



Motorcycle Notes

No. 2 January 2000

Consultation for Motorcycle Measures

This is the second in a series of VicRoads MOTORCYCLE NOTES. The purpose of MOTORCYCLE NOTES is to provide regular practical advice on motorcycle-specific aspects of road design, maintenance and safety for VicRoads, Local Government, Government Agency and Consultant engineers and planners. MOTORCYCLE NOTES should be read in conjunction with: 'Guide to Traffic Engineering Practice Part 15 – Motorcycle Safety', Austroads, Sydney 1999.

The need

There is still only a limited professional knowledge of motorcycles and their users, compared to current levels of expertise in planning and design for other road users.

Motorcycles have a considerably wider range of characteristics than have cars, and the users are equally diverse. Common types of motorcycles include:

- ❑ Mopeds, most of which look like bicycles and have pedals.
- ❑ Very light motorcycles, such as the step-through machines used by Australia Post.
- ❑ Small motorcycles often used by commuters and learners.
- ❑ Scooters, which usually have an open-through area for the legs, and small wheels.
- ❑ Large motorcycles, frequently fitted with fairings and screens.
- ❑ Cruisers, usually with high handlebars and comfortable seats. Typified by the Harley Davidson brand.
- ❑ Large touring motorcycles, with fairings, luggage carrying equipment and even tow bars for trailers.

Sidecars may be fitted to many different types of motorcycle, and have their own unique requirements.

Improving consultation

Motorcycle users and organisations are excellent sources of knowledge and advice on the design and operational issues associated with road infrastructure that are of concern to these groups.

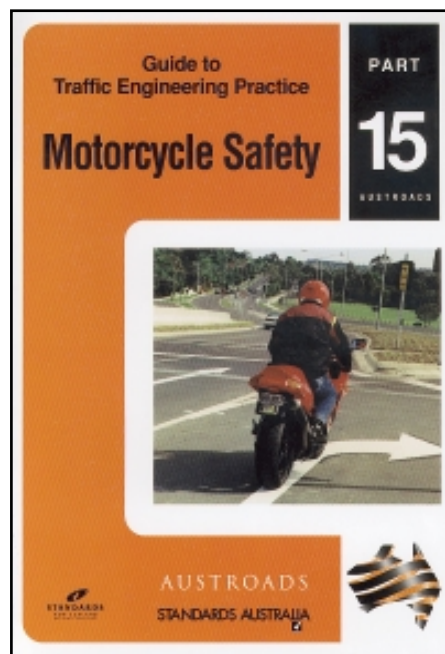
Setting up improved levels of consultation with these groups can therefore contribute to the effectiveness of practical road design and traffic engineering.

Motorcycles have not yet fully benefited from the current balanced approach taken to transport planning, for example for bicycles, where positive provisions now complement approaches that were previously focussed on safety measures alone.

These factors can complicate the task of planning and traffic professionals. Austroads Guide Part 15 provides basic guidance on motorcycle-related road and traffic design and maintenance issues.

Consultation with users can improve the application of these principles and make professional responses more effective.

Austroads Guide Part 15 is the first outcome in a systematic appraisal of motorcycle requirements. It offers a useful basis for informed discussion between traffic professionals and motorcycle users on several aspects of road design.



Specific Steps

The Victorian Motorcycle Advisory Council Workshop in June 1999 (See Motorcycle Notes No. 1) made it clear that user groups sought improved consultation, and also that such closer links could provide Councils and VicRoads with better feedback about issues of concern emerging in the field.

Some of the recommendations of the workshop were:

- Set up Council consultation mechanisms.
- Include motorcycle representatives on consultative committees and on Community Road Safety Councils.
- Establish contacts between engineering and planning staff and motorcyclists to improve information sharing and greater user involvement.
- Provide a channel for reporting on motorcycle issues and proposals. As an example, VicRoads is establishing a point of contact for motorcyclists in each of its regional offices. It has also established the “**Road Conditions Reporting Line**” (03) 9854 2899, where motorcyclists can report road conditions and give suggestions for improvement on any road in Victoria.
For any queries or problems relating to traffic signals, the number to call is: 13 11 70.
- Seek motorcyclist input to road safety audits.

Constructive cooperation

The following initiatives have also been suggested by motorcycling groups:

- Include motorcycle-specific design, parking and road space initiatives in forward plans.
- Set up local reporting of minor accidents.
- Set up a means of reporting diesel fuel spills, loose gravel and other temporary situations hazardous to motorcyclists, (see “**Road Conditions Reporting Line**” above).
- Obtain further relevant hazard information by tapping into existing motorcyclist schemes for visiting injured motorcyclists in hospital.
- Establish motorcycle liaison groups. Motorcycling organisations have an especially strong interest in active consultation and cooperation when promoting safety training to their members. The Ulysses motorcycle club has developed a special road hazard detection course.
- Increase interaction between Councils, VicRoads and professional organisations on motorcycle issues.

VMAC Membership

The Victorian Motorcycle Advisory Council (VMAC) is the Government’s key source of advice on motorcycling matters. It is committed to providing balanced advice on all aspects of motorcycling to government and its agencies.

Ralph Green	Chairman
Steve Chiodo	Peter Stevens Motorcycles
Cameron Cuthill	BMW Australia
Michael Czajka	Motorcycle Riders Association
Peter Dunphy	VACC
Peter Ellard	ARTA
Dr Narelle Howarth	MUARC
Steve Howden	Tiger Angel Leathers
Chief Inspector Peter Keogh	Victoria Police
Geoff Kloot	VicRoads
Detlef Lamp	Victorian Motorcycle Council
Graeme Laing	Yamaha
Ray Newland	FCAI
Robert Nordlinger	Harley Owners Club
Rob Smith	ARTA
Moiria Stewart	WIMA
Paul Tierney	Transport Accident Commission
Professor Marcus Wigan	Oxford Systematics
Kris Grattan	Motorcycling Australia
Ken Wootton	Motorcycle News
Alastair Robinson	VicRoads (Secretary)

Improving communication

The VMAC Secretariat and Council members provide an effective channel which can be used to establish communication with all the major motorcycle organisations from industry, police and on and off-road riding clubs to relevant traffic, transport and safety expertise.

Consultation has already produced positive results on the broader issues of rider safety and regulation.

This gives all parties grounds for confidence that similar measures aimed at traffic and road design will be effective in improving road system performance for motorcycles and their users.

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