



MOTORCYCLE RIDERS ASSOCIATION OF QUEENSLAND

P0 BOX 1273
Slacks Creek QLD 4127
www.mraqld.org

2nd July 2014

The Honourable Scott Emerson MP
Minister for Transport and Main Roads
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Minister

RE Motorcycle discussion Paper – Filtering

Further to our previous correspondence on the above issue we herein respond directly to the Discussion Paper on the matter.

What is lane filtering?

Lane filtering is the practice of moving through stationary or semi stationary traffic via the space between the lines of other vehicles. Filtering is practised most commonly at traffic control signals or in situations of significantly slow moving traffic, and is most commonly done at low speed when sufficient space exists between the other stationary vehicles. This operation has low crash risk.

Filtering does not include moving at high speed between fast moving vehicles or using the same lane space as fast moving vehicles with free space less than currently nominated. This practice is most commonly referred to as lane splitting and does attract higher risk.

History

Although the operation has not been a legal manoeuvre in Queensland or any other Australian state due to various none specific road rules, filtering has been practised by riders for as long as motorcycles have existed.

The operation is still today one that is practised by a large number of riders when congestion exists. With the available crash data the MRAQ can find no evidence indicating that it contributes in any significant way to accidents involving motorcycles.

The NSW Government recently undertook a trial of filtering in the Sydney CBD to provide direct evidence of the possible benefits and problems, with the report on the trial noting that *“Lane filtering was a relatively low risk riding activity for motorcyclists under the conditions of the trial”*.

Several European countries, as well as the state of California in the USA, have filtering as a controlled legal practice, with the NSW government, following the trial results showing that there is benefit, introducing legalisation of the practice.

Main benefits

Two main benefits result from safe filtering.

With a motorcycle taking approximately 60% of the space of a car in congested traffic there is an obvious reduction if motorcycles are allowed to move out of the normal lane control structure and move into the other available spaces when safe to do so.

Additionally, as rear end accidents make up the largest single type of motor vehicle crashes and motorcyclists being one of the most vulnerable road users, there is significant safety benefit by removing riders from the potential crash zone.

Arguments against

The MRAQ can find little if any evidence to support the common objections to the practice of filtering.

Most objections are put forward from a position of self-interest and the biased belief that motorcyclists should not get any advantage over other road users. Such arguments as the potential for injury to riders from inappropriate or illegal actions of other road users should not be classed as legitimate. The suggestion that another road user’s potentially illegal or inappropriate action should be classed as reason to not legalise an inherently safe practice, is completely counter intuitive.

The MRAQ urges the government to not recognise any argument that is inherently based of bias or possible illegal action by other road users as being legitimate.

Statement of position and recommendation

The MRAQ believes that from all available evidence the practice of lane filtering is one that should be legalised under legislative control, and urges the Queensland government to fully consider the recent report and actions taken by the NSW government in legalising this practice, and implement legislation correspondingly.

It is the MRAQ's recommendation that any legislative change should adequately consider the limits that should be applied to this practice and suggests that said legislation should contain an adequate description of what lane filtering is, as well as setting the appropriate limits for the practice. The findings of the NSW trial and following legislation should provide a significant base for the setting up of any revised road rules.

Additionally, it is highly recommended that any change of the road rules should include an advertisement of such change and what ramification these changes will have.

The MRAQ offers its support in any way possible to advance this matter and we look forward to your response.

Yours truly

Chris Mearns
President
Motorcycle Riders Association of Queensland