

Queensland Year 12s Stunned by Crash Scene

By Geoff Horne, Executive Officer, ACRS

Thanks to the enthusiasm and commitment of Barry Collis, retired teacher and former Road Safety Officer with Queensland Education for 17 years, hundreds of year 12 students each year are being challenged to think about road safety by a hard-hitting look at the realities of road accident trauma. Based in Sandgate, Queensland, Barry visits about 20 high schools each year with his 'Docu Drama' program. With the full cooperation of the school staff and a handful of volunteer students as actors, Barry sets up a very realistic-looking crash scene. Other helpers who contribute to making the scene come alive are the local Fire and Rescue Authority and the Ambulance and Police Services. Additional people who contribute to the Docu Drama program are a doctor, a solicitor, paraplegics and other accident victims, a funeral director and counsellors.



The program does not, however, begin with the crash scene, but in the classroom. There Barry sets the scene for the accident and explains to the students some of the statistics associated with car accidents. The students then move outside where the crash scene has been set up. This is a description of what one group of students experienced at their Docu Drama:

"The blood chilling scream of Police and Ambulance sirens as they raced to the showgrounds probably alarmed a number of local residents last Monday afternoon. The Year 12 students from St George State High were participating in a Docu Drama — a life-like scenario of a road accident. The scenario, which confronted the Year 12s as they arrived at the scene was one of carnage — with Sophie lying lifeless on the ground, Leslie, Kate and Nick inside the vehicle and blood everywhere. Leslie, the driver, had been drinking, swerved to miss a dog, lost control and collided with a light pole. While Leslie's and Kate's physical injuries were minor, Nick needed careful extraction as he suffered likely spinal injuries.

After the accident demonstration and subsequent rescue work of the police and emergency services, each Docu Drama includes an appraisal period where the Year 12 students are able to discuss with the participants what they have viewed and talk with actual victims of road trauma to hopefully avoid becoming an accident statistic themselves. The doctor, solicitor, funeral director and a representative from each of the emergency service groups then explain the impact of road accidents from their perspectives.



Here are some typical comments from students after participating in the Docu Drama:

"The Docu Drama had a tremendous impact on the way

I will drive and the decisions I will make." "The emergency crews were an inspiration to us and the Docu Drama will help us to make the right decisions about driving." "The Docu Drama was amazing. I cried. I don't know how the emergency crews can do that every day." "The Docu Drama was awesome. It was really moving. I won't ever drink and drive." "It makes you really think. You watch and think that it can really happen to you. Did you see the number of people crying?" "Words could never create the impact that this Docu Drama had."

The Docu Drama program is sponsored by the RACQ and the Paraplegic Benefit Fund and is also supported by the Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Association and the Trauma Committee of the Royal Australian College of Surgeons. Barry Collis can be contacted by email bmcollis@bigpond.net.au or tel: 07-3269 3936

Motorcycle Safety – The Next Magic Bullet?

by Brian Wood, Motorcycle Council of NSW

Although motorcycle crashes account for more than 10% of road trauma, motorcycle safety is an area of road safety that has generally been overlooked

When I started taking an interest in this subject several years ago I was told that it was adequately taken up under the general road safety message. This does not appear to be the case when comparing our record in motorcycle safety and our general road safety record against other OECD countries. In motorcycle safety we are ranked 6th last whereas at that time we were ranked 6th best for general road safety (ATSB). Had motorcycle safety been adequately taken up in the general



road safety message, our record in motorcycle safety would be similar to that of our general record.

Whereas our general road safety ranking is not dissimilar to the world's best, in motorcycle safety the world's best countries have a fatality rate one third of ours. Therefore, there is significant potential for improvement.

While it is generally agreed that Australia is on track to achieve its goal of a 40% reduction in the rate of road fatalities by the year 2010, motorcyclists have not enjoyed the same level of improvement. When the current National Road Safety Strategy was introduced in 2000 the 12 monthly moving average motorcycle fatality rate was 5 fatalities per 10,000 registered motorcycles. This fatality rate then increased to 6.3 in November 2001 and has since decreased to 5. Therefore, there has been no overall improvement.

The National Road Safety Action Plan 2005 & 2006 uses a 'star rating' system to rate the potential of each initiative, 'car occupants' score a total of 42 stars whereas 'motorcyclists' only rate a total of 30 stars. Thus the expected improvement in motorcycle safety as a result of this Action Plan will lag well behind that for car occupants.

While there are national strategies for Pedal Cyclists, Heavy Vehicles, International Visitors, Level Crossings and a national internet-based system to share information on indigenous road safety, there is no National Strategy for motorcycle safety.

Traditionally motorcyclists have been viewed as a road user group that is difficult to deal with. However the development of a road safety strategy for the Motorcycle Council of NSW called 'Positioned for Safety', has demonstrated what can be achieved when a consultative process is adopted. Positioned for Safety indicates that there is much that can be done to improve motorcycle safety.

Motorcyclists are people with a passion, their passion is motorcycles and they ride because they enjoy it. Like all people who have a passion, motorcyclists do not take too kindly to those who do not share their passion interfering with their chosen activity. In the past, road authorities have attempted to introduce initiatives with little consultation and have then been surprised when their proposals have not been generally

accepted. If improvements are to be made in motorcycle safety, motorcyclists need to be actively involved in the process.

Their passion for riding motorcycles binds riders into an Australia wide community of about 400,000 with links that are both formal and informal. This common 'bond' was demonstrated recently when Alan Mitchell, the economics editor for the Australian Financial Review suggested that motorcycle safety could be 'fixed' by taxing riders off the road. The response was both quick and decisive. A wide range of views was expressed by riders in letters to the editor. The editor received the largest response ever on a single topic, not because riders are avid readers of the Review but that word quickly spread through the rider community. This common 'bond' and network should be used to advantage in communicating safety messages to riders.

Why can motorcycle safety be the next magic bullet?

- There is considerable potential for improvement,
- Practical countermeasures are being developed,
- Unlike other road user groups, motorcyclists are passionate about their mode of transport,
- This passion binds them into a community that has a common interest,
- The motorcycle community is not so large that it is unwieldy, and
- Rider groups are becoming more active, effective and unified. The national body, the Australian Motorcycle Council now represents rider groups from all states and New Zealand.

To be able to bring about a positive change in motorcycle safety it is necessary to engage riders in discussion on safety, something that is rarely attempted. Recently, a number of brochures specifically for motorcyclists have been produced in NSW. These have been very well received as it is the first time riders have received a positive message about motorcycling. These brochures have an underlying safety message.

How can motorcycle safety become the next magic bullet?

- Develop a national strategy for motorcycle safety using a consultative process,
- Tap into the existing motorcycle networks,
- Support the motorcycle groups to bring about a positive change, and
- Deliver programs that allow motorcyclists to take ownership of motorcycle safety.

Brian Wood has been a motorcyclist for over 30 years. He has been a member of the Australasian College of Road Safety since 2001. He has an honours degree in mechanical engineering from the University of NSW and a graduate certificate in road safety from the University of New England. He is chair of the Motorcycle Council of NSW's road safety committee

References

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Arrive Alive Expo

by Brian Connor and Colin Grigg of the ACRS NSW (New England) Chapter

Introduction

The Arrive Alive Expo is a three-day event conducted annually for the last six years as an activity of the New England Chapter. It is conducted at the New South Wales Traffic Education Centre in Armidale. Participants are learner drivers from secondary schools in the region. Schools as far afield as Warialda have participated. Tenterfield High School has indicated an interest in attending in future.

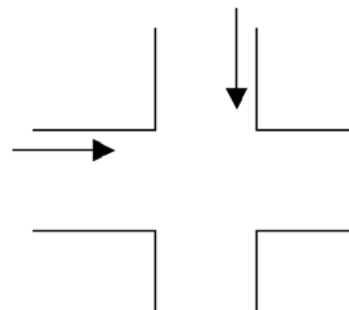
Work Stations

The Brain Injury Rehabilitation Service, located at the Tamworth Base Hospital, provided a static display and two health care professional staff on each day plus two different brain injured clients for the various sessions on a daily basis. This segment commenced with an overview of the long and short-term effects of brain injury and was then followed by a personal story from one of the brain-injured clients. They described the effects of brain damage on their lives with particular emphasis on their very long and slow periods of recovery. These stories were particularly moving.

The Ambulance session was delivered by an Ambulance Officer who demonstrated emergency equipment from the rear of an ambulance vehicle. The talk emphasised the various procedures performed by ambulance staff on injured road crash victims. These are carried out in the critical period immediately after a crash.

The Alcohol Vision Impairment work station used special goggles that replicated the visual distortions associated with a certain blood level. Students tried to catch balls while wearing the goggles and then drove cars around a small, enclosed motor cycle training area. It was found at the Expo in 2004 that participants at this area tended to correct for distorted lateral vision while driving. Consequently, in 2005 they were required to drive up to a stop sign and to stop the car beside it. They were then asked to drive the car through a series of 'witches hats', which represented an increasingly narrower path.

[What was most surprising about this activity, however, was the interest shown by students in the information provided about the range of penalties that could be imposed on "P" plate holders who had been found to be drinking and driving. Students were also given information about alcoholic drinks because of the confusion over volumes of liquid and the concentration of alcohol in various beverages.]



The Braking and Intersection exercise demonstrated reaction times when required to apply the brakes. Students were given printed material about stopping distances at various speeds and then invited to drive into an intersection

marked by 'witches hats'. They were required to apply the brakes at the appropriate spot when vehicles crossing the intersection would become visible. The spot in the intersection where they stopped was then noted.

The Tyre Demonstration consisted of instruction about tyre technology, the importance of adequate tread and equal tyre pressure for all tyres, according to the recommendations of the vehicle manufacturer. The on-site demonstration consisted of driving standard vehicles, with uneven tyre pressures, at relatively low speeds and then braking. The students sat along side experienced rally drivers who could demonstrate the instability associated with inadequate tyre pressure, even at speeds as low as 20 km/hr.

The Safe Vehicle Following Distance exercise had the aim of demonstrating the importance of the three-second gap behind