

Parliament of NSW Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety

Inquiry into Motorcycle Safety in NSW

Response by NRMA Motoring & Services to the questions on notice taken by Mr Jack Haley, in appearing before the Committee on 12 October 2015

Today we heard evidence from a number of people and also there have been submissions about specifically the need for road safety audits and improvement of road safety audits. I am wondering what your position is on that. Is there a special need in terms of motorcycle safety to have better road safety audits?

NRMA response

(a) Road Safety audit teams should ideally have the ability to identify issues from the perspective of all road users. Audits that are specifically focused on motorcycle issues should preferably include motorcycle rider(s) as part of the audit team, and include a 'ride through' of the site to further ensure that issues are considered from a motorcyclist's perspective. This may sound obvious, but is not always the case.

(b) Traffic and road safety engineers are generally familiar with driving cars, riding bicycles, riding on buses and walking.

However, many will never have been on a motorcycle, or even had the opportunity to sit in the cab of a truck to experience issues from a truck driver's perspective. Being able to consider and appreciate issues from the perspective of all road users is very important if difficult road conditions are to be properly identified.

We believe there is an opportunity for Roads & Maritime Services and / or the Centre for Road Safety to work with local government and traffic and safety practitioners to provide opportunities to experience different types of vehicles, perhaps through a road safety roadshow that could tour NSW, or through a demonstration day.

is there a better means or mechanism of gaining reports on difficult road conditions? How would you recommend that that be approached?

NRMA response

It may sometimes be more appropriate to undertake a road safety assessment rather than a formal road safety audit. A road safety assessment may identify issues and propose and prioritise solutions. In comparison, an audit may help in identifying deficiencies, but may not necessarily provide meaningful or practical solutions.

I would be interested in gaining input or finding out how the NRMA would consider we would gain information, and whether it would then be for councils or the Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] to address the issue.

See response to the following question.

Has your research identified in any other jurisdictions best practice, or whether there is a better practice, or if there is a best practice system of monitoring and reporting on road designs, engineering of conditions on our roads, how we can improve the routes for motorcycle users, and safety features?

NRMA considers the commitment from Transport for NSW to place the customer at the centre of everything it does provides an opportunity to significantly improve the way information is reported and collected from road users, including motorcyclists.

Currently, road users may report issues on State (RMS) roads by telephone to the NSW Transport Management Centre, but there is no feedback mechanism to the customer as to whether the issue has been actioned or resolved. During busy periods when the TMC is dealing with multiple incidents, it can take some time to get through to the TMC on this number.

NRMA often resorts to providing feedback to RMS via the generic RMS email address listed on the RMS website. We believe there is scope for this feedback to be captured in a way that enables the information to be more segmented. This would not just assist in prioritising issues, but also provide an opportunity to collate the issues and identify trends.

The 'Report It' section of the Sutherland Shire Council website provides an example of how this can be facilitated:

<http://www.sutherlandshire.nsw.gov.au/Council/Policies-and-Documents/Tasks/Report-It/Report-It-Potholes-Roads-and-Road-Signs>

TfNSW is very focused on pushing information out to customers but as outlined above, there are opportunities to improve the ability of road (and other transport users) to advise TfNSW of issues.

NRMA has recently put to RMS and the TMC that there is an opportunity to facilitate a more responsive two-way flow of information with customers by adding an additional feature to current mobile phone applications, such as the TMC's 'LiveTraffic' app. We would welcome the Committee's support for this initiative.

We envisage this could work through road users taking a photograph of an issue, uploading it to the Live Traffic (or other) app, filling in the category and location from drop down menus along with a short description of the issue, and then sending it directly to RMS. Adding a photograph is not strictly necessary but would be beneficial in helping the agency to quickly understand and prioritise the issue.

This approach would make it much easier for road users to report issues and for TfNSW to engage with road users. Since road users are often the first to identify safety issues with the road, making it easier for road users to report issues could provide a useful and timely source of information for road authorities and provide a new way for TfNSW to engage with its customers.

As an example, motorcyclists would be able to assist RMS by reporting issues such as potholes, loose gravel, damaged crash guardrail, damaged warning signs and road design issues. It would enable the

RMS to capture, categorise, prioritise and action these issues. It would also provide a feedback mechanism to help audit the performance of road maintenance providers.

We further believe that there are opportunities to expand this initiative to cover the local road network.

Using Sutherland Shire Council again as an example, Council has added a 'Report It' mobile App to further enable residents to report issues to Council. Issues reported via the app are automatically added to Council's Customer Request Management System (CRMS).

From a road users perspective, it would be easier if one app (such as the TMC's Live Traffic app) could be used by road users to identify and report issues related to the 18,000km of State road network, but also to the 180,000km of roads across NSW. This would also help to identify trends, performance and hot spots.

Currently it is difficult to source information on who is responsible for which road. To help resolve this, we have asked RMS to both publish maps and also to make its mapping data available to others to show which roads it is responsible for and we would welcome the Committee's support for this initiative.

Finally, we suggest it would be beneficial if TfNSW was to facilitate an annual road safety demonstration day or Road Safety Roadshows. These could include practical demonstrations of road safety products and practices. It would help to promote new and innovative thinking, and encourage greater networking and collaboration on road safety, particularly between the State and Local Government's and with the private sector.

We are aware that 3M in NSW has taken the initiative to hold its own night time events to demonstrate its road sign, vehicle safety markings and line marking products.

We believe there is scope for RMS and / or the Centre for Road Safety to expand on this concept. Such an event could be pitched not just at traffic, safety and road maintenance practitioners, but key decision makers such as Council General Managers, Mayors and the Chair of the Local Traffic Committee to increase understanding of road safety products.

This could be potentially be supported by Local Government NSW, NRMA, the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia, the Australian College of Road Safety, with industry bodies such as the Roadmarking Industry Association of Australia, the Australian Asphalt and Paving Association, the Traffic Management Association of Australia and with others with an interest in road safety.

To what extent does the NRMA use any price signals to reward good riders? Does the NRMA's price for CTP insurance reflect the different groups of riders, such as returning riders who have been identified as a vulnerable group of riders in a number of submissions?

No further comment to add.