

Staysafe Hearing - Inquiry into Driverless Vehicles and Road Safety

Additional Question

Transition

1. We received a recommendation that there be dedicated lanes for automated vehicles on motorways during the transition phase to ensure the safe co-existence of manually and automated vehicles.

Do you consider that this recommendation could enhance the road safety of motorcyclists during the transition phase from manual to automated vehicles?

It is the view of the Motorcycle Council of NSW that due to issues regarding that implementation of dedicated automated vehicle lanes on motorways, that it is unlikely to enhance the safe co-existence of motorcycles and automated vehicles.

If the dedicated lane is located to the left of the motorway this will require manual vehicles including motorcycles to cross between automated vehicles to enter and leave the motorway. As there is currently no evidence that sensors on automated vehicles can effectively detect motorcycles, then this manoeuvre will place motorcyclist at risk of being hit by automated vehicles that has not detected the motorcycle.

If the dedicated lane is located to the right hand side of the motorway this will required automated vehicles to cross between manual vehicles when entering or leaving the motorway.

The right lane is traditionally the fast lane and there is a likelihood that manual vehicles will use the dedicated lane to overtake slower vehicles. Experience with the Transit Lane on the M4 and the high-occupancy lanes on the Tullamarine Freeway, which are located to the right of other lanes, is that it is difficult to enforce the use of these lanes as Police find it difficult to intercept vehicles illegally using these right hand lanes. It will be difficult for motorcyclists to know how to react to the movements of vehicles in the dedicated lane not knowing if the 'driver' has detected their existence.