

Contributed Articles

Please note that the May edition of the Journal will have a special emphasis on Roads. Members are invited to contribute articles on various aspects of road safety in relation to roads (closing date 22 April 2010).

The following article was prepared for the Special November 2009 Edition of the Journal on 'Motorcycle and Scooter Safety', but due to a production error was only published in part. The Editor apologises for the error, and is providing the full article below.

A New Strategic Approach to Advance Motorcycle Safety And Mobility In Victoria

By Nicola Fotheringham, VicRoads

Abstract

Victoria recently released a new strategic action plan for Victoria's motorcycle and scooter riders. As part of its ongoing commitment to improving rider safety, Victoria already had a significant number and range of motorcycle safety projects currently being developed or delivered. The plan provides a new strategic focus as well as identifying a comprehensive set of actions aimed at improving both road safety and mobility for riders. Key focus areas within the plan include research and evaluation, the road network and environment, rider and pillion passenger safety, and vehicle safety and protective clothing. This paper provides an overview of the key safety actions identified in the plan and some of the projects in motion to address them.

Introduction

In August 2009, Minister for Roads and Ports Tim Pallas MP launched a new strategic action plan for Victorian motorcycle and scooter riders, *Victoria's Road Safety and Transport Strategic Action Plan for Powered Two Wheelers 2009-2013*. The plan integrates both the road safety and mobility needs of riders and is the first of its kind for an Australian State Government. The plan recognises the role of motorcycles and scooters in Victoria's transport future. Its objectives are twofold: aiming to significantly reduce serious casualties to riders and pillion passengers and ensure that powered two wheelers (PTWs) are given appropriate recognition in transport and road use policy and planning.

Background

Since 2002, *the Victorian Motorcycle Road Safety Strategy 2002 – 2007* guided the direction of motorcycle safety in Victoria. Over the life of the previous strategy, considerable gains in motorcycle safety were achieved. These contributed to a 20 per cent reduction in motorcyclist fatalities in Victoria at the same time as motorcycle registrations increased by 41 per cent.

Alongside targeted enforcement activities and the introduction of a Learner Approved Motorcycle Scheme, some of the recent achievements and completed projects in Victoria have included:

- *Motorcycle Blackspot Program*. Over 120 motorcycle blackspot sites and popular riding routes have now been treated under the Motorcycle Blackspot Program. Evaluation of the program showed a 24 per cent reduction in motorcycle casualty crashes at 85 sites treated since the program's inception. At a more detailed level of analysis, the evaluation showed a 40 per cent reduction in motorcycle casualty crashes at 54 treated blacklength sites.
- *Role of speed and speeding in motorcycle crashes*. This project improved our understanding of the role speed plays in motorcycle crashes. The project examined the separate role of inappropriate and excessive motorcycle speed on fatal motorcycle crashes, and identified rider, vehicle and environmental factors associated with fatal crashes involving excessive and inappropriate speeding.
- *Involvement of scooters in crashes*. This project improved our understanding of the involvement of the motor scooters in crashes and identified the types of crashes scooter are commonly involved in. The findings indicated that scooter crashes are increasing at a faster rate than that for motorcycles or cars, and that this increase is likely to be due to a proportionate increase in scooter use.
- *Motorcycle exposure study*. Measures of exposure to risk such as number of licences on issue or kilometres travelled do not necessarily represent the most accurate estimate of exposure for motorcyclists. The study collected and examined information on some of the more commonly travelled roads in Victoria, trip purpose and time of day, and key characteristics of different rider groups to provide enhanced information on the current exposure of motorcyclists in Victoria.

- *Motorcycle Enhanced Crash Investigation*. This project involved in-depth investigations of 25 serious motorcycle injury crashes and was aimed at increasing the understanding among road safety stakeholders, riders and emergency services professionals of the causes and outcomes of motorcycle crashes, as well as to identify issues requiring further action.
- *Look, look, look again campaign*. This campaign involved the adaptation of a UK commercial aimed at promoting the importance of drivers looking out for motorcyclists at intersections. The television commercial was supported by radio, billboards and online media.

Victoria's Road Safety and Transport Strategic Action Plan for Powered Two Wheelers

The new strategic action plan was developed with input from government agencies including VicRoads, the Transport Accident Commission, Victoria Police, Department of Transport, Department of Justice and Environment Protection Authority as well as members of the Victorian Motorcycle Advisory Council.

The plan is aligned with *Victoria's Road Safety Strategy: arrive alive 2008-2017*. Like *arrive alive*, the plan takes a Safe System approach to road safety, recognising the need to focus on safer vehicles, roads and road users.

The plan is also aligned with the *Victorian Transport Plan* which provides a strategic approach to the management and development of the State's transport system. The PTW plan recognises the growth of motorcycle and scooter riders in Victoria and identifies initiatives and actions that will support greater consideration in transport policy and planning.

The plan will assist Victoria to meet the targets and objectives identified in both of these overarching strategies.

The plan focuses on four key areas: increasing knowledge and understanding, PTWs in the transport network, rider and pillion passenger safety, and safer PTWs and rider equipment. The plan identifies 49 actions, in addition to the 17 actions identified in *arrive alive Victoria's Road Safety Strategy: First Action Plan 2008-2010*.

This paper is structured under the same focus areas as the PTW plan, providing an outline of the key actions as well as some of the current projects addressing rider safety and mobility in Victoria.

1. Increasing knowledge and understanding

There continues to be a need to improve our knowledge and understanding of motorcycle crashes. Effective research and evaluation of initiatives is identified as a guiding principle for the plan. Research and evaluation underlies many of the actions identified throughout the plan. This knowledge is invaluable for planning and policy development as well as the development of safety and mobility countermeasures.

Actions in the plan include improving the quality of data, increasing information exchange, disseminating research findings and developing a coordinated program of research projects.

2. PTWs in the transport network

One of the major focuses of work over the past seven years in Victoria has been the Motorcycle Blackspot Program. Evaluations of the program have clearly demonstrated that improvements at motorcycle blackspots and popular riding routes can have a significant impact on rider safety at these sites.

Whilst there has been a significant focus on improving the roads for motorcyclists, limited consideration to date has been given to the role of powered two wheelers within an integrated transport network. The new plan identifies numerous actions that will be undertaken to address this.

One of these actions is research into the road safety and mobility impacts of road space management opportunities for motorcyclists. This includes the feasibility of initiatives such as allowing motorcycles in bus and transit lanes or to use advanced stop lines. These initiatives may provide benefits to an integrated transport system. However, the overall road safety impact of these potential initiatives needs to be better understood before any initiatives can be trialled. The research will involve reviewing current literature and consideration of their applicability to the Victorian environment as well as stakeholder engagement. It will result in the development of an assessment framework that will enable potential initiatives to be evaluated and compared.

VicRoads is also currently working with those involved in the maintenance, design and construction of the road environment to increase their awareness of the specific needs of motorcycle riders. Road authorities, utility providers, local governments and contractors all have responsibilities to ensure that their on-road work is undertaken in a way that takes into account the safety needs of motorcyclists. *Making Roads Motorcycle Friendly* is a package of training materials that has been developed and is currently being delivered to workers involved in road maintenance, design and construction to increase their awareness of the specific safety needs of motorcyclists.

3. Rider and pillion passenger safety

The safety of riders can be addressed through a range of measures focussed on both the rider and other road users. The plan addresses key issues such as rider responsibility, the responsibility of other road users, rider skills and knowledge, rider licensing, enforcement, and post-crash management.

Rider responsibility and the responsibility of other road users

The Transport Accident Commission continues to implement key initiatives targeting rider and driver behaviour. These

include improving rider awareness of the risks associated with riding, educating riders of the importance of wearing protective clothing, and educating drivers of the need to look out for motorcyclists.

Under the PTW plan, motorcycle and protective clothing retailers will be engaged to develop and implement a code of conduct aimed at encouraging buyers to choose appropriate vehicles, and purchase protective clothing.

Rider skills and knowledge

Two key projects focussed on improving the skills and knowledge of novice and returning riders are currently being undertaken.

The assisted rides project involves the:

- development of an on-road program for novice riders based on best practice and adult learning theory
- delivery of the program to 2,000 novice riders
- evaluation of the impact of the program over a 12 month period.

The project is one of the first of its kind to evaluate the impact of an on-road rider assistance program conducted on such a large scale. It offers an exciting opportunity to better understand the impact of an on-road coaching program on novice rider safety.

The returning rider project involves the development of a training program targeted at those returning to riding after a break. The first stage of this project involves identification of the skill, knowledge and attitudes of returning riders that need to be addressed. This will then guide the development and piloting of a targeted training program.

Once complete, both of these projects are expected to have a significant impact on the future approach to rider training in Victoria.

Rider licensing

The licensing system plays an important role in the preparation of novice riders before they gain access to the road network, and as they gain experience riding on our roads. There is great potential to strengthen the graduated licensing system for motorcyclists and scooter riders and make it more consistent with the current system for novice drivers in Victoria.

Work conducted to date has included reviewing literature on graduated licensing for motorcyclists, analysis of crash data, and stakeholder workshops and focus groups to identify potential improvements to the licensing system. The next stages of this work will be the development and implementation of improvements to current motorcycle licensing policies and practices that are focussed on improving novice rider safety.

Enforcement

Enforcement activities play an important role in improving road safety for all road users. The Victoria Police continue to provide targeted enforcement for all road users.

One of the new enforcement initiatives that recently commenced is the Community Policing and Education Project. The project is unique in that it has a major educational focus to target all road users whose on-road behaviours put motorcyclists at risk. The project objectives are to reduce the incidence, severity and trauma of motorcycle crashes in Victoria through education of both riders and drivers combined with enforcement to act as a deterrent to those motorcyclists and drivers who exhibit high risk behaviours that jeopardise motorcyclist safety.

4. Safer PTWs and rider equipment

Safer PTWs

As motorcycle manufacturers develop and refine safety features such as antilock braking systems (ABS), integrated braking systems and traction control, consumers need to be kept well informed of the safety benefits of these technologies and the barriers to their uptake well understood. In addition, manufacturers need to be encouraged to increase the availability of these technologies in the Australian market and encourage consumers to purchase safer vehicles.

The actions identified within the plan are aimed at engaging riders and the motorcycle industry to increase the number of motorcycles sold and ridden in Victoria with features such as ABS. Engaging riders and the motorcycle industry to encourage these changes around the safety of motorcycles and scooters will form a critical component of the plan's implementation and its resulting success.

Safer rider and pillion passenger clothing

As initiatives such as airbags for riders built into riding jackets and motorcycles are developed and refined, and a wide range of protective clothing products become available on the market, consumers can find it difficult to know which products offer the highest level of protection in a crash. Promotion of the use of protective clothing has and will remain a key focus.

The concept of a star rating for motorcycle protective clothing shows promise. This would provide riders with an objective assessment of the protective qualities of different products that they may be considering buying. Discussions will continue with stakeholders including riders, industry and governments across Australia to further the development of a star rating system.

Summary

Victoria's Road Safety and Transport Strategic Action Plan for Powered Two Wheelers 2009-2013 provides a strategic and

comprehensive approach to improving rider safety and mobility in Victoria. Some of the key actions and projects that are currently being delivered have been identified in this paper. A partnership between the agencies and departments involved in its delivery, the Victorian Motorcycle Advisory Council, motorcycle

industry, rider clubs and associations as well as local government will be critical to the successful implementation of the plan.

Further information on the strategic action plan can be found at www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/ptwplan

Report on Moscow Road Safety Conference

By Lauchlan McIntosh, Chairman ANCAP Australasia Ltd, and President Australasian College of Road Safety

This is a summary of an address given by Mr McIntosh at a Seminar **Crunch Time - National Road Safety Strategy towards 2020** held at the George Institute for International Health, Level 7, 341 George Street, Sydney on 9 December 2009, following his attendance at the First Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety. 19-20 November 2009, Moscow, Russia. (Mr McIntosh attended the Moscow conference by invitation from the Russian Federation)



Plenary session at the Moscow conference.

Proposal for a ‘Decade of Action’

In November 2009, Ministers and senior officials from 160 countries met in Moscow and agreed to propose to the UN General Assembly that a Decade of Action for Road Safety be declared early next year.

The aim of the proposal is to save 5 million lives in the decade as well as save 50 million from being maimed or seriously injured in road crashes. This was a real target, and agreed as possible.

Ministers and Secretaries of State from countries such as the USA, UK, Sweden, Switzerland, Italy, Russia, Brazil, South Africa, Mexico, Chile, Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Cameroon, Morocco, Ghana and Uganda to name a few, as well as senior officials from the World Bank, OECD, the WHO, and companies such as Michelin, Shell, IRF and a range of NGO’s attended.

Australia was thanked for providing financial support for the conference, but it was disappointing that the other mention of Australia was that our previous good ranking in the road safety performance tables had fallen in recent years.

Australia has a target to reduce our road crash fatality rate by 40% in this current decade (ending this year). Surprisingly Australian State and Federal Ministers a decade ago watered down a target from a recommended 50% to 40%. Given the current political demands for long term target setting over carbon emissions it is interesting that no one in the community and certainly none of their representatives in the State and Federal Parliaments appear to have noticed our failure to meet road safety targets this decade.

Since January 2001 over 14,000 people have lost their lives in Australia in road crashes; that is 1300 lives above the watered down target. This generated an additional cost to Australia of around \$15bn or \$1.5bn every year this decade. That is the additional cost! The dollars are terrible but of course the tragedy of this additional trauma is even worse.

The Conference in Moscow was something of a standard international “high level meeting”. A plenary session with over 20 individual Ministerial presentations led by Russian President