



## MOTORCYCLE RIDERS ASSOCIATION OF QUEENSLAND

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Att. Andrew Mahon  
Driver Licensing Policy Unit  
Transport Regulation Branch  
Department of Transport and Main Roads  
PO Box 673  
FORTITUDE VALLEY QLD 4006

### **Motorcycle Licensing Review**

Dear Andrew

The Motorcycle Riders Association of Queensland wishes to make a direct submission in relation to the current Motorcycle Licensing Discussion Paper.

#### **Preface**

The Q-Ride motorcycle license training and testing systems were put in place in Queensland to overcome a number of flaws in the licensing system that existed prior to its implementation. Most prominent of the issues that needed attention was - 1) Too many unlicensed riders due to the difficulty in accessing license training and testing; 2) The need to better train and test riders; 3) The need to better base training and testing on documented competencies; and, 4) To standardise training and testing content.

To date the Q-Ride system has generally achieved the desired result as set out when it was introduced, the evidence of which is provided by the massive decrease in the number of unlicensed riders as well as the significant decrease in the number of motorcycle fatal and serious crashes since its introduction. These decreases having taken place while the number of registered motorcycles and kilometres travelled have doubled. Although the result to date is admirable some fine-tuning could further make enhancements that would advance the desired result to better equip Queensland learner riders.

Care must however be taken to ensure that any change is based on fully sustainable argument or documented evidence and no change should be

made which adversely affects the results gained against the initial problems that were the reason for the system's implementation. With the goal of improvement, without detracting, the MRAQ makes the following recommendations for enhancement of the current motorcycle licensing system, and particularly, in relation to the Q-Ride stream.

### **Pre –learner**

Currently, no pre-learner training or testing other than a simple written knowledge test is required in Queensland.

With the clear understanding that motorcycle riders are very vulnerable road users, the current system is deficient in that it does not provide any reasonable evidence of even the very basic competency to operate a motorcycle. Hence, it can be seen as failing to equip learners with any skills or knowledge to build upon.

The inclusion of a pre-learner stage should not, however be burdensome to the extent that it discourages potential riders from beginning the proscribed licensing process, and the ability to alter the content to match learners pre-existing experience must be considered.

Recommendations for timing and content are made later in this submission.

**Recommendation -The inclusion of a pre-learner section to the licensing system should be implemented to provide training in and testing to the basic safe operation of a motorcycle. This training should be conducted in an off-road environment.**

### **Learner period**

#### **Practice**

The safe licensed use of any motor vehicle is intended for an on-road environment and as such the learner experience on-road must be the focus of the training and learning period.

Without the need for any mandatory learner practice period within Q-Ride, the current system does not have the ability to conclude that there is a reasonable expectation that the learner has had any critical on road experience, and therefore, there is the high potential for a critical deficiency. However, under the Q-Ride system a reduction in the length of the learner practice period from that under Q-Safe is a reasonable expectation because the learner is operating under a more formal training system.

## **Accompaniment**

The MRAQ cannot find any convincing evidence to support the current system's requirement that a learner rider be accompanied by an experienced license holder. There are arguments for and against this requirement that hold some logic, but on the available evidence from states that do, and those that do not have this requirement, there is no discernible safety issue that supports the requirement and some suggestion that to require the accompaniment, can reduce the amount of training hours undertaken by a learner because of the unavailability of an accompanying license holder.

**Recommendations – The inclusion of a minimum learner on-road experience period be implemented into the Q-Ride system but this period be reduced from the 6 months under Q-Safe to 3 months. The requirement for an accompanying experienced license holder is removed.**

## **License class progression timing**

The MRAQ cannot find any reasonable evidence to support the extension of the mandatory RE license period under a Graduated License System before allowing a rider to progress to a larger engine capacity vehicle. The skills required to operate both classes of capacity vehicle are exactly the same if riding the same type of motorcycle. It can be very successfully argued that a change in motorcycle type is a more difficult change to manage than that of a simple capacity change. The attitude of a rider is, however, one particular item that should be taken into account in relation to any progression in capacity.

With this in mind it should be recommended practice to engage with riders at the time of progression to attempt to moderate, and or modify, any errant behaviours that may have been assimilated during the RE class riding period, and consequently, the removal of the requirement to undertake further engagement at the time of progression would be retrograde.

**Recommendation – The progression process from RE to R remain unchanged but that the focus of the engagement be targeted at riding skills and behaviour.**

## **Other limitation**

With a clear understanding that any learning should be undertaken with as little conflicting influences as possible it is a reasonable expectation that novice riders should be operating without the adverse effects of alcohol or a pillion passenger. However, the evidence for what period this disassociation should take is clouded. A more critical precursor should be the amount of time riding and not just a nominal time period.

However, the governance of a system that requires riding time rather than a nominal time period would be problematic.

The MRAQ supports the alcohol and pillion limitation on novice riders but cannot find satisfactory evidence to support any change to the current requirements.

**Recommendation – The current period requirements for zero percent BAC and no carrying of pillions remain, and applicable to, all learner riders and RE license holders in their first year of operation.**

### **Proposed Q-Ride structure**

With the aim of improving the participant outcome but not increasing the potential to discourage uptake and considering the current model the MRAQ proposes the following for the Q-Ride structure.

#### **Pre-learner**

One half day (min. 4hrs) contact to include vehicle familiarisation, basic riding theory plus riding practice and assessment all done in an off road environment. (This section to be modifiable to account for differing participant's previous experience and ability.)



#### **Learner on road practice**

Three months minimum period with the option for the period to be contained within the 12 months P1 car license period for provisional car license holder.



#### **RE Licensing**

One and one half day contact to include higher level riding theory, additional off road training, on road training and on road assessment.



#### **R Licensing after minimum 12 months RE period**

One half day contact to include advanced level riding theory and attitude engagement plus on road assessment.

The MRAQ is convinced that the current Q-Ride system has the potential for improvement, but full recognition must be acknowledged that any amendment can only be expected to provide an acceptable minimum ability level. Therefore, with these principles in mind it is believed that the above recommendations form the basis for a motorcycle Graduated License System that meets the need for adequate proficiency-based training and assessment without discouraging participation.

We encourage the acceptance of this model as the basis of the revised system and would be pleased to provide further input if required.

Prepared for and on behalf of the Motorcycle Riders' Association of Queensland Inc.

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MRAQ Inc.