



*Patron: His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC  
Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia*

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**Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development**  
Canberra

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Email: [standards@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:standards@infrastructure.gov.au)

**Re: Adoption of Anti-lock Braking Systems (ABS) for motorcycles in Australia**  
**Submission from the Australasian College of Road Safety**

The Australasian College of Road Safety welcomes the opportunity to provide preliminary comments in relation to the discussion paper released by the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development on the above subject area.

The College was established in 1988 and is the region's peak organisation for road safety professionals and members of the public who are focused on saving lives and serious injuries on our roads. The College Patron is His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia.

The Road Safety Problem

As referenced in the Discussion Paper, motorcyclists are involved in many more fatal and serious injury crashes than would be expected from their exposure on the road network - they account for approximately 1% of total travel, between 4 and 5% of vehicle registrations and yet represent about 17% of deaths and an even larger proportion of serious injuries across Australia. Therefore, not only do motorcyclists on average experience a disproportionately high individual risk of being involved in a serious casualty crash, but collectively they represent a very significant proportion of all serious road trauma that occurs across the Australian road network.

Moreover as indicated in the Paper, there is a general trend towards increased levels of motorcycling over time on Australia's roads. Motorcycles are relatively cheap to purchase, are fuel efficient, occupy less road space and have more options for cheap parking. At a time when populations and traffic are growing with a limited road space available, and congestion becoming an increasing problem, the environment is becoming increasingly favourable to motorcycling gaining popularity as a mode of transport.

Against this background, there is an urgent need to introduce countermeasures that can help to improve the safety of motorcyclists on our roads.

## The Opportunity

Through evaluations based on international and Australian data, Anti-lock Braking Systems (ABS) have been shown to reduce relevant serious casualty crashes involving motorcyclists by up to 39%. This is a very significant finding. There are very few safety measures currently at our disposal that are capable of reducing serious trauma to that extent. Modifications to the road environment such as flexible barrier systems is one such example that has been shown to be very successful in reducing serious road trauma by up to 80%. There are very few others.

Finding ways to accelerate the penetration of ABS into the on-road motorcycle fleet is a matter of high priority. Importantly, unlike the motor car fleet, about half the serious trauma involving motorcyclists occurs within the first five years of life of the motorbike. This means that if mandatory fitment of ABS to motorbikes can be expedited, significant safety gains will accrue earlier rather than later.

Every eligible motorcycle that is sold in Australia without ABS, therefore, represents an opportunity lost.

Currently, the cost differentials between motorcycles with and without ABS are appreciable, the availability of bikes with ABS limited and waiting times can be substantial. Signalling the intention to mandate can, of itself, have a significant influence on the availability and uptake of motorcycles with ABS. Cost differentials will rapidly drop as demand increases, while demand in turn will revolve to some extent around immediate availability and choice, the safety advantages conferred by ABS and the prospect of its future mandation.

## Recommendation

The College commends the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development for issuing this Discussion Paper, foreshadowing the development and promotion of the Regulatory Impact Statement. Expediting the regulatory process with a view to introducing mandation at the earliest opportunity is such an important step in helping to keep motorcyclists much safer on Australia's roads.

Yours sincerely,



Lauchlan McIntosh, AM  
**President**  
Australasian College of Road Safety