

Northern Territory Graduated Licensing System for Motorcyclists – Position Paper

Towards Zero Action: 9.2

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Acronyms	Full form
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
GLS	Graduated Licensing System
LAMS	Learner Approved Motorcycle Scheme
METAL	Motorcyclist Education Training and Licensing
MVR	Motor Vehicle Registry
Novice rider	Learner or provisional rider
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
QLD	Queensland
SA	South Australia
TAS	Tasmania
VIC	Victoria
WA	Western Australia

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1 Summary

This position paper reviews the Northern Territory's current licensing framework and considers elements identified by Austroads to commence the process of implementing Toward Zero Action 9.2, for the development of a *standalone Graduated Licensing System for motorcyclists (including mopeds and scooters), which considers mandating rider training, for consideration by Government*. It is intended that this paper be presented to Government and stakeholders, as the Northern Territory's preliminary position towards a motorcycle graduated licensing system. Feedback on this position paper is requested to assist in determining a final position for the Northern Territory, for consideration by Government.

Motorcyclists account for a proportion of the number of serious injuries and fatalities which occur as a result of crashes on Northern Territory roads. From 2011 to 2020, motorcyclists represented 14% of serious injuries and 11% of fatalities on Northern Territory roads. During this 10 year period, a total of 1,370 motorcyclists were involved in a crash, with 44% of the riders killed and 43% of the riders who were seriously injured being under the age of 30 years.

In attempting to reduce and manage the risk of crashes among novice motorcycle riders, licencing agencies across Australian jurisdictions have implemented graduated licensing systems (GLS) for motorcyclists. A GLS is a framework that operates by imposing conditions or restrictions on novice riders, and gradually lifting them as the rider gains experience and progresses through the different phases of the system. The intent of this model is to promote a novice rider gaining initial riding experience in conditions of lower risk and incrementally exposing the rider to more challenging conditions once the rider has reached a particular level of riding experience and maturity.

This position paper considers the *Elements of Graduated Licensing Systems for Motorcycle Riders*¹ discussion paper published by Austroads in 2014 (the Austroads discussion paper). The discussion paper provides a comprehensive analysis of the various elements that could be included in a GLS.

For each of the GLS elements identified in the Austroads discussion paper, consideration is given to the following:

- current practice in the Northern Territory; and
- comparison of GLS in other Australian jurisdictions.

The current GLS framework in the Northern Territory is shown at Figure 1. Based on the consideration given to each of the elements identified in the Austroads discussion paper, the GLS model shown in Figure 2 is the proposed GLS model for motorcyclists in the Northern Territory. The table identifies the following changes recommended for motorcyclists:

- Two licence tenure period pathways at the learner and provisional rider licences stages;
- Licence tenure period concessions for those applicants who already hold a provisional C Class (car) licence (at a minimum);
- Lights on at all times for both learner and provisional rider licence holders;
- No towing for learner rider licence holders;
- Speed restriction of 100km/h for learner rider licence holders and 110km/h for provisional rider licence holders;
- Prohibition for learner rider licence holders and provisional rider licence holders for first 12 months of provisional period, from carrying a pillion passenger;

¹ Dr Ron Christie, 'A Discussion Paper on Elements of Graduated Licensing Systems for Motorcycle Riders' (Research Report No AP-R469-14, Austroads, November 2014).

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- An automatic transmission restriction if assessed on an automatic motorcycle; and
- The inclusion of a mandatory training regime.

Figure 1: Progression through the current Northern Territory GLS for Motorcyclists

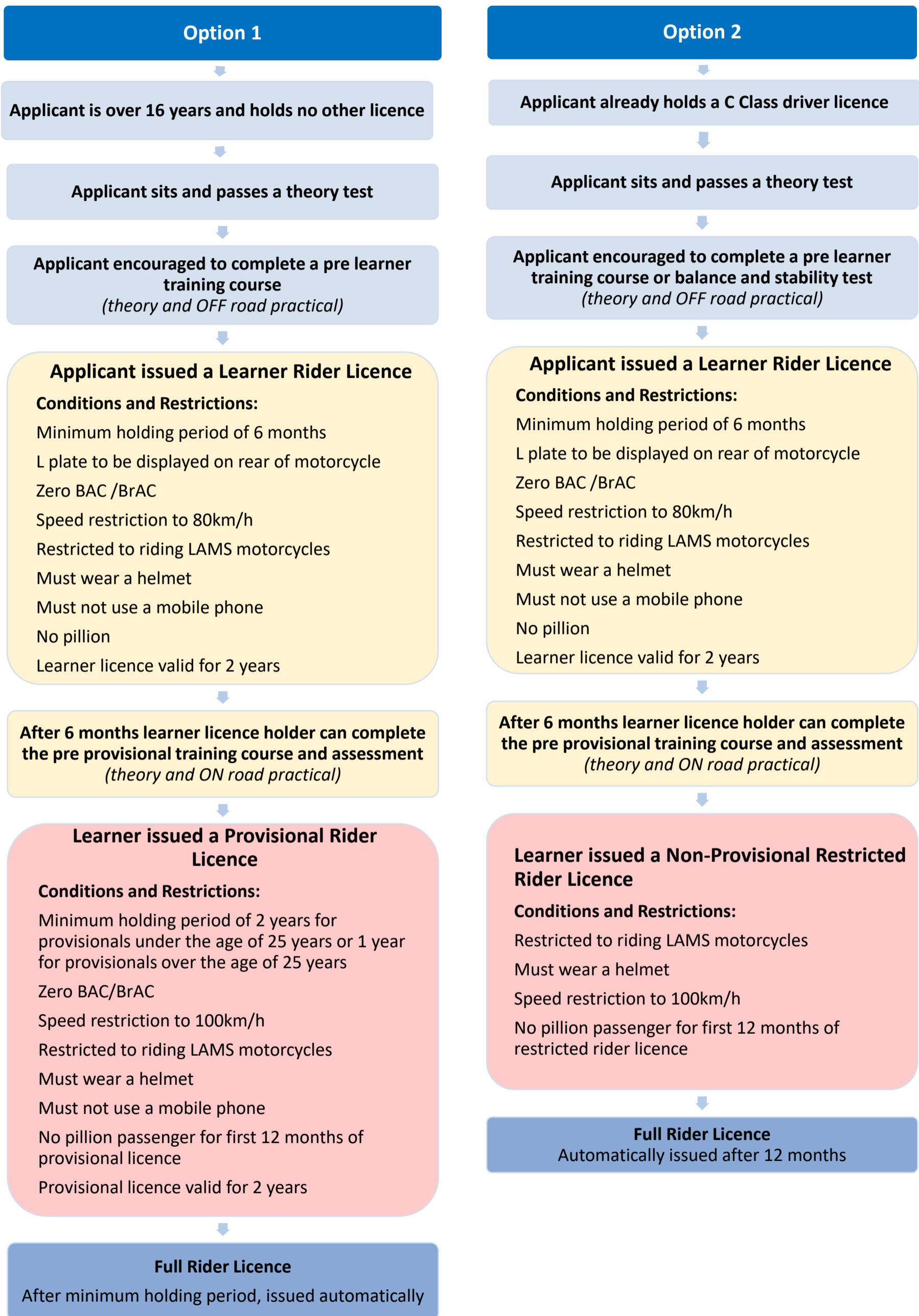
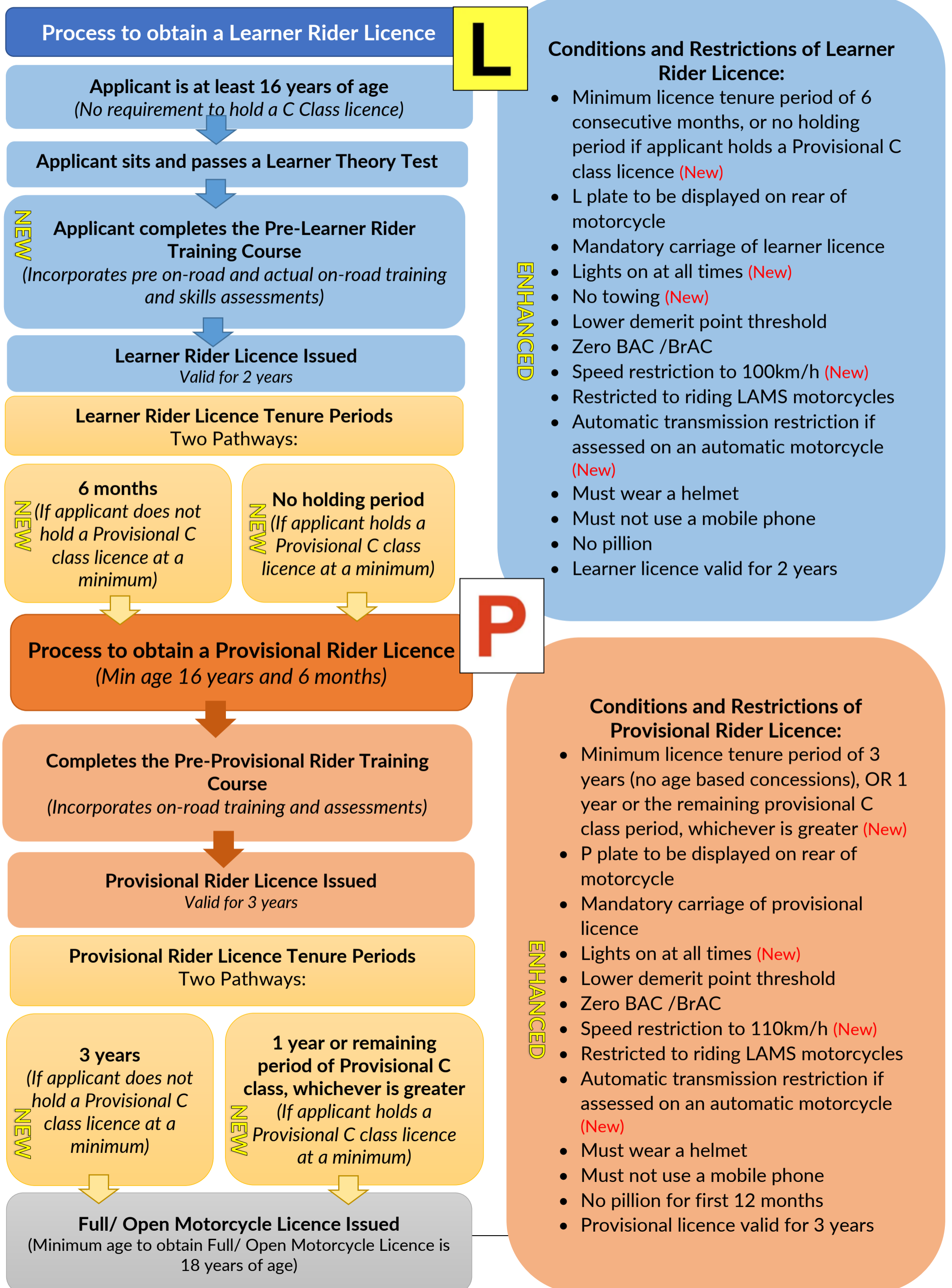


Figure 2: Graduated Licensing System for Motorcyclists Proposed Model



2 Introduction

The Northern Territory's *Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan (2018-22)* presents actions to address a wide range of road safety issues. Towards Zero Action 9.2 provides for the development of a *standalone Graduated Licensing System for motorcyclists (including mopeds and scooters), which considers mandating rider training, for consideration by Government*. This position paper begins the process to implement the Towards Zero Action 9.2.

Motorcyclists face an increased risk of serious injury or death compared to the risk faced by a car occupant. Compared to car occupants, there is a lack of physical protection for motorcyclists in the event of a crash. Additionally, factors including the inherent instability of motorcycles, the relatively low visibility of motorcycles, and certain behaviours exhibited by motorcyclists, may increase the likelihood of a crash.

This road safety risk manifests as a considerable proportion of the number of serious injuries and fatalities which occur as a result of crashes on Northern Territory roads. Motorcyclists are over-represented with regards to the percentage of crashes resulting in serious injuries or fatalities in the Northern Territory. From 2011 to 2020, motorcyclists represented 14% of serious injuries and 11% of fatalities on Northern Territory roads. As at 31 December 2020, there were 5,614 motorcycles registered in the Northern Territory, which represents nearly 4% of the Northern Territory's vehicle fleet.

2.1 Graduated Licensing Systems (GLS) for motorcycles

In attempting to reduce and manage the risk of crashes among novice motorcycle riders, licencing agencies across Australian jurisdictions have implemented graduated licensing systems (GLS) for motorcyclists. A GLS is a framework that operates by imposing conditions or restrictions on novice riders, and gradually lifting them as the rider gains experience, and progresses through the different phases of the system. The intent of this model is to promote a novice rider gaining initial riding experience in conditions of lower risk and incrementally exposing the rider to more challenging conditions once the rider has reached a particular level of riding experience and maturity.

A discussion paper, *Elements of Graduated Licensing Systems for Motorcycle Riders*,² published by Austroads in 2014 (the Austroads discussion paper), provides a comprehensive analysis of the various elements that could be included in a GLS.

² Dr Ron Christie, 'A Discussion Paper on Elements of Graduated Licensing Systems for Motorcycle Riders' (Research Report No AP-R469-14, Austroads, November 2014).

3 Elements for consideration as identified in the Austroads Discussion Paper.

3.1 Three Stage Hierarchical Approach

The Austroads discussion paper identifies the importance of preserving the three hierarchical motorcycle licence levels (i.e. learner, provisional and full licence), with particular emphasis placed upon the preservation of the learner permit level.³

The Austroads discussion paper provides that this element allows for appropriate conditions and requirements to be applied at both the learner and provisional level to better manage the risks faced by novice riders.⁴

Currently, the Northern Territory adopts a three stage hierarchical approach to motorcycle licence levels. However, due to the aged based concession for persons aged 25 years or older and the concession if the person already holds a car licence, there is a non-provisional restricted rider licence with the relevant tenure period being 12 months rather than two years.

All Australian jurisdictions have a learner licence being the first stage of the GLS. For the second stage of the GLS, only three jurisdictions, being the Northern Territory, the Australian Capital Territory and Western Australia, have a single stage provisional licence. All other Australian jurisdictions require licence holders to progress through P1 and P2 provisional licence stages, before obtaining a full/ open licence.

Upon analysing the current three stages in the Northern Territory, it is clear that this current framework would achieve the outcome of managing the risks faced by novice riders.

Recommendations:

1. That the Northern Territory retain this three stage hierarchical approach to motorcycle licence levels, which compliments the car GLS and is consistent with other Australian jurisdictions.
2. That the non-provisional restricted rider licence stage be removed in line with the recommendation at section 3.3.

3.2 Requirement for 12 months car licence tenure

The Austroads discussion paper identifies a best practice element which provides that entry to accessing a motorcycle licence be contingent on car licence tenure for at least 12 months.⁵

The Austroads discussion paper expresses that the element would effectively increase the minimum motorcycle permit age and reduce novice riders being exposed to risk, as they would gain initial solo driving experience in a lower risk vehicle.⁶ This is based on the principle that a GLS involves obtaining experience in lower risk conditions before progressing to phases in which greater risks are encountered.

In the Northern Territory, there is no express provision for granting a learner rider licence, or that the grant of the learner rider licence be contingent on a car licence tenure for at least 12 months.

³ Dr Ron Christie, 'A Discussion Paper on Elements of Graduated Licensing Systems for Motorcycle Riders' (Research Report No AP-R469-14, Austroads, November 2014) 25.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

Queensland is the only Australian jurisdiction where accessing a motorcycle licence is contingent on a car licence tenure for at least 12 months.

From 2011 to 2020, motorcyclists represented 14% of serious injuries and 11% of fatalities on Northern Territory roads. As at 31 December 2020, there were 5,614 motorcycles registered in the Northern Territory, which represents nearly 4% of the Northern Territory's vehicle fleet.

With the majority of the Northern Territory learner rider licence holders already holding a car licence it is probable that the Northern Territory is already achieving the outcome of this element, with there being an increase in the minimum motorcycle permit age and novice riders being exposed to a reduced risk as they gain initial solo driving experience in a lower risk vehicle.

Recommendation:

3. It is recommended that the Northern Territory does not make entry to accessing a motorcycle licence contingent on car licence tenure for at least 12 months.

3.3 Minimum tenure periods for learner and intermediate levels

The Austroads discussion paper identifies that minimum tenure periods for both learner and intermediate level licenses should be served by all novice motorcycle riders.⁷

It further expresses that it would be prudent to require all novice motorcycle riders to be subject to GLS conditions for a minimum of between one and two years across the learner and intermediate stages.⁸ As such, the Austroads discussion paper deemed that the 6 month minimum tenure period for a learner rider licence and a 12 month minimum tenure period for the provisional rider licence is reasonable.⁹

The Austroads discussion paper also identifies that there should be no reductions of tenure or exemptions from novice riding conditions on the basis of age or completion of any training or supervised riding experience.¹⁰ The rationale for this element is that it would provide novice motorcycle riders with time to accumulate experience and skills under GLS conditions, without rushing to meet testing requirements or on the basis of age.

In the Northern Territory currently, there is a learner licence tenure period of 6 months, before they can advance to the provisional licence level.

The provisional licence tenure period for a person under the age of 25 years is two years. For a person who is 25 years of age or older or who already holds a car licence, the minimum provision licence tenure period is 12 months. As such, there is an aged based concession for persons aged 25 years or older or for someone who holds a car licence, with the relevant tenure period being 12 months rather than two years.

Four Australian jurisdictions currently have a minimum learner licence tenure period of 3 months. This tenure period is less than the 6 month tenure period identified in the Austroads discussion paper. The Northern Territory, Tasmania and Western Australia currently meet the element identified in the Austroads discussion paper, for a 6 month learner licence tenure period. South Australia is the only jurisdiction requiring a longer learner licence tenure period of 12 months. Currently, all Australian jurisdictions are exceeding the element of a 12 month minimum provisional licence tenure.

⁷ Dr Ron Christie, 'A Discussion Paper on Elements of Graduated Licensing Systems for Motorcycle Riders' (Research Report No AP-R469-14, Austroads, November 2014) 25.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

With respect to age based concessions, all jurisdictions apart from Queensland and Western Australia, have age based concessions. The Northern Territory's current age based concession is in line with two other jurisdictions.

This element of the GLS aims at ensuring novice riders spend a minimum tenure period in lower risk conditions before advancing to a less restrictive licencing phase. With respect to the age based concessions, the Northern Territory is currently not meeting the element identified in the Austroads discussion paper, meaning that older riders can progress through the provisional licence stage faster than younger riders. Additionally, riders who already hold a car licence are able to progress through the provisional licence stage faster.

The proposed GLS model at Figure 2 provides a potential option where concessions are available for those applicants who already hold a provisional C Class (car) licence (at a minimum), whereby the applicant does not have to hold a learner rider licence for a set holding period. Additionally, those applicants who already hold a provisional C Class (car) licence (at a minimum), have an alternative pathway at the provisional rider licence stage, whereby they would only have to hold a provisional rider licence for a period of 1 year or the remaining period of their provisional C Class licence, whichever is greater.

Recommendations:

4. That the Northern Territory retain the current minimum learner licence tenure period of 6 months, if the applicant does not hold a provisional C Class licence at a minimum;
5. That the Northern Territory increase the current minimum provisional licence tenure period to three years, if the applicant does not hold a provisional C Class licence at a minimum;
6. That the Northern Territory introduce licence tenure period concessions at the learner and provisional rider licence levels, for those who already hold a provisional C Class licence (at a minimum);
7. That the Northern Territory remove the current age based concession on licence tenure periods.

3.4 Clean record for graduation to next GLS level

The Austroads discussion paper provides that in order for a licence holder to graduate from learner to provisional level or have novice restrictions removed from a full licence, the novice rider is to maintain a clean traffic offence record.¹¹

Currently in the Northern Territory (and all other Australian jurisdictions), there is no condition that in order for a licence holder to graduate from learner to provisional level or have novice restrictions removed from a full licence, the novice rider is to maintain a clean traffic offence record.

The Austroads discussion paper expresses that this condition would mean that a rider who does not comply with this clean record requirement would remain at the lower GLS level until the minimum clean record requirement is met.¹² The intent is to encourage compliance with road laws and GLS conditions and may reduce volitional risk taking.

The current arrangement in the Northern Territory and elsewhere in Australia, is to control motorcyclist behaviour during GLS through lower demerit point limits than applicable for full licence holders. The lower demerit point limits will be explored later in this paper, but in summary would effectively require a very low rate of offending.

¹¹ Dr Ron Christie, 'A Discussion Paper on Elements of Graduated Licensing Systems for Motorcycle Riders' (Research Report No AP-R469-14, Austroads, November 2014) 26.

¹² Ibid.

Recommendation:

8. That the Northern Territory does not impose a clean record requirement for graduation to the next GLS level.

3.5 Display of distinctive plates

The Austroads discussion paper identifies the requirement for novice riders to display distinctive plates to be easily identified.¹³

No Australian jurisdictions currently require an R plate to be displayed by full licence holders who are still subject to novice rider restrictions.¹⁴

Currently in the Northern Territory, a learner must not drive a motorcycle unless there is a L-plate displayed conspicuously. Additionally, a provisional rider must not drive a motorcycle unless there is a P-plate displayed conspicuously.

All other jurisdictions also mandate the requirement for novice riders to display distinctive L and P plates. It is worth noting that no Australian jurisdictions require an R plate to be displayed by full licence holders who are still subject to novice rider restrictions.

Based on this comparison it is clear that the Northern Territory is achieving one aspect of the element identified in the Austroads discussion paper and is enabling the easy identification of novice riders. No Australian jurisdiction is imposing a requirement for an R plate to be displayed by full licence holders, who are still subject to novice rider restrictions.

Recommendation:

9. That the Northern Territory maintain the current arrangement of requiring L and P plates to be displayed, and do not impose a requirement for an R plate to be displayed.

3.6 Mandatory licence carriage

The Austroads discussion paper identifies that jurisdictions should require novice riders to carry their respective permits/ licences at all times when riding.¹⁵ It also noted that most Australian jurisdictions already impose this requirement.¹⁶

In the Northern Territory, there is a requirement that the driver of a motor vehicle produce his or her licence for inspection immediately after being requested to do so.

The Northern Territory is currently adhering to this element, as the Northern Territory already requires all drivers (including motorcycle riders) to carry their respective licence at all times when riding/ driving a motor vehicle.

Recommendation:

10. That the Northern Territory retains the requirement for riders to carry their licence at all times when riding.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid 27.

¹⁶ Ibid.

3.7 No pillion passenger carriage

The Austroads discussion paper highlights the need to preserve pillion passenger restrictions for both learner and intermediate levels,¹⁷ protecting riders and passengers from injury or fatality. Pillion passengers could increase the risk of crashing due to the increased difficulty in maintaining balance and being a potential source of distraction.

Of the 1,370 motorcyclists involved in crashes that occurred between 2011 and 2020 on Northern Territory roads, 3% of them were pillion.

It is unclear whether the Northern Territory is currently meeting this element for a no pillion passenger requirement due to some ambiguity in the regulations surrounding its application.

Most Australian jurisdictions (QLD, NSW, ACT, VIC, SA and TAS) have a no pillion passenger restriction for learner licence holders. Four jurisdictions prohibit provisional rider licence holders from carrying pillion passengers for the first 12 months of the provisional period or while at the P1 level (QLD, NSW, ACT and TAS). Victoria and South Australia prohibit provisional rider licence holders from carrying pillion passengers for the entire provisional period.

Recommendations:

11. That the Northern Territory prohibit learner rider licence holders from carrying pillion passengers.
12. That the Northern Territory prohibit provisional rider licence holders from carrying pillion passengers for the first 12 months of the provisional period.

3.8 No late night riding

The Austroads discussion paper identifies a night-time riding restriction between 10pm and 5am for learner riders, noting that night-time restrictions for car drivers are already part of effective car-based GLS systems in some Australian and overseas jurisdictions.¹⁸ The Austroads discussion paper referred to Western Australia as example, in which the jurisdiction applies a late night driving restriction between midnight and 5am during the first six months of a provisional licence.¹⁹

A higher night-time crash risk is likely to be due to a number of factors. These factors include: reduced visibility of hazards for the motorcyclist, reduced visibility of the motorcyclist to other road users, and possible association with other risky behaviours (e.g. alcohol use) or conditions (e.g. sleepiness).

This element would address the higher night time crash rates for novice riders in Australia.

Currently in the Northern Territory, there are no night-time riding restrictions for novice riders.

Based on data obtained between 2011 and 2020, 29% of crashes and 31% of fatalities occur during the night (between 6:30pm and 6:30am) on Northern Territory roads with about 13% of crashes occurring between 10pm and 6am.

Although statistical analysis of crashes in the Northern Territory does not indicate a high risk, national research (involving a larger sample) has shown that novice riders and novice drivers are known to have higher crash rates at night. Therefore, a night time curfew for novice motorcyclists could be a potential countermeasure. Only South Australia imposes late night riding restrictions on learner riders. Additionally, the majority of Australian jurisdictions do not impose late night riding restrictions on provisional riders.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

However, South Australia and Western Australia do impose late night riding restrictions on provisional riders, with some differences based on whether an open C class licence is held or how long a provisional licence has been held.

The no late night driving element is proposed to address the higher night-time crash rates for novice riders in Australia.

Recommendation:

13. That the Northern Territory does not impose a late night riding restriction.

3.9 Zero BAC restriction

The Austroads discussion paper identifies a need for applying a zero blood alcohol content (BAC) limit to novice riders.²⁰ The outcome of this element is to protect the rider and other road users.

Currently in the Northern Territory, learner and provisional licence holders must have a zero blood alcohol content (BAC) limit when driving. However, in the Northern Territory there is another classification of novice rider, namely a non-provision restricted rider. This particular class of rider is currently not subject to the zero BAC restriction due to the wording of the legislative provision which captures only learner and provisional drivers. However, if this classification and the age based concession is removed from the current GLS in the Northern Territory, this will no longer be an issue.

All other Australian jurisdictions currently have zero BAC restrictions for learner and provisional licence holders.

Due to the known crash risk alcohol consumption can cause, there is strong merit in adhering to this GLS element for zero BAC when riding a motorcycle as a novice.

Recommendation:

14. That the Northern Territory retain the requirement for all novice riders to have a zero BAC when riding.

3.10 No towing of trailers

The Austroads discussion paper identifies a need for Australian jurisdictions to implement a towing of trailer restriction for novice riders.²¹

The Austroads discussion paper highlights that towing a trailer is likely to confer additional risk on an inexperienced novice rider and therefore, should be disallowed.²² Although there is very little research on the risk of this activity, it has been argued that towing would place ‘additional demands’ on novices. Given the above, the Austroads discussion paper advocates that such demands mean that a ‘first principles approach’ suggests that towing should be prohibited for novice riders.

It also notes that very few riders, even on a full licence, tow trailers using their motorcycle so any disadvantage to novice motorcyclists is likely to be very minor.²³

Currently in the Northern Territory, novice motorcycle riders (learner and provisional rider licence holders) are allowed to tow trailers.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

The majority of Australian jurisdictions do not have a towing of trailer restriction for novice motorcycle riders. There are currently only three Australian jurisdictions (NSW, ACT and VIC) which have a towing of trailer restriction for novice riders. Noting that NSW and ACT only have a towing of trailer restriction applied to the P1 licence level or for the first 12 months of the provisional licence.

Recommendation:

15. That the Northern Territory place a towing restriction on learner rider licence holders.

3.11 No mobile phone or communication device use

The Austroads discussion paper identifies the banning of any mobile phone use (hand-held or hands-free) as it would remove a common source of distraction.²⁴

The intent of this element is to reduce the risk of novice riders getting distracted and engaging in the use of electronic devices while riding.

Currently in the Northern Territory, there is a prohibition for mobile phone usage for learner and provisional licence holders. Note, this requirement does not extend to the current non-provisional restricted rider licence holders. However, if this licence stage is removed from the current GLS in the Northern Territory, this will no longer be an issue.

Currently, all Australian jurisdictions impose mobile phone and communication device restrictions on learner and provisional licence holders. However, in Queensland and South Australia, mobile phone and communication device restrictions are only applicable to P1 provisional licence holders.

The Northern Territory is already meeting the element identified in the Austroads discussion paper, for learner and provisional riders to be subject to mobile phone and communication device restrictions.

Recommendation:

16. That the Northern Territory preserve the mobile phone **and communication device** restriction on learner and provisional rider licence holders.

3.12 Lower demerit point threshold for licence suspension

The Austroads discussion paper noted that most Australian jurisdictions impose a lower threshold for demerit point licence suspension for novice drivers and riders.²⁵

It further identifies that novice riders who also have a full/ open car licence should be subject to the lower demerit point licence suspension, which is applicable to novice riders who hold a learner or provisional licence and subject to restricted riding conditions.²⁶ This element is aimed at encouraging compliance with GLS conditions and improve traffic law compliance among restricted motorcycle licence holders.

Currently, the Northern Territory imposes a lower threshold for demerit point licence suspension for novice drivers and riders.

All Australian jurisdictions except the Australian Capital Territory, impose a lower demerit point threshold for learner rider licence holders. The Northern Territory's threshold for a learner licence is the same as Victoria, with the threshold in other jurisdictions being quite similar.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid 28.

²⁶ Ibid.

Additionally, all Australian jurisdictions except the Queensland, impose a lower demerit point threshold for provisional rider licence holders. In Queensland, the provisional rider licence holders are subject to the same demerit point threshold as their C class licence.

The Northern Territory's threshold for a provisional rider licence holders is slightly more lenient with the threshold being not to incur 5 demerit points within a 12 month period, compared to other jurisdictions in which the threshold is not to incur 4 demerit points in a 12 month period.

The Northern Territory is already meeting the element identified in the Austroads discussion paper, for learner and provisional riders to be subject to a lower demerit point threshold.

Recommendation:

17. That the Northern Territory retain a lower demerit point threshold for learner and provisional rider licence holders.

3.13 Automatic transmission restriction for novice riders

The Austroads discussion paper identified the need for jurisdictions to introduce an automatic transmission restriction for learner and provisional riders, if tested on a bike without manually operated gears.²⁷ It suggests that the cognitive workload required when developing new skills might result in a higher crash risk for novice riders who learn to ride an automatic transmission motorcycle and then transfer to a manual transmission motorcycle as an inexperienced rider.²⁸

This element is aimed at limiting the risk of novice riders being involved in a crash as a result of them losing control of a motorcycle with a different transmission. This additional mental and physical effort for an inexperienced rider of a manual motorcycle could potentially remove cognitive resources from riding and responding to the road and traffic environment.

All Australian jurisdictions except the Northern Territory, currently impose an automatic transmission restriction for provisional rider licence holders, who complete their practical assessment on an automatic motorcycle.

The element identified in the Austroads discussion paper is targeted at limiting the risk to novice riders, by ensuring that riders who are riding manual transmission motorcycles have adequate experience and are deemed competent.

Recommendation:

18. That the Northern Territory impose an automatic transmission restriction on all novice riders who have demonstrated competence on an automatic transmission motorcycle and not a manual transmission motorcycle.

3.14 Enhanced visibility requirements

The Austroads discussion paper identifies that all learner and provisional rider licence holders should be required to travel with headlights (or daytime running lights) on at all times.²⁹

It also provides that novice riders should be required to wear a high visibility vest or piece of clothing with similar qualities.³⁰

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

The proposed outcome of this element is to improve the visibility of novice riders to other road users, during the day and at night, which in turn, limits the risk of crashing due to novice riders being more conspicuous to other road users.

Currently in the Northern Territory, there is no enhanced visibility requirements for novice riders.

Victoria is the only jurisdiction to mandate the use of high visibility clothing (vest or jacket) for learner riders. Victoria requires that a high visibility vest or jacket must meet at least one of the standards specified by them, be labelled or marked with the appropriate standard and must be securely fitted and fastened. Victoria also impose a requirement for novice riders to travel with headlights (or daytime running lights) on at all times.

Motorcycles, because of their size and manoeuvrability, can be harder to see in traffic than other motor vehicles, even during the daytime. Additionally, drivers can have difficulty in estimating the speed of the motorcycle and therefore judging gap selection becomes important. The vast majority of modern motorcycles have headlights and tail lights on by default. Many are now also equipped with daytime running lamps. Only very old motorcycles would likely be affected by imposing a requirement for lights to be on whilst traveling, hence a very low cohort would be affected.

With respect to a high visibility vest or jacket requirement, there would need to be a set standard imposed and enforced, if introduced in the Northern Territory. Additionally, there may need to be further consideration given to the fastening requirements of the vest or jacket, to prevent it from becoming unfastened and serving as a potential distraction to the rider whilst riding.

Recommendations:

19. That the Northern Territory impose a requirement for novice riders to travel with headlights (or daytime running lights) on at all times.
20. That the Northern Territory does not impose a requirement (mandate) for high visibility vests or jackets at this stage, until a more consistent approach is adopted by other Australian jurisdictions.

3.15 Mandatory protective clothing requirements

The Austroads discussion paper identifies that all novice riders should be required to wear protective clothing (i.e. boots, gloves, full body suit or pants/ jacket) when riding.³¹

It states that protective clothing would help reduce the severity of injury to riders, including abrasion and de-gloving, as a result of a collision with the road surface.³²

Currently in the Northern Territory, there is no mandatory protective clothing requirements for novice riders. A Motorcycle Protective Gear Campaign has been developed in the Northern Territory which aims to promote the importance of protective gear, encourage riders to wear protective gear and raise awareness that it can help minimize preventable injuries resulting from minor crashes. This campaign will potentially assist in targeting the outcome of reducing the severity of injury to riders, including abrasion and degloving, as a result of a collision with the road surface.

Although helmet wearing is mandatory across all Australian jurisdictions, riders can choose the level of protection they wear on other parts of their body. No Australian jurisdictions currently require novice motorcycle riders to be subject to mandatory protective clothing requirements.

³¹ Ibid 29.

³² Ibid.

It has been highlighted by other jurisdictions that protective ratings of particular articles of motorcycle clothing are still being established and as such, guidance for choosing protective clothing (to an applicable standard) would be essential for the effective operation of a mandatory system.

Recommendation:

21. That the Northern Territory does not impose a mandatory protective clothing requirement on novice riders.

3.16 Power-to-weight/ Learner Approved Motorcycle Scheme (LAMS) requirements

The Austroads discussion paper identifies the need for novice riders to be restricted to riding motorcycles with power to weight restriction, and notes the current Learner Approved Motorcycle Scheme (LAMS), which is being imposed in Australian jurisdictions.³³

This element is aimed at reducing the crash risk for novice riders, however the Austroads discussion paper does note that there is no clear evidence that larger engine capacity increases novice rider risk.³⁴

The Northern Territory introduced LAMS in 2008. The LAMS motorcycle restriction applies to all novice riders, in which they are only permitted to ride a motorcycle which is on the approved list of motorcycles. To be included on the list of approved motorcycles, the motorcycle must have an engine capacity not greater than 660ml and must not exceed a power-to-weight ratio of 150 kilowatts per tonne.

As such, learner, provisional and non-provisional restricted rider licence holders are limited to only ride motorcycles which are approved under the Learner Approved Motorcycle Scheme.

Currently, all Australian jurisdictions restrict novice riders to riding motorcycles captured under the Learner Approved Motorcycle Scheme. For learner rider licence holders, the Australian Capital Territory is unique as it stipulates that a learner rider can only ride a motorcycle with a power to weight ratio not exceeding 150 kilowatts per tonne. There is no capacity limit on LAMS motorcycles in the Australian Capital Territory, whereas all other Australian jurisdictions limit learner riders to motorcycles which have an engine capacity not greater than 660ml, and also must not exceed a power-to-weight ratio of 150 kilowatts per tonne.

With respect to provisional rider licence holders, the LAMS requirements across jurisdictions vary slightly. In the Northern Territory, Queensland, New South Wales and Western Australia, the LAMS restriction applies to provisional rider licence holders throughout the entirety of the provisional period. In the Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania, the LAMS restriction only applies for the first 12 months of the provisional rider licence period or for the duration of the P1 period. In South Australia, the LAMS restriction applies for the first 24 months and in Victoria, the LAMS restriction applies for 3 years.

Based on the jurisdictional comparison above, it is clear that the Northern Territory is already complying with the element identified in the Austroads discussion paper, for novice riders to be restricted to riding motorcycles with power to weight restriction, through the Learner Approved Motorcycle Scheme.

Recommendation:

22. That the Northern Territory retain the current LAMS requirement on novice riders.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

3.17 Moped requirements

The Austroads discussion paper identifies that riders operating a moped on Australian roads should hold either a moped licence/ permit or a licence/ permit for a motorcycle class.³⁵ Additionally, the Austroads discussion paper states that moped operation should only be open to those riders who have demonstrated their competence to handle a moped (or motorcycle) through a specific skill and knowledge based assessment.³⁶

By requiring moped riders to meet skill and knowledge testing requirements and to be allocated a specific moped class licence, it would address crash and injury risks and prevent riders from using mopeds to do the skills assessment, when they intend on riding larger machines on the road network.³⁷

Mopeds are small, light motorcycles that may be two or three wheeled. Mopeds have a piston engine with a maximum engine capacity of 50ml and a maximum speed of 50km/h.

Between 2011 and 2020, 17% of the 1,370 motorcyclists injured in crashes in the Northern Territory were riding mopeds. Of that same period, 14% of registered motorcycles were mopeds showing that moped riders are being over represented in motorcycle crashes.

Prior to 1 August 2019, learner licence holders of a light vehicle were permitted to ride a moped. From 1 August 2019, the ability for a person to ride a moped under a learner licence of a light vehicle was removed. However, a person with a provisional or full/ unrestricted licence of a light vehicle, is still able to ride a moped without a motorcycle licence in the Northern Territory.

The Northern Territory, South Australia, Western Australia and Queensland currently allow a C class (car) licence holder to drive a moped on the road network. Victoria, New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania, require a person to hold a motorcycle licence in order to ride a moped.

The outcome of this element is to address crash and injury risks faced by inexperienced riders of mopeds. Particularly in the Northern Territory, this recommendation has merit due to moped riders being over represented in motorcycle crashes (17% between 2011 and 2020). There is also merit in requiring a moped rider to demonstrate their competence in riding through a specific skill and knowledge based assessment.

It is acknowledged that if this was adopted, there may be an impact on affordable transport options and the moped sales/ hire industry.

Recommendation:

23. That the Northern Territory impose a requirement for a person to hold a motorcycle licence in order to ride a moped in the Northern Territory.

3.18 Novice rider licence testing and training requirements

The Austroads discussion paper provides that novice riders should be subject to a competency-based skills assessment, using objective scoring techniques of the three key riding competencies of braking, curve riding and obstacle avoidance before being allowed to ride on the road.³⁸ Additionally, it states that novice riders should also complete a motorcycle knowledge test based on a safe-riding handbook or manual.³⁹

³⁵ Ibid 30.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

The proposed outcome of this element is to reduce the risk to on-road riders. The Austroads discussion paper supports this outcome with research from the United States of America, which shows that states that impose a rider skill test at the learner level, had significantly lower motorcycle fatalities compared to those that did not.⁴⁰

Currently in the Northern Territory, there is no legislative requirement for applicants to undertake a competency-based skills assessment prior to being issued a learner rider licence. It should be noted, that the Motor Vehicle Registry's current policy is to require applicants to complete a pre-learner riding course with an approved training provider, which includes an assessment component which is competency based and includes a rider craft theory test. The 15 minute balance and stability or motorcyclist operator skills test (MOST) is also being used as an alternative.

With respect to a provisional rider licence assessment, a learner rider licence holder is required to pass an on-road competency based skills assessment, in order to be issued their provisional licence.

Tasmania and Western Australia are the only jurisdictions to require competency based skills assessment, in order to be granted a learner rider licence. The Northern Territory, currently requires a skills assessment to be granted a learner licence, however this is only based on policy with no legislative backing and does not include any "on-road" assessment or training.

With respect to the provisional rider licence stage, the majority of Australian jurisdictions require a competency-based skills assessment, with the exception of Queensland. All Australian jurisdictions, apart from Western Australia and the Northern Territory, require the completion of a pre-learner two day training course. In Western Australia, applicants do not have to attend a pre-learner training course. However, if they do not have a driver licence (provisional or full), an approved supervisor must accompany the learner rider at all times either as a pillion passenger, in a sidecar or on another motorcycle. They are also required to log at least 50 hours of riding experience and have a minimum holding period of 6 months.

Some jurisdictions provide exemptions or alternatives for training and assessment requirements in areas outside prescribed areas i.e. remote and outer regional.

All Australian jurisdictions, apart from Western Australia, require the completion of a pre-provisional training course. Western Australia only requires the completion of a practical riding assessment.

The experience in other jurisdictions and advice from training providers suggests that there is an appetite for pre-learner training among nearly all novice motorcyclists and that having a competency assessment prior to riding on the road is consistent with the need for training.

Recommendation:

24. That the Northern Territory impose a novice rider licence testing and training requirement.

3.19 Introduction of Two-Phase Intermediate Stage

The Austroads discussion paper identifies the need of preserving the three stage hierarchical motorcycle licence levels.⁴¹ However, it also gave consideration to dividing the intermediate level (provisional period) into a heavily restricted first solo riding year (i.e. P1) and a less restricted level for the balance of the intermediate level (i.e. P2).⁴² Restrictions in the P1 period could include speed restrictions, restrictions on

⁴⁰ McGwin, G Jr, Whatley, J, Metzger, F, Valent, F, Barbone, L. and Rue, W, 2004, 'The Effect of State Motorcycling Laws on Motorcycle Mortality Rates', *Journal of Trauma, Injury, Infection and Critical Care*, vol. 56, no.2, pp. 415-419.

⁴¹ Dr Ron Christie, 'A Discussion Paper on Elements of Graduated Licensing Systems for Motorcycle Riders' (Research Report No AP-R469-14, Austroads, November 2014) 31.

⁴² *Ibid.*

mobile phone usage, lane filtering, pillion passenger restrictions, zero BAC and automatic transmission restrictions.

The Austroads discussion paper provides that there is no specific evidence which indicates that the above recommendation would benefit novice riders.⁴³ As such, this element is deemed to be optional to a motorcycle rider GLS.

Currently the Northern Territory adopts a three stage hierarchical approach to motorcycle licence levels, there is no division of the provisional licence stage into differing provisional levels such as P1 or P2.

Only three jurisdictions, being the Northern Territory, the Australian Capital Territory and Western Australia, have a one stage provisional licence. All other Australian jurisdictions require licence holders to progress through a P1 and P2 provisional licence stage, before obtaining a full/ open licence.

The Northern Territory is currently preserving the three stage hierarchical motorcycle licence levels.

Recommendation:

25. That the Northern Territory does not introduce a two-phase intermediate stage.

3.20 Development and Introduction of Exit Testing for Novice Riders

The Austroads discussion paper suggests that the development and introduction of exit testing for novice riders could potentially be added to a motorcycle GLS model.⁴⁴

The Austroads discussion paper states that exit testing provides an opportunity for novice riders to be screened before they graduate to a full unrestricted licence and motivates novice riders to gain new skills or experience.⁴⁵ It also provides that no specific research shows crash reduction benefits from exit testing and notes the added cost and complexity, due to all novice riders returning for an assessment on a user-pays basis.⁴⁶

Currently in the Northern Territory, there is no requirement for a provisional rider licence holder to complete an exit test in order to graduate to a full unrestricted rider licence.

Additionally, no Australian jurisdictions currently require novice riders to complete an exit test in order to graduate to a full unrestricted rider licence.

Recommendation:

26. That the Northern Territory does not introduce an exit testing requirement as part of the revised GLS model for motorcyclists.

3.21 Development of Screen-based Hazard Perception Test (HPT) for Novice Riders

The Austroads discussion paper suggests that the development and introduction of a screen-based hazard perception test (HPT) for novice riders could potentially be added to a motorcycle GLS model.⁴⁷

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid 32.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Screen-based HPTs are used to assess novice drivers within car-based GLS models in some Australian jurisdictions.⁴⁸ HPT is a computer-administered test which assesses the driver or rider's ability to detect hazards in the road and traffic environment in a timely fashion and respond to them appropriately.

Studies have demonstrated that hazard perception performance is linked to a slightly lower crash risk. However, crash reduction from HPT for both drivers and riders is yet to be fully established. It is worth noting that a motorcycle-specific HPT has recently been developed by the Centre for Automotive Safety Research (CASR) on behalf of Austroads.

Currently in the Northern Territory, there is no requirement for novice riders to complete a screen-based hazard perception test. South Australia, Queensland, Victoria and Western Australian use a HPT within their GLS for both car drivers and motorcycle riders. However, this is not a motorcycle-specific HPT.

It is envisaged that the introduction of mandatory on-road training for learner and provisional rider licence holders will assist in providing riders with the ability to detect hazard in a timely fashion and respond to them appropriately.

Recommendation:

27. That a HPT should not be included as part of the GLS model in the Northern Territory at this stage.

3.22 Potential Use of Risk Based Screening Tests and Interventions for Novice Riders

The Austroads discussion paper provides that a valid and reliable rider risk assessment tool could potentially be incorporated into a motorcycle GLS as an adjunct to skill and knowledge testing.⁴⁹ It suggests that it could be used at the learner licence entry level, to identify at risk riders who should spend longer at the learner level and should not progress to licensed status.⁵⁰

The Austroads discussion paper also provides that novice riders who are identified as being high risk would also be channelled into behaviourally-based intervention programs that aim to curb over-confidence and address motivational and attitudinal factors that may support risk taking behaviour.⁵¹ The proposed outcome is to target and help deal with novice riders who are identified as higher risk.⁵²

Currently in the Northern Territory, there is no requirement for novice riders to complete a risk based screening test.

Additionally, no Australian jurisdictions currently require novice riders to complete a risk based screening test. South Australia in its Research Report on *Recommendations for a Graduated Licensing System for Motorcyclists in South Australia*, noted the difficulties to design a suitable risk-based screening test and that even if one could be developed, there is limited evidence regarding the benefits of risk based training programs beyond discussions of attitude, motivation and risks which can be offered during standard training.⁵³

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ MRJ Baldock, 'Recommendations for a Graduated Licensing System for Motorcyclists in South Australia' (Research Report No CASR_MB18, Centre for Automotive Safety Research, January 2018) 15.

There is also potential that applicants sitting the risk based screening test may be able to determine the appropriate answers to pass the test, rather than answering truthfully.

Recommendation:

28. That a risk based screening test should not be included as part of the GLS model in the Northern Territory.

3.23 On-Road Supervision of Learner Riders

The Austroads discussion paper provides that on-road supervision of learner riders (by pillion, another motorcycle or use of voice activated communication for supervision purposes) should not be captured under a motorcycle rider GLS.⁵⁴

The reasoning for excluding this element is due to it being inappropriate to require learner riders to carry a supervising experienced rider as a pillion, due to the motorcycle handling differently when carrying a pillion passenger.⁵⁵ This practice has the potential to increase the risk of crash injury for the novice rider and the pillion passenger.

Additionally, supervision of a novice rider from another motorcycle could not be classed as a best practice element due to it increasing the crash risk for both the novice and supervisor, due to the increased cognitive load and distraction from the primary riding task.⁵⁶

There is currently no requirement in the Northern Territory for a learner rider to undergo on-road supervision. Only Queensland and Western Australia impose this requirement on learner riders.

Recommendation:

29. That the Northern Territory exclude an on-road supervision requirement for learner riders from the GLS for motorcyclists.

3.24 On-Road Coaching or Mentoring of Novice Riders

The Austroads discussion paper states that it is not considered appropriate for learner drivers/ riders to be subject to coaching or mentoring, as the novice must have some level of skill and experience in order to benefit from the coaching or mentoring.⁵⁷ The Austroads discussion paper notes that mentoring/ coaching is different to training, as training is focused on generic skills and is not tailored specifically to the individual to improve a particular skill.⁵⁸

The aim of coaching or mentoring is to assist novices to develop further as safe and responsible riders through identifying areas of improvement in their riding style and on-road behaviour. However, the Austroads discussion paper notes that while this approach may have some merit, there is no evidence to suggest that it should be captured under a novice rider GLS.⁵⁹

There is currently no requirement in the Northern Territory for novice riders to be subject to on-road coaching or mentoring.

⁵⁴ Dr Ron Christie, 'A Discussion Paper on Elements of Graduated Licensing Systems for Motorcycle Riders' (Research Report No AP-R469-14, Austroads, November 2014) 33.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid 34.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

Victoria is the only Australian jurisdiction which requires a novice rider to complete a coaching course called 'Check Ride'.⁶⁰ The on-road coaching component of this course is conducted on a pre-determined route which is designed to expose a novice rider to a range of riding environments; including multi-lane highways, narrow country roads, shopping centres and hills and bends. The course is conducted in a group of up to five participants and an instructor who provides feedback on the ride and discusses practical ways of reducing the risk of crashing.

The Austroads discussion paper does not recommend mentoring/ coaching as a novice rider must have some level of skill and experience in order to benefit from the coaching or mentoring.⁶¹ Additionally, there is only one Australian jurisdiction which requires a novice rider to complete a coaching course.

Recommendation:

30. That the Northern Territory exclude an on-road coaching and mentoring requirement from the GLS for motorcyclists.

3.25 Mandatory Rider Training

The Austroads discussion paper provides that as the crash or injury reduction of rider training has not been scientifically established, mandatory rider training is unable to be advocated as a best practice element on road safety grounds.⁶² It further provides that, due to the poor quality of studies identified, it is unable to draw any conclusions about the effectiveness of rider training on crash, injury or offence rates.⁶³

This lack of supporting data and research for mandatory training is noted by the Northern Territory, due to the difficulties in determining whether mandatory training has assisted in crash reduction rates or whether those riders involved in a crash, have undergone appropriate training and were competent in riding a motorcycle on the road network.

Between 2011 and 2020, 17% of the 1,370 riders involved in crashes in the Northern Territory were learner riders, a figure that is statistically significant due to learner riders only representing 8% of the licenced motorcycle cohort in the Northern Territory, in that same period.

While the Austroads discussion paper identifies mandatory training as an element which should be excluded from a GLS for motorcyclists, all Australian jurisdictions, apart from Western Australia and the Northern Territory, currently require the completion of a mandatory pre-learner two day training course. Therefore, mandatory training represents common practice across the majority of Australian jurisdictions.

Noting that while the Northern Territory currently requires applicants to undertake either a pre-learner rider training course or MOST (a balance and stability) test to be granted a learner licence, this is only based on policy with no legislative backing and includes no on road training component.

In Western Australian applicants do not have to attend a pre-learner training course. However, if they do not have a driver licence (provisional or full), an approved supervisor must accompany the learner rider at all times either as a pillion passenger, in a sidecar or on another motorcycle. They are also required to log at least 50 hours of riding experience and have a minimum holding period of six months.

Some jurisdictions provide exemptions or alternatives for training and assessment requirements in areas outside prescribed areas. All Australian jurisdictions, apart from Western Australia, require the completion

⁶⁰ VicRoads, *Get your motorcycle licence*, (Web Page, 29 October 2019) <<https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/licences/licence-and-permit-types/motorcycle-licence-and-learner-permit/get-your-motorcycle-licence>>

⁶¹ Dr Ron Christie, 'A Discussion Paper on Elements of Graduated Licensing Systems for Motorcycle Riders' (Research Report No AP-R469-14, Austroads, November 2014) 33.

⁶² *Ibid* 35.

⁶³ *Ibid*.

of a mandatory pre-provisional training course. Western Australia only requires the completion of a practical riding assessment.

Advice has been received from a training provider in the Northern Territory, who has identified gaps in the current licensing framework regarding pre-learner training. The training provider also advocated a need for mandatory rider training, to ensure that the appropriate development and competency of riding skills and road-craft is obtained by a novice rider before issuing a learner rider licence, and to reduce risks of potentially allowing an incompetent, unskilled novice rider to ride unaccompanied on the road network.

It is further noted, that this element identified in the Austroads discussion paper is only listed as one to be excluded from a GLS for motorcyclists, due to the difficulties in determining whether mandatory training is effective in reducing crash, injury or offence rates, the lack of scientific evidence and poor quality studies.⁶⁴ Based on the jurisdictional comparison above which supports this element as common practice and advice received from a local training provider, it is considered prudent to include mandatory training in the GLS model for the Northern Territory, with the aim of better preparing the rider for managing traffic and the practical road-craft application. A schematic of one potential mandatory training model is provided in Figure 3.

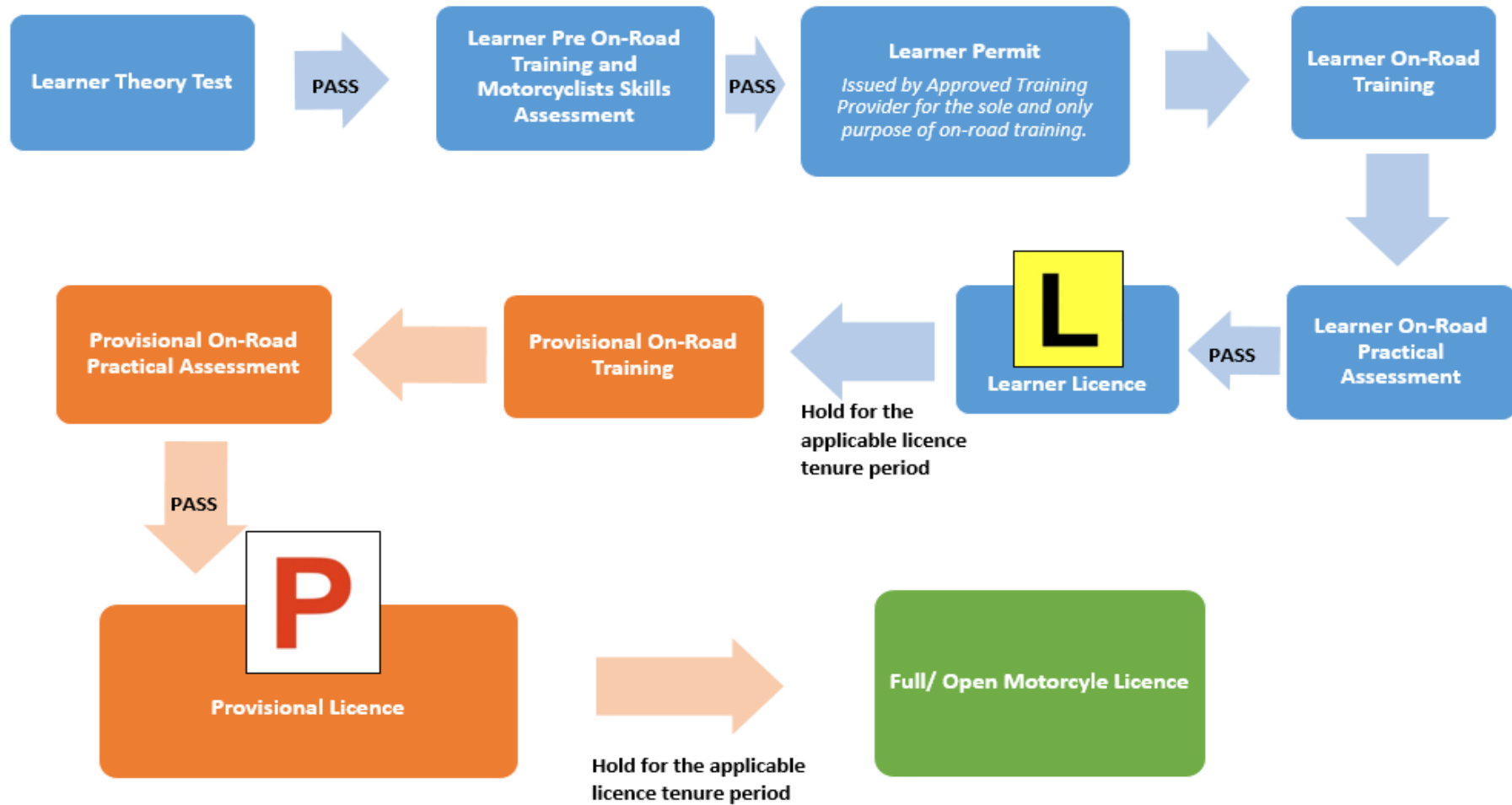
Additionally, the experience in other jurisdictions and advice from at least one training provider suggests that there is an appetite for pre-learner training among nearly all novice motorcyclists, due to them expressing some concerns with the current lack of ability to do pre-learner on-road training.

Recommendation:

31. That the Northern Territory introduce mandatory rider training as part of the GLS for motorcyclists.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

Figure 3: Example of a potential mandatory training model for the Northern Territory



3.26 Engine Capacity Restrictions and Power-to-Weight Restrictions

The Austroads discussion paper suggests that motorcycle engine capacity restrictions for novice riders could not be considered as best practice, due to research from Europe, the United Kingdom and North America failing to show that it reduces the risk of crashing.⁶⁵ The paper also noted that engine capacity restrictions represent common practice in number of Australian and overseas jurisdictions.⁶⁶

It notes that while power-to-weight restrictions would more effectively limit access to powerful motorcycles than engine capacity restrictions, there is no evidence to support crash reduction effectiveness as a result of these restrictions.⁶⁷ However, the Austroads discussion paper further provides that the power-to-weight restrictions do represent a better compromise between retaining engine capacity restrictions and removing them, as has been adopted by most jurisdictions in Australia and the EU.⁶⁸

The Northern Territory has a Learner Approved Motorcycle Scheme (LAMS), in which novice riders are only permitted to ride a motorcycle which is on the approved list of motorcycles. These approved motorcycles, must have an engine capacity not greater than 660ml and additionally, must not exceed a power-to-weight ratio of 150 kilowatts per tonne.

Currently, all Australian jurisdictions restrict novice riders to riding motorcycles captured under the Learner Approved Motorcycle Scheme. For learner rider licence holders, the Australian Capital Territory is unique as it stipulates that a learner rider can only ride a motorcycle with a power-to-weight ratio not exceeding 150 kilowatts per tonne. There is no engine capacity limit on LAMS motorcycles in the Australian Capital Territory, whereas all other Australian jurisdictions limit learner riders to motorcycles which have an engine capacity not greater than 660ml, and also must not exceed a power-to-weight ratio of 150 kilowatts per tonne.

With respect to provisional rider licence holders, the LAMS requirements across jurisdictions vary slightly. In the Northern Territory, Queensland, New South Wales and Western Australia, the LAMS restriction applies to provisional rider licence holders throughout the entirety of the provisional period. In the Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania, the LAMS restriction only applies for the first 12 months of the provisional rider licence period or for the duration of the P1 period. In South Australian the LAMS restriction applies for the first 24 months and in Victoria the LAMS restriction applies for 3 years.

Based on the jurisdictional comparison above, it is clear that the Northern Territory is consistent with all other jurisdictions for novice riders to be restricted to riding motorcycles with power-to-weight restrictions and not solely engine capacity restrictions. This is in line with the best practice element identified by Austroads, which was explored at [section 3.16](#) of this paper, and also more effectively limits access to powerful motorcycles than engine capacity restrictions alone, which is the compromise outlined in this element.

Recommendation:

32. That the Northern Territory preserve the current LAMS power-to-weight restriction which is imposed on novice riders.

⁶⁵ Dr Ron Christie, 'A Discussion Paper on Elements of Graduated Licensing Systems for Motorcycle Riders' (Research Report No AP-R469-14, Austroads, November 2014) 35.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

3.27 Speed Differentials for Novice Riders

The Austroads discussion paper identifies that there is no strong evidence that restricting novice riders or drivers to speed limits below that for other road users reduces crashes.⁶⁹

The Austroads discussion paper further identifies that there is existing evidence which suggests that crash risk for novice riders and other road users increases when there is a greater difference between individual vehicle speeds and the flow speed of the traffic.⁷⁰

In considering the above, the Austroads discussion paper highlights that restricting the speed limit for novice riders to levels below that of the stream speed, particularly in 100km/h and 110km/h zones, is not considered best practice.⁷¹

Between 2011 and 2020, 84% of all motorcyclists injured in crashes on Northern Territory roads occurred in speed zones of 80 km/h or less.

Currently in the Northern Territory, learner riders and drivers are restricted to a maximum speed of 80km/h and provisional riders are restricted to a maximum speed of 100km/h.

The restriction of speed limits for learner rider licence holders varies across Australian jurisdictions. The Northern Territory and Tasmania are the only two jurisdictions which restrict learner riders to a maximum speed of 80km/h. New South Wales is the only jurisdiction in Australia which restricts learner riders to a maximum speed of 90km/h. South Australia and Western Australia restrict learner riders to a maximum speed of 100km/h and Victoria, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory restrict learner riders to the sign posted limit.

The restriction of speed limits for provisional rider licence holders also varies across Australian jurisdictions. The Northern Territory and South Australia restrict provisional riders to a maximum speed of 100km/h. Western Australian restricts provisional riders to a maximum speed of 110km/h. Queensland, the Australian Capital Territory and Victoria restrict provisional riders to the sign posted limit. New South Wales and Tasmania have varying speeds across the P1 and P2 level. In New South Wales, P1 riders are restricted to a maximum speed of 90km/h and P2 riders are restricted to a maximum speed of 100km/h. In Tasmania, P1 riders are restricted to a maximum speed of 80km/h and P2 riders are restricted to the sign posted limit.

Based on the jurisdictional comparison above, it is clear that the Northern Territory is only one of two jurisdictions, which restrict learner riders to the lowest maximum speed of 80km/h. Relevant to provisional riders, the Northern Territory is more aligned with other Australian jurisdictions, in which provisional riders are restricted to a maximum speed of 100km/h.

Recommendation:

33. That the Northern Territory amend the current maximum speed restrictions and restrict learner riders to 100km/h and provisional riders to 110km/h.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

4 Summary/ Conclusions

Motorcyclists are determined to be vulnerable road users in the Northern Territory, due to them being over-represented in crashes. As such, the aim of developing a standalone motorcycle GLS in the Northern Territory is to improve road safety outcomes for novice and fully licenced motorcyclists. This position paper begins the process, in ensuring that this vulnerable road user group is provided with an improved graduated licensing system with the aim of subsequently improving road safety outcomes.

This position paper considers the *Elements of Graduated Licensing Systems for Motorcycle Riders*⁷² discussion paper published by Austroads in 2014 (the Austroads paper) which provides a comprehensive analysis of the various elements that could be included in a GLS.

For each of the GLS elements identified in the Austroads Paper, consideration was given to the following:

- current practice in the Northern Territory; and
- comparison of the GLS in other Australian jurisdictions.

Based on the consideration given to each of the elements, recommendations were made regarding a proposed GLS model for motorcyclists in the Northern Territory. These recommendations are summarised in the proposed model presented in Figure 2. The current GLS framework in the Northern Territory is shown at Figure 1.

⁷² Dr Ron Christie, 'A Discussion Paper on Elements of Graduated Licensing Systems for Motorcycle Riders' (Research Report No AP-R469-14, Austroads, November 2014).

Appendices

Appendix 1: Proposed Recommendations that Change or Retain Aspects of the Current Northern Territory Graduated Licensing System for Motorcyclists

Recommendations:
1. That the Northern Territory retain this three stage hierarchical approach to motorcycle licence levels, which compliments the car GLS and is consistent with other Australian jurisdictions.
2. That the non-provisional restricted rider licence stage be removed.
3. That the Northern Territory retain the current minimum learner licence tenure period of 6 months, if the applicant does not hold a provisional C Class licence at a minimum.
4. That the Northern Territory increase the current minimum provisional licence tenure period to three years, if the applicant does not hold a provisional C Class licence at a minimum.
5. That the Northern Territory introduce licence tenure period concessions at the learner and provisional rider licence levels, for those who already hold a provisional C Class licence (at a minimum).
6. That the Northern Territory remove the current age based concession on licence tenure periods.
7. That the Northern Territory maintain the current arrangement of requiring L and P plates to be displayed, and do not impose a requirement for an R plate to be displayed.
8. That the Northern Territory retains the requirement for riders to carry their licence at all times when riding.
9. That the Northern Territory prohibit learner rider licence holders from carrying pillion passengers.
10. That the Northern Territory prohibit provisional rider licence holders from carrying pillion passengers for the first 12 months of the provisional period.
11. That the Northern Territory retain the requirement for all novice riders to have a zero BAC when riding.
12. That the Northern Territory place a towing restriction on learner rider licence holders.
13. That the Northern Territory preserve the mobile phone restriction on learner and provisional rider licence holders.
14. That the Northern Territory retain a lower demerit point threshold for learner and provisional rider licence holders.
15. That the Northern Territory impose an automatic transmission restriction on all novice riders who have demonstrated competence on an automatic transmission motorcycle and not a manual transmission motorcycle.
16. That the Northern Territory impose a requirement for novice riders to travel with headlights (or daytime running lights) on at all times.
17. That the Northern Territory impose a requirement for a person to hold a motorcycle licence in order to ride a moped in the Northern Territory.
18. That the Northern Territory impose a novice rider licence testing and training requirement.
19. That the Northern Territory introduce mandatory rider training as part of the GLS for motorcyclists.

Recommendations:

20. That the Northern Territory preserve the current LAMS restriction which is imposed on novice riders.

21. That the Northern Territory amend the current maximum speed restrictions and restrict learner riders to 100km/h and provisional riders to 110km/h.

Appendix 2: Austroads Discussion Paper – Key Elements of a Motorcycle Graduated Licensing System

Reference: Austroads (2014). *A discussion paper on elements of a graduated licensing system for motorcycle riders* (AP-R469-14). Sydney: Austroads. <https://austroads.com.au/publications/road-safety/ap-r469-14>

Permit Stage	Intermediate Stage	Full/Open Licence Stage	Comments
<p>Pre-requisites Minimum age 17 and must have held Australian car licence for at least 12 months NB: No exemptions to allow direct entry to motorcycle permit/licence</p>	<p>Pre-requisites Minimum age 17.5 and have held motorcycle MLP for at least six months NB: No exemptions to allow direct entry to motorcycle permit/licence</p>	<p>Pre-requisites Must have held intermediate motorcycle licence for at least 12 months and have completed car based provisional/probationary licence period</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No concessions/exemptions for applicants aged 25 or over - All applicants treated the same - Mopeds treated as class of light motorcycle with safe riding knowledge/skills requirements - no moped operation on car licence allowed
<p>Testing Requirements Must pass motorcycle knowledge and off-road skill tests to gain motorcycle learner permit (MLP) and meet general fitness to drive requirements (e.g. vision)</p>	<p>Testing Requirements Must pass licence level off-road skill tests to gain and meet general fitness to drive requirements (e.g. vision)</p>	<p>Testing Requirements Nil – unless GLS exit testing applies in that jurisdiction to graduate from P phase</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MSF style competency based style training is available - Specific handbook/manual sets out safe riding information - Skills test assesses/confirms key riding skills - On-road competency based assessment may be applied at intermediate or full/open licence level as an option
<p>Restrictions/Conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Must display L plate - Mandatory carriage of learner permit - No pillion passengers - No night-time riding (10pm to 5am) - Zero BAC limit - Lights on at all times (headlamp or DRL) - High visibility vest required at all times - Must wear approved helmet, and protective clothing at all times - No towing - No mobile phone use - Lower threshold for demerit point licence suspension (same as for car based GLS L level) - May ride only LAMS approved motorcycle - If tested on automatic transmission machine, may not ride manual transmission machine - If tested on moped, moped only condition applied 	<p>Restrictions/Conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Must display P plate if still subject to P conditions, otherwise R plate displayed - Mandatory carriage of licence - No pillion passengers - Zero BAC limit - Lights on at all times (headlamp or DRL) - High visibility vest required at all times - Must wear approved helmet, and protective clothing at all times - No towing - No mobile phone use - Lower threshold for demerit point licence suspension (same as for car based GLS P level) - May ride only LAMS approved motorcycle - If tested on automatic transmission machine, may not ride manual transmission machine - If tested on moped at LP level moped only condition applies 	<p>Restrictions/Conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As for full/open licence holders - If tested on automatic transmission machine at learner level, may now ride manual transmission machine - If tested on moped at LP level moped only condition continues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No concessions/reductions on the basis of age or completion of training or supervised riding experience