

Riders say safety boss has no plan to stem toll

Sunday Times, 9th December 2007 - Aleisha Preedy

THE WA branch of the Motorcycle Riders Association has called for Road Safety Council chairman Grant Dorrington to be replaced because he is "anti-motorcycle".

Branch president David Wright said not enough was being done to address increasing motorcycle fatalities.

"(Mr Dorrington) has no plan or ideas for reducing the motorcycle death toll other than to say, in his opinion all motorcyclists speed," Mr Wright said.

This year, 29 riders and three passengers have died on WA roads. Last year 28 riders and three passengers were killed. The figures are a big jump on 2005 when 18 riders and three passengers perished.

Mr Wright wants to see more rider training, better education and WA roads to be made more motorbike-friendly.

"The State Government has been talking for about four years about making people have more training before they receive their motorcycle licence and they are really dragging their feet on that one," Mr Wright said.

"With more experience and more knowledge about how to avoid accidents, I believe more lives could be saved. With motorbikes being smaller, they are harder to see, very vulnerable and the consequences of them getting hit are a lot worse than if it were a car."

Police found that in all but six of this year's 29 motorcycle fatalities, the rider was at fault.

Mr Dorrington said: "There is no easy fix and no one solution that will satisfy everyone. However, we will continue to examine the research and explore world's best practice in order to find realistic and effective solutions for WA."

Office of Road Safety executive director Iain Cameron said the Department of Planning and Infrastructure was developing a Graduated Rider Training and Licensing Program to increase supervised driving and training for novice bikers.

The MRA has also renewed calls to Main Roads WA to remove dangerous roadside barriers. Mr Wright said that if roads had more of a run-off area, instead of signs and barriers, motorcyclists who came off their bikes would have a better chance of survival.

Mr Cameron said speed was the main cause of road fatalities but that Main Roads WA was working to improve road safety for all road users.

"It is recognised that barriers of any type -- flexible, steel or concrete -- provide a potential risk to motorcyclists and indeed other road users when struck," he said.