Policy: **Motorcycles**

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The use of motorcycles and scooters is a matter of individual choice. So long as nobody else is likely to be harmed, it is not acceptable for the government to interfere in it.

Motorcycles and scooters represent an economical, convenient and environmentally favourable means of transport that also place fewer demands on roads and other infrastructure.

The LDP will implement the following measures:

1. Ensure that specific facilities for motorcycles and scooters are included in public parking.
2. Reduce taxes, tolls and other charges on motorcycles and scooters to no greater than a quarter that of cars.
3. Allow motorcycles and scooters to use public transport corridors such as bus lanes.
4. Permit motorcycles and scooters to filter between lanes of slow moving traffic.
5. Create refuge areas for motorcycles and scooters in front of cars waiting at intersections to facilitate faster traffic flow.
6. Ensure motorcycle and scooter safety is given the same priority as car safety in road design and construction.
7. Encourage voluntary adoption of European CE standards of safety clothing for motorcyclists, accompanied by accurate labelling.
8. Remove obstacles to the establishment of accessible rider training courses at moderate cost.
9. Remove any requirement for front number plates.
10. Permit novice riders to travel at the posted speed limit.
11. Allow parking on the footpath where it is wide enough.

These measures are additional to the LDP's policy on traffic laws, which includes:

- Set speed limits at, or slightly above, the 85th percentile. This would result in an increase of 10-30 km/h in the limit on roads where drivers feel it is safe to travel at such speeds, while perhaps leading to reductions on less safe roads.
- Give low priority to enforcement of any traffic laws intended to protect road users from themselves while having no impact on innocent victims.

Discussion

Many people choose to ride motorcycles and scooters for the sheer enjoyment they provide. However, there are also many practical reasons for using them.

Modern motorcycles and scooters are fuel efficient, cheap to operate and have low exhaust emissions. They are also mostly recyclable.

They represent a very efficient means of transport, occupying a quarter or less of the space required by a car and causing far less road wear. They require much less room to park and can utilise areas that are not suitable for cars.

For commuters, motorcycles and scooters represent a highly attractive option. They are not subject to the physical constraints of walking or cycling or the scheduling and over-crowding problems of public transport. They can handle traffic density far better than cars and substantially reduce traffic pressure, particularly when replacing single occupant car journeys.

Despite these advantages, state and federal governments regularly ignore motorcycles and scooters or treat them the same as cars. They are also subjected to regulatory controls based on historical perceptions about safety, noise, bikie gangs and other assumed evils.

Parking for motorcycles and scooters in cities tends to be in chronic short supply. In many cases motorcyclists are expected to use and pay for the same parking facilities as cars, despite requiring much smaller areas. Motorcycles are also more vulnerable to bumping by

other vehicles and cannot safely display parking tickets, making certain types of parking unsuitable.

Cars are smaller and lighter than trucks and usually charged less to use motorways. Motorcycles are smaller and lighter than cars but are usually required to pay the same toll as cars. Taxes are also quite often the same as cars.

Motorcyclists are not always permitted to use public transport lanes, despite the fact that they almost never impede buses and other lane users.

The standards for road safety barriers are based on tests using cars, not motorcycles and scooters. Data on motorcycle safety is seriously deficient.

The safety of motorcycles and scooters is reduced by painting roads with slippery marking paint and using steel plates, hazardous crash barriers, rigid guide posts, and by placing light poles, posts and signs close to the roadway. Deteriorating roads are hazardous due to loose surfaces; cracks are repaired with slippery crack sealant; surfaces are grooved without adequate warning and loose gravel is used on sidetracks and repairs.

Europe has an objective system for rating safety clothing (CE) that allows motorcyclists to choose clothing suitable for their needs, but clothing that fails the European standard is sold in Australia and motorcyclists cannot identify it due to a lack of accurate labelling.

There are numerous barriers to the establishment of rider trader courses, not only the same as those faced by small businesses anywhere in Australia but also regulatory barriers relating to issues such as liability and business licensing. These affect rider training providers particularly severely. As a result there is a shortage of accessible, affordable rider training courses. The result is reduced levels of rider expertise and safety. Front numberplates on motorcycles and scooters are a hazard to riders and bystanders due to protuberances and sharp edges, as well as constituting an unnecessary cost. The motive for reintroducing them is simply to generate revenue from speed cameras.

Although the wearing of helmets makes great sense, it is not the role of the government to protect people from poor judgment so long as nobody else is harmed. Criminalising the non-wearing of helmets is an unacceptable intrusion into the realm of personal choice.

Limited speeds imposed on learners and probationary riders on freeways will slow other vehicles, cause frustration and result in antisocial behaviour by driving too close to the learner/P rider, particularly by those in heavy vehicles.