Development of Victoria's new Motorcycle Graduated Licensing System

Teresa Senserrick[a], Mark Russell[b], Duncan McRae[c], Phil Wallace[d], Rodney Blythe [b], Eve Mitsopoulos-Rubens[b], Liz de Rome[e], Paul Rees[f] and Ann Williamson[a]

[a] Transport and Road Safety Research, The University of New South Wales, [b] VicRoads, [c] Youthsafe, [d] Learning Systems Analysis, [e] LdeR Consulting and [f] Advisor

Abstract

VicRoads has been working with the motorcycle community and road safety experts towards implementing a new Motorcycle Graduated Licensing System (M-GLS) in accordance with a commitment in Victoria's Road Safety Action Plan 2013-2016. This followed release of a 2010 public Discussion Paper and a 2012 Parliament of Victoria Road Safety Committee Inquiry. Motorcycling is growing in popularity, yet motorcyclist fatalities have not experienced the same reductions as found for car drivers over recent years. Research indicates that inexperience is a major contributor, with learner and novice riders comprising almost one-third of Victorian motorcycle fatalities and serious injuries. Protocols for new mandatory training, off- and on-road testing for the motorcycle learner permit, a learner "check ride" and on-road testing for the licence have been developed based on review of Australian and international motorcycle licensing systems, literature on motorcycling, behaviour change theories and adult learning, observations of current rider training in Victoria and analysis of Victorian motorcyclist crash data (2003-2013). A key focus has been to extend a current emphasis on basic skills in vehicle handling to higher-order skills, including awareness, judgment and decision making. Piloting is underway and due for completion at the time of the conference. This joint presentation by the research team and VicRoads will report on the development process and pilot results. Due to the grounding of this work in best practice, this presentation will not only provide a platform to introduce the new Victorian M-GLS but provide insights and learning for other Australian and international jurisdictions.

Background

VicRoads has been working with the motorcycle community and road safety experts towards implementing a new Graduated Licensing System for motorcyclists in Victoria. Riding a motorcycle is growing in popularity. In particular, the growing number of motor scooter riders and commuters suggests that riding has become more of a mainstream activity and is not the sole domain of motorcycle enthusiasts (VicRoads, 2010).

While the road toll among car drivers, including novice drivers, has decreased over recent years, the fatalities among motorcyclists have not decreased by the same extent. Research indicates that inexperience is a major contributor to Victorian motorcycle crashes, with learner and novice riders comprising almost one-third of all motorcycle fatalities and serious injuries (VicRoads, 2010).

Graduated licensing systems worldwide have demonstrated that having a systematic process of phasing in driving privileges over time has reduced the incidences of crashes among young novice car drivers (Senserrick & Williams, 2015). The new motorcycle training and testing regime will have an emphasis on a robust process for riders to graduate through different phases as they develop their riding capabilities. These capabilities include not only basic skills in vehicle handling, but, critically, capabilities in higher-order skill areas as well.

In 2010, VicRoads released Graduated Licensing for Motorcyclists - A Discussion Paper on graduated licensing for public consultation. The submissions were used to help formulate new policy recommendations. Motorcycle licensing practices worldwide were also reviewed. VicRoads

also took into account a number of recommendations from the Inquiry into Motorcycle Safety, completed by the Parliament of Victoria Road Safety Committee in 2012.

As a result of this work, the Victoria's Road Safety Action Plan 2013-2016 included a commitment to introduce a graduated licensing system for motorcyclists to help beginners develop critical riding skills under safe conditions.

The aim of this presentation is to introduce the new Motorcycle Graduated Licensing System (M-GLS) model for Victoria and the overarching framework and approach to its development

Victoria's new Motorcycle Graduated Licensing System

Stage 1 of the new M-GLS introduced revised learner and licence phase conditions in October 2014, as summarised in Figure 1.

Learner Phase	Licence Phase (restricted licence)
- ride with headlight on at all times - wear a high visibility vest or jacket whilst riding - if tested on an automatic motorcycle, restricted to riding an automatic motorcycle - retaining current requirements: - must only ride a learner approved motorcycle - zero BAC - no pillion passenger - no mobile phone use - no towing - must display L plates - compulsory carriage of permit	- ride with headlight on at all times - no mobile phone use - no towing - if tested on an automatic motorcycle, restricted to riding an automatic motorcycle - compulsory carriage of licence - retaining current requirements: - must only ride a learner approved motorcycle - zero BAC - no pillion passenger The duration for the conditions increased from 1 year to 3 years

Figure 1. Victoria's M-GLS learner and licence phase conditions

Stage 2 of the M-GLS redevelops the training and testing, as summarised in Figure 2.

Approach to development of training and assessment

Development of the new M-GLS has involved extensive collaborations, consulting, and oversights in close keeping with the conference theme of Taking Action Together.

Several advisory and steering committees were established to provide oversight to the project, including a core Project Advisory Group (VicRoads, academics and motorcyclists) and a Provider Advisory Group (representatives of current Victorian rider training providers). The committees met at core stages of the project in addition to update and consultation meetings with all providers. The research protocol was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at The University of New South Wales.

The training, coaching and assessment activities were developed based on review of Australian and international motorcycle licensing systems, literature on motorcycling, behaviour change theories and adult learning, observations of current rider training delivery in Victoria and analysis of Victorian motorcyclist crash data from 2003 to 2013. A key focus was to extend a current emphasis on vehicle-handling in rider training and licensing to give greater prominence to development of

awareness, judgment and decision making. Therefore, the Goals for Driver Education or GADGET matrix (Hatakka, Keskinen, Gregersen, Glad, & Hernetkoski, 2002), considered a best-practice framework in novice driver education, was adapted to a Goals for Rider Education framework, with essential and desirable competencies identified at each level and activities developed to address these.

The analysis of Victorian crash data revealed the top five novice crashes in Victoria as:
- loss of control – straight;
- loss of control – curve;
- intersection;
- same direction; and
- head on.

Curriculum and assessment activities were therefore developed in the context of these five key crash types.
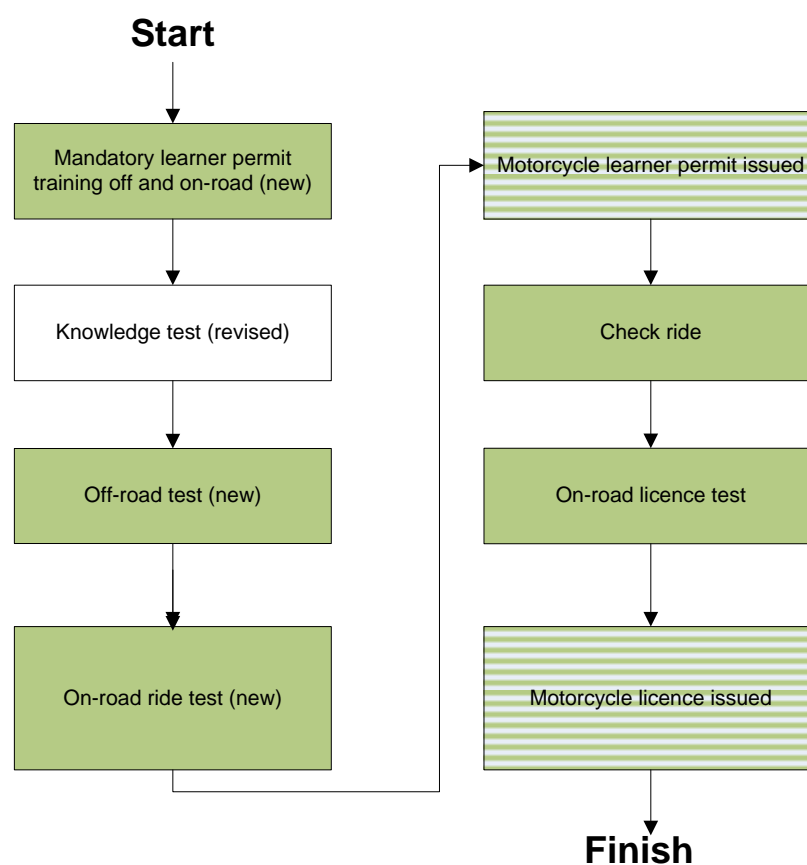

Figure 2. Victoria's new M-GLS learner and licence training and assessment

Piloting

Manuals were developed for the two-day Learner Permit Course (pre-learner curriculum and assessments), Learner Check Ride program and Licence Test, including "train-the-trainer" materials and "instructor" materials to deliver the training. Piloting was conducted with novice rider participants, trainers and instructors, as well as including experienced riders to assess whether the assessments discriminated between riders at different levels of competency (in progress for the Check Ride and Licence stages). Piloting was then followed by wide stakeholder consultation (in progress).

Conclusions

A new M-GLS has been developed for Victoria, targeting the five top novice motorcyclist crash types in the state. An important novel characteristic of the program is its comprehensive nature; including basic and higher-order skills required for safe riding. Due to the grounding of this work in best practice, this presentation not only provides a platform to introduce the new M-GLS but provides insights and learning for other Australian and international jurisdictions.

References

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