

## Motorcycles

The over-representation of motorcycles in the 2007 and 2008 road tolls has the Queensland Police Service (QPS), along with the Queensland Government, re-evaluating current legislation and policy regarding motorcycle licensing.

In 2007, 73 of the 360 fatalities involved motorcycles. That is 20 percent of all fatalities, a significant number considering that motorcycles account for only four percent of registered vehicles on Queensland roads.

So far this trend has continued in 2008. As at March 10, there were 15 motorcyclist fatalities out of the 65 recorded road fatalities, which equates to 23 percent of the road toll this year.

Statistics for 2007 show that speed is the most frequent contributing circumstance to motorcycle rider and pillion fatalities. Inattention, alcohol and illegal manoeuvres were also significant contributing circumstances.

To improve motorcycle safety the Queensland Government will be moving forward with a phased approach to implement a package of motorcycle safety initiatives over three years.

The Government will also be undertaking a comprehensive consultation process with key motorcycle stakeholders on a range of motorcycle initiatives, including those recommended by the Parliamentary Travelsafe Committee in *Report 47—Report on the inquiry into Q-RIDE*.

Initiatives being considered include:

- specific elements of a graduated licensing system, such as power-to-weight ratio restrictions, tenure period of licences, and additional training requirements
- initiatives to reduce the number of dormant motorcycle licence holders
- moped licensing requirements, and
- initiatives to increase rider visibility.

The Government intends to begin a consultation process in early 2008 and to use the findings to help develop a motorcycle safety package. Phase one of the package is expected by late 2008 and phases two and three will see the introduction of the motorcycle safety package initiatives.

The QPS regularly participates in programs such as the Rider Survivor days held in Metropolitan North and South Eastern regions. This is a joint public education initiative with Queensland Transport and the Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety, Queensland (CARRS-Q).

Sergeant Russell Waters, Brisbane West District, regularly participates in Rider Survivor days on Mount Glorious, along with enforcement and education days run by QPS.

“The Rider Survivor days are a joint community effort between Queensland Transport, CARRS-Q, Morgan and Wacker Motorcycle Training School, and the Queensland Police Service, Brisbane West District,” Sergeant Waters said.

“They are proving effective. It’s been more than four years since there has been a fatality on Mount Glorious where the Rider Survivor days are held and where enforcement is regularly undertaken.

“The holistic approach is what works, not simply enforcement alone,” he said.

The next Rider Survivor day will be held on Sunday April 20, 2008, from 8am–1pm on the block of land next to the Outpost Cafe in Christie Street, Canungra.

Police, ambulance, and fire and rescue officers will be on hand to answer questions and profile what happens in the event of a serious crash. Motorcyclists will also have the opportunity to see radar detection equipment, police motorcycles, and a mobile car camera first hand.

Attendees will be invited to complete a survey and the results will help agencies such as Queensland Transport and QPS to develop new ways to improve motorcycle safety in the area. The day will include a free sausage sizzle.

## Heavy vehicles

This year has also seen a significant increase in the number of fatalities involving heavy vehicles.

As of March 10, 2008, heavy vehicles were involved in 26 of the 65 deaths that occurred on Queensland roads. This represents 40 percent of the total road toll so far this year, despite the fact that as at January 2008, heavy vehicles accounted for just over two percent of registered vehicles on Queensland roads.

Of the 53 fatal crashes that have occurred in 2008, heavy vehicles were involved in 20. This is a significant increase from 2007, when heavy vehicles were involved in only five of the 65 fatal crashes that occurred in this time period.

However, while heavy vehicles are over-represented in the road toll, the majority of drivers are not seen as being ‘at fault’.

As of March 10, 2008, 55 percent of heavy freight vehicle drivers involved in a fatal crash were not considered at fault.

Crash statistics for 2007 show the highest-known contributing circumstance for fatalities involving heavy vehicles was inattention followed closely by illegal manoeuvres. Fatigue, speed, and inexperience also rated highly among contributing circumstances to fatalities involving heavy vehicles.

As a result of this significant increase, State Coroner Michael Barnes is chairing a committee to discuss a review of fatalities involving heavy freight vehicles in Queensland.

Research officers from State Traffic Support Branch are in the process of developing a research proposal in consultation with a senior research officer from CARRS-Q.

The QPS along with Queensland Transport, the Australian Workers Union and the Queensland Trucking Association have all agreed to participate in the review.

It is hoped this review will assist in reducing the level of road trauma on Queensland roads as well as helping to prevent similar road crash fatalities in the future.

*By Shannon Kincade and  
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