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EVALUATION OF THE PRE-LICENCE MOTORCYCLE TRAINING COURSE AT THE
NEW SOUTH WALES TRAFFIC EDUCATION CENTRE

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Abstract

The development and implementation of the Pre-Licence Motorcycle Training Course at the NSW Traffic Education Centre was reviewed. Six areas are dealt with in the report: Developing the Pre-Licence Motor Cycle Course; Adequacy of Resources; The Participants in the Course; The Contribution of Individuals and Groups from the Community; Perceptions of Course's Success; Requirements for Running a Successful Course. The report concludes with a set of conclusions relating to each of these areas.

Keywords

Evaluation Motorcycle Training Course Traffic Education

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**EVALUATION OF THE PRE-LICENCE MOTORCYCLE
TRAINING COURSE AT THE
NEW SOUTH WALES TRAFFIC EDUCATION CENTRE**

**Prepared by
Dr M. Batchler**

June 1988

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PREAMBLE	i
1. DEVELOPING THE PRE-LICENCE MOTORCYCLE TRAINING COURSE	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 The Training of Instructors	1
1.3 Developing the Course	2
1.4 Evaluation Summaries	5
The Victorian Syllabus	6
The Tasmanian Syllabus	7
General Comments	7
1.5 Conclusions	9
2. ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES	11
2.1 Funding	11
2.2 Human Resources	11
2.3 Venue	12
2.4 Motorcycles	12
2.5 Time	13
2.6 The Curriculum	13
2.7 Conclusions	13
3. THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE COURSE	15
3.1 Conclusions	16
4. THE CONTRIBUTION OF INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS FROM THE COMMUNITY	17
4.1 Conclusions	17
5. PERCEPTIONS OF THE COURSE'S SUCCESS	18
5.1 Conclusions	19
6. REQUIREMENTS FOR RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL COURSE	21
6.1 Human Resources	21
6.2 Finance	21
6.3 Time	22
6.4 Venue	22
6.5 Curriculum	22
6.6 Other	23
6.7 Conclusions	23
7. OTHER COMMENTS	25
7.1 Conclusions	25
8. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS	26
APPENDICES	
Appendix 1. Persons Trained as Instructors in 1987	
Appendix 2. Motorcycle Riders' Basic Skills Programme New South Wales Traffic Education Centre	
Appendix 3. Sample of a completed evaluation sheet	
Appendix 4. Interview schedules used in the study	

PREAMBLE

The New South Wales Traffic Education Centre is being developed in Armidale as a community-based resource to serve the people of New South Wales. The Centre has grown out of a community-based road safety program which has been in operation for the past eight years. The pre-licence motorcycle course is one of a number of initiatives aimed at the improvement of safety on the roads and the reduction of road crash trauma.

This report resulted from a project commissioned by the New South Wales Traffic Education Centre on behalf of the Federal Office of Road Safety. The project had the following major objectives:

- (i) To obtain information about the development of the Pre-licence Motorcycle Training Course;
- (ii) To obtain information about resource use and resource need;
- (iii) To obtain perceptions of factors relating to the success or otherwise of the Motorcycle Training Course;
- (iv) Drawing upon (i), (ii) and (iii), to develop a set of conclusions relating to the implementation of the pre-licence motorcycle training course based at the New South Wales Traffic Education Centre.

Data for the report were drawn from three main sources:

- (i) An analysis of documentation on the development of the motorcycle training course;
- (ii) An analysis of interviews conducted with the Chairman of the Centre's Education Committee, the co-ordinator of the course, the instructors, and course participants;
- (iii) The writer's experience as a participant in the course.

The body of the report deals with six areas:

- Developing the Pre-licence Motor Cycle Course;
- Adequacy of Resources;
- The Participants in the Course;
- The Contribution of Individuals and Groups from the Community;
- Perceptions of the Course's Success;
- Requirements for Running a Successful Course.

Each of the sections dealing with these areas concludes with a set of conclusions. The conclusions from all the sections are brought together in a summary in the concluding section of the report.

1. DEVELOPING THE PRE-LICENCE MOTORCYCLE TRAINING COURSE

1.1 Introduction

Following the investigation of existing programs in Australia in 1983 by the Chairman of the Centre's Education Committee, Dr. B.H. Connor, preparations commenced to develop a community-based pre-licence motorcycle training course in Armidale. In 1984 the New South Wales Government promised support for the programme. After discussion with the New South Wales Government's Standing Committee on Road Safety (STAYSAFE) and detailed negotiation with the New South Wales Police, arrangements were made to train six members of the local community as motorcycle instructors. It was decided that the training should be carried out by the police instructors at St. Ives, Sydney and that the co-ordinator of the team of trainees would be the Head Teacher of the Automotive Section at the Armidale College of TAFE. Simultaneously the New South Wales Traffic Education Centre developed some facilities for use by motorcycle instructors and course participants. Funds for the development and subsequent evaluation of the pre-licence motorcycle training course were provided by a grant from the Federal Office of Road Safety in October, 1986.

1.2 The Training of Instructors

Advertisements seeking persons to be trained as instructors were placed in local newspapers, applicants were interviewed and potential instructors selected.

Six people were trained, in February 1987, at the Police Driver Training School in St. Ives. The motorcycle riding experience of the six people ranged from eight years to seventeen years, while the team co-ordinator who attended the course as an observer had eighteen years road riding experience. A variety of occupations were represented - two secondary school teachers, a builder, a hardware store employee, a

leading hand welder and a university student. There was one female in the group.¹

All participants in the course passed and were supplied with certificates testifying that they were now qualified to instruct in "basic motorcycle riding techniques".

The newly qualified instructors gave their time voluntarily during training sessions and during subsequent trialling of the curricula in 1987.

When instructors were asked about the training which they received, all respondents reported that it prepared them appropriately to give basic motorcycle riding instruction. All stated that they had gained considerable knowledge and skills from the course even though they already had substantial motorcycle riding experience. Individual responses included:

It covered everything we ever needed to cover for the level we're offering in our pre-licence course.

I got an awful lot more than I thought I would.

It was long enough for a basic course - one day theory and the rest practical. It helped when we were trialling material from other states. We modified some sections in the light of the training we got. Content and format were good.

If we go further with our course here, we'll need another course for a higher level of training - people who've been riding around for a couple of years - to upgrade their skills. For that we need a bigger track, too.

The course was generally very good. We could have put in more time on highway work, on gravel and dirt - be taught how to take people out on the road. We'll need a more advanced course later.

1.3 Developing the Course

During 1987 motorcycle training syllabuses from the Driver Education Centre of Australia in Shepparton, Victoria and from Tasmania were

1. More detailed information about the instructors is included in Appendix 1.

trialled at the New South Wales Traffic Education Centre and subsequently a curriculum document entitled Motorcycle Riders' Basic Skills Programme² was produced. Included in the programme is material obtained from Queensland relating to the effects of alcohol and drugs. It is intended to include an "attitudinal" video which is being produced by the Federal Office of Road Safety.

The objectives of this programme are:

- (i) To provide students with the basic practical skills required to safely operate a motorcycle on public roads;
- (ii) To make students aware of the mental skills and attitudes required by a motorcycle rider;
- (iii) To provide students with the skills required to pass the local authority's permit application riding test.³

The programme includes the following ten units, each intended to be of one hour's duration:

Unit One

Introduction
Safety
Protective Clothing

Unit Two

Centre Stand
Mounting and Dismounting
Riding Posture
Location and Operation of Controls
Pre-ride checks
Maintenance

- 2. The Motorcycle Riders' Basic Skills Programme is included in Appendix 2.
- 3. Motorcycle Riders' Basic Skills Programme, p. (i).

Unit Three

- Walking the Motorcycle
- Partner push
- Starting and stopping
- Friction point

Unit Four

- Straight line riding
- Slow riding
- Rectangle riding
- Gradual turns

Unit Five

- Gear changing theory
- Lean angles
- Gear changing practice
- Riding large circles

Unit Six

- Braking theory
- Braking practice

Unit Seven

- Alcohol and drugs attitudes
- U-Turns

Unit Eight

- Safe road riding

Unit Nine

- Hill starts
- Slalom
- Braking in corners

Unit Ten

- Counter steer
- Revision
- Assessment

In the process of developing the New South Wales Traffic Education Centre's programme, three trials of the Victorian syllabus and three of the Tasmanian syllabus were carried out. Two instructors conducted each trial. It was planned to have six participants in each of the trials but in some cases these numbers dropped due to one or two participants not being able to take part because of "last minute" problems.

The participants came from Year 12 in school, the Child Care Programme at the Armidale College of TAFE and from the general community. Some trials were held over two consecutive days and others over single days on consecutive weekends.

Three different group structures were used - all male, all female, and mixed male and female. Although groups tended to be made up of similar age ranges, this was not originally intended. Each syllabus was trialled using one each of the different types of group - that is, a different group was used for each trial. The participants were not ranked beforehand as far as ability was concerned and so the level of motorcycling experience in each group was quite varied. Only one participant in each of the Victorian and Tasmanian trials had a Motorcycle Rider's Licence. One person in the Tasmanian trials had a Learner's Permit and two had a permit in the Victorian trial. However, several members of both programme trial groups had a great deal of off-road motorcycle riding experience.

At the conclusion of each of the six trials each participant completed an evaluation sheet which sought, in addition to demographic data, information about the content of the syllabus being tested and the time devoted to its component activities. In addition, opportunity was provided for "open-ended" responses to the question:

Is there any other aspect of motorcycle riding you would like to see included in a basic motorcycle course similar to the one you have just completed?

A sample of a completed evaluation sheet is provided in Appendix 3.

1.4 Evaluation Summaries

Evaluative comments relating to the trialling of the Victorian and Tasmanian Syllabuses are given below:

The Victorian Syllabus

(a) Programme Content

The majority of the participants considered the programme content to be "good to very good".

Participants requested additional sessions of riding on rough surfaces and on general maintenance.

Instructors expressed concern about lack of reference to defensive driving or roadcraft theory and the need for exercises in slalom, hill start and counter steering techniques. These exercises enable the rider to develop throttle and cycle control skills and accident avoidance techniques as well as confidence.

It was felt that the section dealing with cornering techniques was too brief and did not include instruction on lane positioning or cornering under various conditions such as loose or wet surfaces.

(b) Programme Length

Most participants considered that the time was long enough for most exercises. However, 37.5% of the participants believed the programme was not long enough in the area of safe riding. Additional comments included the need for additional exercises designed to improve confidence and control, and the special requirements of beginners who may require increased practice time with starting and stopping.

Instructors had no additional comments to make about programme length.

(c) General

Participants suggested that length of sessions may need to be varied to suit age and/or experience of students. This means that the final programme draft requires the necessary flexibility to vary session durations without interfering with continuity.

Instructors believed that some road circuit riding was desirable and that the early verbal instruction could be shortened e.g. concerning mounting and dismounting procedures.

The Tasmanian Syllabus

(a) Programme Content

Most participants assessed the programme content as "good to very good". The only exception was in the area of cornering techniques where almost 17% of participants thought that the content was "poor to very poor".

Additional comments made by participants included the need to add defensive riding techniques and a session on road rules to the programme. They asked for more instruction on gear changing, the addition of a brief session on motorcycle construction and design, and a session on riding techniques for rough surfaces. Instructors commented that a brief session on two and four stroke engine operation could be included, more emphasis was required on braking and cornering techniques, including a session on emergency braking on corners and on loose surfaces, and instruction on counter steer technique was needed.

(b) Programme Length

Participants stated that sufficient time had been allocated to most topics. However, time spent on motorcycle control and on braking techniques was thought to be insufficient by 25% and 33% of participants respectively. Approximately 42% of respondents felt that not enough time had been allowed for practising gear changing while 54% stated that insufficient time had been allowed for practising lean angles, cornering and traffic exercises.

Instructors commented that more time was needed for task 12 (motorcycle control) for beginners and for the teaching of braking theory.

General Comments

Overall, the two syllabuses which were trialled appeared to be received well by participants. However, some problem areas emerged.

Time - More time was required than originally allowed for practising exercises.

Some important riding techniques were omitted. The Victorian syllabus required more emphasis on riding on rough or loose surfaces, general maintenance, defensive riding and roadcraft, slalom, hill start, counter steer, and cornering techniques.

The Tasmanian syllabus was deficient in the areas of defensive driving, riding on rough surfaces, road rules, lack of emphasis on gear change co-ordination on down shifts, motorcycle construction and design, braking and cornering, emergency braking on corners and counter steering, and too little time was spent on general track work which included gear change and lean angles.

The length of training sessions required careful structuring to minimize the effects of fatigue and this may mean that training time should vary according to the age and previous experience of participants.

Additional general comments from the instructors about the trialling process and about how the final programme differed from the Victorian and Tasmanian syllabuses included:

We have a bunch of good, keen instructors. In the general organizing, setting up, things necessarily ran slowly. Having part-time volunteers can sometimes be a problem.

All of the instructors trialled each course. After each course had been trialled, we had a meeting soon after. Our training in Sydney helped each of us to make a worthwhile contribution.

We talked about the sequencing. Should we change this? We juggled things around sometimes after meeting.

The format and content are fairly similar. We still need some adaptation for rural areas - riding on gravel roads, off-road riding.

The Victorian one seemed disjointed. After talking to David Hill I found the reason was the first three hours of the course were for total beginners. Then another class could come in on top of that. It was really two courses in one.

Our course is suitable for inexperienced riders and for those with some experience. It can be adapted. For instance, you can go from Unit One through to Unit Ten or units can be left out.

One big difference between our programme and the others is our lack of facilities - no traffic lights. We don't have a highway road circuit.

We had three runs on each syllabus. We tried some things - mixed sex groups, then single sexed groups. On the last two trials, the fifth and sixth, we had to take whoever would come. We needed "guinea pigs". They were free courses.

Some students had difficulty mastering the use of the back brake e.g. in doing big circles. So we took the slow race first so they practiced slipping the clutch and using the back brake, then they had no problems doing big circles.

The syllabus developed for the New South Wales Traffic Education Centre attempted to address perceived deficiencies in the Victorian and Tasmanian syllabuses. The time for the programme has been extended from nine to ten hours in order to allow a greater period for practising rider skills. Extra topics have been added and the depth of study in some others increased. Special additions to the syllabus involved Alcohol and Drugs and Rider Attitudes because of their importance to the motorcyclist.

The course has been developed in a way which allows it to be offered at various levels. Early units may be omitted without altering the credibility of the programme or its benefit to more experienced riders. This course structure was felt to be important for communities where participants may have had a great deal of prior off-road experience e.g. on farms. It was noticed during the trials that participants with previous off-road experience found it more difficult to maintain motivation during the early units but gained great benefit from the road riding skills emphasized in later units.

1.5 Conclusions

The ten unit course which has been developed is well sequenced, and the content and levels of difficulty of the material are appropriate for a basic motorcycle rider training course.

Trialling procedures were sufficiently extensive to enable the identification of adaptations which needed to be made to syllabuses from other States.

Since a substantial number of participants live in rural areas, it is desirable that training programmes for instructors include tuition in how to teach skills required for riding on gravel and dirt surfaces.

Riding skills needed for riding on rough surfaces and on loose and wet surfaces should be included in the Pre-Licence Motorcycle Training Course.

A section of basic motorcycle maintenance could be included in the course, particularly when a group of participants have already had some experience in riding motorcycles.

More emphasis could be given to gear changing up and down and co-ordination on downshifts.

Practice time for braking needs to be increased, particularly when a group includes people who have not ridden a motorcycle before. Fatigue and time factors need to be taken into account, but more team teaching on this section could make more practice possible for individuals.

It would be desirable to include road circuit riding.

Instructors should stress, especially to very inexperienced participants, that at the completion of the course they have acquired some basic skills but, in most cases, they are not yet ready to ride on the roads without further practice.

2. ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES

All of those who were interviewed⁴ were asked to comment on the adequacy of the resources available to run the programme. The quotations presented below are representative of the majority of people in particular respondent groups.

2.1 Funding

Funding was adequate in one way but inadequate in two areas. The evaluation was sort of a tacked on thing. The cost of motorcycles has increased dramatically.

It took so long to get money that by the time it got through quotations for motorcycles were out of date.

They need money to improve the grounds and build a good track. It's a bit rough now.

Funding was sufficient to get the programme off the ground. But, of course, now more funding is needed. There's a real need for a proper circuit for example. If government regulations change and people must first do a course before getting their motorcycle rider's permit and if more people then come here for training then there will need to be increases in staff and equipment to cope with greater numbers. It might be that people will come to us to do a training course and be issued with a permit, or they may be required to go elsewhere first for a permit, but if they fail, then have to go here to do a course before reapplying for a permit.

2.2 Human Resources

The instructors are very good. The idea of having two for each group is a good one. This allows one instructor to take most of the group while the other might be helping individuals who need more practice on particular skills.

A manager or co-ordinator is needed to make bookings for courses and other administrative things. If he or she was also qualified to teach on the motorcycle training course, that would be even better. At present the instructors have to do the administration, arrange for the equipment for the course as well as run it. And of course, since we're part-time instructors, we can't be at the Traffic Centre all the time. (Instructors)

4. Interview schedules used in the study are included in Appendix 4.

2.3 Venue

Most respondents expressed the view that a properly developed training circuit was required. While recognizing the need for a new circuit, one respondent put the interesting view that "maybe some of the glass and heaps of gravel should be left - it gives a touch of realism". The following comments represent the views of the large majority of the respondents:

We have to develop another circuit. This place needs to be a centre to use now in a more broadly based community way for all motorcyclists. But capital input is needed to make sure we have the required circuit. It would be awful now if we failed for want of some extra funding.

Off-road is the best place to learn - not on the roads. But a better circuit is needed.

Several respondents pointed out that people living in rural areas have to cope with riding on gravel and dirt surfaces. They pointed out that as well as a highway riding circuit there was a need for facilities for pre-licence motorcycle riders to learn to ride off-road on dirt and gravel surfaces.

A number of secondary school students expressed the view that a dirt circuit is needed somewhere in Armidale. The following quotations exemplify this view:

A dirt circuit would keep the kids off the streets. Some of us have bikes and can't ride them. If you ride on the stock routes you get into strife.

The oldies worry if we ride our bikes on the footpath in case we hit someone. We've got no insurance. It's alright for the kids with trail bikes out on their properties but the kids in town really have nowhere to ride.

2.4 Motorcycles

Initially six borrowed 125 CC Honda agriculture bikes were used in order to expedite the development of the course while negotiations continued over the purchase of bikes for the course proper. The final trials were conducted using motorcycles of varying capacity as follows: 250 CC (two road motorcycles), 175 CC (two trail bikes), 125 CC (two road

motorcycles). Conducting the course using these new motorcycles overcame the problems encountered when using the second hand Honda motorcycles.

The choice of a range of motorcycles gives participants experience in riding a variety of machines. As each size and type of motorcycle has a different "feel" when in use and requires slightly different control applications, students have the opportunity to experience these differences. Training given by the police department is undertaken with two different types of motorcycles. Trainees are initially trained on trail motorcycles and then on road motorcycles.

2.5 Time

There was general agreement among participants in the course that there had been sufficient time during the course to enable them to learn basic motorcycle training skills. A few individual respondents suggested that they would have liked further time to practise particular skills, for example, braking.

2.6 The Curriculum

All respondents commented positively about the curriculum. There was general agreement that the sequencing of the content in a gradual progression enhanced the confidence of participants and facilitated the learning of the necessary skills. Individual respondents suggested that the length of practice sessions might be increased. More detailed comment about the curriculum is to be found elsewhere in this report.

2.7 Conclusions

Funding

Funding is needed for the provision of a highway circuit as soon as possible.

It is desirable that funding for a dirt/gravel circuit also be provided.

Human Resources

The instructors are enthusiastic and competent. The present practice of having two instructors for each group of participants should be continued.

Some administrative/staffing problems would be overcome if a manager of the Traffic Centre were appointed. If the person were also a qualified motorcycle instructor his/her salary might be partly met by using a "user pays" system for the motorcycle training course.

Venue

The need for provision of circuits has been mentioned above.

The provision of a dirt track, particularly for young motorcycle riders, needs further investigation. This may be a matter for the City Council rather than the Traffic Centre. Issues such as likely level of demand, indemnity, supervision, location, etc., need to be considered.

Motorcycles

The policy of having a range of motorcycles seems appropriate at present. Students can exchange motorcycles during the course in order to experience different control applications.

Should the level of demand for the course increase, e.g. if government legislation changes, and pre-licence training becomes mandatory consideration should be given to increasing the number of trail motorcycles.

Time

Ten hours is adequate for the course as it is now organized.

Curriculum

Curriculum issues have been dealt with under The Course above.

3. THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE COURSE

Apart from those who participated in 1987 and in the six trials of the Victorian and Tasmanian Syllabuses, a total of twenty took part in the newly developed course in the latter part of 1987. In 1988 a total of five courses have been conducted involving a further thirty participants. A total of fifty, therefore, have participated in the course developed for the New South Wales Traffic Education Centre. Reasons given for enrolling in the course included the following:

I wanted to learn how to ride a motorcycle properly and be taught by someone who was trained in how to do it.

It would be fun to get know how to ride a motorbike the proper way and prevent accidents.

I want to own my own motorbike one day so I needed to learn how to ride one properly.

I've got an Ag bike at home, on the farm, but I wanted to learn more about how to ride on the roads.

Motorbike accident statistics are pretty horrific. I didn't want to become one of them.

I wanted to take the course so that I could go for my rider's licence.

The ages of participants have covered a wide range. The majority of participants, however, have been in the 15 to 21 years age group.

The experience of participants ranged from those with no experience of motorcycle riding to those who have held a motorcycles rider's licence for several years (for example, one participant had been licensed for ten years). The majority of the participants had no road riding experience, although many had some experience in riding trail bikes or agriculture bikes on out of town properties.

One group of participants consisted of 12 secondary school students who participated in the course as part of their school's Group Activities. All of the group were boys who were enrolled in Year 9. The course for this group was organized in a different manner from other courses. It was conducted over a period of one and a half weeks with sessions each morning. Besides participating in the practical sections of the course, students were required to study the booklets containing

information which motorcyclists must know in order to pass the test for a Motorcycle Learners' Licence. Students were tested on this material and if they failed they were required to study the material again until they attained sufficient knowledge to pass the test. When these students were interviewed all expressed great enthusiasm about participating in the course and all felt that the course had been very valuable.

Almost all of the instructors and participants who were interviewed suggested that the course be extended to other participants. The following quotations typify the kinds of suggestions which were made:

Under the current regulations, people can answer a number of theory questions and then ride a bike on the road, only having passed a theory test. There should be some practical test, then if they fail they should have to do a course and pass it.

People should come just before they get their licence. That's a high risk area for accidents. It should become compulsory. Other groups such as people who have a licence already and need to learn more could also be encouraged to take the course.

The main emphasis should be from Year 10 onwards at high school. It might be possible to teach some of the theory at school and run after school classes. There are too many, especially kids, getting out there and not knowing what they're doing.

Everyone should have to do the course before getting a licence, even those on dirt tracks should do the course before being allowed on the track.

3.1 Conclusions

Participants

If Government legislation is changed to include a motorcycle riding test as part of the requirements for a Motorcycle Learners' Licence, those who fail the test might be referred to the New South Wales Traffic Education Centre in order to complete the Motorcycle Riders' Course.

If such legislation is enacted, the level of demand for the course from those seeking training before applying for a Licence is likely to increase. This has implications for the need to increase resources at the Centre.

Incorporating the Motorcycle Training Course into TAFE Course offerings could be further explored.

"Awareness programmes" might be conducted with Year 10 to Year 12 students at local secondary schools.

4. THE CONTRIBUTION OF INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS FROM THE COMMUNITY

Individual community members and groups who have contributed to the course include persons who volunteered to be instructors, police who were involved in discussions about the course, a local motorcycle retail store, council employees who sweep gravel from the area periodically, and community members who were willing to take part in the course. The following comments from people who were interviewed summarize these contributions:

Community individuals have been very happy to get involved as instructors. That's exciting.

We did initially approach the motorcycle group through the Armidale City Council Road Safety Committee, but we received no reply. Doing it the way we did seemed to work. You have to work through key people. A member of the Board of the Traffic Centre and Head Teacher at the Armidale College at TAFE said he'd take this on board and he took over and was the driving force. That's the key thing that finally rolled it.

It's important to recognize that pioneering things only happen if you have some key people who have something extra going for them.

Police were involved in discussions all the way along the line. That gave us some legitimacy - it wasn't a "fly-by-night" thing at all.

A local motorcycle retail store lent us motorcycles for the first few programmes. They lent safety equipment and they still do. They quoted reasonable prices for motorcycles, negotiating with importers. They lend us riding gear for our courses on the weekend and we take it back on Monday. If any maintenance is needed on the motorbikes, there is no charge.

The Council arranges periodically for their employees to sweep gravel from the asphalt surfaces.

Instructors got community groups to be involved, for example, kids from schools and TAFE to be trainees. One spin off was favourable comments from parents about kids becoming more responsible on the roads.

4.1 Conclusions

There were not large numbers of community members involved in contributing to this Course. Rather, use was made of "key people". This strategy has been successful in developing and implementing the Course.

5. PERCEPTIONS OF THE COURSE'S SUCCESS

Data from course documentation as well as data from interviews indicate that those who are responsible for implementing the course as well as those who have taken part in it perceive the course to be successful. The following quotations are illustrative of general comments about the success of the course:

Sixteen hours to go from zero to confidence - I didn't think I'd develop this much knowledge in such a short time.

It fits together as a whole. It's a gradual progression.

I'm ten times better at riding a motorbike than I was before. I learned a lot from it. It taught all of us something. We're more aware of possible accidents and aware of how to prevent them.

Yes, I'm confident now that I could apply for a licence.
(riders with trail riding experience)

It taught the basic safety skills as well as how to ride the bike properly.

By the end all of us could ride - a couple hadn't ridden before. Even those who had ridden trail bikes learned a lot - emergency stops and slalom.

It worked. We juggled the other two courses around, then we built our own one. Then we implemented the course and found it did work the way we wanted it to.

I approached each new thing with trepidation - I wondered whether I'd be able to handle it - but the sequencing was excellent. Skills were learned and reinforced and then we went on to something a bit harder.

You get the opportunity to frighten yourself safely - to get yourself frightened in a supervised area like going over the edge, and that would have been really scary outside where no one was around to give support.

We all felt after an hour or so we were all pretty good at riding in a straight line - we could even change gears and things like that and brake.

There were skills that were developed in the course that a lot of riders wouldn't have.

The course is really good and it should be continued. Armidale is very suitable - there's such a very high student population.

When respondents were asked to comment on the success or otherwise of particular sections of the programme, individual suggestions included:

From a staffing point of view there could be a second permanent staff member - someone well versed in teaching motorcycle training. We could have a manager-cum-motorcycle instructor as a second person. The salary might be covered by a user-pays system.

It would be better if there were a greater range of bikes. Trail bikes are the best for teaching skills but on the other hand they don't have centre stands.

The course needs more on maintenance work - mixture of fuels, etc. - to know the main points of the bike that could foul up on you.

There could be an advanced course later.

Keep the same content but increase the length of practice periods.

It would be good if there was a way of simulating an emergency on a highway circuit.

Maybe the second day of the course could be looked at. It's very demanding and a bit quick.

5.1 Conclusions

The Success of the Course

Participants, as well as implementers, perceived the course to be successful.

Further research needs to be done at a later date to determine the longer term effects of the course.

The course is appropriate as a basic course for riders who have had some experience and are not yet licenced to ride a motorcycle, as well as for those who have had no motorcycle riding experience.

Those with no previous motorcycle riding experience who have taken the course need further practice in basic skills included in the course before they could be considered competent to ride safely on the roads.

Content is well arranged and the progression of levels of difficulty is appropriate.

Consideration could be given to the inclusion in the course of basic motorcycle maintenance.

The possibility of developing an "advanced" course might be considered. This has organizational and instructor training implications which need to be explored first.

6. REQUIREMENTS FOR RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL COURSE

The Chairman of the Centre's Education Committee, the Co-ordinator of the Motorcycle Training Course and the instructors who implement the course were asked what they believed were the requirements for running effective motorcycle training programmes.

Since the number of respondents was small, some of the comments below were made by one respondent. In order to obtain a measure of validity, all respondents were subsequently given a draft of these comments and were asked to indicate whether or not they agreed with the statements. All stated that they agreed with all comments.

The responses are grouped under the following headings: Human Resources; Finance; Time; Venue; Curriculum; Other.

6.1 Human Resources

You need an overall managerial arrangement. In this Centre we need a Centre Manager to do bookings and to handle payment. This person needs to be responsible for the Centre and could also be an instructor. He or she, for example, could book in school groups, people for car driving courses, motorcycle riding courses, community groups needing a speaker and so on - a full-time paid person.

You need a co-ordinator and qualified instructors. You would need a greater number of instructors if they were working on a volunteer basis. You need a support person to maintain motorcycles and tend to transport. Our bikes are still brand new so very little maintenance is needed.

We have six trained instructors. If legislation comes in requiring compulsory training, for example, and there is more community awareness, then more instructors would be needed.

6.2 Finance

You need finance for a track and you really have to pay instructors something. That way you get stronger commitment. If they do it on a voluntary basis sometimes it takes forever to get things done. This Centre needs finance for a road circuit which might cost \$200,000.

Our facilities leave a bit to be desired - gravel and irregularities in surface and so on. We need a road track incorporating stop signs. It's absolutely essential. Otherwise it's just like running around in a car park.

The user should pay something, but it's unrealistic to charge the full cost because the user would think it was far too costly.

If it officially comes in that New South Wales has to have learner's skills training for motorcyclists, this Centre becomes a Centre for the northern part of the state and facilities will need to be substantially upgraded.

6.3 Time

You need about twelve months to set up a programme.

As far as time for implementing the programme is concerned, our arrangement of ten hours seems to be generally okay. We found in one course, though, that they were really slow learners. If it's a person off the street who is required by law to learn, it's in their interest to learn quicker.

Ten hours seems about right. We have got through it in nine hours in a group of more experienced people.

6.4 Venue

You really need a highway circuit and, especially in rural areas like this one, you need some facilities that give training on dirt and gravel surfaces.

Some people are finding the whole traffic thing so complicated that they're bewildered by it all. They need a place where it happens that's constant - some stable reference point. This is one motive for having the Traffic Centre here.

6.5 Curriculum

The interesting thing about Australia is that there are almost more Traffic Education curricula than there are people learning them. So much material puts people off. No one really knows what does and doesn't work. The way we've approached it here is to trial some curricula with people who are "hands on". In Australia you've got a tremendous amount of material in all sorts of areas. There should be communication among people who are doing these things to improve them. Networking has gone on unofficially in setting this course up. We'd like to see more of that.

The way we are teaching skills seems to be okay. Should we give a short test to each participant after each section? It's a question mark at the moment that we are thinking about. Presently we tend to give them the skills and they polish them up for themselves.

The gradual sequencing of material is important. You also need to build in breaks for participants because some of the material demands quite a lot of effort from learners, especially those with very little experience.

It's an advantage if the course can be locked into the education system, e.g. it can be part of TAFE. In Armidale they want that to happen.

6.6 Other

We have six motorcycles now - two 125cc, two 175cc, and two 250cc. The 175cc are trail bikes. In my opinion they are the pick of the bunch. They are a lot more forgiving in nature. The 125ccs are sporting little things. If a student gets into trouble he or she can't get out of trouble easily. With a trail bike you are sitting up high. You've got big handlebars. Also if they fall over, trail bikes do very little damage to themselves. One drawback is for people who are short. Our selection seems okay at the moment, but I would be inclined when more are needed to get more trail bikes. They are a lot more manageable and manoeuvrable.

There's a need to make skills training mandatory.

You need publicity to attract assistance and to attract participants.

6.7 Conclusions⁴

There is a need for a Centre Manager to be appointed to the New South Wales Traffic Education Centre.

Finance is needed for the building of a road circuit, particularly if legislation requiring riding tests for learners permit applicants is enacted.

4. Conclusions which have already been recorded in other sections of the report are not repeated here.

Fees should be charged for participants in the Motorcycle Training Course.

Co-operation with TAFE in developing and implementing training courses is recommended.

It seems desirable that a national study of the "state of the art" in traffic legislation and traffic education be done.

7. OTHER COMMENTS

All who were interviewed were given an opportunity to make "open-ended" comments. Only a small number of respondents felt the need to add further comment to the responses they had already made during interviews. The comments that were made included the following:

A lot of things about riding a motorbike are also applicable to driving a car, so it's reinforcement of roadcraft skills.

I am much more aware now about how a motorcyclist sort of has to "drive the cars around". I thought motorcyclists only had to look after themselves, but they don't. They have to look out for the car drivers around them. You get a whole new view of the world around you.

It would be useful if they could arrange with the Armidale City Council to use the public roads - have signs to say "This is a motorcycle training area" and people could go out there to graduate people not to be afraid to get out into the traffic.

All high school children, especially from Year 9 up, whose parents would allow them to ride a motorcycle, should have the opportunity to go through a course like this. For those who are not allowed then an awareness programme so even if they drive a car they know what motorcyclists are, how to look out for them. Other traffic is a great danger to motorcyclists.

Victoria has regional centres. One or two instructors could go to Victoria and see what's happening there.

A sort of course that experienced riders could go to, not just a learner's course would be useful.

7.1 Conclusions

The possibility of organizing "awareness programmes" in local secondary schools might be investigated. These might be extended to students at tertiary institutions.

Funding could be sought in order to allow instructors to visit other venues e.g. Shepparton, Victoria.

8. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions from the six major areas dealt with in the report are brought together below. Where conclusions overlapped in two or more areas they are mentioned here only once.

The Course

The ten unit course which has been developed is well sequenced, and the content and levels of difficulty of the material are appropriate for a basic motorcycle rider training course.

Trialling procedures were sufficiently extensive to enable the identification of adaptations which needed to be made to syllabuses from other States.

Since a substantial number of participants live in rural areas, it is desirable that training programmes for instructors include tuition in how to teach skills required for riding on gravel and dirt surfaces.

Riding skills needed for riding on rough surfaces and on loose and wet surfaces should be included in the Pre-Licence Motorcycle Training Course.

A section of basic motorcycle maintenance could be included in the course, particularly when a group of participants have already had some experience in riding motorcycles.

More emphasis could be given to gear changing up and down and co-ordination on downshifts.

Practice time for braking needs to be increased, particularly when a group includes people who have not ridden a motorcycle before. Fatigue and time factors need to be taken into account, but more team teaching on this section could make more practice possible for individuals.

It would be desirable to include road circuit riding.

Instructors should stress, especially to very inexperienced participants, that at the completion of the course they have acquired some basic skills but, in most cases, they are not yet ready to ride on the roads without further practice.

Funding

Funding is needed for the building of a highway training circuit, particularly if legislation requiring riding tests for learner's permit applicants is needed.

It is desirable that funding for a dirt/gravel training circuit also be provided.

Human Resources

The instructors are enthusiastic and competent. The present practice of having two instructors for each group of participants should be continued.

Some administrative/staffing problems would be overcome if a manager of the Traffic Centre were appointed. If the person were also a qualified motorcycle instructor his/her salary might be partly met by using a "user pays" system for the motorcycle training course.

The provision of a dirt track for practice and recreation, particularly for young motorcycle riders needs further investigation. This may be a matter for the City Council rather than the Traffic Centre. Issues such as likely level of demand, indemnity, supervision, location, etc., need to be considered.

Motorcycles

The policy of having a range of motorcycles seems appropriate at present. Students can exchange motorcycles during the course in order to experience different control applications.

Should the level of demand for the course increase, e.g. if government legislation changes, and pre-licence training becomes mandatory, consideration should be given to increasing the number of trail motorcycles.

Time

Ten hours is adequate for the course as it is now organized.

Participants

If Government legislation is changed to include a motorcycle riding test as part of the requirements for a Motorcycle Learners' Licence, those who fail the test might be referred to the New South Wales Traffic Education Centre in order to complete the Motorcycle Riders' Course.

If such legislation is enacted the level of demand for the course from those seeking training before applying for a Licence is likely to increase. This has implications for the need to increase resources at the Centre.

"Awareness programmes" might be conducted with Year 10 to Year 12 students at local secondary schools. These might be extended to students at tertiary institutions.

Involvement of Individuals and Groups

There were not large numbers of community members involved in contributing to this Course. Rather, use was made of "key people". This strategy has been successful in developing and implementing the Course.

The Success of the Course

Participants, as well as implementers, perceived the course to be successful.

The course is appropriate as a basic course for riders who have had some experience and are not yet licenced to ride a motorcycle, as well as for those who have had no motorcycle riding experience.

Those with no previous motorcycle riding experience who have taken the course need further practice in basic skills included in the course before they could be considered competent to ride safely on the roads.

The possibility of developing an "advanced" course might be considered. This has organizational and instructor training implications which need to be explored first.

Fees should be charged for participants in the Motorcycle Training Course.

Co-operation with TAFE in developing and implementing training courses is recommended. Incorporating the Motorcycle Training Course into TAFE course offerings could be further explored.

Other Issues

Funding could be sought in order to allow instructors to visit other venues e.g. Shepparton, Victoria.

Further research needs to be done at a later date to determine the longer term effects of the course.

It seems desirable that a national study of the "state of the art" in traffic legislation and traffic education be done.