

INQUIRY INTO VULNERABLE ROAD USERS

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NSW Police Force
www.police.nsw.gov.au

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

21/8/10
dated,

Mr Geoff Corrigan MP
Parliament of New South Wales
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Corrigan,

Inquiry into Vulnerable Road Users

I refer to your letter dated 24 June 2010, requesting submissions on the Inquiry into Vulnerable Road Users.

The NSW Police Force submission is attached.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely,

A P Scipione APM
Commissioner of Police

25 AUG 2010



**NEW SOUTH WALES POLICE FORCE RESPONSE
STAYSAFE INQUIRY INTO
MOTORCYCLE AND BICYCLE SAFETY**

- a) **Patterns of motorcycle and bicycle usage in New South Wales:**
The NSW Police Force has no information on this item.
- b) **Short and long term trends in motorcycle and bicycle injuries and fatalities across a range of settings, including on-road and off-road uses:
and**
- c) **Underlying factors in motorcycle and bicycle injuries and fatalities:**

FACTORS IN MOTORCYCLE FATALITIES

According to police reports 332 fatal motorcycle crashes occurred in the five calendar years of 2005 to 2009.

The following points were identified in regards to those fatal crashes:

- The motorcycle rider was considered (by police) to be “at fault” in 258 or 78% of crashes;
- Of these 258 crashes, where the rider was considered to be “at fault”:
 - Speeding was a factor in 31% of cases*;
 - Alcohol was present in the rider’s blood in 20% of cases;
 - Speed and Alcohol together were a contributing factor in 7% of cases.

*Based on the initial COPS report only.

Alcohol as a factor in motorcycle fatalities

The Traffic Research and Intelligence Unit (TRIU) of NSW Police Force’s Traffic Services Branch receives reports (from NSW Health) of post mortem Blood Sample results taken from riders killed in fatal crashes.

The TRIU has examined post mortem Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) records of 64 riders who had alcohol in their blood stream and who involved in fatal crashes from 2005 to 2009.

Of 64 known Post Mortem Results	Number of Readings	% in total
Between 0.001 and 0.019	14	21.9%
Between 0.02 and 0.049	8	12.5%
Between 0.05 and 0.079	6	9.4%
Between 0.08 and 0.149	15	23.4%
0.150 and higher	21	32.8%
Total	64	100.0%

More than half of these riders were in what is referred to in the Road Transport legislation as the “high” and “medium” range (i.e., BAC readings ‘between 0.08 and 0.149’ and ‘0.150 and higher’).

This suggests that these riders were intoxicated prior to their crash. All of the riders with a BAC of 0.150 or more were considered by police to be “at fault” in the crash, and also 93% of riders with BAC readings between 0.08 and .0149 were considered to be “at fault”.

Off Road Deaths

In the period 2005 to 2009, police identified an additional 33 motor cycle fatalities which occurred “off-road” and were therefore not included in the road toll. Some characteristics of these crashes were:

- The rider was known to have been wearing a helmet in 64% of cases;
- Alcohol was in the deceased’s blood stream in 24% of these off road deaths;
- In 75% of the alcohol related deaths, the deceased was not wearing a helmet.

FACTORS IN BICYCLE FATALITIES

Police records of 66 fatal bicycle crashes that occurred in the five calendar years of 2005 to 2009 were examined.

The following points were identified in regards to those fatal crashes:

- The bicycle rider was considered to be “at fault” in 40 or 61% of crashes*;
- 55% of the deceased bicycle riders were known to be wearing helmets;
- Post mortem results found alcohol in the blood stream of 6 (or 15%) of the deceased “at fault” riders. In 5 of those 6 cases, the BAC level was between 0.158 and 0.188.

*Based on the initial COPS report only.

d)-i) Current measures and future strategies to address motorcycle safety, including education, training and assessment programs;

Based on the information gathered from Police around the State on local and regional motorcycle related matters, NSW Police Force adopts measures to address issues involving motorcycles, such as road trauma, drink driving and speeding. To identify the high risk areas on the NSW roads, data on motorcycle injury and fatal crashes are gathered. Operational resources are directed to the areas identified as “high risk”, having regard to the times and days with high level of motorcycle crashes. Information obtained on types/models of motorcycles and demographics of the riders using particular routes is used to devise strategies.

Operation SOLO, for instance, was initiated in conjunction with Operation Southtracks and supported by funding from the Police/RTA Enhanced Enforcement Program (EEP) with the aim of reducing the number of crashes. Speeding and drink driving were targeted through high profile police presence, including use of camera cars, radar and LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging). RTA inspectors were also utilised to combat antisocial driver behaviour.

Among the current measures used are:

a) Deterrence:

High profile strategies using marked police vehicles, vehicle intercepts, random breath testing, media campaigns (including RTA advertising campaigns), education (utilising Road Safety Officers and RRIS – Reduce Risk Increase Student Knowledge program);

b) Detection:

The techniques utilised to detect traffic offenders include the use of mobile random breath testing, unmarked and camouflage vehicles, disqualified driver/High Risk Offender (HRO) targeting, local street operations, complaints, intelligence (including alcohol linking), camera car, lidar and radar, RBT bus, rostering and tasking of police according to days/times and level of risk of crashes.

These measures are further reinforced by working through other avenues including RTA, councils, schools, volunteer and community organisations and public forums.

The above measures and strategies will continue to be implemented in the future. The following case study from 2001 is an example of how NSW Police Force approaches the issues related to motorcycle safety, education, training and assessment.

CASE STUDY – Alpine Way

Through the sealing of the final section of the gravel road on the Alpine Way between Thredbo and Khancoban in 2001, motorcycle tourists had access to an extended loop through the Snowy Mountains and came to the area in unprecedented numbers. Unfortunately, many riders were mentally and physically unprepared for the challenging conditions. Five motorcyclists were killed during 2002 in the alpine area of the Albury Local Area Command, including three on the Alpine Way itself.

Although this case study relates to events that took place almost a decade ago, it remains relevant, as the road safety issues identified today on the Alpine Way were recognised and successfully addressed through the work of Police (New South Wales and Victoria), RTA, Local Government, National Parks and members of the motorcycle community.

Identified factors:

The riders involved in fatal and injury crashes in the Alpine Way area were profiled and the following characteristics were identified:

- Crashes generally occurred from midday onwards, after riders had been travelling for several hours. The highest number of crashes occurred on Saturday, Friday and Sunday (although when a Grand Prix was being held at Philip Island, riders would pass through the area on Wednesday and Thursday, as opposed to the weekend).
- The motorcycle season commenced in October and continued through April, although early or late snowfalls impacted on this.
- Riders were mostly males, aged in their 40s and 50s. Some were reasonably new to riding, while others appeared to be experienced as they had held a licence for 20 or more years. Most of these riders had obtained a licence early in life but had not actively ridden for many years. Many years later, they were returning to riding, had purchased new (high powered) motorcycles and were attempting to emulate the distance riding experiences they had when they were in their twenties or thirties. By the time they crashed, usually after lunch, fatigue had set in.
- These riders were on high-powered motorcycles (1000CC+).
- Groups of riders became scattered and spread out. The more experienced riders were out in front and the less experienced ones drifted further from the pack and when they tried to catch up, they crashed. Considerable effort was made to promote safe riding practices and the use of rest areas to re-group.

Riders stopped by police:

- It was generally the riders at the head and tail of the pack who were caught speeding by police. This reinforced the concerns held for unsafe group riding practices.
- Most riders were unfamiliar to the area and therefore had not heard of the unfavourable crash history or were unaware of police enforcement programs in the area. Riders came from as far as the ACT, Sydney, Melbourne and even Queensland.
- Some riders stopped at local licensed premises for lunch. Extensive RBT in the area found that although some riders showed low readings of alcohol, no rider was over the legal limit.
- Riders were unaware of local wildlife that would enter onto the road (e.g., kangaroos, wallabies, possums and brumbies).

The alpine motorcycle safety issues were addressed by the following methods:

Enforcement:

- A highly visible enforcement strategy was devised and implemented.
- Funding for additional patrol hours through the Police/RTA Enhanced Enforcement Program (EEP) was obtained. This allowed for extended shifts and overnight deployments of Highway Patrol officers to the area.
- Police taskings to the alpine area were on high risk days and times as identified by road crash data.
- A number of sites were commissioned where police could deploy (marked) Vehicle Mounted Speed Camera cars.
- A Breath Analysis instrument was installed at Khancoban Police Station.
- General duties staff were also EEP funded and tasked to perform RBT duties.
- Development of partnerships with Victoria Police who began to experience an increase in motorcycle road trauma from 2003 onwards. During one Grand Prix weekend, there were up to six Highway Patrol police officers deployed on the NSW side, but none deployed on the Victorian side. The NSW side had no motorcycle crashes but over the border in Victoria there were two deaths caused by motorcycle accidents.

Education:

- The Snowy Mountains Motorcycle Safety Group was formed and it consisted of the RTA, Local Council Road Safety Officers, Victoria Police and concerned motor cyclists.
- Community forums, where riders could learn more on the relevant issues, were held.
- An extensive survey of riders, which identified needs for rest areas and other motorcycle-friendly facilities, was conducted.

Encouragement:

- Surveys were left at petrol stations, stores and licensed premises in an attempt to gain more information on the types of riders coming to the area and their needs.
- A brochure, promoting safe group riding practices, rest area locations and safer protective equipment, was published.
- Media releases were issued at key times of the motorcycle tourist season to highlight the dangers and provide examples of undesirable driver/rider behaviours detected by police.

Engineering:

Among the measures adopted were:

- Better facilities, including toilets and BBQ areas where riders could rest and re-group;
- Improvements to roadside fencing and the elimination of some roadside objects (e.g., a sign, a tree, a barrier);
- Morning sweeps of the road by National Parks and Council workers to remove fallen trees and rocks;
- After the large fires in the Kosciusko National Park in early 2003, road authorities installed better signage in the area and promoted approaching rest areas.

Evaluation:

- On-going review of crashes to identify causes, key times, locations;
- Refinement of taskings and expanding them to neighbouring police commands.

Significantly, from the end of 2002 to the present day, there have been no further motorcycle fatalities in the alpine area of the Albury Local Area Command.

Where roads are improved, the potential exists for the issues relating to Alpine Way to re-emerge. New sealed roads such as the Tablelands Way (Taralga-Oberon) and Sea Cliff Bridge (north of Wollongong) have become popular with motorcycle riders. The completion of work on Main Road 92 in late 2010 may result in additional motorcycle tourists coming to yet another remote area, which has limited mobile phone coverage and is a long distance away from services.

d-ii) Current measures and future strategies to address bicycle safety, including education, training and assessment programs:

Information has been received from police around the State on local and regional issues in regards to current bicycle safety initiatives. These initiatives have been summarised below.

COMMUNITY AND ROAD EDUCATION SCHEME (CARES)

CARES is a joint initiative between the NSW Police Force, RTA and local government. The CARES facilities deliver bicycle and road safety education programs designed primarily for students in Years Five and Six. Annexure A is a special feature article that appeared in *Police Weekly* magazine on 31 May 2004.

BICYCLE SAFETY LECTURES

Regular police lectures are delivered to the community on bicycle safety. Some examples of these lectures are bike education and safety power point presentations to schools in Lismore, Casino and Ballina. The police lectures contain information on protective equipment, riding on the road, riding on the footpath, and in bike lanes. The lectures often combine bicycle/motorcycle safety. The RRISK (Reduce Risk Increase Student Knowledge) program also covers road safety for cyclists in a general sense. In addition, police deliver presentations to the driver education students at high schools.

e) The integration of motorcyclists and bicyclists in the planning and management of the road system in NSW:

The NSW Police Force has no information on this item.

f) Motorcycle and bicycle safety issues and strategies in other jurisdictions:

The NSW Police Force has no information on this item.



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CARES

Community & Road
Education Scheme

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CARES

Community & Road Education Scheme

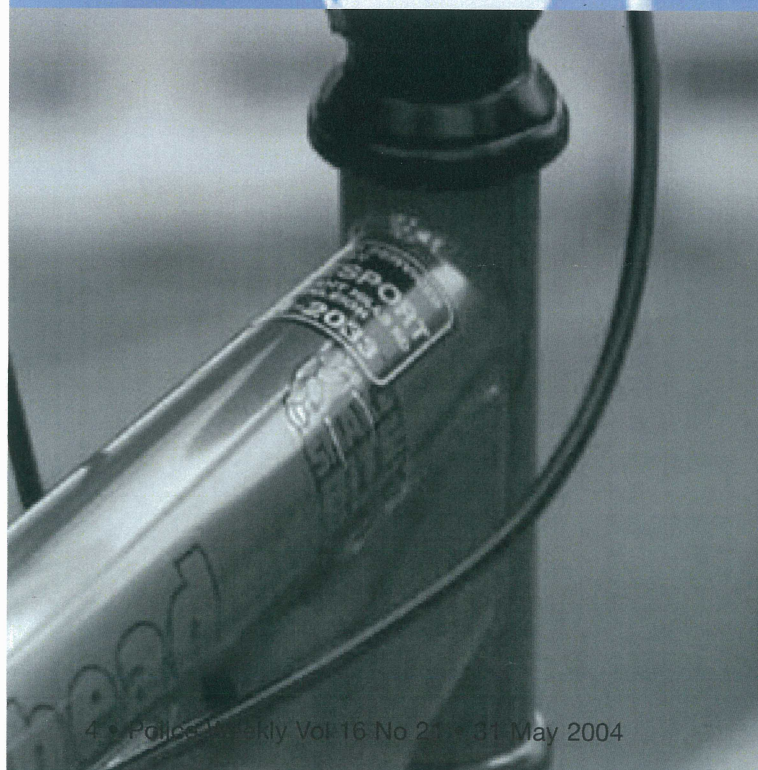
CARES (Community & Road Education Scheme) is a joint initiative between NSW Police, NSW RTA and local government. CARES facilities deliver bicycle and road safety educational programs designed primarily for students in year five and six. Several of the facilities also teach modified programs for other primary grades and preschool aged children to ensure they too can be safe on and around the road environment.

The CARES program is a combination of practical activities and classroom lessons that provide students with a degree of road safety knowledge, as well as develops confidence and skills in a safe and friendly environment.

The day is divided into three session including a classroom lecture, an obstacle course where balance, braking and observation skills are taught and tested, and a simulated network of roads designed for teaching practical 'on road' skills.

There are five CARES facilities in the Sydney Metropolitan Region including Bass Hill, Prospect, South Sydney, St Ives and St Marys. Plans are underway to open a facility on the Central Coast at Palmdale, Gosford.

There are also two similar facilities: the Lake Illawarra PCYC Road Safety Park and the Campbelltown Bicycle & Road Safety Education Centre. While these two centres are not police operated, they share a close working relationship with the other CARES facilities to ensure continuity in teaching bicycle and road safety messages.



Bass Hill CARES

Bass Hill CARES was opened in 1996, within Bankstown LAC. This facility caters for primary aged children, as well as junior primary school and preschool students. Junior classes focus on crossing the road safely as well as the bicycle safety aspect.

More than 4360 students attended Bass Hill CARES in 2003. They came from the Bankstown, Canterbury and Fairfield local government areas, whose councils have a very close working relationship with CARES staff and offer a great deal of support.

The facility has a 95-100% occupancy rate with nearly every school day taken servicing students from preschool to year six. The average class size is 60 students.

For more information about Bass Hill CARES, contact Cst Linda Cross or Snr Cst Bronwyn Green on ph: 9743 9297.

Prospect CARES

The very first CARES facility opened at Prospect at the end of 1990. The concept was developed by local police and the Guildford Rotary Club.

It was initially located adjacent to the Prospect Dam but was relocated to nearby Reen Road, Prospect.

The facility has a 95-100% occupancy rate with nearly every school day booked for primary school students from years three to six. The average class size is 30.

For more information about Prospect CARES, contact Snr Cst Charlie D'Agostino on ph: 9831 8355.

South Sydney CARES

The newest CARES facility was developed and created by South Sydney Council. It is located in Sydney Park, Alexandria and was officially opened in February 2004. South Sydney CARES is available for the public to use free of charge outside its hours of operation.

For more information about South Sydney CARES, contact Csts Jacqui Phillips or Courtney Spencer on ph: 9519 9465.



CARES will develop children's road sense now, for the day they get their driver's licence

St Ives CARES

The CARES facility at St Ives has celebrated 10 years of teaching children bicycle and road safety, having opened officially in November 1993. The site is situated within the grounds of the old police driver training school at St Ives, which is now used by Honda Australia Roadcraft Training (HART).

Located in a bushland setting, students are fortunate enough to enjoy the local fauna including wallabies, an echidna and a vast array of birds.

An average day can have staff teaching up to 60 students from years five and six who come from the Central Coast to the Harbour Bridge, Northern Beaches, outskirts of Parramatta and the North Shore. CARES St Ives also has a 95-100% occupancy rate and saw close to 5000 students in 2003.

For more information about St Ives CARES, contact Snr Cst Sharon Tull or Cst Belinda Mauro on ph: 9983 1142.

CARES Community & Road Education Scheme

St Marys CARES

St Marys CARES opened in June 1995 and is located within the St Marys LAC at Creek Road, St Marys.

St Marys CARES services a large area of schools from Windsor and Richmond, to Badgerys Creek, through to Katoomba and Lithgow.

In 2003, approximately 3000 students attended the facility from 50 different schools.

For more information about St Marys CARES, contact Cst Karen Swindale on ph: 9833 3699.



Lake Illawarra PCYC Road Safety Park

The Lake Illawarra PCYC Road Safety Park is located in the Wollongong – Shellharbour area. Lake Illawarra PCYC has demonstrated its commitment to community safety with the development of the first Road Safety Park in the Illawarra area and was opened in September 1993. The Road Safety Park is situated aside the beautiful lake and close to beaches, which provides a wonderful backdrop and learning environment for the students attending the park.

The program is designed to cater for the needs of students in years three to six with provision for children from preschool and infants. In 2003, 5069 students attended the facility to learn about bicycle and road safety.

For more information about Lake Illawarra PCYC Road Safety Park, contact Melanie Lausz on ph: 4296 4448.

Campbelltown Bicycle & Road Safety Education Centre

Campbelltown City Council opened the Campbelltown Bicycle & Road Safety Education Centre in 1990, the first of its kind in NSW. The centre is located on the corner of Broughton Street and Moore Oxley Bypass and services 150 schools from the Campbelltown, Liverpool, Wollondilly and Camden areas. Each term between 500-800 students attend the centre.

Bicycle and road safety education programs are designed for children from preschool to year 12 and special needs groups. All programs are designed to educate students in safe road behaviour and bicycle skills appropriate to the students' age and ability.

This facility opens free to the public on Sundays and during school holidays and is available for casual and birthday party hire.

For more information about the Campbelltown Centre, contact Chris Reynolds on ph: 4625 7073.