

www.victorianmotorcyclecouncil.org.au
victorianmotorcyclecouncil@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/victorianmotorcyclecouncil
ACN: 148567015



VMC Key Principles Policy position and FAQ: April 2022

Road Safety – Key Principles

Position Statement:

Key Principles:

The Victorian Motorcycle Council holds, and the various antecedent ministerial and Vicroads motorcycle advisory panels, with participants from Victoria Police, Transport Accident Commission, VicRoads, Department of Justice, Road Minister's Office and members of the riding community, agreed that:

"On the topic of road safety:

- *Road safety is a shared responsibility amongst all road users, road designers and road maintainers.*
- *The road safety of one road user group should not come at the expense of the road safety of another road user group."*

VMC Policy Position: Road Safety Key Principles

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Q: Is this principle really seen in action?

A: It is excellent that these principles are/were recognised by various people within the authorities and agencies, but in terms of departmental output, the answer is no. There is no inherent policy to make such considerations, unlike for walking and cycling.

Q: In what ways isn't motorcycling considered when authorities make road safety decisions?

A: The impact on motorcycling is rarely considered when vehicular, pedestrian or cycling safety programs are announced. All transport policy and road infrastructure decisions consider the impact on pedestrian and cyclist safety as a matter of course. Some decisions are even driven by such considerations in that walking and cycling have ongoing and multiple road safety programs in place funded by the State from general revenue. Given that everyone is a pedestrian and almost everyone has ridden a bicycle or is a cyclist, this makes some sense, but it is not right.

The automatic inclusion of pedestrian and cyclist road safety happens because walking and cycling are well integrated in Transport policy. There is active provisioning in planning, policy and budgets for adding and/or improving pedestrian and cycling safety and infrastructure. The same obligations and focus does not exist for motorcycling and the VMC has counted many road safety and road policy decisions over the years that completely ignored their impact on motorcycling, for example Victoria's 30yr Infrastructure plan, City of Melbourne bicycle and tram lane separation works, lane width reduction works, carcentric road repair standards, are but a few examples.

Q: But the TAC and other agencies are on about motorcycle safety all the time aren't they?

A: Yes because motorcycling is primarily considered as a road safety problem, particularly when there is a spike in statistics. Motorcycling is rarely considered outside of this framework. The mobility, efficiency, environmental, congestion and mental health benefits of motorcycling are never positively promoted unlike for walking and cycling. Even fledgling personal e-modes of transport such as e-scooters and e-bikes have a more positive public discussion.

Q: Isn't that a gaping contradiction in the bureaucratic framework then?

A: Yes it is. Rather than safer motorcycling objectives dropping out as part of an integrated transport policy, such as we see with walking and cycling, riding is almost always considered through the lens of road safety generating a "something has to be done" public discussion.

Q: Why do the authorities have such a blind spot?

A: That is a long and convoluted discussion. It is partly a rod riders have made for their own back by wanting to be left alone or exhibiting anti-authoritarian tendencies. It is partly to do with not having a critical mass of riders in the general community. It is partly to do with there not being enough riders in the bureaucracy. It is partly to do with riding largely being seen as

VMC Policy Position: Road Safety Key Principles

a discretionary activity. It is partly to do with riders being an extremely broad demographic who have not been able to coordinate a single voice...And the reasons go on.

Q: Is this why we have a motorcycle safety levy?

A: Short answer is yes. Firstly, the VMC does not support the motorcycle safety levy as it is discriminatory and institutionalises this singular focus on motorcycling as a road safety problem. Secondly, with the current policy positions and road funding systems in place, motorcycle safety programs and road treatments rarely rise in priority over other “bigger” issues to attract timely funding from general revenue. Until that systematic reality changes, the motorcycle safety levy provides exclusive funding that can only be spent on approved activities that benefit motorcycle road safety. Like or hate the levy, fewer riders have ended up in hospital because of levy funded projects. Ultimately, these kinds of outcomes should be funded and achieved without the motorcycle safety levy, and would come when riding is genuinely considered as an integrated part of transport policy.

Q: What's the VMC doing about trying to get motorcycling viewed as part of transport policy?

A: The VMC is a volunteer organisation and does its best with limited means and time. It is working towards this long term objective by being seen as a reasonable representative voice and building working relationships based on cooperative partnerships rather than taking a belligerent line. It calls out the bureaucracy when another example of the policy blind spot is seen. It makes submissions to government that sometimes take an educative and wider scope than called for by the terms of reference.

Q: We can't just stop thinking about motorcycle safety – it is a genuine issue.

A: This policy position is not an argument for the bureaucracy to stop working towards safer motorcycling, but to treat it as one of the outputs of a more integrated holistic transport policy approach. For example, filtering was introduced without updating the learner driver curriculum about this change. Freeways have had lanes added to increase capacity, partly by reducing lane widths which failed to recognise how this might make filtering less safe. Road space is carved away to increase foot paths and add bicycle lanes, without considering the motorcycle safety impacts of reduced shared road space. Future infrastructure plans often focus on and promote public transport, walking and cycling, but never consider promoting the benefits of motorcycling.

