

REVIEW OF ACT LICENSING, TRAINING AND TESTING REQUIREMENTS FOR NOVICE RIDERS

1. Objective

To review the ACT's current motorcycle licensing, training and testing requirements for novice riders.

2. Background

There has been a growth in the popularity of motorcycling over recent years, which is reflected in the figures for national motorcycle sales and registrations. There were 6,500 motorcycles and motor scooters on the ACT register in January 2002, growing to 8,700 in January 2007, 10,860 in January 2009, and 11,173 in June 2010.

Motorcyclists face a fatal crash risk about 30 times higher than car occupants, and the severity of injuries faced by motorcyclists is also higher than for other road user groups. Data from all jurisdictions indicates that serious crashes involving motorcyclists have increased in recent years. In the ACT, 3 of the 14 fatalities in 2007, 4 of the 14 fatalities in 2008 and 2 of the 13 fatalities in 2009 involved motorcyclists.

Although many road safety countermeasures apply to both drivers and riders, there is also scope for motorcycle-specific countermeasures, including awareness campaigns, training schemes and engineering treatments.

The ACT Auditor-General's Office Performance Audit Report No. 4/2006, *Road Safety*, (June 2006) recommended:

"..... the Department of Urban Services should review the regime for motorcycle licensing with a view to introducing an on-road component."

This recommendation was included in the ACT Road Safety Action Plan for 2007 and 2008, but was not progressed.

Subsequently, the Follow-up Audit Report No. 2/2009, *Implementation of Audit Recommendations on Road Safety*, (May 2009) recommended:

"TAMS should implement the recommendation of the 2006 Audit Report on road safety relating to motorcycle safety, including the enhanced approach to testing novice riders, such as on-road testing."

TAMS agreed in part to this recommendation, and an item under the ACT Road Safety Action Plan for 2009 and 2010 states:

"It is proposed to review current licensing and training requirements, in liaison with motorcycle training and user representatives. One option to be explored is making the Pre-Provisional licence training course mandatory for all novice riders. Specific issues in relation to motor scooter riders will also be considered."

This discussion paper addresses the above item, and Stay Upright and the Motorcycle Rider's Association ACT (MRA) are gratefully acknowledged for their contributions, comments and suggestions.

3. Current ACT Licensing Process

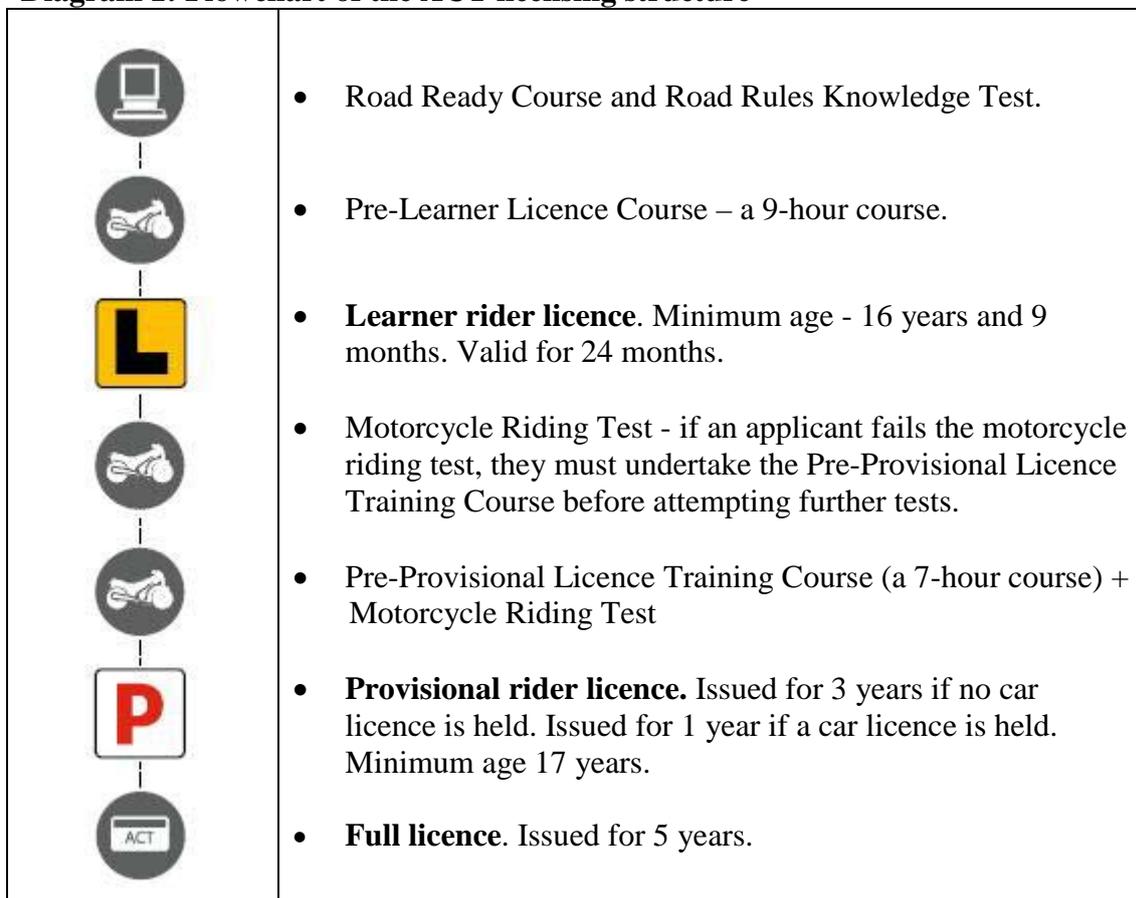
3.1 Licensing Structure

The current ACT licensing structure has been in existence since April 1998, and the process is:

- 1) The learner rider must hold a current driver licence or must have completed the Road Ready program and passed the Road Rules Knowledge test.
- 2) A nine-hour Pre-Learner rider course must be completed before a Learner motorcycle licence is issued. The Learner licence is valid for 24 months.
- 3) The Provisional licence assessment can be undertaken after holding a Learner licence for at least 3 months, provided the applicant has attained the age of 17 years. Learner motorcycle riders can choose to undertake a Pre-Provisional licence training course to enhance their skills and road-craft awareness.
- 4) If the applicant fails the Provisional licence assessment test, they must undertake the seven-hour Pre-Provisional licence training course before attempting further tests.

The normal duration for a Provisional motorcycle licence is 3 years. The normal duration for an additional Provisional licence class (applicable if the applicant already holds a full car licence) is 1 year. Diagram 1 shows a flowchart of the ACT licensing structure.

Diagram 1: Flowchart of the ACT licensing structure



3.2 Licensing Course Costs

Table 1 shows the current ACT licensing course costs:

Table 1: Current ACT Licensing Course Costs

Course	Cost (\$)	Payee
Pre-Learner Course	241	User pays.
Pre-Provisional Course	149	User pays. Course is optional unless learner fails Provisional Test; then course is mandatory.
Provisional Test	46	User pays.

Currently, both training courses and the Provisional licence assessment test is undertaken on a 'user-pays' basis. The cost of the Pre-Provisional Course was previously subsidised by the ACT Government for learners who failed the Provisional motorcycle rider assessment. This subsidy was removed in November 2010 as a budgetary savings measure. No subsidies are provided by the ACT Government for learner car drivers.

3.3 Licensing Conditions

3.3.1 Learner licence holders

- i) can only ride motorcycles with a power to weight ratio not exceeding 150 kilowatts per tonne,
- ii) must not carry a pillion passenger,
- iii) must not tow another vehicle (including a trailer),
- iv) must be under an alcohol concentration level of zero,
- v) must not exceed a maximum of 12 demerit points, and
- vi) must not ride a motorbike on a road or road related area unless a **L** plate is conspicuously displayed, the correct way up, at the rear of the motorbike, and is clearly visible from behind the motorbike.

3.3.2 Provisional licence holders

- i) can only ride motorcycles with a power to weight ratio not exceeding 150 kilowatts per tonne,
- ii) must not carry a pillion passenger, and
- iii) must not tow another vehicle (including a trailer)

until they have held the Provisional motorcycle licence for 12 months, and

- iv) must be under an alcohol concentration level of zero,
- v) must not exceed a maximum of 4 demerit points, and
- vi) must not ride a motorbike on a road or road related area unless a **P** plate is conspicuously displayed, the correct way up, at the rear of the motorbike, and is clearly visible from behind the motorbike

for the full duration of their Provisional motorcycle licence.

Condition (v) above will be increased to 8 demerit points, and condition (vi) above will cease to apply, if a person has held a Provisional motorcycle licence for at least 6 months and

- the person is at least 26 years old; or
- the person has, at any time, successfully completed an approved provisional driver training course (Road Ready Plus), has provided evidence to the road transport authority in an acceptable form, and has this recorded against their licence record.

3.4 Training Publications

The “ACT Motorcycle Rider’s Handbook” has been developed as a guide for all motorcycle rider licence applicants, and should be used in conjunction with the information contained in the ACT Road Rules Handbook and related Acts and Regulations. It contains important information about riding techniques, how to cope with hazards and selecting and maintaining motorcycles.

4. Other Jurisdictions’ Practices

There is currently no established best practice of a motorcycle licensing structure in Australian jurisdictions, and each jurisdiction implements its own scheme. Development of a national graduated licensing model for novice motorcycle riders is expected to be progressed under the National Road Safety Strategy for 2011-2020.

The **NSW Road Transport Authority (RTA)** has recently revised its motorcycle rider licence scheme, and now requires new riders to pass through 3 licensing stages before obtaining an unrestricted rider licence.

http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/licensing/downloads/getting_motorcycle_licence_dl1.html

Vic Roads implemented new regulations for Learner and Probationary motorcyclists in July 2008. Now novice riders will only be permitted to ride motorcycles on the approved Learner Approved Motorcycle Scheme (LAMS) list which includes bikes with power-to-weight ratios not exceeding 150 kilowatts per tonne and engine capacities not exceeding 660cc.

<http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/Home/Motorcycles/Licensing/MotorcycleLicences.htm>

The **Department of Transport and Main Roads, Queensland Government’s** motorbike licensing system requires riders to hold a particular class of licence for a set period of time before being eligible to upgrade to the next class of licence. This arrangement gives learners the opportunity to gain additional driving skills for the lower class of vehicle before riding more demanding vehicles.

http://www.transport.qld.gov.au/Home/Licensing/Driver_licence/Getting_a_licence/Motorbike/

A comparison of the above jurisdictions’ current motorcycle licensing requirements is shown in Table 2 on the following page:

Table 2 : MOTORCYCLE LICENSING, TRAINING AND TESTING REQUIREMENTS FOR NOVICE RIDERS

	ACT	NSW	VIC	QLD
Learner Licence	<p>The learner must hold a current driver licence or must have completed the Road Ready program and passed the road rules knowledge test.</p> <p>A nine-hour Pre-Learner rider course must be completed before a Learner motorcycle licence is issued.</p> <p>The Learner licence is valid for 24 months.</p>	<p>Stage 1: A seven hour Pre-Learner training course (held over 2 days) must be completed and passed, after which a Pre-Learner certificate of competence is issued. This is valid for three months.</p> <p>The applicant must then pass an eyesight test and the Rider Knowledge test before a learner licence is issued.</p> <p>The learner licence is valid for 12 months.</p>	<p>The applicant must be at least 18 years old and must pass:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an eyesight test, • a motorcycle knowledge test, • a learner permit road law knowledge test (not required if they already have a car licence or car learner permit), and • a motorcycle learner permit skill assessment (a practical ride) <p>The learner permit is valid for 15 months.</p>	<p>The applicant must have held a provisional or open licence of another class for at least one year within the last five years. The applicant must also pass an eyesight test and a knowledge test before a learner licence is issued.</p> <p>When learning to ride a motorbike, learners must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • only be supervised by a person who holds, and has held, an open licence for the class of motorbike they are learning to ride for at least one year, and • not carry the supervisor as a pillion passenger on the motorbike. They may only carry a suitably licensed supervisor seated in the sidecar attached to the motorbike. If the motorbike does not have a sidecar, the supervisor may follow at a safe distance on another motorbike or in another vehicle.
Provisional & Full Licence	<p>The Provisional licence assessment can be undertaken after holding a Learner licence for at least 3 months, provided the applicant has attained 17 years of age.</p> <p>If the applicant fails the Provisional licence assessment test, they must undertake the seven-hour Pre-Provisional licence training course before attempting further tests.</p> <p>The normal duration for a Provisional motorcycle licence is 3 years. The normal duration for an additional Provisional licence (applicable if the applicant already holds a full licence) is 1 year.</p>	<p>Stage 2: The Pre-Provisional training course can be undertaken after holding a learner licence for at least 3 months. This is a six hour course, with a further one hour for the motorcycle riding test.</p> <p>After passing the course, a Pre-Provisional certificate of competence will be issued, which is valid for 3 months.</p> <p>The applicant must then pass another eyesight test and knowledge test before a provisional red P1 licence is issued. This is valid for 18 months.</p> <p>Stage 3: The applicant can go to RTA to get the provisional green P2 licence after 12 months - an exemption from the provisional P2 licence phase will apply to rider licence applicants aged 25 and over and who hold a current Australian unrestricted driver licence. The provisional P2 licence is valid for 30 months.</p> <p>A full licence can be obtained after holding a provisional P2 licence for 24 months.</p>	<p>A motorcycle licence assessment can be undertaken after holding a current motorcycle learner permit for at least 3 consecutive months. The applicant must pass the following tests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an eyesight test, • a motorcycle licence skill assessment (a practical ride), and • a hazard perception test (not required if they already have a car licence). <p>Probationary riders under the age of 21 will be issued with a four year probationary licence card - the 1st year is the P1 probationary period and the following three years is the P2 probationary period.</p> <p>Probationary riders 21 years or older will be issued with a three year P2 probationary licence card.</p> <p>Holders of a probationary car driver licence will be issued with a probationary motorcycle licence that will end at the same time as their car probationary period.</p> <p>Holders of a full car driver licence will be issued with a full motorcycle licence.</p>	<p>A motorbike licence may be obtained through Q-Ride, a competency-based training and assessment program, or by passing the Department of Transport and Mains Roads Q-SAFE practical riding test.</p> <p>Applicants must be licensed to ride a LAMS machine for 12 months before doing the Q-Ride assessment or the Q-Safe test.</p> <p>The Q-Ride learner training is optional. However, learners not undertaking the Q-Ride training must hold the learner licence for at least six months before they are eligible to take a practical riding test.</p>
Power-to-Weight and Engine Capacity Restrictions	<p>Learners and novice licence holders can only ride motorcycles with a power to weight ratio not exceeding 150 kilowatts per tonne until they have held a Provisional motorcycle licence for at least 12 months.</p>	<p>Holders of Learner, P1 and P2 licences can only ride motorcycles with an engine capacity not greater than 660 ml, and with a power to weight ratio not exceeding 150 kilowatts per tonne.</p>	<p>Novice riders will only be permitted to ride motorcycles on the approved Learner Approved Motorcycle Scheme (LAMS) list which includes bikes with power-to-weight ratios not exceeding 150 kilowatts per tonne and engine capacities not exceeding 660cc.</p>	<p>Learner riders can only ride motorcycles on the LAM Scheme, which restricts motorcycles to have power-to-weight ratios not exceeding 150 kilowatts per tonne and engine capacities not exceeding 660 cc.</p>

5. Issues

5.1 Crash Statistics

Data from all jurisdictions indicates that serious crashes involving motorcyclists have increased in recent years, with motorcyclist deaths increasing nationally by a total of 22.1% over the three year period from 2004 to 2007. Table 3 below shows the percentage of motorcycle fatalities in the ACT over the past 9 years:

Table 3: Motorcycle Fatalities in the ACT

ACT Fatalities	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Total number of fatalities	16	10	10	9	26	13	14	14	13
Fatalities involving Motorcyclists	1	1	1	2	8	3	3	4	2
Percentage of Motorcycle Fatalities (%)	6.3	10.0	10.0	22.2	30.8	23.1	21.4	28.6	15.4

Research by the ANU Medical School indicates that a large proportion of motorcycle crashes (about 79%), even those occurring on roads, are not reported to the police. As such it is not possible to obtain accurate statistics of all motorcycle crashes in the ACT. Table 4 below tabulates the available ACT motorcycle crash data by crash severity:

Table 4: ACT Motorcycle Crash Data (based on reported crashes)

Severity	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Fatal Crashes	1	1	1	2	8	3	3	4	2
Injury Crashes	61	50	43	64	62	32	74	80	105
Property Damage Only Crashes	94	132	102	100	121	129	110	141	172
Total No. of Crashes	156	183	146	166	191	164	187	225	279

Analysis of available data shows that a significant proportion of crashes involve riders under the age of 30 years (see Figure 1), indicating a necessity to enhance learner behaviour and skills through more rigorous licensing processes.

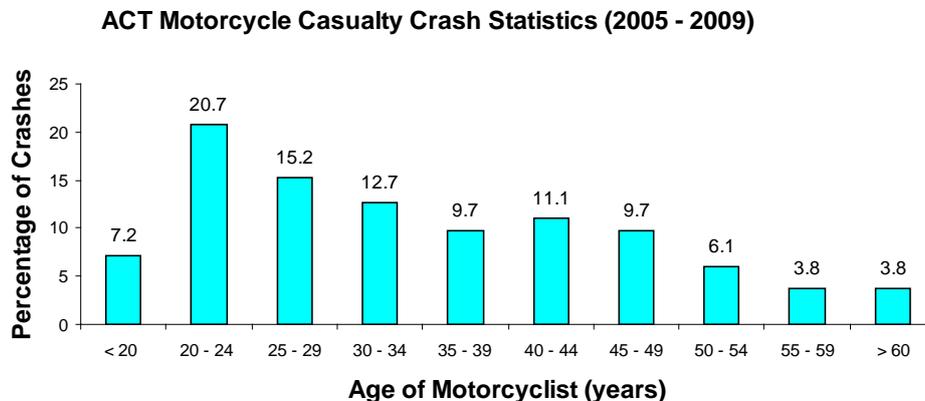


Figure 1 - Analysis of ACT Motorcycle Casualty Crash Data (2005 - 2009)

Also, a major contributing factor in single vehicle motorcycle fatalities seems to be poor rider attitude - speeding is involved in 68% of fatal crashes and alcohol/drug use in 44%. This suggests that the attitudinal content might be increased in Rider Training and Testing Schemes (RTTS), and possibly in other road user training and education programs such as the Road Ready and Road Ready Plus programs.

However, ACT crashes should not be analysed in isolation as the sample size is too small to be meaningful.

Existing ATSB crash data shows that although ACT motorcycle registrations over the last 3 years have increased faster than the national average, the ACT fatality/registration ratio has stayed constant; and remains well under the national average. Whilst this suggests that riding in the ACT is comparatively safe, it is not known if ACT riders are safe or are following safe riding procedures.

Existing motorcycle crash data focuses on how and where crashes happen, but does not include data on licence status (L, P or open), state of issue, rider training details or years of riding experience. This makes identification of problems or objective comparison of the various Rider Training and Testing Schemes (RTTS) across Australia a difficult task.

5.2 Licensing Issues

The main aim of the motorcycle training, testing and licensing process is to influence learner behaviour in three key areas - mental skills, physical skills and attitudinal (self control) skills.

5.2.1 Road Ready and Road Ready Plus

Road Ready is a classroom program that includes a variety of interactive activities designed to help make young people aware of issues relating to safer road use before they begin to learn to drive. The course includes a range of problem solving and decision-making sessions, statistical analysis, group tasks and research assignments.

Currently all novice riders have to undertake the Road Ready Course to pass the Road Rules Knowledge test before attending the Pre-Learner Licence course, unless they already hold an existing Class 'C' (car) licence.

The Road Ready Plus is an optional course that has been designed to support new drivers through a critical period in their driving. It involves small groups of new drivers who have held a provisional licence for at least 6 months meeting together and participating in a facilitated discussion workshop around the experiences of driving.

Developing a similar motorcycle centric Road Ready Plus course for Provisional motorcycle licence holders might provide additional reinforcement of hazard perception and appropriate road user attitude knowledge.

5.2.2 Pre-Learner Course

The **Pre-Learner Course** (9-hour course) covers road-craft quite well, and can be undertaken over 1 full day or 2 half-days:

Day 1 – the principal focus is on basic machine operation (physical skills).

Day 2 – the focus is on advanced machine operation in the context of observation, hazard identification and risk minimization using road and traffic simulated activities and theory sessions (physical, mental and to a lesser extent, attitudinal development).

Table 5 tabulates the strengths and weaknesses of this course:

Table 5: Strengths and weaknesses of Pre-Learner Course

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flexible full day or two half day option.• Prior knowledge or experience is not a prerequisite.• Content and format is consistent with most other jurisdictions - especially NSW.• 90% or better pass rate is achievable by most participants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Single day option is too long on days of extreme weather.• “One size fits all” course - present structure does not recognise prior riding experience.• No short course option for those who have prior riding experience – this option is available in VIC and QLD.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a "safety net" for those who fail, in the form of discounted private catch-up lessons. • Affordable in cost and time. • Riding equipment provided in fee. • Equally relevant to riders of regular motorcycles and automatic scooters, the similarities of which far outnumber their differences. • Consistently receives positive feedback from participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacks provision for on road demonstration or practice. • About 7% of participants who pass course requirements still lack confidence to ride in the "real world", and usually seek further training.

It is unclear if this training complements and reinforces messages delivered in the Road Ready course, which has a comparatively greater emphasis on attitudinal development. The Pre-Learner course content could be reviewed against the Road Ready program to ensure compatibility.

Stay Upright has suggested that the limited transfer of road-craft concepts from the classroom and training range to the real environment could be overcome by reviewing the current syllabus to include the:

- introduction of a video component (road riding demonstration), and/or
- inclusion of an on-road component during training with government pre-approval of trainees to ride on road at a certain time and place in the company of a training provider, or under a limited duration special licence with restricted conditions.

The existing Pre-Learner course includes a simulated road ride in a controlled environment. It is the view of TAMS that enhanced on-road training components would be more appropriately placed in the Pre-Provisional course, after novice riders are licensed to ride on public roads.

The current Pre-Learner course also contains additional components such as obstacle avoidance and slow speed riding techniques, which are considered necessary for acquiring basic riding skills for attempting the Alternate Motorcycle Operators Skills Test (Alternate MOST).

However, concern has been expressed by instructors familiar with both the NSW and ACT schemes that the longer ACT course length contributes more to students' fatigue rather than learning, as it attempts to include the above skill elements which could otherwise be included in a mandatory Pre-Provisional course. This suggests that the 9-hour syllabus may be unnecessarily long and could increase the likelihood of information overload.

The adoption of the 7-hour NSW syllabus may be less stressful for trainees and trainers alike, and might also remove problems associated with limited daylight hours in colder months. However, it should only be considered if the Pre-Provisional course is made a compulsory component of the training scheme.

5.2.3 Pre-Provisional Course

The **Pre-Provisional Course** consists of a review and practice of physical riding skills, road-craft discussion and an observed road-craft ride. It has a greater emphasis on attitudinal, behavioural and self development strategies than the Pre-Learner course, and the provisional test may be attempted during and at the end of the course.

Whilst this course is currently not a compulsory pre-requisite to the Provisional licence assessment, Learner motorcycle riders can choose to undertake the course to enhance their skills and road-craft awareness. However, if the learner fails the Provisional licence assessment test, they are required to undertake this 7-hour course before attempting further tests.

Table 6 tabulates the strengths and weaknesses of this course:

Table 6: Strengths and weaknesses of Pre-Provisional Course

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables on and off road demonstrations and practice opportunities. • Encourages self assessment and introduces attitudinal concepts. • Very good feedback is common, such as “it should be compulsory for all”. • Small group size 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road ride not competency based - short of crashing participants cannot fail. • Road ride is a learning exercise with participants following instructor at all times so opportunities to offer feedback on road-craft performance are limited. • Previous ‘100% subsidy’ scheme discouraged voluntary participation - only 15% of learners actually did the P course, most having failed the test. • The policy of linking course attendance with failing the MOST promotes the view that the course is only for those who have poor physical skills.

This present course is based on a 2005 version of the NSW syllabus, and has remained unchanged despite several changes to the NSW format over the last few years. TAMS has now approved the adoption of the current version of the NSW syllabus, and its implementation is awaiting a minor amendment to the rider training contract.

Significant other improvements made to the NSW format that could be incorporated into the ACT system are:

- making the 7-hour Pre-Provisional course compulsory;
- making the road ride an assessable part of the course; and
- incorporating a written or computerized motorcycle control and road-craft knowledge test.

The NSW currently have a computer based touch screen ‘Hazard Perception Test’ for all drivers transiting from the P1 to P2 licensing stages, which uses film clips of real traffic situations and measures the participant’s ability to recognise potentially dangerous situations on the road and respond appropriately:

<http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/licensing/tests/hazardperceptiontest/index.html>

This test could be adapted or emulated to meet our needs. NSW RTA has generously provided material in the past, and could be approached for assistance in this matter.

Compulsory Pre-Provisional training would allow learners to see road-craft principles and techniques in action on the road rather than the present classroom presentations and off-road simulation exercises provided through the Pre-Learner course. A stronger focus on on-road training would also be in line with the recommendations of the 2006 and 2009 Reports of the ACT Auditor-General.

However, there is currently no data showing that Pre-Provisional course participants are safer riders than those who avoid the course, and a close examination of costs and benefits in terms of safer riding outcomes has not been undertaken.

The implementation of 2 compulsory user-pays training components – a shorter 7 hour Pre-Learner course and the 7 hour Pre-Provisional course – would:

- increase the overall user cost of rider training participation, and
- cost ACT learners significantly more than their NSW counterparts who enjoy a significant NSW government subsidy for Pre-Learner training.

Table 7 compares the user cost of courses and licences in the ACT and NSW:

Table 7: Comparison of ACT and NSW User Costs

	With a Full Driver Licence		With a Learner Driver Licence	
	ACT	NSW	ACT	NSW
Cost of the Pre-Learner course (\$)	241	78	241	78
Cost of L licence (\$)	35.60	21	zero	21
Cost of the Pre-Provisional course (\$)	149	117	149	117
Cost of the Provisional test (\$)	46	47	46	47
Cost of P licence (\$) - for 3 years (only 1 year for riders with another full licence)	zero	-	90	-
Cost of P1 licence (\$) – for 1 year	-	48	-	48
Cost of P2 licence (\$) – for 2 years	-	-	-	76
Cost of Open or Full licence (\$) - valid for 5 years	151	153	151	153
Total User Costs (\$)	622.60	464	677	540

It is understood that the NSW Government subsidises the NSW Pre-Learner course. Both Stay Upright and the MRA suggest that the cost to ACT learners could be offset by providing a subsidy to the Pre-Provisional course fees and/or the Road Ready Plus course, but not to the pre- learner course.

As mentioned previously, the cost of the Pre-Provisional course was previously subsidised by the ACT Government, but removed in November 2010 as a budgetary savings measure. In this light, future ACT Government subsidies are not likely.

5.2.4 Provisional Licence Test (Alternate MOST)

The **Provisional Licence Test** is a low speed riding assessment of fundamental physical skills such as moving off, accelerating, turning and braking requiring balance, coordination and multi-tasking skills and judgment.

The original **MOST** test design was pitched at motorcycles of smaller capacity classes. The acceptance of larger motorcycles as part of the move away from a 250cc capacity limit to a “power to weight” ratio, and in the ACT’s case no capacity limit, has meant that test dimensions may place an obstacle for learners attempting the test, if the learner has chosen a larger machine. Advice informally given at Learner training generally advises on better choices of machine; however, learners often choose unwisely.

The **Alternate MOST** tests balance, throttle and clutch control, and an overall grasp of rider control skills, including braking and swerving. It does this at a useful speed without introducing unnecessary risk to the rider or the rider’s machine, while providing a consistent (and fair) testing regime allowing a testing authority to confirm these skills.

The **Alternate MOST** test structure is of increasing complexity and skill, and consists of two pairs of basic exercises followed by two separate higher speed demonstrations. These are the:

- i) “left turn” - emulates the tight turn typical of on road left hand turns;
- ii) “stop in a box” - demonstrates that a rider can accurately judge when to commence braking in order to bring the machine to a controlled stop from a low speed at a nominated point without losing control (skidding)
- iii) “cone weave and U-turn” - demonstrate low speed manoeuvring skills, including an understanding of balance, throttle, clutch and an ability to plan and execute tight and larger turns; and
- iv) “emergency stop” and then a “quick swerve” - perform an emergency stop and able to swerve around an object.

The purpose of these tests is to confirm a rider’s possession of basic physical control of the motorcycle, and should not be replaced unless the replacement offers a similar confirmation of skill under similar conditions of fairness and risk.

If there is concern that machines which are acceptable under the LAMS criteria are compromised under current testing dimensions, then there may be a case for reassessing these dimensions. An alternative view is that a rider who has chosen a larger machine should be capable of demonstrating a commensurate level of control.

Some candidates do not comprehend the relevance of this test, or of any shortcomings in their basic riding skills identified through the testing, and have a negative attitude towards the test before it is even attempted. This negative view has also been promoted within local support groups and clubs at varying times, largely due to a misunderstanding of the test’s intentions.

The test, in fact, sets a benchmark of minimum skill-sets for all riders, and it or its variants are used throughout Australia and in many other countries.

Table 8 tabulates the strengths and weaknesses of this test:

Table 8: Strengths and weaknesses of the Alternate MOST Test

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick, inexpensive, objective, and easy to understand - therefore conceptually acceptable to most riders. • Practical skill shortfalls are identified with minimum risk to rider, assessor and equipment – some less skilled candidates prove to be unsafe when braking or steering at speeds under 30 km/h. • Variations are used in many jurisdictions here and overseas - so collective judgment suggests the test has worth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on physical skills. It is not intended to enable assessment of road-craft or riding attitude, which would require an additional testing methodology.

The learner’s understanding of the “Alternate MOST” test could be improved by producing a brochure and webpage/s explaining the testing intent as well as the necessary basic skills required to pass the test.

The NSW testing format makes riding aspects somewhat easier (e.g. slightly more generous test dimensions), but includes penalties for poor technique (e.g. failure to headcheck). Stay Upright suggests that the ACT test could be improved and aligned to the NSW format by:

- incorporating all practical systems learned at Pre-Learner level (e.g. mount/dismount, posture, start/stop engine, riding techniques etc);
- adopting the same test dimensions as used in NSW;
- revising the present scoring system to introduce penalties for poor technique; and
- if compulsory Pre-Provisional training is not adopted, the practical test can be retained and an additional on-road assessment or an off-road simulation component incorporated into the assessment process.

It is the MRA’s opinion that the existing exercises should be retained with the cone weave and U-turn made non-assessable but advice provided to trainees/examinees on their short comings, and that the swerve and emergency stop should be done at a higher speed approximating a pedestrian zone of either 40 kph or 50 kph to make it more real life. These suggestions are not supported by TAMS.

5.2.5 Licence Duration and Conditions

Current ACT certificate and licence validity periods are:

- Certificate of Course Completion (CoC) - 3 months
- Learner licence – minimum 3 months, maximum 2 years
- Provisional licence – minimum 1 year, maximum 3 years - depending on existing licence class status
- Open licence – valid for life, as long as 5 yearly fees are paid on time

Table 9 tabulates the strengths and weaknesses of current ACT licences:

Table 9: Strengths and weaknesses of current ACT licences

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2-year L period is very ‘generous’, and is popular with learners. • Absence of an engine capacity limit on Ls or Ps is the most generous learner condition in Australia, and popular with learners and probably the motorcycle industry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 month Pre-Learner certificate validity period is too long - encourages putting off getting Ls or a motorcycle to enable practice. • 2 year Learner rider licence is too long - offers too much time to put off motorcycle acquisition (and begin practice) and also to develop/reinforce bad skills/habits. • Current P conditions are somewhat confusing and poorly understood (see Section 3.3.2). • L and P licence conditions are generally inconsistent with other states (especially NSW), giving scope for confusion when riding interstate. • Open rider licences allows older licensed riders who have not had formal training or who have not ridden for a long time to venture back onto the roads, hoping skills will take up where they left off. Risk profile could be the same or higher than novices as more powerful motorcycles and longer trips are usually involved.

The generous CoC and Learner licence validity periods could have a detrimental effect on the skill levels of novice riders. The availability of a longer timeframe to pass through the rider training and testing scheme could allow bad habits to develop and become entrenched as less confident riders repeatedly put off doing the test.

This skill deterioration could be reduced by shortening the statutory periods between training, testing and licensing, thus encouraging novice riders to begin practice sooner. Some suggestions to this effect are:

- Reduce the period of validity of all three CoCs issued by Stay Upright from 3 months to 1 month.
- Reduce the term of learner licences from 24 months to 12 months, retaining the present non-renewal rules.
- Consider increasing the 6 month condition changes on provisional licences – available upon completion of the Road Ready Plus course or for riders 26 years and older - to 12 months to remove any confusion.

The current ACT Power-to-Weight restrictions are generally consistent with national calculations and implementation. However, the ACT LAMS list does not restrict novice riders to only being able to ride motorcycles with engine capacities not exceeding 660 cc as required in the states and the Northern Territory.

Whilst there is no evidence suggesting that bigger motorcycles are more dangerous in the hands of ACT learner and provisional licence riders than the restricted 660 cc ones, and the MRA strongly oppose this restriction, aligning the ACT LAMS list to the other states will be part of the national reform process, and would assist with consistency and enforceability.

Inconsistency of mutual recognition policies between Road Transport Authorities (RTAs) means transferring learner licences between jurisdictions is confusing for learners, trainers and RTA staff. The recommendations of this review should assist by aligning ACT arrangements closer to NSW, pending development of a “best practice” national model.

5.3 Training Opportunities and Courses

Learning opportunities (e.g. mentoring and coaching) are available through many clubs and novice riders should be advised of these options during their initial learning period. Getting novice riders involved early with such clubs may avoid some of the loss of road-craft skills and the development of bad habits.

Training courses for returning riders, such as the MASTERS and GEARS courses, are available for open licence riders who have not ridden for a long time; however, the voluntary uptake of these courses is low. Stay Upright suggest that this may be overcome by introducing a compulsory no charge licence re-testing for open licensed riders who have not had a motorcycle registered in their name in the previous 5 years. A fail would then mean compulsory user-pays training and retesting.

Although TAMS does not propose to proceed with this suggestion at this stage, it may be an option for the future.

The following voluntary Stay Upright post-licence training courses are available locally for ACT motorcyclists:

- Bike Prep – a 2-hour basic motorcycle maintenance course, with a focus on safety maintenance issues.
- Intermediate Course – an on-road and off-road refresher course on Pre-Learner road-craft principles.
- "Manage the Road" – a 4-hour on-road course on road-craft principles for new riders.
- Advanced Skills Development I – an off-road course on physical skills and road-craft principles for riders of all levels.
- MASTERS Course – similar to the Advanced Skills Development I course, but with a focus on returning riders who are at special risk.
- GEARS Course – a short course, for ladies only, with a focus on road-craft principles.

In addition, the MRA hosts short Discovery rides for newly licensed riders, and full day Ride 'n' Thrive on-road road-craft training rides for more experienced motorcyclists.

Information about these training options could be made available on the ACTGS website and the motorcycle rider booklet to promote more awareness and participation.

5.4 Scooter Specific Issues

The ACT Road Safety Action Plan for 2009 and 2010 states that specific issues in relation to motor scooter riders will also be considered as part of this review.

Stay Upright feel that the Pre-Learner course is equally relevant to riders of regular motorcycles and automatic scooters as the similarities far outnumber their differences.

Both MRA and Stay Upright agree that pre-learner training could be marginally simplified for riders of automatic scooters as some exercises could be shortened or removed – e.g. clutch control and gear changing exercises. At present levels of demand however, conducting scooter-only courses would not be economically viable and waiting times to get on a course would be unacceptable.

Stay Upright trialled Scooter Skills Advanced courses in late 2009 and early 2010 with patchy success. The program has been abandoned due to lack of interest from the scooter fraternity. There is a perception among some scooter riders that scooters are safer than motorcycles because of their comparative simplicity and ease of operation.

The majority of modern scooters have an automatic transmission, and as such automatically engage and disengage their clutch, and vary the drive ratio with respect to engine revolutions and load. Some older scooters (e.g. the older Vespa scooter) do have a manual clutch and gear box, while some larger modern scooters have rider selectable gear changes. Scooters like Suzuki's Burgman and Honda's DN01 blur the motorcycle/scooter definition and incorporate a mix of auto and manual controls.

In this respect, a learner who is planning, and in most cases learning on an automatic scooter, should receive some initial information regarding the differences between auto and manual features. The auto clutch operation is throttle/rpm dependant, and the engaging and disengaging of the auto clutch needs to be understood by a rider.

As an example – low speed riding requires sufficient engine revs to engage the clutch, and on deceleration, particularly on hills, a rider needs to understand and expect the auto clutch to “drop out” if engine revs drop. If a rider is depending on “engine braking” on a descent or when slowing in traffic, they must be prepared to use the scooter brakes when the revs drop to the point where the auto clutch disengages. This effect will also occur at low speed in slow or stopping traffic. This can be a disconcerting effect if a rider is unprepared, and may generate a panic response from a novice rider.

Also, although there has been a move to larger wheel sizes as modern scooters have developed, there remains a need to remind novices that the smaller wheels of most scooters can turn quickly, may be subject to “bump steer”, and will have a tendency to drop into road imperfections (which the larger wheels of motorcycles may not have). This is worth considering when riding in a group of mixed machines as travel speeds may not be aligned to the needs of different vehicles in different road conditions.

Features of scooter transmission systems and small wheel handling issues should be noted and included in the general learner curriculum for mention to learner scooter riders as part of the normal course. Discussion of these matters can be made during training involving a mix of manual and auto motorcycles/scooters, and practice in

engaging an auto clutch can be made during normal learner training alongside manual motorcycles.

Stay Upright already incorporates the contents of a NSWRTA-produced scooter supplement into the pre-learner course. A scooter specific information brochure could also be produced and handed out to learner scooter riders.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Technical Changes

- Review the 9-hour Pre-Learner syllabus with a view to increasing transfer of knowledge and skills and ensuring compatibility with the Road Ready program.
- Review the 7-hour Pre-Provisional course to include a written or computerized motorcycle control and road-craft knowledge test, and make the road ride an assessable part of the course.
- Seek Government agreement to make the 7-hour Pre-Provisional course compulsory.
- If the Pre-Provisional course is made compulsory, seek Government agreement to reduce the content and duration of the Pre-Learner course to follow the 7-hour NSW format.
- Consider the development of a motorcycle centric Road Ready Plus course for provisional motorcycle licence holders – for those riders who wish to undertake it.
- If subsidies are to be re-introduced, subsidise the Pre-Provisional course and/or Road Ready Plus program; not the Pre-Learner course.
- Align the ACT Alternate MOST test with recent changes made in NSW, such as including penalties for failure to headcheck.
- If the Pre-Provisional course is not made compulsory, consider the introduction of an on-road assessment or an off-road simulation to complement the ACT Alternate MOST test.
- Reduce validity periods of all three Certificates of Competency from 3 months to 1 month, and the Learner licence from 24 months to 12 months.
- Consider increasing the 6 month condition changes on the Provisional licences - available upon completion of the Road Ready Plus course or for riders 26 years and older - to 12 months.

6.2 Supplementary Changes

- Improve the learner's understanding of the 'Alternate MOST' test by producing a brochure and webpage/s explaining the testing intent and the necessary basic skills required to pass.
- Actively promote follow-on education and training for all riders, including returning riders.

- Ensure features of scooter transmission systems and small wheel handling issues are included in the general learner curriculum for mention to learner scooter riders as part of the normal Pre-Learner course.
- Produce a scooter specific information brochure for learner scooter riders.