

VicRoads
Motorcycle On-road Rider
Assistance Program
Market Research Report
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Executive summary and suggestions to maximise the appeal of the program

Aim and methodology

- The purpose of this research project was to examine the appeal of a motorcycle on-road rider assistance program among recently licensed motorcycle riders and those who had returned to riding after a break
- Four focus groups were conducted with key target markets as follows:
 - > Recently licensed riders aged 20-25 years
 - > Recently licensed riders aged 30-50 years
 - > Returning riders aged 30–60 years
 - > Scooter riders, recently licensed and returning, aged 20-60 years

Research findings

Overview

- The model program developed in Stage One of this project was of general appeal to most of the riders we spoke to, however some minor modifications would increase its appeal considerably
- Motivations in relation to participating in such a program and towards riding in general differed among the three market segments and need to be taken into account in program development

Recently licensed riders

- Recently licensed riders are generally interested in becoming better and safer riders, improving their confidence on the road and developing skills in unfamiliar and potentially dangerous conditions such as riding with tram tracks or on gravel roads
- These riders were more interested in a program with a serious focus which included an upfront theory component in a group, small group on-road tuition, and post ride group discussion as well as individual feedback
- This group valued the social aspects of riding and preferred a program run in a small group (with a ratio of one instructor to four riders preferred) to maximise the opportunity to learn from others and to take the 'pressure' off the individual

Returning riders

- Returning riders have often taken a break from riding when they started a family and returning to riding is associated with new freedom, recreation, fun or a *mid life crisis!*
- While acknowledging that they could always learn more, these riders believe that they have adequate riding skills and have little interest in a program with a focus on criticism or assessment
- A program which emphasised the 'returning' or 'refreshing' element while having fun would have the most appeal

- For this group, the theory component should be minimised and preference is for a small group situation to create a social environment and reduce focus or pressure on individuals

Non-scooter riders

- In addition to the elements discussed above, non-scooter riders (recently licensed and returning) preferred a combination of urban and touring routes with a suggestion for various program options to be offered separately
- These riders considered that half a day would be appropriate for an urban program but that a touring route would require a full day, although older riders with families and/or businesses acknowledged that it might be difficult to *escape* for more than half a day

Scooter riders

- Scooter riders generally ride to commute or to conduct errands in an urban environment: riding is less of a recreational or social pursuit for this group
- Hence, scooter riders are unlikely to ride long distances or in groups, with 10 to 30 minute rides being the norm
- The model program was appealing to this group, if it was customised for scooter riders in urban riding environments, including 'tricky' riding situations such as roundabouts, freeways and tram tracks
- It was clear that a program for scooter riders should be a maximum of two hours in duration, perhaps with two one to two hour sessions spread over two separate days
- One instructor to one or two participants was preferred to maximise learning

Delivery organisation and instructors

- There was an obvious preference for the program to be managed and coordinated by VicRoads with service delivery provided by trained and accredited instructors
- Overall, it made most sense to riders for the program to be run separately for scooter riders and other motorcycle riders due to their different capabilities and requirements for such a program

Promotion, price and incentives

- It was also very clear that such a program must be promoted to riders soon after they are licensed or immediately they return to riding after a break (ie within the first one to two months), any longer and the 'window' is lost, as many riders then believe that they do not require skills or safety development
- For the program to be appealing, the price should be below \$200, preferably around \$100 after discounts or incentives, as the target markets are likely to have recently outlaid a considerable amount of money in purchasing a motorcycle, protective gear, licensing, insurance and registration
- The most attractive incentive would be a reduction in insurance premiums or a registration discount
- Rebates are considered to be inconvenient and off-putting, while motorcycle and gear discounts are not valuable at a time when these items are likely to have been recently purchased

Naming

- The program name should be appealing to all rider groups, in particular returning riders who are easily deterred by any notion of judgement or criticism
- The names *Rider Coaching*, *Rider Mentoring*, *Rider Development* or *Rider Support* had general appeal across all the focus groups
- Consideration could also be given to naming the program differently for the different markets with the use of the terms 'returning' or 'refresher' incorporated for returning riders

1 Introduction and Background

One of the eight issues identified in the current Victorian Motorcycle Road Safety Strategy (2002-2007) is a lack of rider skills and experience. This project will involve the development and piloting of an on-road rider assistance and support program for Victoria based on best practice related to rider education and consideration of existing programs of this type. The aim is to improve rider skills and experience to reduce the number of motorcyclist fatalities and serious injuries.

This project represents Stage 2 in a five stage approach to the development. The five stages to be undertaken are:

- Stage 1: Critically review current on-road rider assistance programs and develop a best practice model for delivery
- Stage 2: Market research demand for an on-road rider assistance program in Victoria
- Stage 3: Develop an administration system for incorporating incentives and sponsorship for an on-road rider assistance program
- Stage 4: Develop and implement an on-road rider assistance pilot program
- Stage 5: Evaluate the on-road rider assistance pilot program and develop a longer term evaluation framework

2 Project Objectives

The purpose of this research project was to conduct market research with recently licensed motorcycle riders and those who had returned to riding after a break, to examine the appeal of a program as determined in Stage 1.

The research:

- Assessed the overall appeal of a rider assistance and support program to several different groups of motorcycle riders
- Examined views about various aspects of such a program, including content, group size, type of instructor, program location, length and timing, delivery organisation and naming issues
- Determined whether scooters should be included with other motorcycle types or separately
- Identified responses to a proposed program model determined in Stage One
- Examined views about program costs and the extent of participation incentive required for the program to be attractive to riders

3 Methodology

Four focus groups were conducted with key target markets as follows:

1. Recently licensed riders (last 6-18 months) aged 20-25 years, excluding scooter riders
2. Recently licensed riders (last 6-18 months) aged 30-50 years, excluding scooter riders
3. Returning riders (within first two years after break of at least five years) aged 30–60 years
4. Scooter riders, recently licensed and returning, aged 20-60 years

Structure of focus groups

- Eight to nine participants were recruited to attend each group
- Recruitment of groups was undertaken by a specialist recruitment agency to ensure a good cross section of participants on the basis of the following characteristics:
 - > Range of motorcycle types, age and gender (attempt to include two women in groups 1 and 2 and up to four women in group 4)
 - > Geographic distribution across Melbourne
 - > Participants within each groups did not know each other as this would reduce the range of views and attitudes
- The focus groups were conducted in a central professional venue to allow digital recording and with an opportunity for VicRoads to observe each group
- The groups, of one to one and a half hours duration were conducted in the evening to maximise the likelihood of participants being able to attend
- Respondents were paid a financial incentive to attend the group

Characteristics of focus group participants

Group 1: Recently licensed riders aged 20 to 25 years

- Four men and one woman attended
- Despite confirming eight people on the morning of the focus group, three people did not attend
- All had been licensed for up to 6 to 18 months
- Participants came from suburbs across Melbourne, including South Yarra, Noble Park, Essendon, Reservoir and the city

Group 2: Recently licensed riders aged 30 to 50 years

- Three men and two women attended
- Despite confirming eight people on the morning of the focus group, three people did not attend
- All had been licensed for up to 6 to 18 months
- Participants came from suburbs across Melbourne, including Kensington, Altona, Cranbourne, and Southbank

Group 3: Riders returning after a break, aged 30 to 60 years

- Seven men attended
- All had returned to riding within the last two years, after a break of five years or more
- Participants came from suburbs across Melbourne, including Doncaster, Glen Iris, Moorabbin, St Kilda, Sunbury, Cheltenham and Heidelberg

Group 4: Scooter riders, recently licenced and returning after a break, aged 20 to 60 years

- Six men and three women attended
- Three had started riding a scooter after having ridden other types of motorcycles previously
- Participants came from suburbs across Melbourne, including St Kilda, Lilydale, Ringwood, Brunswick, Glen Waverley, Fitzroy, Cheltenham, and Richmond

Methodological limitations

- It should be noted that qualitative research provides rich, insightful information which provides a good, depth understanding of riders' views to assist in the development of a pilot rider assistance and support program
- However, focus groups are not quantitative research and do not provide findings which can necessarily be considered to be representative of the views of all motorcycle riders

4 Research Findings

4.1 Top of mind appeal of an on-road assistance program

Participants were shown the information below about on-road assistance programs which was taken from the Stage One project report, and asked for their immediate views about the appeal of such a program.

While there is no single definition of what constitutes an on-road assisted ride program, such programs generally:

- Concentrate on everyday on-road riding rather than off-road operation
- Assume that riders possess basic riding skills (ie they do not teach basic riding skills)
- Provide mentoring and feedback from experts, experienced riders or instructors to riders about how they could modify or improve their riding skills to enhance their safety
- Have a safe riding focus
- Do not provide or address advanced riding skills, other than those related to rider safety
- Provide formal or informal referral of riders to rider training for riders who may seek or require this
- Expect riders to participate on their own street-legal motorcycles (or scooters)

Recently licensed riders

Recently licensed riders were generally quite interested in the program concept, although it was considered that such a program would be most valuable within the first few months of commencing on-road riding.

The following reasons and motivations were mentioned:

- To become a better/safer rider
- To improve confidence on the road
- To develop skills in areas and conditions don't usually ride in (eg tram tracks, gravel roads)

Several recently licensed riders commented that they had undertaken informal 'mentoring' rides either with a friend (as a pillion passenger) or on a one to one ride with a 'mentor' identified through *Net Rider*.

These opportunities were seen as a valuable way to develop skills, although it was mentioned later in the discussion that it is important that a mentor or coach has not developed bad habits, and in this context, it would be preferable to have a professional 'coach'.

The following comments were made by recently licensed riders, indicating that they are not always confident riding on the road when they commence riding:

It's a little bit daunting, I guess that's why I did a lot of back street riding at first, that's before I ever started riding to work. It's handy to constantly learn more and more.

I think any help is good. I don't have any friends who ride so I gave it a shot on my own and then I joined a motor bike club... I found that they just sit and around and drink and talk, they don't really ride that much.

Just become a better rider at the end of the day. We all know we don't want to come off and know it is dangerous.

One of the things that concerns a lot of people is if you go for your learner's in a car you have to spend a whole year with someone watching you in the car before you can get your licence. With a bike, sure you have to wait a bit longer to get it, but you go and do six hours on a course and they hand you a piece of paper and say bye bye. You're in a more vulnerable position, you haven't got the protection, so I think obviously those kinds of people who haven't even driven a car, they are just going to be so vulnerable.

*I think it's a great idea. When I first got my learners I got on a bike and I enrolled in a course and there was a group of us and we all felt the same way. At the end of the two days we were all handed a piece of paper and the fact that we were allowed whatever on motorbikes scared the absolute sh*t of us and we were all like 'oh my god don't let us'.*

For me it would fill a big gap between at the end of my learners having a bit of bike craft and then applying it into road situation. I would've done it before if it existed. I had to rely on my own sense to stick on the side streets rather than go straight on the freeway.

Returning riders

Most returning riders had taken a break from riding when they started a family. The break was usually *directed* by their wife and or instigated for financial reasons.

Then had kids, instructed to sell bike!

These riders had recommenced motorcycle riding as their children got older, when they got more freedom or were in a better financial position, and in response to a *mid-life crisis!*

Overall, most returning riders were of the view that they could ride well and were unlikely to attend a program of this type, although several acknowledged that such a program could be helpful to them.

All but one of the returning riders was male, and these middle aged men commented that not wanting to attend a program was an *ego thing* and that *they wouldn't want someone else criticising their riding.*

The one woman who had returned to riding a scooter after formerly riding a larger bike after a break raising a family, commented that she would have been very interested in attending a rider assistance program in the period immediately after she recommenced riding.

Thinking about it I should have done something like this coming back. Long break, busier roads. Would have been ideal!

The comments below were made by returning riders suggesting that a program for returning riders needs to have the following characteristics to entice these riders:

- Should be able to attract riders as soon as they recommence riding
- Should be fun (eg on a racetrack or touring location, something don't get the chance to do every day, trying out different bikes)
- Should focus on changes in road and traffic conditions
- Should avoid criticism or telling returning riders how to ride

It comes back so quickly. Just like riding a bike!

I noticed a lot more cars on the road and they don't care. Riding didn't feel different but the drivers did.

I guess there is concern with our age group, skills and reflexes are slower. So I guess this is for easing old farts back into it!

I think something like this has to be fun...So make it fun as well as safe. Don't come down and police everything. I've seen courses in Two Wheels, you can go to the Black Spur and they do a rider assistance kind of thing. Thought it sounds cool because I would have fun doing it.

It might be a bit of an ego thing, get told you're not up to it!

It has to be a fun thing. One of the worst things is to get where you're going and have a mate critique your style. Don't want to know, who cares. Don't want to hear it.

On the road critiquing, don't know if that appeals!

But once you've actually got back on the bike and think are competent, don't want to be told what to do.

I don't feel any different to way I felt when I was 25 riding a bike. Don't feel I've lost anything but I probably have. I just can't measure it.

Scooter riders

Scooter riders were generally quite interested in the idea of a rider assistance program, although preferred a different focus to riders of larger bikes (these issues are discussed throughout the report).

As with other riders, the program would be of most benefit in the few months after licensing or returning to riding.

The following comments were made by scooter riders:

I think it would be a really good thing for people with little experience and who want to have scooter to get around city. Have to deal with lots of traffic and situations you might be nervous about getting around.

I did a one-day course, then I was on the road with a licence. Bit daunting! So then would have been good.

No, I've been riding for nearly two years, and I think I'm invincible! I would have been interested when I first started riding though.

I would say right at the very start.

4.2 Preferred program content

Focus group participants were asked whether they would be more interested in attending a program which included a theory or classroom component or a program which focussed primarily on on-road riding, instruction and feedback.

Participants' views about any other program elements were also sought.

In general, recently licensed riders indicated that they would like to include a reasonably substantial theory component, while returning riders and scooter riders would prefer to focus more on practical riding.

Recently licensed riders

Recently licensed riders liked the idea of some theory component to help them think through the practical component and to learn from the views of other program participants.

Older recently licensed riders tended to prefer less theory than younger riders.

Well I'd have to say I think you need like a theory component at the start and then maybe at the end. I like to talk about a theory what we're going to do and then go out on the road and then touch it again. You sort of want to know what you're going to do before you get out there.

I'd agree with that. I think the theory you get when you get your licence or L's is really basic. So there are a lot of things that need to be learned.

If you have theory, often you think 'I don't know what to talk about' but often someone can bring up something you didn't think of. Everyone has a lot of good ideas. And obviously the practical riding side is good because it shows the skills you would be using.

It depends on what you're talking about. The length of time, if it's like a two hour training session of embedding stuff in and then a five minute drive then that's not realistic. For myself I kind of like to go and get the theory of something and then go and try it out. For me a short amount of theory and then try it out.

I would think some theory would be relatively essential. Don't think it needs to be any more than 25% of the time allocated. Just to check that everyone knows the same thing, on the same page.

Individual feedback on riding was considered to be very important to the new riders, but they also thought it would be valuable to include feedback in a group setting where other participants could also benefit.

I think a bit of both. While you're on the road someone is out there with you. That person can focus on the individual a bit and tell them what they did right or wrong and then at the end maybe have a group discussion and the instructor could tell them what they did, 'Jo did this'...Maybe someone might not have done it during the program but it may be a problem solved.

Other content elements raised by recently licensed riders were:

- Statistics and graphic images to emphasis safety issues
- Immediate feedback to reinforce learning

They could talk about some statistics. Whether it's accidents. In regard to how people have been injured and whether it's their fault or other people's fault. The safety component can sometimes hit home. Maybe it makes you think about how people are getting injured.

I reckon also the graphic images. I don't know about you guys but when I see that it really hurts. Something graphic to say this is what could happen.

I think the biggest aspect of what I'm looking for is like in a car when you have someone right next to you who can fix your mistake on the spot but when you're riding you have to wait till you finish before you get feedback on it. I have had a chance to go with someone who was an experienced rider and we had a chance to go really slow. It was sort of like a two up situation. I always thought it would be really good to have a program like that. Sort of explaining it and then having a debrief.

Returning riders

Returning riders were happy to include a small amount of theory to anchor the practical component, but would not be interested in too much of being *told what to do*.

It was also clear that returning riders would only participate if they thought a program would be interesting and/or fun and any theory component should therefore take this issue into account.

I don't mind the theory. If it's been a while you may have forgotten something. So have a quick brief, then on road and away you go. It's not a case where you ride and they give you some criticisms, don't mind some basic refreshers before hand, so 'keep head like this or do this'...Because there are some skills you lose when you haven't been on a bike for a while...not forever theory.

I don't think I could handle someone talking in my ear!

Scooter riders

The scooter riders were more similar to the returning riders, in preferring a strong emphasis on on-road riding. Unlike the other returning riders, however, scooter riders were happy for as much individual feedback as possible.

Issues particular to scooter riders to be included in the program were:

- Turning, particularly at roundabouts
- City riding, including tram tracks

You go through all theory when going for your licence.

That sort of thing, roundabouts and sharp turns are good, because a lot of people think they bike will fall over and they won't. Will only crash if apply front brake.

Tram tracks. Wet tram tracks too. A couple of times thought I was going to come off.

Comment [f1]: Out of context? Is this about the use of headphones to give immediate feedback? – needs some explanation

4.3 Size of group

Participants were shown the options below and asked which group size they thought would be most beneficial in relation to their learning and (following discussion) which type of group would provide the most normal or natural riding situation.

What group size do you think would be most beneficial and why?

- One instructor and one participant
- One instructor and two participants
- Small group with one instructor for a group of 6-8 participants
- Large group of about 30 people overall, but on-road component having one instructor to 6-8 participants

Overall, most of the non-scooter riders preferred a small group situation, with one instructor to three or four participants. This group size was considered to allow the benefits of learning from other riders while still providing sufficient individual attention. Furthermore, a small group was considered to provide a natural riding situation (for larger motorbikes) and to be a more social and enticing event.

Many of the non-scooter riders, particularly older returning riders, did not like the idea of the focussed attention or *pressure* they would receive in the one to one situation.

Two additional points were made in relation to a small group situation:

- Two different instructors could provide more interest, with different teaching styles
- It would be important to have participants of a similar standard to avoid a situation where one person got more attention than the other(s)

Scooter riders, on the other hand, generally preferred a one-to-one or one to two learning situation where they could each receive maximum focus.

This situation may in part be more attractive because scooter riding is a more individual activity, where scooter riders ride to commute or to conduct errands, rather than as a social activity. For these reasons, a group of scooter riders is not considered to create a normal or natural riding situation.

Rider comments in relation to preferred group size are shown below.

Recently licensed riders

Larger could be better. As I said before, if you're all chatting everyone can learn from experiences and you find out the most. I suppose you don't want it to get too big because everyone may not have the time.

I would probably say 15 and then break up into smaller groups and each group has two instructors. One instructor to four participants. Maybe have a change with a different instructor. Maybe at the start someone teaches you something and at the end someone else will teach you. Instructors will teach differently.

I think in a one to one environment it's very similar to getting a car licence. Like if you go out and make a blatant mistake you feel the pressure.

I agree that the smaller group is better. The more feeling you get of people watching you, you have the pressure situation again. You're thinking more about what people are watching you.

I think you take something from one on one and also group. You want to pick up something from the group. A bit of everything is always handy.

With three or four or maybe six, you could see where something is working and realise 'oh yes that's not working' and it makes some things sink in as well. I know as learners when you're watching sometimes you think 'oh that person is doing something else'.

I think you would be more nervous doing it one on one anyway. I think you would make more mistakes knowing somebody is sitting behind you judging your every move.

Returning riders

It would be more fun in a group. Otherwise you'd feel fully assessed. Too much focus on you as an individual. Your natural flow won't come out.

I don't think I'd feel comfortable one on one.

You have to allow for people's personalities, some people take criticism well, others don't. It could feel like a test.

I'd rather one on one, full attention. Value for money, Focused attention on you. If it was a group of 6-8, you might be third off the rank, you may miss things he would have picked up on one on one.

Scooter riders

One or two worst case. Any more than that, the instructor can't pay attention.

A direct relationship...not intimate, but can focus on each other.

I'd say one to two, with people who have done similar things to me...I'm there to reflect off what they have done. They may be at the same level as me but had different experiences so that could be good.

I wouldn't like it if one person needed more attention than another, then it could really backfire.

4.4 Type of instructor

Participants were shown the options below and asked which type of instructors they thought would be the most appropriate and credible.

Which of the following types of instructors would be the most credible and why?

- Motorcycle police officer (uniformed/marked motorcycle)
- Motorcycle police officer (off duty)
- Trained instructor (such as the instructors who run licence training programs) (eg HART)
- Experienced rider

The responses were very consistent across all the focus groups.

There was a clear preference for trained motorcycle instructors, as they were thought to be experienced, know how to teach others and not have any 'bad habits'.

I would like a trained instructor from a training school.

I think it would give you more confidence to think you are actually getting good advice. If you know you are getting feedback and a trained professional. You want someone with accreditation.

I would definitely go with the trained instructor. You want someone who knows what they're talking about. Not so much an experienced rider but someone who is trained. Otherwise, it might not be necessarily the right way of doing things.

Motorcycle police officers on-duty were unanimously considered to be unsuitable because of the impact on the traffic environment and because they may be too daunting to some riders.

I wouldn't bother with experienced rider and police officer because to me it wouldn't feel like a proper riding experience. When you see a police car, the traffic is doing 10 k's slower. It might also intimidate the person who is getting the instruction.

I think people would get intimidated. If I had to work with a police officer I couldn't do that. I'd want more of a relaxed one to one.

Police would make people too nervous!

I think a lot of people wouldn't do the course if cops were running it.

Off-duty motorcycle police officers were considered as an option by some riders, if they had also undertaken instructor training.

Mine was an instructor, used to be a cop. I liked getting the insight.

It would be Ok if the cops had done the training.

General 'experienced riders' were not considered to be appropriate as they were not thought to be able to provide a coaching environment of greater value than an experienced friend or *Net Rider* mentor.

A personal (experienced) rider may make the same mistakes they do while they are riding and they may not be aware of those. I don't know about you guys but my mum is a terrible driver and she's been driving a lot longer than I have!

I would probably knock off the experienced rider because they are all experienced riders and I guess the trained instructor is trained to do things the right way. I mean I find myself when I'm trying to teach something it's hard to get it though to them because I'm not a good teacher.

I think the experienced rider has picked up a lot of bad habits.

But how do you quantify an experienced rider? We're experienced (returning) riders but I wouldn't want to critique anyone.

4.5 Location

Participants were shown the suggestions below and asked which location(s) would be of most interest to them for an assisted ride program.

Following discussion, participants were asked whether it would interest them to participate in a program which was customised to their regular riding routes.

Would you be most interested in participating in a program in an:

- Urban location
- Touring route (eg Black Spur, Great Ocean Road)
- Combination of these

Overall, non-scooter riders liked the option of including a combination of urban and touring routes, with a preference for separate programs run on different days in different locations to allow riders to pick and choose that which suited them best.

Scooter riders had a clear preference for urban riding, in keeping with their usual style of riding.

All groups indicated that while a customised approach was appealing, riders needed more practice or skills training in conditions in which they did not regularly ride.

Non-scooter riders

I think there is much to be learnt in both (environments). They need different riding skills and knowledge.

Combination. Most bike riders like going for nice rides too!

My understanding for this course is to make things safe. My thought is people do their learner's, get their basic skills and then start moving to the wider 'how do I get my experience on the road'. The most dangerous place is the urban roads. I think having better skills in the urban area would lead to more safety.

I was going to say I would have few different programs. Some people may never go for a weekend ride on the Great Ocean Road. For me, I just want to get to work and back.

There may be some people that like an urban location or may be people who only like the Black Spur.

I would do both but then again I think for others it would be a deterrent if it was too long. I'd like to find the time. Maybe one day you could do the urban and then half a day to do the Great Ocean Road one.

...conditions on your own route - road conditions are different everywhere. Go through train tracks anywhere in the city. Go through road signs anywhere. I think it would be too difficult to do your own route. I actually like the idea of different roads, tram tracks.

It runs the risk of getting people into a comfort zone which isn't what you want. If you say I only ride on this sort of road in Richmond and then a couple of years later they have only ever ridden in the city and suddenly they have no frame of reference.

Probably streets in Collingwood and Richmond where road is crap. That was the first thing I noticed when I came to Melbourne, the roads are crap, they're not like that in Perth.

Scooter riders

I'd be surprised if people would want Black Spur, or Great Ocean Road...

More an urban location, city streets.

I think a bit of a mix of what normally do, new areas as well, tricky ones too.

Tram tracks and freeways with semi-trailers! Things that scare us.

4.6 Length and timing

The focus group participants were asked what length of program they would be most likely to attend and their views in relation to the program being conducted on weekdays or the weekend.

How long do you think such a program should be:

- One to two hours
- Half day
- One day
- Two days

Again, the views of scooter riders and non-scooter riders differed.

Non-scooter riders had a preference for a half day to full day program, perhaps with various location options (ie urban half day and Great Ocean Road full day).

Older riders and those with businesses and families indicated that it would be difficult to take more than half a day at a time.

Scooter riders preferred a one to two hour program, (perhaps on two separate days) as they felt that more than this would be too tiring. The scooter riders present indicated that most of their rides would be of 15 to 30 minutes in duration and for a particular purpose (eg commuting or shopping) and that they rarely went 'cruising' or rode for recreation.

Most riders preferred a weekend option, to cater for all job situations, although it was acknowledged that the traffic situation would be more realistic and meaningful on weekdays.

Non-scooter riders

I prefer half a day to a day. Two days is too long. Would you go to all that trouble for one or two hours? You need half a day depending on what you're doing.

One or two hours might not be enough. Even half a day might not be enough if you go out of the urban conditions. I might say one day for the urban and one day for the touring.

Half day for each component.

A lot more time to learn from your mistakes, and make mistakes. If you're going to be doing, theory, go out with the instructor, and then stop for lunch. I think you need a day to get more out of it. I guess you could squeeze it into a half day though.

I think if it was a smaller group, definitely the half day.

Sometimes with your own work demands you can only attend half a day...I think the course should be a number of courses like 1 to 4. Not just one for each person.

I have a business and four kids...that's time out. So half a day is about it.

Well traffic conditions change on the weekend to week days, then again I work every day so I wouldn't be able to make a weekday. Probably give two options I suppose.

Especially with urban traffic you need to deal with it on the week days.

Scooter riders

Most people only ride a scooter for half an hour!

Two hours on two different weekends. So go back and get tested, get feedback. Ask questions and get a certificate.

Yes, because if it's too long and there are too many things to work on it could sap your confidence. If I get a few ideas, go away and work on them, and then come back for more feedback, its better. So not one whole day.

4.7 Type of motorcycles to be included

Participants were asked their views about whether scooter riders and other motorcycle riders should participate in the program together or separately.

The majority view (most recently licences riders and scooter riders) was that the two styles of motorcycle should be kept separate because:

- The style of riding is different and the riders will have different needs from a program
- Scooter riders prefer a shorter, urban based program with one or two participants per instructor
- Other motorcycle riders prefer a half day to full day program with a small group (around three or four riders per instructor)
- Scooters may be slower and hold up the rest of the group
- Scooter riders may be intimidated by other motorcycle riders

The returning riders, however, had no concerns about scooter riders being included with other riders.

The focus is on being on a two-wheeler and being safe.

Non-scooter riders

Just different dynamics basically. They behave differently.

I think they're automatic as well, scooters, most of them. And I think changing gears is a big problem of riding bikes (which we would want to focus on in a program).

Definitely. I mean what scooters go down the Black Spur or the Great Ocean Rd!

Your scooter is going to struggle on the Black Spur!

The only issue I would have and I remember from my old course that the scooter riders were like the remedial riders. They held up the people in terms of timing!

Scooter riders

People with motorcycles have gears so it's a different way of driving. Ours is automatic.

Demographics are different, scooters seem to be a specific group.

Lots of scooter riders would be intimidated by motorcycle riders. I was the only non-motorcycle rider when I did a similar course...

I used to be more reckless on a bike...now I'm on a scooter I am forced into riding soft and slow. Scooter riders are more sensible, bike riders are more aggressive.

4.8 Delivery organisation

The riders were asked which organisation they would prefer the program to be coordinated by and the reason for this view.

What type of organisation would you most like a program to be coordinated by and why?

- VicRoads
- Local Government Associations (Councils)
- Training providers
- Other? Who?

A clear preference was expressed in all focus groups for the program to be managed and coordinated by VicRoads with service delivery by training providers.

VicRoads was considered to be the most appropriate coordinating body to ensure safety standards were met, instructors were appropriately accredited and delivery was consistent across locations.

VicRoads was also mentioned as being best able to promote the program to riders.

I think VicRoads because they're basically the governing body... So everyone that does it is getting similar training.

VicRoads to keep it streamlined for everyone rather than different people providing different information. Yes that would definitely be VicRoads.

Certification standards of Vic Roads would give it the most credibility.

I think I would be happy with Vic Roads being the ultimate authority defining the boundaries but I think they should have as many accredited organisations implementing it

as possible. Whether it's a council or training facility it doesn't matter as long as Vic Roads is responsible.

I suppose having VicRoads do it for the interest of the safety of the public.

I think VicRoads would give you the best promotion of it.

They would have access to you when get your L's and P's, and send out information in the post. So probably VicRoads.

4.9 Program naming

Participants were shown the list of potential program names below and asked which names were most appealing to them.

The opportunity to suggest alternative names was also provided.

Given the nature of the program, what do you think of the following titles:

- Rider assistance
- Rider mentoring
- Rider feedback
- Rider coaching
- Rider support
- Rider training
- Rider safety
- Rider assessment
- Rider instruction

The following additional names were suggested by participants:

- Rider development (recently licensed)
- Roadcraft training (recently licensed)
- Refresher (returned)
- Rider Return (returned)
- Enhancement (returned)
- Improvement (scooter)

Overall, the preference for a program name was quite evenly split between *Rider Coaching*, *Rider Support*, *Rider Development* and *Rider Mentoring*.

The names *Rider Assistance* and *Rider Assessment* were the least favoured.

Returning riders were clearly put off by names which inferred that they needed help or would be criticised or assessed.

Illustrative comments in relation to these names are shown below.

Coaching

I think the coaching. It has a personal sort of the emphasis to take you from where you are and improve. (recently licensed)

And it's not telling you, it's guiding, that's what a coach comes across as. That's what you're looking for. (recently licensed)

Support

If you are looking at appealing to everyone, using 'mentoring', 'feedback', or 'support' implies that you already have some sort of skill. So people will feel all warm and fuzzy recognising that they already have some skills...and ego does come into it. Assessment implies you are just starting out. Training can cover both, first in and people going back. (returning)

Development

I'd probably go rider development. I'd say that's what it's doing in a sense, it's expanding people's knowledge, developing your current skills and making you better off. (recently licensed)

Mentoring

A mentor is someone you look up to; it's not negative like teacher or principal. (scooter)

Assistance

I think rider assistance that's what it is- someone there helping you. (recently licensed)

Sounds like a phone call. (returning)

Assistance assumes you are a disaster. (scooter)

Assessment

The second last one, I definitely wouldn't do it. Assessment. I'd feel like I was being scrutinised! (returning)

Comment [f2]: Have you documented most of their concerns here? Or is it just repetition from earlier in report?

4.10 Response to proposed model

After examining the individual program elements in some detail, focus group participants discussed their level of interest in participating in the model program, shown below, which was developed during Stage One of this project.

Model program:

- Concentrate on two types of participants: recently licensed riders and older riders returning to riding after a break
- Be coaching or mentoring, not training
- Provide feedback based on observation of actual rider behaviour
- Avoid or minimise classroom/theory sessions
- Coaches/mentors would be off-duty police riders or other trainers, not on-duty, uniformed police riders with marked police motorcycles
- Have low ratios of participants to coaches/mentors – ideally 1:1 or 2:1, not a group ride approach
- Accommodate different types of motorcycle riders, with scooter riders separate
- Be conducted in the area where riders live and usually ride, but to include some urban, built up area riding
- Would go for a half day (4 hours either on a weekend or weekday)

In general, the model was considered to be appropriate and appealing, although each group preferred some minor modifications.

Recently licensed riders – 20's

The younger recently licensed riders thought the model program was quite appealing as presented but would prefer an introductory and closing group 'theory' or discussion session with a slightly larger number of participants, (perhaps four to eight people), to make it more social, take the pressure off the individual and provide the opportunity to learn from other participants.

It was considered that one instructor with one to four participants would be appropriate on the road.

Overall, around half of the recently licensed riders (both the younger and the older groups) would be interested in participating in a program of this type, if the price was acceptable. It is likely that the level of interest would increase substantially if the program was promoted immediately after licensing.

I think that nearly reads exactly what we ask for!

In terms of the riding component the less numbers the better, but with the theory people would come up with ideas that I may not have thought of. To have the group discussion with larger numbers would be better but with the instructor 1 or 2 is alright.

I think if the type of participants are recently licensed, I would love to do that!

I think it's a good proposal. The only thing...I don't know how people would perceive themselves as a recently licensed driver. I would like to see refresher course for older people to return that's the only thing I would add to it, I don't know about 1 to 1 but you can work it out.

These ones pretty much said everything. Just price, that's another factor.

Was there any discussion about type of instructor – police or trainers for this group?

Recently licensed riders – 30+

The older recently licensed riders also thought the model program was quite appealing, however this group would like to see an emphasis on all instructors being fully qualified or accredited and had a preference for a longer program (up to one day) for the touring route components.

I'd do that for sure.

The only thing I'd change is I'd like to see it a bit longer.

It concerns me, the off duty police riders. What it doesn't say is it's not going to be qualified instructors.

An off duty police officer might have good riding skills but they might be a crap instructor!

To me it's going to be a little bit about money. If it's going to be one on one it would be more expensive.

Returning riders

The returning riders found the program less appealing to them personally as they believe they already have good/safe riding skills and are generally not interested in being 'assessed' or critiqued'

For the program to be of interest to these riders it would need to be unthreatening, clearly promoted as a 'refresher', be fun and social, perhaps by being offered to friendship groups. An acceptable price or financial incentives would also be important.

Again, it would need to be promoted to returning riders soon after they returned to riding.

Again, if it's fun and you are going to get something out of it, learn something,...at the beginning I said not for me because already had returned. I've returned twice now, so I wouldn't do it, but if it was the first time I might, provided it was fun and I'd learn something.

If starting out again, possible. Not now, because am back into it. If you could get discount on your insurance...have incentives to get mates to do it, that would help.

I don't know. Probably if a bunch of mates rocked up and said let's go and do it. I would go into it saying I don't need it although I probably know that I do. And I'd probably have a lot of fun and get a lot out of it and say I learned a bit. Just riding with better riders, watching what they do, you learn.

If I'd known about it before considering going back to riding I would have looked at it.

Also this group? - Was there any discussion about type of instructor – police or trainers

Scooter riders

The scooter riders generally found the model program to be appealing, however it was clear that a shorter program would be necessary for scooters. The preference was for two blocks of one to two hours spread over two days.

As with the other groups, scooter riders would be most likely to participate in a program like this soon after they obtained their licence or immediately after they returned to riding.

The issue of price and incentives was raised again, as in the other groups.

The model is a good model. Just it's too long. Four hours for a scooter is too long. Maybe on a motorcycle, that's fine, but for a scooter, it's too long.

It does sound expensive.

An insurance discount, maybe...

4.11 Price and incentives

As mentioned in the previous section, riders in all groups spontaneously raised the issue of price, suggesting that they would only participate in a program if the price was acceptable.

To better understand price sensitivities, and to ensure that focus group participants were not influenced by each other, each group was asked the questions outlined below, and asked to write down their responses.

The prices below were identified in consultation with VicRoads, based on estimates produced in the Stage One report.

1. What do you think you would be prepared to pay for a program like this? (model program)
2. Would you pay **\$500** for a half day program?
3. Would you pay **\$500** if there was **\$300** worth of discounts (eg reduced insurance/discounts at motorcycle shops)?
4. If there was a financial subsidy for the program, would you be prepared to pay **\$500** upfront if you knew you could apply for a rebate of **\$300**?
5. Would you pay **\$200** for a half day program?
6. Would you pay **\$200** if there was **\$100** worth of discounts (eg reduced insurance/discount at motorcycle shops)?
7. Please record your total household income before tax.

Program price

The price that was considered to be acceptable for the model program was very similar across the focus groups, with around 80% of participants suggesting a price between \$100 and \$200.

Only one person was prepared to pay \$500 for the program.

Overall, 20% of participants (evenly spread across the focus groups) were not prepared to pay more than \$100. However, no clear relationship was observed between the acceptable price and the respondent's household income.

It's not a required course it's an optional course. So they're not going to be willing to pay a lot of money for that fact.

It was mentioned that most riders who are attracted to the program will recently have purchased a motorcycle and gear, so will not have a large capacity to pay for a riding program.

That's the biggest factor. After you've just got on the road you're not going to pay an astronomical amount to do a course.

A further factor to consider is that 'mentoring' is available through *NetRider* free of charge.

I'm lucky that I found that rider (through NetRider) and had other riders who were free so I am lucky that I got that experience for free.

Financial incentives to participate

Participants were shown the list below to prompt discussion about the most acceptable incentives.

What type of services/product incentives would encourage you to participate in such a program?

- Rebate
- Reduced insurance
- Discounted riding gear
- Discounted new or used bike
- Other? What?

Responses were very consistent across the four focus groups

The most attractive incentive was clearly reduced insurance premiums, or reduced registration as these are necessary purchases. Almost all participants had their motorcycles comprehensively insured.

I think it would depend on the type of discount. Insurance is big thing. If I was going to get a decent discount on my insurance I would look at it...I could see the benefits if I knew I was getting a 30% discount on that.

Except if there is a benefit like reduction in the insurance or registration. Like one of the insurance companies provide a discount if you do the training courses.

If it's insurance that you have to pay then it's something you're getting out of it. I think that would be an incentive to people. If it's not a mandatory course.

Rebates were considered to be *better than nothing*, however a number of riders were suspicious of rebate schemes, and most thought them to be inconvenient and somewhat off-putting.

It (a rebate) would definitely reduce your enthusiasm.

I would definitely consider it, but it would still deter me anyway. I mean you're on the road already and money is always going to be a factor. I mean I'm only 21 and forking out \$500 and then having to worry about getting a rebate...

I would ask the question if you're going to get the rebate guaranteed why pay that much to begin with?

It defeats the purpose of paying...why pay it if you are getting it back?

Scam. I think really strongly scam. Get this get a rebate and then you try and get the rebate...

Overall, discounted motorcycles or gear were not considered to be a good incentive as most riders would have recently purchased these before starting or returning to riding.

A lot of people already have their gear so don't need the discount for their gear. A lot of people that I ride with complain about the \$50. If that was given back as a discount a lot of people would jump at it.