



The Hon. Duncan Gay MLC

Deputy Leader of Government in the Legislative Council
Minister for Roads and Ports

M11/1503/A1

Mr Russell D Grove
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Parliament of New South Wales
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000



Dear Mr Grove

Report No. 5/54 of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety – ‘Vulnerable Road Users – Inquiry into Motorcycle and Bicycle Safety’

Thank you for your letter to the former Minister for Roads dated 7 December 2010 about the recommendations listed in the above report.

I welcome the focus and guidance provided by the Staysafe Committee on motorcycle and bicycle safety.

Please find attached the Roads and Traffic Authority's (RTA) position on each of the nineteen recommendations. The RTA will provide further progress reports and implementation details as requested. Further, the RTA will be working with customers and stakeholders to improve bicycle and motorcycle safety.

I hope this information has been of assistance. For more information please contact Mr Harold Bear in my office on (02) 9228 5271.

Yours sincerely

Duncan Gay MLC

Deputy Leader of Government in the Legislative Council
Minister for Roads and Ports

Comments on Recommendations from the Staysafe Inquiry into Vulnerable Road Users by the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA)

Recommendation 1

The Committee supports the establishment by the RTA of an interagency crash data working group and recommends that, as one of its priorities, the working group should address the current lack of centralised data collection for off-road injuries and fatalities.

Position

Partially supported.

This recommendation will be limited due to the NSW Police Force (Police) not having jurisdiction over private property; therefore there is a lack of information available about crashes which occur on private property.

Proposed Action

The RTA proposes to work with the Police to review the quality of on-road crash data. The review will be oversighted by an interagency Data Management Committee and may contribute to a more extensive understanding of off-road crashes.

The RTA can only report on off-road crashes that are reported to the Police and subsequently provided to the RTA by the Police. Additionally, as Police do not have jurisdiction over private property, the RTA cannot be assured that it receives all information regarding off-road crashes.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that, in order to provide data of higher quality and utility and to complement the Austroads initiative to enhance the provision of raw data by road agencies, the interagency crash data working group devise means by which data can be collected to differentiate between rider typologies.

Position

Supported in-principle.

The RTA will endeavour to further separate vehicle types. However, there are currently some technical barriers to this. It would also require changes to licensing and registration and may prove difficult to define the difference between recreational and commuter riders for licensing purposes.

Proposed Action

The RTA is seeking to enhance the identification of groups within classifications. For example, the separation of motorcycles and scooters (ie smaller motorcycles such as the Vespa) from personal mobility devices (ie mobility scooters and motorised wheelchairs).

Recommendation 3

The Committee also recommends that the interagency crash data working group develop a strategy to better document the incidence of bicycle injuries on the roads in order to target appropriate interventions more effectively.

Position

Supported in-principle.

Proposed Action

The Data Management Committee will examine ways to improve data on bicycle crashes and injuries.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that the composition and membership of the Motorcycle Ministerial Advisory Council reflects the interests of all stakeholders and that it adopts the practice of the Victorian Motorcycle Advisory Council (VMAC) of appointing an independent Chair to oversee its operations and to provide effective leadership.

Position

Supported.

The Motorcycle Ministerial Advisory Council (MMAC) already has broad stakeholder representation. The appointment of an independent chair will be progressed.

Proposed Action

The RTA will explore options to appoint an independent chair to oversee the operations of the MMAC.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that the RTA strengthens its monitoring of road surface conditions to improve safety for vulnerable road users and implement a direct reporting system to alert the appropriate engineering and maintenance areas of the agency and local councils to potential hazards, for immediate remediation as problems arise.

Position

Partially supported.

Proposed Action

The RTA already has in place a road surface monitoring system for the RTA network which operates through a combination of automated and visual surveys. The issues identified are prioritised and resolved accordingly. The RTA's monitoring system assists in the provision of safe road conditions for all road users, including motorcyclists and bicyclists.

The RTA will continue to review and enhance its road surface monitoring system. Specifically to address the needs of cyclists, the RTA has recently launched the Bicycleinfo website, including a hazard reporting system. Through this online system (<http://bicycleinfo.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/index.cgi?action=reporthazard.form>), bicycle riders can report the location and nature of a hazard on their route.

The information is then distributed to the relevant road authority for that location, ie RTA or local council. The road authority can then assess the hazard as soon as possible, and take appropriate action.

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that the RTA trial a system of bike boxes, also known as advanced stop lines (ASL), that allow bicyclists to move in front of vehicles when stopped at a signalised intersection in order to reduce the potential for conflicts with vehicle turning movements on the green signal.

Position

Supported.

The Road Rules and the RTA's Traffic Signal Design guidelines already allow the use of both ASLs and bike boxes. There is no need for them to be trialled unless they are to be implemented in an unusual location or configuration. Bicycle storage boxes are generally most appropriately deployed at signalised intersections on local roads where a narrower road cross-section limits the space available for a cyclists to await a green signal next to (rather than in front of) a motor vehicle.

The relevant Technical Direction (TDT 2009/06 Bicycle Storage Boxes and Advanced Bicycle Stop Lines) is available at:

http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/trafficinformation/downloads/td09_06i.pdf.

Proposed Action

The RTA will continue to allow bike boxes and ASLs to be introduced at signalised intersections to support local government bike routes on local roads which need to pass through signalised intersections.

Recommendation 7

The Committee also recommends that separate signal phases for bicyclists at intersections, which stop all vehicular traffic while permitting bicyclists to proceed through the intersection in designated directions, should be trialled where appropriate.

Position

Partially supported.

Proposed Action

The RTA has developed modifications to the SCATS traffic signals operating system, to provide a safe and conflict-free bicycle-only phase at signalised intersections on bike paths. These modifications have been used on the City of Sydney's cycleway network. If proposed by the City for a specific future cycleway project, the RTA would need to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed 'scramble crossing for cyclists', including its impact on crossing pedestrians and other road users, before considering a broader use of this proposal.

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that the RTA conduct a comprehensive review and safety audit of shared paths and zones and undertake appropriate engineering modifications and other necessary measures to reduce potential risks to users of these facilities.

Position

Partially supported.

Shared paths that are designed and constructed by the RTA are in accordance with the specifications provided in the Austroads Guides, the associated RTA Austroads Guide Supplements and the NSW Bicycle Guidelines.

In 2009 the RTA conducted an observational study to determine the number and nature of conflicts that occur between bicyclists and pedestrians on shared paths. The study was conducted at ten locations in Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong. The study observed more than 50,000 pedestrians and 12,000 bicyclists over 672 hours and noted only five conflicts, none of which involved actual contact between pedestrians and bicycle riders.

When the RTA provides a contribution towards local government cycleway or bicycle facility projects, the RTA requires a road safety audit is undertaken at:

1. either the strategic design stage or concept design stage of the project.
2. either the detailed design stage or pre-opening stage of the project.

Proposed Action

The RTA will monitor usage on shared paths and review the design and construction specifications as required.

The RTA will also continue to educate pedestrians and bicyclists regarding safe shared path behaviours.

Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends that the RTA sponsors research into the impact of rider fatigue in motorcycle crashes. If found to be a significant risk factor, this should form the basis of an education awareness campaign and also be incorporated into awareness training for novice riders.

Position

Supported.

Proposed Action

The RTA will undertake a research project into the impact of rider fatigue in motorcycle crashes. It will then evaluate the outcomes and ascertain whether an education campaign is required.

Recommendation 10

The Committee recommends that the RTA report on the results of its current trial of post-licence mentoring activities and implement appropriate strategies to improve the skills of novice riders on the basis of findings of this research.

Position

Supported in-principle.

The RTA supports the investigation of strategies to improve skills of novice riders and post-licence mentoring activities.

Proposed Action

The RTA is awaiting the outcome of the VicRoads/Honda Australia Rider Training (HART) trial before proceeding further.

Recommendation 11

The Committee recommends that the RTA and the Police evaluate the effectiveness of the Community and Road Education Scheme (CARES) program with a view to increasing its funding for wider expansion.

Position

Not supported.

In 2010, the RTA conducted a literature review to determine the best practice in bicycle safety education. The review identified that attitude-based safety education delivered in school road safety education programs has the greatest road safety benefit.

Proposed Action

The RTA will continue to support the existing CARES Program through educational advice and small funding grants to ensure the safety of equipment available, in particular, helmets and bicycles.

In addition, the RTA proposes to trial a bicycle education program for children 10-12 years, combining attitude-based education in the classroom with community-based practical workshops that will educate parents and children together on practical and real-life cycling skills. The results of this trial would inform the further development of best-practice bicycle education for school children in NSW.

Recommendation 12

The Committee recommends that the RTA and local councils conduct further educational campaigns to make road users aware of the location, operation and potential risks associated with the use of shared paths and cycleways.

Position

Supported.

In 2009 the RTA conducted an observational study to determine the number and nature of conflicts that occur between bicyclists and pedestrians on shared paths. The study was conducted at ten locations within observation zones on ten shared paths located in

Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong. The observational study of 51,031 pedestrians and 12,319 bicyclists noted only five conflicts, none of which involved actual contact between pedestrians and bicycle riders.

Proposed Action

The RTA will continue to educate pedestrians and bicyclists regarding safe shared path behaviours. The NSW Government website www.bicycleinfo.com provides maps to promote safer cycling. This website is a ready reference for information on cycling in New South Wales.

Further research will be undertaken to identify the conflict issues on shared paths.

Recommendation 13

In the interests of public safety and in recognition of the high degree of motor coordination and vigilance required to ride a motorcycle in a safe manner, the Committee recommends that the *Road Transport (Safety and Management Act) 1999* be amended to reduce the legally prescribed blood alcohol concentration level applying to motorcycle riders to 0.02.

Position

Supported in-principle.

This is addressed in the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020.

Proposed Action

The National Road Safety Strategy contains the action "in consultation with stakeholders and community, examine the scope to reduce the legal blood alcohol concentration (BAC) limit for all drivers" ..

Recommendation 14

The Committee recommends that the RTA initiate a new broadly based campaign to promote the Road Rules. This includes an emphasis on the different rules applying to all road users and highlighting areas of potential conflict. Included in this campaign strategy should be a strong focus on educational resources for schools, the inclusion of more detailed information about vulnerable road users in licensing test arrangements and targeted media and public information material delivered in a variety of print and electronic formats.

Position

Supported in-principle.

Currently the Road Users Handbook has a section on sharing the road and being aware of others, including motorcycles, bicycles and pedestrians. The Driver Knowledge Test contains questions involving pedestrian, bicycle and motorcycle safety and the driving test assesses the ability to recognise and respond to hazards.

Proposed Action

The RTA is developing a Motorcycle Safety Strategy which will include a Communications Strategy. It is anticipated that scoping for the Communications Strategy will be completed in 2011.

The RTA will investigate future opportunities for motorcycle safety education.

The NSW BikePlan was released in May 2010 and includes strategies and actions for maintaining or improving the safety of bicycle riders.

Recommendation 15

The Committee recommends that the RTA closely monitors the results of the Motor Accidents Authority's (MAA) review of protective motorcycle clothing and ensures that any implementation of such a system includes the effective public promotion of suitable clothing to consumers.

Position

Supported.

Proposed Action

The RTA is involved in the MAA Review and Working Party and will monitor the results of the MAA's review of protective motorcycle clothing. Implementation of an awareness campaign, including point of sale advertising, will be incorporated into the RTA's Motorcycle Safety Strategy.

The *Good Gear Guide* booklet provides information for motorcyclist and scooter riders about protective equipment. This booklet is endorsed by the National Road Safety Council for Australia-wide distribution and is available through the RTA Rider Training providers and other RTA outlets. The *Good Gear Guide* has also been endorsed by the Motorcycle Council of NSW and the Australian Motorcycle Council.

Recommendation 16

In view of the increasing popularity and use of mobility scooters, the Committee also recommends that the RTA investigate this category of motorcycle use as part of the Motorcycle Safety Strategy, including the increasing prevalence of smaller motorcycles, such as Vespas, and the implications for safety of the lack of requirement to wear protective clothing.

Position

Partially supported.

Mobility scooters are not included in the scope of the Motorcycle Safety Strategy. There is not a licence class for users of mobility scooters, therefore they do not fall into the same category as motorcycles.

Proposed Action

The Motorcycle Safety Strategy will examine safety issues for all motorcycle categories including smaller motorcycles. It will also address protective clothing, including investigating its use by riders of smaller motorcycles.

Recommendation 17

The Committee recommends that the RTA review The George Institute for Global Health's research findings regarding retro-reflective materials and visibility aids for bicyclists and promote the safety benefits of these aids as part of its education and promotional activities.

Position

Supported.

Proposed Action

The RTA will investigate The George Institute's findings in relation to retro-reflective materials and visibility aids for bicyclists.

The RTA will continue to educate pedestrians and bicyclists on the safety value of wearing light coloured clothing and other aids to increase their visibility to other road users.

Recommendation 18

The Committee recommends that the RTA promote the adoption of Australian Design Rules for anti-lock braking systems and traction control systems for motorcycles as soon as practicable.

Position

Partially supported.

Proposed Action

The RTA is encouraging ABS brakes for motorcycles with the Australian Department of Infrastructure and Transport, which has responsibility for the Australian Design Rules.

Further research into traction control systems for motorcycles is required before promoting their adoption. The RTA will further investigate this technology.

Recommendation 19

There are obvious benefits in closer collaboration between the NSW Government and local councils in the setting and implementation of road safety priorities. Therefore, the Committee recommends that the NSW Government examine the feasibility of extending the current provisions applying in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City of Sydney and negotiate similar arrangements with other local councils, in order to assist with road safety transport planning and implementation at the local level.

Position

Supported in-principle.

The City of Sydney covers a wide area with its own unique complex transport systems and road networks. An MOU between the City of Sydney and the RTA was considered appropriate but MOUs are not appropriate for all local councils.

Local RTA regions have in place effective working relationships with Councils. A partnership approach is being applied to address road safety issues.

Proposed Action

The RTA has very sound and effective relationships with most local councils, which delivers quality road safety outcomes. The RTA will explore the possibility of further MOUs where appropriate, and will continue working in partnership with local government to target road safety issues.

The RTA is establishing Regional Cycling Consultative Forums across the State to promote information sharing and problem solving among RTA regional staff, local councils and the bicycle riding community, and to address local, bicycle-specific issues at the most appropriate level.