



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT AND CITY SERVICES
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Inquiry into Road Maintenance in the ACT

Submissions 5

Motor Cycle Riders Association of the ACT Inc

 A.C.T. LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE OFFICE	
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**The Motorcycle Riders Association of the
Australian Capital Territory Incorporated
(MRA ACT)**

**Response to the ACT Government call for submissions to the
Inquiry into the Planning, Management and Delivery of Road Maintenance in
the ACT**

Background

Terms of Reference

On 15 March 2017, the Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services adopted the following terms of reference:

To inquire into and report on the planning, management and delivery of road maintenance in the ACT, including:

- 1) The role of all levels of government in facilitating, and the regulations governing, road maintenance in the ACT;
- 2) The procedures for identification, prioritisation and scheduling of road maintenance in the ACT;
- 3) The need for, and frequency of, road maintenance in the ACT, including:
 - a) The impact of the level and type of road usage,
 - b) The impact of road accidents, fuel and chemical spills, and extreme weather events,
 - c) The impact of design and structural deficiencies,
 - d) The impact of vegetation, animal activity, topography and surrounding land use,
 - e) The role and adequacy of traffic signals, signage and road markings;
- 4) The level of responsiveness to road maintenance issues in the ACT and the extent of maintenance backlogs;
- 5) Technical and structural considerations including the role, and type of materials used in road maintenance in the ACT, with a focus on cost effectiveness, sustainability and their impact on road users;
- 6) The adequacy of traffic management during road maintenance in the ACT;
- 7) Administrative, budgetary, planning and procurement practices, including reporting structures, funding sources, investment and expenditure, oversight and accountability mechanisms, work health and safety compliance and the implementation of related territory and national specifications and standards;
- 8) The level and adequacy of engagement and communication with key stakeholders, with particular reference to road users; and
- 9) Any other relevant matter.

Response to the ACT Government call for submissions to the
Inquiry into the Planning, Management and Delivery of Road Maintenance in the ACT

Written submissions should be lodged by 7 July 2017.

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Introduction

The Motorcycle Riders Association of the ACT is recognised as the representative body of the motorcycling community of the ACT.

The Motorcycle Riders Association of the ACT participates in government decision making and is called upon to provide views and raise concerns. The ACT and federal governments, opposition and other parties recognise the MRA ACT as the representative body for motorcyclists in the ACT and surrounds irrespective of the type of motorcycle or single track vehicles, gender, age or club affiliation.

Our Objectives

To represent all riders of the ACT and immediate surrounds irrespective of gender, age, club affiliation, or type of motorcycle or single track vehicles they ride by

- Raising the profile of motorcycling in the broader community
- Keeping the rights and needs of riders before government authorities regarding the use of roads in the ACT and surrounding regions
- Improving road safety for riders but not by undermining a riders right to choose
- Engendering motorcycling as a safe, efficient and greener alternative form of sustainable transport.

Our Activities

Improving Road Safety outcomes

- Organising Motorcycle Awareness Week each year to promote Rider Awareness and highlight Road Safety
- Representing riders at the ACT Chief Minister's Road Safety Round Table voicing the concerns of the rider to sub-standard roads and road side furniture
- Being an active member of the Australian Motorcycle Council
- Representing riders on the Black Spot Committee; and other ACT Government convened groups
- Voicing concerns of riders to the media
- Providing rider training with the MASTERS course for returning and mature aged riders, which has had a positive impact returning bikers
- Reviewing proposed changes to road rules and developing strategies that create a safer environment for motorcycle and scooter riders in the ACT
- Responding to the ACT Government Inquiry into Vulnerable Road Users
- Engaging in stakeholder groups, including representing motorcyclists and scooter riders on the Majura Parkway Project
- Representing ACT riders at the ACRS Road Safety Conference

Response to the ACT Government call for submissions to the
Inquiry into the Planning, Management and Delivery of Road Maintenance in the ACT

The Motorcycle Riders Association of the ACT Committee appreciates the opportunity to present a submission and offers the following comments in response to the Inquiry into the Planning, Management and Delivery of Road Maintenance in the ACT

With respect to the Motorcycle Riders Association of the ACT's contribution to this review the key focus and comment will pertain to matters affecting motorcycling. However it should be noted that a focus on this particular vulnerable road user group is likely to be useful to other vulnerable road users and the general motoring populace. (ref Scully 2008)

Responses to the Inquiry's Specific Questions

The term 'motorcyclist' is used throughout to cover not only motorcyclists, but also scooterists and riders of other powered single track vehicles.

1. The role of all levels of government

The role of all levels of government in facilitating, and the regulations governing, road maintenance in the ACT.

Noting that the ACT adheres to the Austroads guidelines (the ACT is an active Austroads member). Austroads is a body made up of the states of Australia and New Zealand. Austroads guidelines ensure a consistent approach to road and road safety matters in all member states and countries)

Noting also that the ACT has a "Road Safety Strategy 2011 to 2020" which recognises the Vision Zero philosophy in line with the National Road Safety Strategy for the same time period. Vision Zero is a philosophy of road safety that eventually no one will be killed or seriously injured within the road transport system. It is worth noting that the MRA ACT provided input into the Road Safety Strategy.

Both the National and ACT Road Safety Strategies (as with the other states and territory) use the Safe Systems Framework to address road safety matters. The **Safe Systems focuses on Safer Roads and Roadsides, Safer vehicles, Safer Speeds and Safer people.**

THE MOTORCYCLE RIDERS ASSOCIATION OF THE ACT RECOMMENDS: ADHERENCE TO ROAD SAFETY STRATEGIES AND GUIDELINES

- Any review of road surfacing, design and matters such as alignment should be constrained by the above strategies and guidelines and any opportunity to support and contribute to them should be taken.
- Further any with respect to "Safer Roads" ACT road maintenance **should not be in conflict with the above strategies and guidelines.**

2. The Procedures

The procedures for identification, prioritisation and scheduling of road maintenance in the ACT

It is assumed that the ACT has a suitably funded program and schedule for road maintenance.

It is noted that the ACT "Fix My Street" allows an ad hoc response to issues on advice from the public which hopefully allows rapid response to issues outside a scheduled program; i.e. <https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/app/forms/fixmystreet/>

THE MOTORCYCLE RIDERS ASSOCIATION OF THE ACT RECOMMENDS: PROGRAMS BE SUITABLY FUNDED TO ACHIEVE STATED OUTCOMES

- That the ACT has a suitably funded program and schedule for road maintenance.
- That the "Fix My Street" or similar facility continues to be supported to allow ad hoc reporting of road maintenance issues.

3. Frequency of road maintenance in the ACT

The need for, and frequency of, road maintenance in the ACT, including:

- (a) The impact of the level and type of road usage,

CYCLE PATHS

While the Motorcycle Riders Association of the ACT encourages the use of bicycles on the ACT roads and footpaths, on-road cycle lanes should not be a norm at the expense of crash avoidance space for other road users. For example, the narrowing of the lanes on Northbourne Avenue adversely impacts on a motorcyclists-buffer zone and escape routes.

Some cycle paths start suddenly, without adequate signage for general road users, and stop abruptly; this forces the cyclist back into traffic which is a danger to the riders and other users, especially those not familiar with the area and suddenly finding a cyclist in their midst whilst trying to turn left.

The requirement for motorists to provide a cyclist with a metre buffer when traveling at or under 60 km/h, or a 1.5 metre buffer when traveling at speeds greater than 60 km/h, means that a significant number of motorists over compensate and intrude into nearby motorcyclist's buffer zone as motorists typically do not understand or perceive the motorcyclists "buffer space".

The new cycle paths in the CBD contribute:

- At the intersection Moore Street and Rudd Street, with the new cycle path followed by a row of parked cars, oncoming traffic cannot be observed approaching from the left unless you go out into the street; this then blocks the green cycle path.
- The corner of Bunda Street and Mort Street is a significant hazard. The left turn crosses the 'green cycle path', and is a downhill slope with a stop sign at the intersection; it appears that many cyclists do not stop at the stop sign. A road user turning left observes oncoming traffic to the right, and then to the left; they **DO NOT** look back over their left shoulder to see if a rider is coming down the cycle path.
- In addition, riders have been observed treating the new cycle paths as footpaths and travel against the flow of traffic.

THE MOTORCYCLE RIDERS ASSOCIATION OF THE ACT RECOMMENDS: REVIEW CYCLE PATH CONFLICTS

- A review of all ACT on-road cycle paths to ensure their appropriateness and safe design.
- A review of shared pedestrian-cycle paths to ensure they are properly maintained and a viable alternative to on-road paths for cyclists.

- Consider safety programs which emphasise and explain the need for buffer zones around wheeled vulnerable road users (both cyclists and motorcyclists).

(b) The impact of road accidents, fuel and chemical spills, and extreme weather events,

Where sand or other absorbent material is used to clear up fuel spills, the resulting surface can be disastrous to motorcycles and scooters. If used, then clear signage must be placed and the absorbent material must be swept cleanly and entirely away as soon as possible.

Weather events such as heavy rain can increase risks to motorcyclists when drainage is blocked, not designed correctly resulting in ponding, or flows across roadway. Mud and debris carried by these flows can further produce a hazard. A related hazard with regard to ponding is the behaviour of other vehicles manoeuvring around the ponding as they can intrude into a motorcyclists' path.

THE MOTORCYCLE RIDERS ASSOCIATION OF THE ACT RECOMMENDS: MAINTENANCE AND REMEDIAL TREATMENT

- Treatment of spills cannot be considered complete until the treating material has been removed from the road surface.
- Removal of rain generated debris from the road surface ASAP.
- Clear blocked drains and review drain design and location. If design and construction is in error refer to a remedial treatment.

(c) The impact of design and structural deficiencies,

Road design features which decrease lines of sight for all road users or other features such as drainage or expansion joints (e.g. bridges) can affect a motorcycles stability.

Cross fall drainage, blocked gutters and drains and other aspects of road design where heavy weather events have not been considered.

BETTER ROAD SURFACES

ACT motorcyclists often comment negatively about the standard of the Territory's road surfaces.

A common resurfacing practice appears to be where excess aggregate is left to be forced into the new surface by the passage of road traffic. Rather than being forced into the road surface by traffic these loose "stones" tend to be swept clear of the 4 wheeler wheel tracks creating windrows which constrain and limit any alternate (safer) path chosen by the motorcycle rider. The consequence is that the road surface is rendered unsafe by the road maintainers; an inappropriate and ineffective practice. Further, car drivers are at risk of vehicle damage such as broken windscreens.

Pothole and partial road repairs are often done in such a way that the road surface is left in a more dangerous condition for motorcyclists. Examples of this can be found north-bound on William Hovell Drive; part roadwork and pothole repairs have left the road with a diagonal seam at the Form One Lane which can cause single track vehicles to veer unintentionally.

Similarly, longitudinal joints between lane surfaces can also cause destabilising “tramlining”. On one instance in past this occurred on remedial work within a roundabout where motorcycles have to lean in order to corner, and on another occasion the “step” between roadworks was nearly 50mm.

In some cases the step from sealed to unsealed sections of the road side can be much greater. This constitutes a significant hazard in the event that a motorcyclist is forced to make an evading manoeuvre. The consequences can be a “single” vehicle crash – caused by other driver manoeuvres and the motorcyclists escape route being compromised. Storm events can exacerbate these conditions.

Due to the poor workmanship, it is a perception that there is no inspection of the works carried out and that the contractors are simply permitted to erect speed reduction signs without further assessment or concern. With no visible evidence of remedial actions when works appear to be less than satisfactory, motorcyclists are often left wondering if the government is aware of the hazardous conditions for vulnerable road users. It may also be that the contract specifications are poor, and if so these should be reviewed. Good contract management saves the government and road users’ money, through reduced accidents and insurance / compensation claims.

THE MOTORCYCLE RIDERS ASSOCIATION OF THE ACT RECOMMENDS: MOTORCYCLISTS NEED TO BE CONSIDERED THROUGHOUT ROAD DESIGN CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

- Road repair and construction techniques need to take into consideration single track vehicles. Repairs need to be full lane width and loose gravel should be cleaned up entirely as it presents a severe crash hazard.
- The maintenance contracts for re-surfacing roads in the ACT should be reviewed to ensure that they specify road repairs to an appropriate standard.
- The ACT Government’s contract management processes should be reviewed to ensure contractors carry out the works required to the standards specified.
- The ACT’s road hazard reporting mechanism is maintained and supported to ensure prompt, comprehensive responses.
- Adherence to the Austroads Guidelines.
- The above should be carried out with the consideration of motorcyclists needs – if in doubt please consult with the MRA ACT.

(d) The impact of vegetation, animal activity, topography and surrounding land use,

Roadside vegetation should not be allowed to obscure lines of sight. A critical component of motorcycle road craft is “observation”. It can affect the ability of motorcyclists to see other road users and hazards which could otherwise be avoided, and the ability of other road users to see motorcyclists. Decorative roadside vegetation has on occasion been placed for its aesthetic appeal rather than its location near a roadway where it can have a negative effect on vision, and possibly present a further hazard in the event of a crash.

Inursions of animals into the road environment is to be expected given the co-location of the road network and animal habitat. Impact between motorcyclists and animals both domestic and native can be catastrophic for all parties.

Landscaping can similarly offer line of sight issues.

Land use such as parks, recreation areas, and sporting facilities can also introduce hazards if there is insufficient road infrastructure such as wider verge, parking, and turning areas to facilitate safe parking and manoeuvres.

THE MOTORCYCLE RIDERS ASSOCIATION OF THE ACT RECOMMENDS: KEEP LINES OF SIGHT CLEAR

- Consider the location, species of roadside plantings and future growth and maintenance to prevent line of sight issues.
- Similarly landscaping should receive similar consideration.
- Facilities around recreation areas and similar public spaces should receive consideration to reduce hazards.

(e) The role and adequacy of traffic signals, signage and road markings

ROAD MARKINGS

The Motorcycle Riders Association of the ACT Committee also notes there is an increased amount of painted lines and while we are sure that the paint used conforms to the relevant standards it does not provide an adequate amount of traction to be safe for vulnerable road users; this is of particular concern during wet weather or conditions of frost and / or ice.

When painted road markings are changed, they are often covered over with a layer of black tar or paint, without further attempts to unify the road surface. This has the effect of increasing the amount of painted road markings, plus in wet weather, at night, or in low light the covered markings become visible as shiny lines; this causes confusion for all road users. An example of this is along Hindmarsh Drive when travelling from Woden towards Weston Creek, where the lanes have been narrowed to incorporate an on-road cycle lane.

The Motorcycle Riders Association of the ACT notes that where slow down bars are placed on the road surface approaching roundabouts at the end of long straights effort has been made to limit them to only the left hand wheel track and the middle of the road leaving the right hand wheel track clear. This is an example where design and construction has considered motorcyclists need for an uncompromised "all weather condition" braking surface. This is a considerate aspect of design which is to be commended.

A common complaint amongst ACT motorcyclists is the apparent neglect of reflective road markers. When not kept in a functional state, the reflective markers situated in the middle of the road, and on the edges, are no longer visible at distance and this can leave all road users with the inability to properly judge cornering and / or camber, or respond to changes in road condition. Examples of this can be found traveling along Dudley Street Yarralumla at night, or along Lady Denman Drive. This is particularly dangerous for motorcyclists when there is oncoming traffic as reflective road markers are at times the only visual guide for the road when a rider is engulfed in the light from headlights.

THE MOTORCYCLE RIDERS ASSOCIATION OF THE ACT RECOMMENDS: REVIEW ROAD REMARKING PRACTICE WITH A REGARD TO SLIP HAZARD, LONGEVITY, AND RELATED CONFUSION

- The amount of painted lines is reduced when future road works are undertaken.
- Changes to road markings are made with consideration to ongoing visibility with regard to “wear and tear”.
- Roadmaking Paint choice (brands and type) should improve or maintain traction levels and not detract from them.
- The ACT Government’s road maintenance program includes more effective removal of redundant and faded painted road lines, and frequent assessment / maintenance of reflective road markers.

4. Responsiveness

The level of responsiveness to road maintenance issues in the ACT and the extent of maintenance backlogs

See previous comment at item 2; particularly with respect to “Fix My Street”.

5. Technical and structural considerations

Technical and structural considerations including the role, and type of materials used in road maintenance in the ACT, with a focus on cost effectiveness, sustainability and their impact on road users

Barriers and Roadside Furniture

Many riders fear the barriers currently in use around the ACT. All barriers must be installed in accordance with the guidelines, and be treated to reduce potential negative outcomes for motorcycle riders if impact occurs during a crash.

There is also a tremendous amount of signage alongside the ACT’s roads, which can be a hazard to motorcyclists as it reduces the amount of crash avoidance space. It also increases the amount of distraction for all road users. Unnecessary roadside signage should be reviewed with a view to reducing risk and is placed to ensure no distraction for riders.

An example of recent frivolous incursion of road signage into the clear zone would be the “speedo check” signs on Canberra Avenue between Fyshwick and Queanbeyan. These posts compromise the clear zone and increase hazard for no discernible public benefit; i.e. the “speedo check” may have had some validity in times past but is of dubious value to modern technologies

Wire Rope Barriers must be installed in line with best practice. ET2000 terminals MUST be made motorcycle friendly. W-beam barriers must have under-run rails (Rub-Rail) fitted as standard and retrofitted as part of a maintenance program. Note that regional programs of some years standing see NSW and Victoria installing “crash cushions” on WRB posts and under run barriers on regional roads frequented by motorcyclists. Examples include the Kings Highway (NSW), on the Brown Mountain (NSW), and Monaro Highway (Victoria).

All poles and posts on the roadways (for example cyclist grab rails, keep left signs) need to be frangible and if possible, self-healing. No poles or signs should be within 1.5 metres of the edge of the road and should be relocated as a part of the maintenance program. Signage must NOT intrude into the motorcyclist envelope.

The amount of unnecessary roadside signage should be reviewed with a view to its reduction and placement to ensure no distraction for riders.

THE MOTORCYCLE RIDERS ASSOCIATION OF THE ACT RECOMMENDS: THE ROADSIDE VERGE BE KEPT CLEAR OF UNNECESSARY INSTALLATIONS, CRASH BARRIERS ARE PLACED ONLY WHERE ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY AND THAT THEY RECEIVE MOTORCYCLE FRIENDLY REMEDIATION

6. Adequacy of traffic management

The adequacy of traffic management during road maintenance in the ACT

Traffic management does not always consider motorcyclists needs and can increase risk. Clear direction of traffic movements reduces random panicked manoeuvres by other road users. Traffic path changes need to be considered and managed for low visibility conditions such as dawn dusk and night. Transitions from one surface to another when traffic is diverted need to be at 90degree to the traffic path or risk a destabilising deflection of the motorcycle wheel. Small wheeled scooters are particularly at risk.

Police enforcement of roadworks areas would assist in ensuring speed compliance.

THE MOTORCYCLE RIDERS ASSOCIATION OF THE ACT RECOMMENDS: TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT DURING ROAD MAINTENANCE NEEDS TO CONSIDER ALL ROAD USERS

- Clear definition of traffic diversions in all weather and light conditions (dawn, dusk and night).
- Enforcement needs to be active and highly visible; patrols could be useful.

7. Administrative, budgetary, planning and procurement practices

Administrative, budgetary, planning and procurement practices, including reporting structures, funding sources, investment and expenditure, oversight and accountability mechanisms, work health and safety compliance and the implementation of related territory and national specifications and standards

THE MOTORCYCLE RIDERS ASSOCIATION OF THE ACT RECOMMENDS: SAFETY ASPECTS OF ROAD MAINTENANCE SHOULD BE APPROPRIATELY SUPPORTED BY PLANNING, EXECUTION, AND COMMUNICATION AT ALL LEVELS

All road users are affected if the above elements are neglected.

8. Engagement and communication

The level and adequacy of engagement and communication with key stakeholders, with particular reference to road users

Various opportunities exist to communicate with key stakeholders ranging from user groups (Road User Working Group, Motorcycle User Group, Bicycle Advisory Group, ACT Road Safety Advisory Group), contact with key representative bodies (such as the MRA ACT or NRMA). This allows presentation and feedback at a planning stage as is often done at the Bicycle Advisory Group meetings.

Other communication can be made through use of media (web, Twitter, Facebook, and traditional print, radio, and TV – via press releases). Road side signage and electronic message boards allows further advice to be given to the public.

Referring to the previous topic (7), budgetary and administration arrangements should be such that the necessary communication processes are supported.

THE MOTORCYCLE RIDERS ASSOCIATION OF THE ACT RECOMMENDS: CONSIDER AND EMPLOY ALL MEDIA CHANNEL OPPORTUNITIES

Stakeholder and user group engagement should be suitably regular and reported through the directorates to the relevant ministers.

9. Any other relevant matter

Forward Stop Boxes and Lane Filtering

Forward stop boxes are incorporated in road design overseas and allow motorcyclists to filter and move to the front of traffic queues. This has the dual benefit of putting motorcyclists in a safer position amongst traffic and assisting in traffic flow, reducing road congestion. This is in line with the Vulnerable Road User Enquiry, Recommendation 26 (Agreed in Principle) that a trial of lane filtering and forward stop boxes be trialled. Whilst the trial of lane filtering is still being evaluated, the Motorcycle Riders Association of the ACT strongly encourages a trial of Forward Stop Boxes at traffic lights.

THE MOTORCYCLE RIDERS ASSOCIATION OF THE ACT RECOMMENDS: FURTHER CONSIDERATION AND WORK ON STOP BOXES AND LANE FILTERING

- Forward stop boxes are introduced at road junctions in line with Recommendation 26, VRU Enquiry.
- The ACT Government complete the current work on motorcyclist lane filtering in line with other States and Territories.

ANNEXURE

Recommendations of the National Motorcycle and Scooter Safety Summit: the Road Ahead,
2008

Road Infrastructure and Roadside Hazards

Key Actions

Develop an Australia-wide website for reporting local road hazards which allows for uploading data and photos and includes details of treated hazards.

Future Directions

Scope best practice infrastructure-related motorcycle and scooter safety measures across Australia and develop national guidelines.

Scope best practice safety measures for roadside barriers.

Ensure that jurisdiction-based auditing schemes for roadside hazards take account of specific hazards for riders of motorcycles and scooters.

Communicate research and best practice by facilitating professional development education for traffic engineers.

Review national motorcycle-related black spot funding criteria, noting that treating these black spots will also benefit other vehicles

References

National Road Safety Strategy; <http://roadsafety.gov.au/>

ACT Road Safety Strategy;
http://www.justice.act.gov.au/safety_and_emergency/road_safety/act_road_safety_strategy_and_action_plans

Austrroads guidelines; <http://www.austrroads.com.au/>

Scully Newstead and Corbin, Motorcycle Levy Evaluation Blackspot 2008, October, 2008 Consultancy Report to VicRoads, Monash University Accident Research Centre