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Media Release

NEW FIGURES: MOTORCYCLISTS 23 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO BE KILLED ON THE ROAD THAN CAR DRIVERS

Motorcyclists now account for almost 15 per cent of all road deaths despite making up only 4.5 per cent of registered vehicles in Australia, according to new official statistics.

Today I'm releasing a new report – *Fatal and Serious Road Crashes Involving Motorcyclists* – which shows that motorcyclists are 23 times more likely to be killed and 41 times more likely to suffer serious injury than car occupants.

Significantly, a large proportion of fatal motorcycle accidents occur on weekends and most between the hours of 2pm and 6pm, two facts which suggest that many fatal accidents are associated with recreational riding rather than commuting.

While motorcycles and scooters are cheaper to buy and run, they can also be extremely dangerous – as the family and friends of accident victims know all too well.

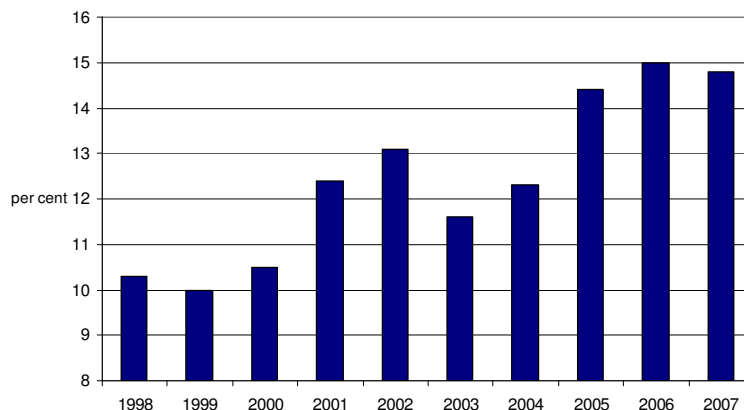
Last year alone, 240 motorcycle riders were killed and 5,000 hospitalised.

My message to riders is simple: your first accident is likely to be your last so slow down, don't drink and ride, wear a helmet and in the case of the weekend rider, acknowledge your inexperience and limits with the machine.

For the rest of us, we need to be aware that motorcyclists have a place on our roads, and that we need to stay alert and respect their presence.

Since 1998, motorcycle deaths as a proportion of all road deaths have been steadily increasing (see graph below).

Motorcyclist deaths as a proportion of all road deaths
(1998 to 2007)



The report also reveals that:

- Over the past decade motorcycle deaths increased by an average of 3.1 per cent a year, while car deaths fell;
- Queensland has recorded the largest average annual increase in motorcycle deaths – up 8 per cent a year since 1998;
- Older riders (i.e. those aged over 44) accounted for most of the annual increase in motorcycle deaths;
- The proportion of all fatal motorcycle crashes involving single vehicles has been increasing and currently stands at about 42 per cent;
- Nearly nine in ten fatal accidents occurred in fine weather conditions;
- Approximately 40 per cent of fatal accidents occur on major roads such as national highways;
- ‘Excessive speed’ and ‘alcohol and/or drug use’ were the two biggest causes of fatal motorcycle accidents;
- One in ten motorcyclists killed were not wearing a helmet; and
- Compared to OECD countries, Australia’s motorcycle death rate is high.

Motorcycle accidents are a serious and growing issue. Accordingly, the community’s efforts to tackle carnage on our nation’s roads must include measures that improve motorcycle safety.

That’s why the recent landmark Motorcycle and Scooter Safety Summit was so timely.

Organised by the Australian Government and the Motorcycle Safety Consultative Committee (MSCC), this landmark two-day Summit brought together rider groups, police, road authorities and safety experts from around Australia and overseas.

The Summit generated an enormous range of ideas to improve motorcycle safety, with proposed measures addressing rider education and licensing, police enforcement, road engineering and protective clothing.

I look forward to these proposals being further developed by the MSCC so that they can be considered by the Australian Transport Council for inclusion in the next National Road Safety Strategy.

The MSCC comprises representatives from the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries, motorcycle clubs and associations, and my Department.

The full *Fatal and Serious Road Crashes Involving Motorcyclists* report can be downloaded: www.atsb.gov.au/publications/2008/mono20.aspx.

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