

**REPORT FROM THE
MOTORCYCLE SAFETY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
OCTOBER 2010**

**NATIONAL GRADUATED LICENSING SCHEME (GLS)
for
MOTORCYCLE & SCOOTER RIDER TRAINING AND LICENSING**

ELIGIBLE AGE

In recent times some states have increased the minimum age for a motorcycle learner permit to that commensurate with or higher than the provisional licence age for a car. This has been largely based on advice that motorcycle riding is a higher order skill than that of car driving and also on the belief that if a person is licensed to drive a car they may be less likely to pursue the riskier activity of motorcycle riding.

There is very little evidence to support this view and the MSCC finds this to be discriminatory against those wanting to enter motorcycling.

The MSCC recommends that the eligible age for obtaining a motorcycle learner permit under a national GLS becomes 16 years and 6 months.

TRAINING

There is no empirical evidence that rider training reduces motorcycle crash risk. However, government initiated rider training (either voluntary or compulsory) exists as part of the current licensing scheme in all states and territories except Western Australia.

The training differs markedly between states in duration, content and cost and is delivered by accredited training providers that in many states also provide the tests of skill and knowledge that are the only means through which novice riders can gain a licence. The SA Government provides this training in SA.

Rider training therefore is an integral part of motorcycle licensing programs across most of Australia.

The MSCC recommends that all learner riders must go through compulsory rider training. It is realised that in some rural and remote areas, this may not be possible. However, Rider Training Companies could cover these areas on a regular basis.

TRAINING CURRICULUM

Competency Based Training and Assessment

Competency Based Training and Assessment (CBTA) by definition requires that a student progresses at their own individual pace through various competencies (usually in a sequential order) and demonstrates “competency” of each task before progressing to the next. This requires an open-ended duration within the learning environment for each student until completion of all competencies.

Progressing at their own pace would be logistically impossible within the current style of training in Australia; usually a set course with a set duration for a set fee. None of the current state and territory training systems are true CBTA programs

The NSW course claims to be competency based but is in reality a CBTA de-facto that expresses the objectives in a competency form but actually requires the students to proceed through the course very much in a lock-step teaching approach although some opportunity is provided for students that do not achieve competence to return for further tuition on a one-to-one basis.

The other major difficulty with true CBTA is that of ensuring that the numerous accredited private providers can actually structure their teaching programs to accommodate students progressing at their own rate. There seems to be more than enough difficulties in getting the accredited providers to follow the stipulated competencies of the various state and territory training curricula.

MSCC members realize that they are not rider training experts and the need to have input from accredited rider training organizations in the near future is seen to be very desirable. It is therefore proposed that a meeting be convened as soon as possible with invited commercial rider training organization representatives to further investigate the best possible training curriculum for learner riders across Australia. This proposed meeting would also be attended by the members of the MSCC.

The MSCC recommends that a joint meeting between accredited Rider Training Organizations and the MSCC be set up to explore and implement the best practice to be adopted into a proposed training curriculum.

Licensing for riders of scooters (step through, automatic transmission machines) varies between states ranging from permission to ride with a car licence to that of requiring full motorcycle training and licensing.

In New South Wales scooter riders are required to complete the Learner training program and are issued with a restricted “automatic” learner licence to ride scooters of up to 160cc. After 3 months the scooter rider may pass the P Skill test on the automatic scooter and be issued with a restricted Provisional licence. This may be upgraded at any time to a motorcycle licence by completing the provisional training course on a motorcycle with a manual gearbox and being issued with a motorcycle provisional licence. The normal requirements of

motorcycle learner and provisional licence duration and restrictions apply to both scooter and motorcycle licences.

However, there is little available evidence to prove that riders of 50cc scooter riders present a higher crash risk. The MSCC members are aware of a project proposal before the Queensland Government through CARRS-Q for an investigation into the crash risk of riders of 50cc automatic clutch scooters when riding on a car license. The project task is to identify who uses mopeds, reasons for riding a moped, type of use, prior on-road experience and training, protective gear used, and on-road experiences. This will help to identify level of prior experience and/or training among moped riders, the target audience(s) for any changes to licensing and/or training requirements, public education, and messages that riders may be receptive to. The project is due for final reporting within the 2010.

A final decision will be made when the conclusions of this project are available in due course. With this in mind, the MSCC will contact CARRS-Q to possibly 'fast forward' this project.

(MSCC members are mindful of the possible destruction of businesses that hire 50cc scooters in high profile tourist areas in the States that allow riders to have a car license only.)

The MSCC recommends that we wait until the conclusion of the Queensland Governments moped research project conducted by CARRS-Q be completed. The NSW model for the licensing of 'up to 160cc' automatic clutch scooters is however supported in principal.

Care should be exercised to ensure that the content of the training/assessment is achievable. For example, in Queensland's Q-Ride Training Program, under the Apply Roadcraft section, the "assessment environment" stipulates:

- b. All available road systems including:
 - b1 one way roads
 - b2 marked and unmarked roads of varying width
 - b3 merge/exit lanes
 - b4 unsealed surfaces
 - b5 curves/bends
 - b6 roundabouts
 - b7 marked and unmarked driving lanes
 - b8 intersections (combination, staggered, cross roads and T-Intersections)
 - b9 controlled and uncontrolled intersections (signs, lights)
 - b10 directional markings and signs
 - b11 edge lines
 - b12 pedestrian, children's and level crossings
 - b13 various speed zones
 - b14 varying traffic density

It is doubtful that accredited providers would employ all these road systems in their on-road training and assessment. It would be far more important to ensure learners demonstrate appropriate visual scanning, hazard perception, safest positioning of the m/c and speed appropriate for the conditions in a variety of strategic traffic conditions / roadway characteristics and are assessed using appropriate checklists.

Further, it is recommended that the three critical skills vital to rider survival of **braking** (the #1 primary skill for riders) **swerving** (being able to steer around a hazard) and **riding curves** (a situation which results in a third of rider fatalities annually) be afforded much more emphasis and competence in the off-road part of the training curriculum.

These three critical skills were identified by A. James McKnight in the early 1980's as essential components for the remedial skills training component of the *Improved motorcyclist licensing and testing project* Anderson, J. W., Ford, J. L. & Peck, R. C. (1980) and are still valid today as important vehicle control skills within a comprehensive training and licensing program.

Training/Assessment Stages and Duration (subject to confirmation by expert training committee)

An **initial Learner stage** where the student

- learns/identifies an understanding of the risks of motorcycling and the value of protective clothing
- and also learns/demonstrates competence of the basic controls, mounting/dismounting, starting engine and low speed operation.

Duration approx 4 hrs

A **consolidation Learner stage** where the student

- learns/demonstrates competence of the fundamental control skills of changing gears, turning corners, riding curves within marked pathways, stopping at a point and stopping quickly on command (this to be initially demonstrated at 25-30km/h and then at 35-40km/h)
- learns/demonstrates competence of appropriate visual scanning, safe positioning of the m/c, wearing appropriate protective clothing, hazard detection and response and road rules applicable to riders
- satisfactorily passes a knowledge test of riding techniques and road rules based on information in a motorcycle handbook.

Duration approx 8 hrs
(2 x 4 hr sessions)

Students demonstrating competence at this point and passing the knowledge test and other eligibility requirements (proof of identity and age) would be issued with a learner permit and be allowed to ride solo on road to gain further experience while complying with L restrictions within the 6 months minimum duration of the permit.

Those completing the Learner course on an automatic scooter up to 160cc would be issued with a restricted automatic learner licence.

A **licensing proficiency stage** where the student learns/demonstrates competence of:

- road survival skills of braking, swerving and riding curves at 40-45 km/h,

- assessed on prescribed criteria by electronic means (MOST or similar);
- application of the above skills, road rules and safe road riding behaviours during a set road ride in urban and rural situations of at least 1 hour comprising a variety of roadway and traffic situations, and assessed according to prescribed checklist criteria;
- appropriate hazard detection and response to a variety of computer based visual riding situations; assessment measured by HP computer program.

Duration approx 8 hrs
(2 x 4 hr sessions)

Total Training Duration approx 20 hrs

Students demonstrating competence at this point for the off-road skills and the on-road ride and passing the computerized Hazard Perception assessment would be issued with a Provisional licence and be required to comply with P restrictions for the minimum 30 month duration of the provisional licence

TRAINING INSTRUCTORS

The success of any training and licensing program is dependent upon the quality of the instructors. In most states the training of instructors is the responsibility of the accredited providers and since the mid 1990's Certificate IV in Workplace Training has been the recognized instructor qualification.

However the AMC is concerned that in some locations the licensing jurisdiction does not exercise sufficient audit control functions over accredited providers to ensure the specific "on the job training" of instructors in delivery of the training and testing processes that often results in sub-standard quality of the training program for novice riders and a subsequent outcome of a less than competent licensed rider.

The AMC therefore recommends that to ensure the quality of instructors, the joint committee established to develop a national best practice curriculum also considers a core curriculum for the training of quality motorcycle instructors.

MANDATORY or VOLUNTARY TRAINING

Rider training across Australia is currently mandatory in 5 states/territories and voluntary in 2 states.

The MSCC supports mandatory training to ensure everyone seeking a learner permit or licence has undergone the training and demonstrated competence in all the specified tasks. However the mandatory training and assessment should follow the established best practice national model recommended previously.

TESTING

Testing should form an integral part of the training and licensing program.

To offer a system of licence testing in parallel to the training and licensing system, such as with the current system of Q-SAFE in Queensland, leaves much to be desired in ensuring competence of the persons assessed under such a system. The skills being assessed in the case of Q-SAFE by an examiner following in a car are markedly different from those being learned and assessed in the Q-RIDE rider training system.

The MSCC recommends that parallel testing programs offered by jurisdictions be discontinued and all applicants be channeled through the national GLS training and licensing program.

MINIMUM DURATION for LEARNER AND PROVISIONAL PERIODS

Learner

During the learner stage a car learner driver is accompanied by a supervising fully licensed driver who supervises up to 120 hours of extensive learning and practice that is recorded in a log book. A motorcycle however does not readily accommodate the carriage of a supervising driver and the additional weight factor would provide difficulties in handling and control for the learner rider.

There is no evidence to support the introduction of a supervising rider during the learner period and supervisor advice given by radio technology may be confusing to the learner and could have potential crash and injury outcomes.

Motorcycle learners therefore ride solo during the learner stage and for this reason the transition from learner to provisional licence is typically shorter than for car drivers and the use of a “log book” for recording mandatory hours of practice is more difficult. However, there may be some scope for recording riding experiences in a journal or similar. This should ideally comprise equal amounts of urban riding in 50 - 60km/h speed zones and rural riding in 80 – 100km/h speed zones. Learner drivers and riders should be legally able to travel at normal posted road speeds and not be made to travel at lower limits.

The MSCC suggests 6 months as the minimum duration for holding the learner permit prior to eligibility for provisional licensing.
The maximum duration of the learner period is suggested as 24 months.

Provisional

The duration of the provisional licence currently varies between jurisdictions ranging from one to three years. Given that the principles of a GLS aim to extend

the skill and experience level for novice riders it appears that **30 months** duration for the provisional motorcycle licence would be most appropriate.

The MSCC recommends that 30 months becomes the duration of the provisional licence period (P1 + P2) prior to being issued a full motorcycle licence.

REQUIREMENTS - RESTRICTIONS

Display of L & P plates - P/W – pillion - BAC

Most states already require learner riders to display an L plate and provisional riders to display a P plate for the entire learner and provisional licence periods. Due to the design and construction of motorcycles this is only on the rear of the vehicle.

The MSCC supports the display of L and P plates as a requirement during the learner and provisional licence periods for all states and territories.

Power/Weight/Capacity - LAMS Restriction

During the past decade the Learner Approved Motorcycle Scheme has been progressively introduced in all states and territories except Western Australia. This is based on a maximum power to weight ratio of 150kW/tonne with an engine capacity limit of 660cc and has been accepted in most jurisdictions as a replacement for the previous 260cc learner and provisional restriction.

The MSCC fully supports LAMS as a restriction for the entire duration of the learner and provisional licence periods.

Automatic Transmission Restriction

It is realized that some learner riders wish to ride machines with a capacity greater than 160cc with automatic clutches and hence can do the compulsory rider training on these types of machines. They therefore will not have the appropriate skills to ride conventional motorcycles with manual clutches. These riders will therefore be restricted to these automatic clutch motorcycles.

The MSCC fully supports a separate restricted licence for riders of larger capacity automatic clutch scooters/motorcycles.

Trike Licenses

Currently most States require that riders of three wheeled vehicles (trikes)

need a full motorcycle licence. (NSW will allow some trikes to be ridden on a current car licence.)

Possibly, a disabled rider wishing to ride a trike will therefore be precluded from ever attaining a motorcycle licence because of their personal disability. The introduction of a separate trike licence course is therefore recommended.

The current definition of a 'trike' is currently different within each State jurisdiction. It is recommended that a national description of a trike be defined and used. It is recommended that all three wheeled vehicles including motorcycle and sidecar combinations and commercially available machines three wheeled be defined as 'trikes'.

The MSCC fully supports a licence for riders of all three wheeled vehicles. The definition of these three wheeled vehicles must be agreed to by all jurisdictions.

Pillion Passenger

The restriction on pillion passengers during the learner period and the first year of provisional licence has long been the practice in most jurisdictions.

More recently it has been suggested that in keeping with the principles of a GLS, this restriction should be extended to the entire learner and provisional licence periods to increase the skill and experience level of solo riding for the provisional licence holder prior to handling the additional weight and also for increased passenger safety.

The MSCC supports the restriction on pillion passengers for the entire duration of the learner and provisional licence periods.

Zero BAC

The effects of alcohol impairment on novice riders/drivers is well documented and a restriction of 0.00% BAC for learners and provisional licence holders exists currently in most states and territories.

The MSCC supports a zero BAC restriction for the entire duration of the learner and provisional licence periods.

Protective and High Visibility Clothing

The benefits of protective clothing are recognized universally. They protect the rider from abrasion injuries in lower speed crashes and also protect the rider from the elements. Owing to the vast differences in climatic condition across Australia, what is appropriate in Hobart is not appropriate in Darwin.

Therefore the mandatory wearing of protective clothing can not be recommended. (Currently there are no standards for this apparel and the quality therefore cannot be guaranteed.)

However, the MSCC strongly endorses the wearing of protective clothing but cannot condone the mandatory wearing of it. Enforcement issues would also present a problem as what is appropriate for winter in a specific location would not be appropriate in summer.

Similarly, the compulsory wearing of high visibility vests, while desirable, would not be supported. The promotion of the benefits from wearing of this apparel would however be endorsed.

The MSCC does not support the mandatory wearing of protective and/or high visibility vests but strongly supports the promotion of it.

Returning Riders

There is some evidence to support the fact that 'returning riders' are at a higher risk of crashing than those of similar age that have been riding motorcycles continuously during that period.

It is realized that these returning riders do have a current motorcycle licence and therefore can legally purchase a machine of any capacity and return to riding. They may possibly have increased visual impairment, loss of cognitive skills and have reduced reaction times, all necessary requirements for successful motorcycle control.

The MSCC is conducive to a process of capturing these riders before they return to riding but realize that this action is difficult, as proving who has and who has not ridden during a lay off period can only be done by accessing road authority registration records and matching them with licence records.

A form of mandatory refresher training is recommended before these riders return to active motorcycling. The MSCC sees that this proposed refresher course need not have a test component at its conclusion as these riders already possess a valid motorcycle licence.

The MSCC supports the mandatory refresher retraining of returning riders after a lay off period of not riding and not owning a registered motorcycle.

Motorcycle licensing

Currently within Australia, there are approximately 1.4 million motorcycle licence holders and approximately 650,000 registered motorcycles. Adding to this is the fact that many licence holders own more than one registered motorcycle. There is an obvious wide gap between these two figures.

This is partly explained by the fact that many motorcycle licence holders no longer actively ride and are classed as ‘dormant licence holders’.
(Many of these return to motorcycling and this topic is addressed above.)
It is quite apparent that the motorcycle levy currently employed in Victoria has given them an edge in addressing motorcycle safety issues within that **State**. However, the levy is discriminatory and is not officially endorsed.
Notwithstanding this, the MSCC can see the benefits of a dedicated fund for motorcycle safety and has explored other methods of raising revenue that will benefit all motorcyclists as well as the overall road safety picture in the long term.
A separate motorcycle licence is therefore recommended. This licence will be granted after the necessary graduated licence progression as outlined in this position paper. It is suggested that this cost in the vicinity of \$52 (\$260 for five years); a similar monetary value as the current motorcycle levy in Victoria.

It is proposed that this revenue will be spent in the following ways:

- \$10 state administration (perhaps this figure could be less)
- \$12 for national/state motorcycle organisations (subject to arrangement with the AMC)
- \$5 towards a new “Australian Motorcycle Research Trust” – to provide the opportunity for a variety of studies. (Note it is not called a “safety” trust – could be for research into anything motorcycle-related.)
- \$25 to the relevant state or territory jurisdictions for motorcycle-related projects. (This money would be allocated through VMAC-style committees in each state and territory.)

On the expiry of a current motorcycle licence after a 5 year period, riders will be required to attend an endorsed refresher course before that licence can be renewed. All returning riders will also be required to attend this same course. At the conclusion of this proposed course, a certificate of attendance will be issued and this will be presented to renew or purchase a motorcycle licence. Those dormant riders not wishing to pay for this motorcycle licence will have the option of making this wish known and will be removed from the system. ‘Dormant riders’, who rarely ride, are at a higher crash risk as outlined in the section ‘returning riders’.

Riders would be funding this initiative with proven and worthwhile benefits for all. It is realized that this proposal would have to be subject to intense scrutiny and refinement.

The MSCC supports the introduction of a motorcycle national licence and the associated distribution of the acquired funds for the promotion of motorcycle safety issues as specified.