not motorcyclists.

Mr LANGUILLER — Why do you say they alienate motorcyclists?

Mr HYATT — Because people who are not motorcyclists — people who are in their cars driving along — see those ads and think, ‘Bloody motorcyclists; they are stupid. Why do they ride?’.

Mr LANGUILLER — So you think they present a negative image and build up a negative image of motorcyclists?

Mr HYATT — I think they do.

Mr LANGUILLER — Is that the common commentary, if you like, amongst your fraternity?

Mr HYATT — I would say so, yes. Amongst the members of the forum I am part of the majority would suggest that those ads do not do any good, because they do not reach motorcyclists and they probably alienate non-motorcyclists.

Mr ELSBURY — Thank you very much for your time, David, in coming and speaking to us. I am just interested in your thoughts about whether or not you think your experience on a motorcycle has made you a better driver?

Mr HYATT — Yes, definitely. I think all experience makes you better if you allow it to. I have learnt — I like to call it the little voice in my head. Some people might call it a sixth sense, but part of roadcraft is almost like reading body language. You can look at someone and go, ‘He is going to do this’ or, ‘She is going to do that’, and you just know. You could call it the force — you could call it a million things — but that is what experience adds up to. You cannot be taught that; it is a time thing.

Mr ELSBURY — From what I have been told basically you go in being wary, you then become super-confident and then, after a bit of time on the road, you end up being paranoid, and that is when you are a safe rider because you are watching everyone, making sure that they are not going to do something that is potentially going to harm you.

Mr HYATT — One of my friends refers to it as being unconsciously competent, and that is when you do all the right things without having to think about them. I am also having a crack at learning to do martial arts, and if you have ever seen it on the telly and the movies, they are repeating the same thing over and over again, and the reason for that is so that it becomes a reflex — you do not react; you act. If someone throws a punch, you block it, and that is what riding a bike is like — and the only way you will get it up in time is to consistently do it. Driving a car helps. In answer to your question, any experience on the road should help you to learn.

Mr ELSBURY — How much gear do you wear when you go out?

Mr HYATT — I always wear my trousers, jacket, boots and helmet in the winter. I have winter riding gear. You said you have your learners. If you keep going, you will build up a wardrobe of stuff. I have stuff that is warmer for wintertime. I wear my leathers in the summer. I believe if it is too hot to wear my leathers, I will do something else.

Mr ELSBURY — Yes. I am about to go off to do the advanced course as well — not quite as advanced as yours, but it is on-road and off-road as well with the same organisation. Any tips for young — not exactly young but certainly new — riders out there?

Mr HYATT — Listen to the instructors. When I did my course I think there were 30 of us there, and there were 3 instructors. The instructor stood out and said, ‘We are going to do this exercise’, and there were a couple of people every time, when he was talking through the exercise, saying, ‘Why would you do it that way? There is no point’. If you are paying good money to get instructed, then be instructed. At least try it and have a go at what they are showing you, and if you still think it does not work, then fair enough, but go in open-minded and soak it all up.

The CHAIR — In recent times there has been a spike in deaths in the arena of off-road riding. Do you have any experience in that area?

Mr HYATT — None whatsoever. I noticed that when you were talking to the police sergeant before — it sounded to me like you guys think that if someone is off-road, they are committing a crime automatically. That was the impression I got when you were talking about policing and checking and searching and all that sort of stuff.

The CHAIR — No, we have a breadth of viewpoints. We did take evidence from a young off-road rider who collided head-on with another person on a track and was profoundly injured, so we have a degree of insight, and my colleague Mr Tilley down the end has done significant off-road riding himself, so there is a breadth of experience.

Mr HYATT — I do not have a lot of experience. I would go back to my first point that each rider has to be responsible for their own actions. I was taught that you should not arrive at a corner at such a speed that you cannot avoid an obstacle if it jumps out in front. How you teach people — and that goes back to risk-taking. I am probably jumping around all over the place.

My daughter is 10, and she was telling me last night when she got home from school that on the adventure playground in the school they have removed the wobbly bridge and just replaced it with solid planks. I said, ‘What did they do that for?’, and she said, ‘Someone slipped off the bridge and hurt themselves’. Okay, but here is a case now where the schoolkids are not going to learn that if you walk on a slippery surface, you might fall over. If we do not allow young people to learn how to make a proper decision, then when they get to the age of

17 or 18 and they get behind the wheel of a car or they wander out on the beach, they do not know how to weigh up consequences.

Mr LANGUILLER — I compliment my colleague just in relation to off-road. The reason for and the background to our questioning is that our data shows that almost 50 per cent of injuries and casualties happen off-road. You would have heard the police officer indicating the lack of resources they have — in fact pretty much nothing — to patrol, to monitor, to help and to assist off-road and to diminish the number of injuries and fatalities in terms of off-road, which is almost 50 per cent. Therefore there is some background to some of the questioning, if you like, on the off-road stuff.

Mr HYATT — Perhaps in the same way that you now have to go for a test to get a licence to ride on the road, perhaps — some of the training companies are now offering off-road components. Maybe they need to be subsidised as well so that people who cannot afford to do this sort of stuff can find a way. They need training, training, training. I have done a little bit of off-road riding but not for 20 years and not to the same extent as the guys are out, so I really cannot answer your question. I do not know how you could do more. You could give the police more dirt bikes. The biggest problem is that there are not enough police, and if you send six guys out into the bush — so you send six highway patrol guys out — then there will not be six guys patrolling the roads around Ballarat or there will not be six guys going after street crime or investigating burglaries or whatever. There are not enough police to do the job that is required of them; that is the simple answer to that question. It is not a simple solution, I understand, but that is — it seemed that when I was a little boy there were police everywhere. It does not seem like that so much anymore.

The CHAIR — One matter I just want to clarify is that you made a remark before that motorcyclists and drivers need to be 100 per cent in the moment. Two examples we heard yesterday were where motorcyclists were killed not necessarily through inadvertence on their part but through the inadvertence and negligence of car drivers. The question really becomes how can you ensure ongoing safety as a motorcyclist when you are on the road where there is a blind spot for car drivers and other circumstances where accidents arise through their negligence and not that of the motorcyclist?

Mr HYATT — I am responsible for me, so if I am behind you, I do not ride in your blind spot. Through roadcraft and my experience, built up over years and years, I make sure that I am not in an inadvertent position. I do not know the story, but perhaps in relation to the two people you learnt about yesterday, maybe one of them was not — if someone came around the bend and he ran wide coming the other way, I think you said, on the ocean road — —

The CHAIR — Yes, that was due to the motorcyclist's error. One was a sideswipe. The other one was the rider being clipped from behind.

Mr HYATT — So the sideswipe — why was he so close to the car? That would be the question — and they are hard questions. It would be hard to ask that person's family or something, but how did he allow himself to get into a position where a car could sideswipe him? Rear-ended? Was it traffic lights, or was it — —

The CHAIR — Waiting to do a right turn.

Mr HYATT — I do not know. I think that filtering is an option that needs to be really explored so that when you get to the traffic lights on a motorcycle, you are allowed to come up between the cars to the front of the line and then move away. It is not lane splitting. I have heard and seen videos on the computer where the traffic is travelling at whatever speed, say, 60 or 70 kilometres an hour, along the West Gate Bridge — and I have seen it myself when I have been riding down to Melbourne — and someone goes barrelling up in between all the cars. I do not agree with that. I think it is stupid and dangerous. But when I pull up to the traffic lights, the safest place for me to be is at the front. I do not need to do it so much here, because Ballarat is not so big; there are only two-lane roads.

If you can get yourself through, you do not have to worry so much about what is going on around you, but you should be aware. You should be looking around. You should have one eye on the mirror. If you see someone coming up behind you, you leave yourself room to get away. When you pull up behind someone at the lights, you make sure that, if you have to, you can dart up the middle. You do not get so close that you would have to push your bike back first and then get out of the way. You need to create space around yourself at all times when you are stationary and when you are moving.

Mr TILLEY — I think the evidence from David has been refreshingly frank. I do not have anything to ask at this stage.

Mr LANGUILLER — I have a quick one in relation to the licensing regime. David, you would be aware that if I wanted to — and I do not have a licence — I could get a licence for an automatic scooter. Eventually I could drive a manual motorbike which has gears and so on. What do you think of the licensing regime? Do you think it is adequate, given your experience?

Mr HYATT — Considering that I have had my licence for 20 years, I am not exactly certain if it was the same as it is now. I am not sure how to answer that. I would advocate for there to be more training. But how you do it, I do not know; I am not sure. You go in, and perhaps there is the advanced course, which I have done. It sounds like if you are going through HART and it is its advanced course, then it is the same course I did. Perhaps that needs to be the bare minimum for getting your licence; maybe not. You do a test, you know all the road rules and then you go do some riding. Maybe it needs to be whatever it needs to be now and then a little bit more.

But how do you take it in all in one go? That is the thing. You get out on the roads and say, 'I am out on the road'. I was very lucky when my father taught me to drive that he was happy to let me drive whenever I wanted. He would sit next to me and let me drive. I do not have a good answer for that. But the licensing is what it is. I think you probably have to do more now than you had to do when I got my licence. Maybe it still needs to be further. If you learn to ride a scooter, perhaps what needs to be done is that you are not allowed to get your licence on an automatic vehicle. You have to learn on a vehicle with gears, because once you know how to do it, you will not forget. Perhaps do that. Then if you get on a scooter, you can ride it. But you are in a situation where you have to ride with gears, then you how to do it. Maybe it should be the same with a car.

Mr ELSBURY — I have got the learners permit, and I have not been doing this by halves. I have actually been looking at bikes. I have been looking at BMWs possibly, because it is the only time I am ever going to get near a BMW. But most of them have got ABS. Does your bike have ABS?

Mr HYATT — No. When my bike was manufactured ABS was something that only BMWs had. My next bike will have ABS.

Mr ELSBURY — On Saturday night when the lotto numbers come up, and you are able to buy the bike of your dreams, you will be going for ABS?

Mr HYATT — Jeremy Bowdler, editor of *Two Wheels* magazine, has said in this latest issue — I think it is in the editorial — that if you are on your bike and you put your brakes on and the ABS engages, then it is too late. You would have already crashed into another. ABS is not in place of brakes; ABS is the safety device. They will teach you that at your advanced course. They will teach you how to use your brakes and how to make the most of them. But if you get to the point where the ABS comes on, then it is already too late. You have made a mistake back here somewhere, and you need to go back to your roadcraft. In a perfect world it should never be engaged, because you have done everything right already. If ABS saves you once, then it has paid for itself.

The CHAIR — You wear full protective clothing?

Mr HYATT — Yes.

The CHAIR — Do you believe it should be compulsory?

Mr HYATT — No. I do not think choice should be taken away from people. Here in Ballarat even when it gets really hot, it is not that hot. Somewhere up in Queensland, where I never been, I understand the humidity is just mind numbing. I think one of the things that makes Australia Australia, as opposed to many other countries we see in the news, is that we have choice. The option should be there for people to be able to choose to take up those options or not. If you are my friend, and you fall off without your gear on, then I reserve the right to ridicule you endlessly for making a stupid decision, but you have to be able to make the decision. If you are smart, you wear all the right gear.

The CHAIR — There is a wider ramification to that in relation to choice — that is, the cost of medical treatment and the role of the TAC in paying for skin grafts and repair that could otherwise be prevented through protective clothing. Does that shade your opinion in any way that the community would bear the cost rather than the motorcycling fraternity?

Mr HYATT — The community bears the cost for a lot of things. If you are going to go down that line, why not just ban smoking altogether? My mum is at home dying of lung cancer because of smoking. I see people smoking every day. It kills you. I might fall off my motorbike and lose some skin, but smoking will kill you. Drinking alcohol causes fights. I would ban these things first. Australia is about the choice that you get to make. You get the choice to hurt yourself. Maybe you change. You look at what happens afterwards. To do with the TAC, I do not know how, but — —

The CHAIR — Should the cost of registration be user pays then? If the TAC says the cost of medical treatment for motorcycle riders is X thousand dollars amortised across the fraternity, should motorcycle riders pay a higher premium?

Mr HYATT — I am not sure how to answer that, but no, I do not think so. I do not really understand the question.

The CHAIR — Your choice is subsidised by other members of the TAC scheme.

Mr HYATT — I think so. My choice is to wear my gear all the time. But it is a choice. It is an argument that I do not really have an answer for. It is just my feeling, so I will answer on my feeling and answer honestly.

The CHAIR — I am happy to take it on board.

Mr LANGUILLER — A good question and a good answer. Can I just ask you one basic one? If I may take you back to the early days of your riding, why do you ride?

Mr HYATT — Because I have to.

Mr LANGUILLER — Meaning?

Mr HYATT — I have to. Have you never ridden? You do not ride?

Mr LANGUILLER — No.

Mr HYATT — What is the thing that you do when you are not working that is the most fun?

Mr LANGUILLER — I swim.

Mr HYATT — Can you not swim?

Mr LANGUILLER — No.

Mr HYATT — I cannot put it any better than that. I have to ride.

Mr ELSBURY — Telmo has got to swim and David has to ride.

Mr HYATT — There are some people who buy bikes and ride bikes or scooters, because it is cheaper. For myself I am a motorcyclist and I ride, because I could not bear not to.

The CHAIR — David, thank you very much for your evidence. You have made an outstanding contribution to the work of our inquiry in terms of your lucidity and independence of thought that reflects a very capable viewpoint of motorcycle riding.

Witness withdrew.