



Motorcycle Riders' Association of South Australia Inc.

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## **MRASA Response to Minister Tarzia's GLS proposal introduced to Parliament 12 November 2020**

Finally, after nearly 3 years of deliberation, procrastination and inactivity, changes of minister, the current Minister for Emergency Services, Vincent Tarzia is introducing the bill into parliament. We note this presentation was made without reference to any members of the groups participating in the consultation process.

As a member of the Motorcycle Reference Group, the MRASA was party to discussions leading up to and the presentation of a report by Dr Matthew Baldock from CASR recommending changes to the way motorcyclists attain their licence. The bulk of the recommendations made were common sense proposals in line with the existing car licence GLS. Indeed, if you search through the records of the MRASA, on the web page, you can see we have long held a similar position.

We and other riding members of the reference group, agreed that allowing skills to be acquired gradually is a good thing. The old analogy of crawling, before you walk, before you run, is very true in the context of learning to ride. Also, alcohol and riding do not mix, at any time, let alone whilst learning to ride.

The key point of opposition to the recommendations, and now the proposed legislation, is the raising of the minimum age to 18 with a few minor variations to meet critical needs, whilst a car learner's permit can be obtained at 16 years.

Firstly, the entire motorcycle cohort felt the disparity was discriminatory against motorcyclists. There has been no valid reason or evidence put forward to support delaying a motorcycle learner's permit by an extra 12 months, compared to that of a car. Crash statistics, traffic offence statistics and any other "evidence" all clearly point to an alarmingly similar trend for both car and bike riders, not a separator.

Police research quoted in the Advertiser article of 12/11/2020 shows that younger riders are often encouraged by older peers to partake in risky riding activity far beyond their capability and experience. A common concern heard in road safety circle centres on the cocksure attitude of "P" plate drivers.

Studies have shown that young people, especially adolescent males are more prone to impulsive behaviour than adults due to a slow down of the brain maturation process which is a necessary developmental stage to allow the development of flexibility of thinking and learning. This can continue in some people into the mid to late 20s. This finding, which is largely undisputed among neuroscientists, contests the assertion that impulsivity of actions and a lack of self-control like deciding to break traffic laws for a thrill is confined to 16-18 year olds.

Under the GLS proposal we would have an army of drivers (already heavily influenced by their peers) attaining their rider learners' permits, supremely confident in their own abilities, ready to show us older riders how to truly ride a motorcycle. Minister, such a mix of attitude is a disaster in the making. They will now be on machines capable of eye watering acceleration without the protection of a steel cage. Hopefully, they will survive. At least by allowing riders to get their learners permit at the same time as that for a car, you remove the supreme confidence from a large number of applicants.

*Let those who ride decide*

The MRASA has long advocated for a complete overhaul of the rider education process. Teaching riders to control a bike at low speeds on a car park has its uses but we need to include a significant on road component which includes varying speeds and traffic conditions. More importantly, we need experts to work on the problem of correcting driver/rider attitude. Surely, the police research would be a very big hint that legislation alone is not going to fix the problem.

Lastly minister, please do not insult the efforts all the members of the Motorcycle Reference Group have put in to preparing legislation. The time lines on the MRASA material shows how long we have been waiting for this bill to come before parliament. There has been little or no consultation in the past 2 years. We have had promises but no action. Now we have action, but please minister on behalf of all parents and riders, do not make a bad situation worse by making riders wait 12 months after they can drive a car before they can ride a bike.

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