

28 June 2006

Assistant Director, Pricing  
Government Prices Oversight Commission  
GPO Box 770  
**HOBART TAS 7001**

Dear Sir

### **MAIB PRICING POLICIES INVESTIGATION 2006**

The safety of motorists on Tasmanian roads is a concern, however I believe it is every road user's concern, and therefore do not support increasing premiums for motorcyclists from 1.25 to 1.40.

Whilst it is imperative that we provide our full support to the improvement of the safety of motorcycle riders - I am not convinced that imposing a significant increase on the motorcyclists themselves with increased premiums is the best means to achieve this. As motorcycle riders share the road with all other road users, any strategy that informs the riders should also inform other road users too.

The State Government quotes that in 2003, one in four fatalities involved a motorcycle rider or pillion passenger. In 2004, motorcycle riders and pillion passengers represented 12 per cent of all road fatalities, however it should be noted that 77 per cent of fatalities were motorists, including drivers and passengers.

There appears to be an automatic assumption that the problem lies with motorcyclists, particularly in the case of the single-vehicle accident, but what evidence has been provided to show that this statistic is not an indication that driver awareness or education need to be the subject of a new safety campaign, and thus this increase? Could it be that these roads where

accidents occur are long overdue for upgrade, or are there other factors that need to be addressed?

Does this also set a precedent that could see the flow on of higher premiums to other classes of road users or categories within classes, such as smaller vehicles that do not attract the same safety rating as for example a four-wheel-drive vehicle with a bull bar, that will no doubt provide much greater protection to its occupants than a small car?

If a cause of a crash is deemed to be alcohol or drug abuse related then surely the current or proposed driver education programs addressing this issue will need to meet the needs of all drivers, motorbike or car. I believe a whole-of-road user approach such as a Tasmanian community road safety partnership would provide a broader and more inclusive approach and provide the opportunity for all road users to increase awareness of not just the issues that affect their particular vehicle but all other road users as well, rather than singling out one particular group.

The majority of motorcycle riders also own other vehicles and they pay the registration on those vehicles as well. A lot of people are choosing to ride motorcycles because of the reduced fuel consumption and costs that go with that.

I reiterate my support for implementing safety programs for not only motorcyclists but all road user groups, but I find it very difficult to support increasing premiums to one group of road users, when all road users need to receive similar if not the same awareness and safety programs in relation to motorcycle riders, all of whom share our roads.

Whilst I acknowledge that injuries sustained in a crash involving a motorcycle will generally be more severe and thus result in higher medical and other costs, I would also like to put on record that not only are motorcycles much more fuel efficient, but they also cause less road wear than other vehicles. It could be argued that premiums for motorcyclists should actually be reduced, or certainly not increased, as they (motorcycles) cause less wear and tear or damage to roads than other heavier vehicles.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment.

Yours sincerely

**Hon Ruth Forrest MLC**  
**INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR MURCHISON**