ACC Motorcycle Safety Research

Qualitative research with riders and car drivers

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CONFIDENTIAL

ACC
Motorcycle Safety Research
Qualitative research with open road older male riders, urban commuter riders and car drivers

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Executive Summary

Project objectives and approach
To help make riding on New Zealand roads safer, the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), Young and Rubicam (Y&R) and the Motorcycle Safety Advisory Council (MSAC) need a collective understanding of motorcyclists’ opinions and underlying attitudes toward safety. Ultimately this project is about saving lives and reducing injury: by better understanding the values, habits, knowledge and ultimately the decisions made by motorcyclists. A key outcome of this research is to support the development of a behaviour change programme led by Y&R.

To gain an understanding of the issues and opportunities to improve motorcycle safety, qualitative research was conducted with:
- Older male open road riders of large motorbikes;  
- Urban road motorbike/scooter commuters;  
- Car drivers.

Summary of findings

Open Road Riders
These riders value the experience of riding both in terms of where they ride but also how they ride. They see skills as a core safety factor and are open to improving skills. Some riders actively ride close to what they perceive as their skill limits. They enjoy this risk and see riding as a balancing act: weighing up speed and safety. Most believe they are confident and skilful riders. However, some also acknowledge that their skills are untested and their confidence is based on the assumption that time on the bike equates to a honing of skills and instinct. These riders do tend to value protective gear, visibility (though not via high visibility vests) and bike maintenance. There is an opportunity to create greater engagement with skill development with a focus on risk identification and avoidance.

Urban and Scooter Riders
These riders tend to value cost and convenience over the experience of riding. This is a key difference, as commuters tend to be less focussed on skill development and are less compliant around wearing of protective gear. Scooter riders in particular are less conscious of the risks of injury and tend to place their faith in other road users. There is an opportunity to create a more powerful safety social norm that is built around the values of convenience and efficiency, and that makes clear the minimum safety gear and skill level requirements of riding a scooter or motorcycle in a commuting context.

Car drivers
Car drivers tend not to prioritise motorcyclists as a road safety issue. Some take special care to watch out for riders on the road, however many do not. All acknowledge the vulnerability of riders; however, many do not understand the rider’s decision to use what they believe is a high-risk mode of transport. The relationship between car drivers and riders can be a negative one. The behaviour of some riders (speed, lane splitting, overtaking etc), creates strong negative associations for car drivers, and this has the potential to translate into unsafe road practices (car
drivers not giving room on the road, tail gating etc). There is an opportunity to make drivers more aware of why riders ride the way they do and to further emphasise the vulnerability of motorcyclists. Importantly, positive images of motorcyclists will go some way to balance the stereotypical view that motorcyclist are reckless.

Implications

This research highlights key differences in how riders think, feel and behave on their motorcycles. Conversations that attempt to engage riders and change their behaviours will need to be conducted in a way that riders feel is relevant and in a way that delivers value to them.

Like many road users, motorcyclists believe that crashes happen to other people. Riders in the main feel confident that they are riding safely and that accidents won't happen to them. Riders also have very different values around why riding is important to them and the risks associated with what and how they ride. This is important because messages that do not align to these values and beliefs will likely be rejected. Telling a rider who rides for the sensation of speed to slow down, is unlikely to engage that rider. Telling a scooter rider to wear full protective gear all the time, again will likely be rejected.

Encouragingly, this research highlights that riders are prepared to listen and learn and change. The focus groups themselves created an environment where riders were able to challenge their own assumptions about what safe riding meant. Not all riders responded in the same way of course, however the research provides an optimistic view that given the right messages, delivered in the right way and at the right time, there is clear opportunity to improve the safety outcomes of motorcyclists in New Zealand.
**Background**

**Project objectives**

To help make riding on New Zealand roads safer, the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), Young and Rubicam (Y&R) and the Motorcycle Safety Advisory Council (MSAC) need a collective understanding of motorcyclists’ opinions and underlying attitudes toward safety. Ultimately this project is about saving lives and reducing injury: by better understanding the values, habits, knowledge and ultimately the decisions made by motorcyclists. A key outcome of this research is to support the development of a behaviour change programme led by Y&R.

The research objectives were to understand:
- What drives motorcyclists’ decisions and behaviour when it comes to being safe, including:
  - The choices they make before they get on their bike (type of bike, gear, route planning, etc); and
  - While on the road (speed, risky riding, etc).
- The opinions and attitudes of car drivers towards motorcyclists, in order to understand their behaviour towards keeping motorcyclists safe.

The detailed information objectives, as taken from the research brief, were as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>What we want to find out</th>
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<tr>
<td>Large bikes, open road</td>
<td>• Attitudes towards speed, alcohol, registering their bikes.</td>
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<td>• Attitudes towards bike maintenance.</td>
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<td>• Attitudes towards choosing the type and size of their bike.</td>
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<td>• Attitudes to other road users.</td>
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<td>• How skilled they think they are at riding.</td>
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<td>• Attitudes about who they think would benefit from motorcycle training.</td>
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<td>• What barriers stop them attending rider training.</td>
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<td>• Their knowledge of importance of visibility (influenced by bike, gear, skills).</td>
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<td>• Attitudes towards hi-vis gear.</td>
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<td>• How do they select the right gear?</td>
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<td>Smaller bikes, urban</td>
<td>• Attitudes towards speed, alcohol, registering their bikes.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Attitudes towards bike maintenance.</td>
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<td>• How do they select the right gear?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other road users</td>
<td>• What is their view of a “typical motorcycle rider”?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• What are their general attitudes towards motorcycle riders?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Are riders courteous or dangerous?</td>
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<td>• Have they had any close calls with motorcycles?</td>
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<td>• Do they know motorcyclists &amp; does this change their attitude towards them?</td>
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<td>• Any other general attitudes towards sharing the road with motorcyclists.</td>
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Project approach

To gain an understanding of the issues and opportunities to improve motorcycle safety, qualitative research was conducted with:

- Older male open road riders of large motorbikes;
- Urban road motorbike/scooter commuters;
- Car drivers.

The research was conducted in Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington and Nelson, with the three target groups as specified below.

**Open road riders (16 in-depth interviews)**
- 40-65 year old males of European descent.
- Ride large motorbikes (500cc+) at least 6 times a year on open road for recreation on weekends.
- Including some riders who had been in an on-road crash in the last 4 years.
- A mix of motorbike types, engine sizes, years of experience and affiliations.

**Urban commuter riders (4 focus groups)**
- Scooter and motorbike riders who commute on urban roads at least once a week.
- Including some riders who had been in an on-road motorcycle/scooter crash.
- A mix of genders, age groups, engine sizes and affiliations.

**Car drivers (4 focus groups)**
- Drive at least once a week.
- Do not currently ride a scooter or motorcycle.
- A mix of genders and ages.
- A mix of some who had ridden a scooter/motorcycle in the past and those who had not.
- A mix of some who had close family/friends who ride and those who do not.

See appendix for further details on the research participants.

Report interpretation

Please note that the findings in this report are based on qualitative research. That is, the findings are based on a small number of respondents with the objective to gain a good understanding of their attitudes and reported behaviour.
Furthermore, the findings in this report are solely based on the respondents interviewed as part of the research and provides a reflection, but not necessarily a total summary, of all the themes in the wider population base.

In the report, we refer generally refer to ‘Open road riders’, ‘Urban riders’ and ‘Car drivers’. Please use the following definitions for each group when interpreting the findings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When we refer to:</th>
<th>This is defined as:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Open road riders’ or ‘Open road motorcyclists’</td>
<td>40-65 year old males, of European descent, who ride large motorbikes (500cc+), at least 6 times a year, on open road, for recreation on weekends, who were included in the research.</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘Urban riders’</td>
<td>Scooter and motorbike riders who commute on urban roads at least once a week, who were included in the research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Car drivers’</td>
<td>Car drivers who drive at least once a week and who do not currently ride a scooter or motorcycle, who were included in the research.</td>
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During the interviews and focus groups, the anonymity of the riders’ and car drivers’ responses was stressed by the interviewers. We feel that we received honest responses from those who took part in the research.

**Report structure**

The report firstly details the research findings for open road and urban riders, followed by a separate section for car drivers. The findings for open road riders and urban riders are detailed under shared theme sections, in order to more easily compare and contrast these rider groups and understand the opportunities to change behaviour.

Within the rider section, we applied the following framework to understand rider behaviour and opportunities (i.e. the findings on riders are laid out under these headings):

- **Mindsets/Values**: Firstly, we cover themes relating to what riders think i.e. what they value, their attitudes, how they think and feel;
- **Habits/Actions**: Secondly, we discuss themes relating to what riders do i.e. how they currently behave;
- **Physical riding elements**: Lastly, we discuss themes relating to what riders have i.e. what they have in terms of their gear and bike, and how they make decisions about these physical attributes.
**Riders:**
Open road older males
and urban

**Mindsets / Values**
1. General profiles of respondents

Open Road Motorcyclist Respondents

To provide an overview of the type of open road older male motorcyclists we interviewed, most:
• Started riding motorbikes as teenagers, either on dirt bikes and/or farm bikes.
  • A few remember going for a ride on a motorbike as young as five years old.
  • A few had raced bikes in the past.
• Had a break from riding while they had a young family (5-10 year break over their 20-30s).
• Feel riding is an important part of their life and who they are - they miss it when they are not able to ride.
• Most had been in a crash or a near-miss at some point in their life.

Urban Motorcycle and Scooter Respondents

To provide an overview of the type of urban motorcyclists and scooter riders we interviewed:
• We spoke to a mix of urban riders who ride both motorcycles and scooters, and found some clear and distinct differences between these groups.
• Scooter riders were most likely to ride for cost-savings and convenience, and these factors had a strong influence on their attitudes and behaviour with regards to safety.
• The urban motorcycle riders we spoke to also rode on the open road. So, although cost-savings and convenience was a reason for urban commuting for this group, the “freedom” of motorcycling was also a core component of their reason for riding. This, along with the influence of the motorcycling community (for which an equivalent does not exist for scooter riders), had a strong influence and created key differences from scooter riders in terms of their attitudes and behaviours towards safety.

2. Reasons for riding

Open road riders (40-65 years)

Open road motorcyclists ride for the “escape”, “freedom” and “handling”
Open road riders use a range of words to describe why they ride. Many in fact find it difficult to articulate the experience of riding, some speak of the connection between themselves and the bike, others talk about the connection they feel with the environment and the road, others feel a sense of liberation. Riders appear to more commonly fall within one of the following:
• **Escape**: Riding is about getting away from their routine life (e.g. a moment away from family, work, responsibility) or for fun, or for some it is also a means of stress relief.
• **Freedom**: is about being at one with the elements, the outdoors and their bike (i.e. not being confined in a car). This feeling is often associated with speed, however does not always have this association.
• **Handling**: Riding is about the skill of handling the bike in a way that feels effortless and fluid. The feeling of mastery, of skill and control. Handling is more often about the feeling of speed and adrenaline for some, pushing their skills and feeling the thrill associated with speed, especially on corners.
“The reason I got back into riding in my mid 30s was to get out of the house really. It wasn’t to do big miles or get a powerful bike, it was when I got home from work stressed out, it was 1hr or 1.5hr by myself, nothing else. It was really the reason why, nothing else.” (Open road older male rider, Nelson)

“I’ve always enjoyed it – when I am grumpy, my partner says ‘go for a ride’. It’s a part of me – after going for a ride I am more hyper, I cheer up.” (Open road rider, male, 50 years, Wellington)

“Cars are safe; bikes are fun.” (Open road rider, male, 47 years, Wellington)

“I think most motorcyclists would say the same thing; feeling of freedom, the air in your face; its just magic. It’s pretty indefinable when you have to sum it up, but its very tangible. It’s probably a bit like endorphins that get released when you exercise. Something chemical happens, and it’s a huge amount of enjoyment.” (Open road older male rider, Nelson)

“For me, a lot of analysis goes into driving and riding, and I’m always analyzing the line I’m taking, the speed, and the balance and all that sort of stuff…. That is part of the enjoyment, knowing I’m doing it well. I get a buzz out of that.” (Open road older male rider, Nelson)

Following this, open road riders also ride for the following:
• Socialising and community: many enjoy being part of a motorcycle club, going on rides with others and going to motorcycle events. Plus, it provides a talking point in public, e.g. “people who have a bike will ask you about it and you make friends”.  
• Scenery: some riders also commented that they really enjoy the scenery they see whilst out riding their bikes.

Key take away – In communicating with open road riders, target what riders value: “freedom”, “escape” and handling.

Urban riders

Commuters primarily ride for convenience and cost savings
Urban riders predominantly ride for cost savings and convenience. Cost saving on a motorcycle/scooter is created through fuel efficiency and free parking. Whereas, convenience for an urban rider is about the motorcycle/scooter:
• Being a quick form of transport (e.g. getting through and not getting stuck in traffic).
• Being easy to find a parking spot in cities.
• Being faster and easier than walking (e.g. some riders explained: “I am too lazy to walk”, or “it is easier to carry things” e.g. supermarket shopping).

“I bought a scooter for transport to university and back a few years ago. I actually graduated a year and a half ago now, but still use it to save money, basically. It would be nice to have
a proper bike one day, or what I call a proper bike, but it’s just reliable, economical transport.” (Scooter, Male, 39 years, Nelson)

For some scooter riders, riding is purely to get from A to B cost-effectively and conveniently, i.e. there is no real emotive passion associated with it.

“I don’t get much enjoyment from my scooter right now. There are still elements of enjoyment, but I wouldn’t take it out for a ride like I used to on my bike.” (Urban rider, Scooter, Male, 27 years, Auckland)

However, some urban riders (motorbike riders in particular) also enjoy the sense of freedom or “escape” that riding provides e.g. the feeling of being connected and in tune with the environment and “not being boxed in a car”. Some riders commented that they accentuate this sense of freedom by listening to music as they ride. For some scooter riders, this freedom was also expressed as “fun” and “zippy”. Some scooter riders that liked the sense of freedom created by being on a bike, were considering getting a motorbike because they liked the feeling so much.

“I commute daily - it is handy to get through traffic, but I also use my bike to get out of the house and escape my Mum and partner.” (Urban rider, Motorcycle, Male, 22 years, Wellington)

“I ride to work, but I take any excuse for a ride.” (Urban rider, Motorcycle, Male, 25 years, Auckland)

“[I am currently riding a scooter], but I can see myself loving bikes for the rest of my life… my partner wants me to get a car because it’s practical, but I just really don’t want it.” (Scooter, Male, 22 years, Nelson)

The sense of community and socialising which is valued by motorcyclists, is not shared amongst scooter riders. Motorcyclists have organised groups and actively speak to each other in public about motorcycling, but this community or social element was not shared by scooter riders.

“Not with riding a scooter… you don’t get approached by people saying do you want to join a club riding a scooter.” (Scooter, Male, 39 years, Nelson)

Key take away – In communicating with commuting riders, recognise what these riders value: “convenience” and “cost-savings”.
3. Riders’ attitudes towards speed

Riders don’t perceive speed as a safety issue for them
Many riders (open road and urban) acknowledge that they had gone fast or “too fast” on their bikes at least once in their lives. However, in general, riders do not feel that speed is an issue for them or other riders. If they are going over the speed limit, they are doing so “cautiously” and are taking calculated risks.

“I don’t view speed as dangerous, I view cars doing silly things as dangerous.” (Open road rider, older male, Hamilton)

“You have to go fast to see how much your bike can do. I would do it on an open road, not on a suburban road.” (Motorcycle (urban), Male, 25 years, Auckland)

“I’m of the opinion that if you manage risk, speed is not the issue, its about analysing the conditions you are in right now and managing your speed according to those conditions. There are times when 50km is appropriate, there are times when 120km might also be appropriate. Don’t get me wrong, I know that a motorcyclist is a very vulnerable animal, and if they hit something at 120km they have a good chance of not walking away… my attitude to speed is variable depending on the circumstances.” (Open road older male rider, Nelson)

“If something tells me to slow down that’s not going to have any impact on me, I’m going to say ‘nah, that’s for someone else’. I’d far rather see a sign like the ones up North with the guy enjoying himself that said ‘think about your speed’ rather than ‘slow down’”. (Open road older male rider, Nelson)

“I’m a great believer in personal responsibility. If I want to break the law and do 120km or 130km in a 100km zone and I get a ticket, I’ll happily take that ticket. In my mind it’s not an unsafe act… to me, what the speed limit sign says is less important than what the road conditions are like, what your skills are like and making a rational decision based on that.” (Open road older male rider, Nelson)

Looking at riders’ reasons for riding, there are two differing attitudes towards the value of speed:
- For some riders, speed is a necessary component of the excitement or thrill they get from riding a bike, however they don’t necessarily say that they “enjoy speed”.
- For some riders, speed is not a component for their thrill or enjoyment of riding bikes, however they may use speed to get them to safe zones in the traffic.

The differences between these two groups is described in more detail below.

Type 1: The thrill of speed is not a key priority

The thrill of speed is not a key motivation for many riders
For most of the commuters and the Auckland, Wellington and Nelson older male open road riders, the thrill associated with speed was not a key reason for riding their bikes. For open road
riders, the benefits of riding were more associated with getting away from routine life and being at one with the elements/outdoors and/or convenience. Whereas, for scooter riders it was more about cost-savings and convenience.

For the older open road motorcyclists in this group, they may have enjoyed the thrill of speed in the past (when they were “younger”, for “adrenaline”), but the thrill of speed is not a dominant reason for their passion for motorcycling now. Some of the reasons for their change in attitude included:

- Having crashes in the past;
- Realising they are not “bullet-proof”;
- Having a family to support;
- Realising that there are many factors they can’t allow for, e.g. particularly the actions of other drivers;
- Acknowledging the risk of more severe injuries at higher speeds;
- Acknowledging the risk of getting a speeding ticket or losing their license.

“It’s a long time to recover after coming off at high speed like me.” (Motorcycle, Male, 20 years, Auckland)

“My name’s just not having a 180 horse power motorbike and don’t feel the need to go particularly fast. I generally won’t go past 110km/h on the motorway - it’s important to keep your eyes peeled. … I have a policy of just getting to where I’m going. There’s no taking off at the lights anymore and I don’t do a lot of high speed lane splitting… but it’s simply about getting to where I’m going, and that’s plenty good enough for me to have a bike and to get out and relax, and not listen to anyone or answer my phone or any of that kind of stuff. … I don’t do anything silly, I don’t go chasing riders than me on faster bikes… if I get there six minutes behind my mate, I don’t really care.” (Open road older male rider, Nelson)

However, they may use “speed” for safety reasons
Open road and commuting motorcyclists say they do use speed to pass other vehicles to find a safe space on the road (away from other traffic). Riders mentioned that they may push up to around 120km/h on the open road in these circumstances. Some urban and open road motorcyclists also mentioned that they feel more visible if they are moving faster. Urban motorbike riders also like to move faster than the traffic so they are not rear-ended and because it is one of the main benefits of riding a motorcycle in peak hour.

Scooter riders struggle with keeping up
Some scooter riders struggle to ride at speed limit, especially on hills in Wellington. Scooter riders’ main focus is keeping up with the traffic and holding their place on the road for visibility/safety. They feel that car drivers pressure them to speed up by tail-gating (especially going up hills), which they find threatening. In response, some scooters will ride in the breakdown/parking lanes, but know that this also brings risks of being hit by car doors or cars at intersections or driveways not seeing them. In order to keep up with traffic, reduce tail-gating and ultimately feel safer, some scooter riders change to a motorcycle to commute.
Type 2: Use/need speed to get the sensations they seek

Speed enables the passion for some open road riders

For some open road riders speed is a necessary component of the excitement or thrill they get from riding a bike, however they don't necessarily say that they “enjoy speed” straight out. For these riders, they enjoy the sensation of speed as an important characteristic of riding a motorcycle. In terms of speed being a component for their enjoyment of riding a bike, it manifests itself in a number of ways as follows:

• They enjoy the sensation/thrill/experience of riding their bikes fast – it provides their sense of freedom, e.g. riding 140-200km/h on the open road.
• Larger modern bikes don’t handle well unless they get to a certain speed. In line with this, modern bikes give riders the confidence to ride fast.
• They like using speed to push their skill levels (especially regarding handling, e.g. cornering).

“Hard to describe I guess that sense of freedom and sense of adventure. It's a little bit different - it's just the thrill you get from riding the bike.” (Open road older male rider, 60 years, Hamilton)

“There’s nothing better than going out there and having a really fast ride safely and then having a cup of coffee afterwards and thinking shit that was good.” (Open road older male rider, Nelson)

A few stated that they get the adrenaline they seek from speed by accelerating quickly from a standstill (i.e. not exceeding the speed limit).

Some noted that they have slowed down compared to when they were younger, but still enjoy the experience brought about by speed.

“I have slowed down, but I don’t ride at the speed limit. I ride at 110 or 120, but I don't go over that much anymore. I don’t do 160 or 180.” (Open road older male rider, 60 years, Hamilton)

Speed is justified through rationalising the risks – they use speed “cautiously”

These riders are conscious of the risks of speeding, but feel the risks are managed via their competency (they see themselves as confident and skilful riders), experience, good gear and good bikes. They are calculated in their approach to riding as a way of outweighing the risk of speeding. They use speed cautiously by undertaking “calculated risks”, “using their judgement” and, overall, believing that they are doing so safely. They will go beyond the speed limit (e.g. 120km/h) in “safe” conditions (e.g. on straight stretches, on open road, on roads they know, with no cars around). As part of this calculated approach, most are cautious on a new bike, recognising the need to build up their skills and get used to the handling of a new bike until they feel confident.

“I think that it’s safe, it's safe because of my judgment. It’s my judgment call at that speed. You are judging what’s around you and whether you can control the bike at that speed.”
are aware of your surroundings, things can still go wrong at that speed, but things can go wrong at 80km and 100km, that speed is moving at a pace that is not being slowed by cars and you get the thrill of riding but you are not travelling at 180 to 200 clicks to get it.” (Open road older male rider, 60 years, Hamilton)

**Speed is less of a motivator for scooter riders, but some still like it**

Most scooter riders do not ride to experience speed. However, there is a minority that do.

“I like speed. I don’t want a big bike. I’m not confident to be on a big bike but I want a scooter that goes 100.” (Scooter, female, 36 years, Hamilton)

Key takeaway – In communicating with riders, don’t focus on “speed”. Riders don’t believe they “speed”. They acknowledge speed is a component of their thrill of riding or staying safe, but they use speed cautiously and rationalise the risks. Without an element of “speed”, it removes their passion for why they ride and/or their perceived safety.

**4. What are riders’ general mindset towards safety**

**General mindset**

**Safety is really important to open road riders**

Generally, most riders think that "safety" is really important.

“Definitely safety first. Need to be as safe as possible, because driving a motorbike is far less safe than a car.” (Open road older male rider, Nelson)

Some open road riders are very conscious of the possible consequences of not being safe – and take a staunch approach to riding safety. However, safe behaviour or attitudes can be compromised by the social pressure to race.

“I don’t want a smashed up leg, a different life, a ribbing from my mates, and knowing I’m stupider than I think I am. … I do get a bit of stick for it from some of my up North mates for not keeping up the pace, but we’ll all get to a point where we meet up and there’s plenty of conversations about “don’t outride yourself”, “don’t chase the fastest guy” and all those kind of things, but as soon as they see you not chase the fastest guy they give you stick.” (Open road older male rider, Nelson)

**Some open road riders feel they need to balance safety with “calculated risks”**

However, for some open road riders, there is a need to “disregard safety” to get the freedom and “chemical reaction” that is a core reason for their passion for riding. In doing this, they believe they take “calculated risks” by occasionally disregarding safety in their behaviour, but ensuring that they have good gear and good skills. It is expressed as a balance between safety and fun – “through trusting yourself and your ability”, which brings with it a bit of arrogance.
“Sometimes I do completely disregard safety, not just cause I’m sick of having safety rammed down my throat (and ramming it down everyone else’s is my job). It might just be a mid-life thing, I’m not sure, but I do like danger at times. Not just the freedom of riding and the smooth cornering and the smell of things, but sometimes just letting go of things.” (Motorcycle, Male, 50 years, Nelson)

“The balance between fun and danger and safety is, I suppose, and a lot of my friends would say: it’s arrogance. There’s a very fine line between confidence and arrogance, and I admit that I’m probably a little arrogant in my riding style… I think my stopping distance in 1/10 of a car, and I’m so much better because I’ve got all these years of experience, and yeah, there is a little bit of arrogance, and I feel a little bit of invincibility, well not necessarily invincibility but that overconfidence… I know what I’m capable of, I know what my bike’s capable of.” (Motorcycle (urban and open road), Male, 31 years, Nelson)

Open road riders also acknowledge that they sometimes need to “push it” in terms of their skills and there is a “balancing act” between pushing their skills and keeping safe. They also talk about the “tipping point” in this process, when “confidence” can convert to being too “cocky”. In other words, to improve (and understand) their skills, riders need to push themselves and be confident, but they need to do this to the point that they are still under control and not overconfident.

“Confidence comes from… ‘are you riding within your ability?’ Yes, you are pushing yourself at times - it’s part of it, because you always trying to find your balance. Can I go around that corner at that speed and ok, so there is a kind of balance, so I think you are always pushing that, but if you get too confident well…we are part time riders at the end of the day. We ride on the weekends we are all weekend warriors at the end of the day. So it’s very easy to get a bit cocky and the modern bikes give you a bit more confidence as well.” (Open road older male rider, 60 years, Hamilton)

Key take away – In communicating “safety” to open road riders, it is important to understand the balance riders seek between safety and fun or improving their skills. That is, riders believe safety is important, but to improve their skills, and/or enjoy their riding, they need to push themselves at times. A potential message to communicate with regards to this, in relation to safety, is the tipping point between controlled confidence and uncontrolled overconfidence.

Key safety concerns

Riders’ key safety concerns are other drivers and road surface hazards
The key hazards for rider safety are seen as: other drivers and hazards on the road surface (e.g. gravel, oil, painted lines, animal muck, rain).

Given these key hazards, open road riders focus on the following factors to keep themselves safe:

• **Skills**; they believe that skills play a big part in preventing crashes. This includes:
  o Observation skills
• Reading the road
• Reading other vehicles
• Reading the conditions
  o Braking skills
  o Cornering skills (i.e. not crossing the centre line, entry speed, choice of line, visibility and not braking on the corner)
  o Bike-specific skills, e.g. knowing their bike

• Gear
• Experience:
  o Years experience: i.e. years of practise helps to keep them safe
  o Close calls/crashes: riders are more aware of the risks and their safety after they experience close calls or crashes
  o Learning: from others or courses is seen as an important factor to keep safe for some

Scooter riders are less likely to think about their gear, cornering skills, knowing their bike, or continual learning (compared to open road riders), but do consider the other factors listed above in thinking about their safety. Compared to open road riders, scooter riders place more blame on car drivers in thinking about their own safety. The core difference in scooter and motorbike riders that causes this polarised reaction, is that scooter riders feel much more at the mercy of drivers and their actions, whereas open road riders feel they can use the power of their bike to address bad driver behaviour.

“I think the question isn’t: ‘is motorcycling unsafe?’ - the question is: ‘is it unsafe to ride a motorcycle on the same road people drive cars are on?’” (Scooter, Male, Nelson)

Open road riders believe “other” riders crash, particularly inexperienced riders on new large bikes
Many open riders believe that (unlike themselves), those that crash have not been riding a long time (e.g. “they do not have the experience of 20 plus years”) and/or they do not ride regularly (e.g. “some only ride every couple of years”). They stereotype the 40-65 year old “born again” male, who “now has money and goes out and buys a $35,000 half-tonne motorbike”, suggesting that their skill levels don’t match the requirements of the bike they buy. In summary, open road riders state that the men that crash in their age group:
• Are new, returning, or occasional riders;
• Overestimate their riding skills;
• Are on motorbikes which are bigger, faster and harder to handle than they used to be;
• Are on roads where there is more traffic on the road that there used to be.

“I came back into riding after a long period off, but it’s the Born Agains, buying Harleys and Harley lookalikes. That’s why I bought a 600.” (Motorcycle, Male, 50 years, Nelson)

“It’s those with no previous experience who get on a large bike. They should start on a smaller bike. The problem is that they are not used to the bike”. (Open road older male rider, 47 years, Wellington)
The open road riders making these claims of the new/occasional riders (“Born Agains”) perceive themselves to be more capable (given their years of experience and consistency), despite the fact that they have had crashes themselves. They state that “I remember how to ride” and “even I take my time if I have had a break from my bike”.

They propose that these new/experienced riders need skills training and to buy bikes that match their skill level, including pillion training for those taking passengers.

One rider who had had a crash, also supported these points, stating that his crash was due to not knowing his bike, as well as decision-making that was based on instinct and habit. Following his crash, he bought a bike with linked brakes and went to training.

“[The reason for my crash] … speed wasn’t a factor… we weren’t going crazy. … A set of circumstances… we were riding in a group and we were trucking along, not crazy but quick. I was on a new bike and, in hindsight, I did not know the bike well enough. I’ve always said that if I was on my old bike I would not have done what I did. We were going through corners and a guy dropped in front of me. I locked it up and went end over end. It was an error on my part, the catalyst was the guy in front, but my decision-making was flawed in what I did. And that came from instinct and habit, and on my old bike I probably could have got away with it. The one I’ve got now has link braking. For me, it was circumstances. Now I’ve brought in technology, so that won’t happen again. I also did another training after getting back on the bike – I really lost my confidence and needed to get it back slowly.” (Open road older male rider, 60 years, Hamilton)

Another open road rider who was a “born again” said that when he started out riding, he was overconfident, ignorant, stubborn and felt that it was a weakness to seek training or help.

“I figured ‘I rode bikes for years, I can just get back on’… I just thought ‘ahh, this will be easy’ and it wasn’t. It was quite a shock, but the old stubbornness kicked in and said ‘nah, you’ll get through this, you’ll just ride and teach yourself’. But I’ve got to the point now where I realise there is more, a lot more, than I have to learn, so I am planning to.” (Open road older male rider, Nelson)

**Urban riders believe “they” mostly crash due to external factors**

When urban riders are asked why riders crash, unlike open road riders, they mainly think about why they themselves may crash, i.e. they don’t propose that it is just “other riders” who crash. Urban riders believe they crash on urban roads mostly due to unexpected, external factors. This includes:

- Other road users not seeing them:
  - Due to the “complacency” and “inattentiveness” of other road users.
  - Who are mostly car drivers, but also due to cyclists, buses, and taxis.
  - Believed reason: Scooters/motorbikes are less of a threat to cars than other vehicles (e.g. other cars, buses, trucks), so cars are less likely to look out for scooters/motorbikes.
• Road hazards, such as:
  o Debris: “Even at slow speeds, there are things that flick up.” (Wellington)
  o Manhole covers.
  o Painted lines.
  o Wear on the road, e.g. potholes, shiny patches.

• Weather conditions:
  o Rain: “Rain is a major cause of crashes.” (Wellington)
  o Wind: “Scooters are very prone to wind.” (Wellington)

“You can go very fast on the supertrack, but you get killed in the CBD on a moped.” (Urban motorcycle, Male, 49 years, Auckland)

“We are invisible.” (Urban motorcycle, Male, 25 years, Auckland)

“Inattentive cars are the number one reason why riders crash. You can slow down, but some cars will run lights. There are cars that don’t give way. It’s people that you have to avoid.” (Scooter, Male, 27 years, Auckland)

“Bus drivers have nearly hit me.” (Scooter, Female, 30 years, Auckland)

Urban riders generally feel that safe riders are constantly looking around and are very aware of their environment. For most, it is about “trusting yourself” and not others i.e. the need to take safety into their own hands, given the distrust in cars to see them or act courteously towards them.

However, a few urban riders also note that it is not only external factors that cause crashes. In that riders’ lack of skills and experience are also to blame – especially those who are just learning to ride scooters. As well as the habitual nature of commuting, that is, it is easy to lose concentration and go on “auto-pilot” when you are travelling the same road everyday.

Key take away – In communicating with open road older male riders, don’t talk about their likelihood to crash, as they believe it is other riders that crash. In communicating with urban riders about safety and how to improve their safety, talk about the risks of external factors causing of them to crash, e.g. don’t suggest to urban riders that they need to improve their skills (an internal factor), but that external factors are a real risk and improving their skills is one way to deal with this.

Impact of messages, influencers and the media on safety mindsets

Motorbike safety messages stand out and are useful
Most riders have seen motorbike safety messages on billboards and/or buses, and a few have seen messages on their Facebook page. Many motorcyclists commented that the messages containing “tips” are useful and good reminders for their riding.
Some of the messages riders recalled (in their words) are:

- **Awareness of other road users:**
  - “Share the road (for bicycles)” (Urban riders) – this was an important one for urban riders who also felt others needed to share the road with motorcyclists and scooters as well.
  - “Look out for bikes”, “Watch for motorcycles” (Open road riders)

- **Visibility:**
  - “Always be seen”
  - “Make sure you are seen” (Urban riders)

- **Gear:**
  - “Be aware of what you’re wearing” (Urban riders)
  - “Wear all the gear all the time”
  - “The pictures with half gear and half clothes”
  - “One layer is better than none” – this slogan made one scooter rider buy dedicated clothing for wearing on her scooter (but she does not always wear it e.g. on warm days)

- **Skills/behaviours:**
  - “Live to ride”
  - “Stay awake”
  - “Look at the corner” – this message had motorcyclists looking more at their cornering
  - “Stay on your side”
  - “Ride to the conditions”
  - “Upskill”

Riders felt that the positive motorcycle messages (on billboards and buses, e.g. showing rider silhouettes and rider tips) were good reminders to drivers to look out for them, as well as being good at creating awareness that it is different to riding a bike compared to driving a car. Urban riders commented that those types of communication also made them feel less like a “menace to society”, as the messages were not “gory” or did not portray riders in a negative light. Open road motorcycles liked how the messages suggested that you could have fun in safe manner. Riders also commented that the cyclist billboards were good at making cyclists human, and could have a flow-on effect for motorcyclists and scooter riders.

“It makes me feel a little bit of confidence, that there’s a big poster every couple of kilometres with a motorcyclist which just reminds drivers ‘hey - don’t forget to look out for us’. I really like that.” (Motorcycle, male, 31 years, Nelson)

“The ads with cyclists with Dad written on top… makes you think that they’re a person, not just a hindrance on the road.” (Scooter, male, 22 years, Nelson)

“I’ll tell you what I did notice, and it was absolutely brilliant… the roadside billboards, aimed at motorbikes, with the little stylised picture of a motorbike going around a corner with simple things like ‘clear head good ride’ or ‘don’t cross the centre line’… they were in a really positive way, which encouraged really positive behaviours. I liked that the guy leaning over looked
like he was enjoying himself and reinforced that you could have good fun but safely. They were good because they were designed to make you feel good and make you react in a positive way.” (Open road older male rider, Nelson)

Riders also commented that the types of campaigns that they have found most effective in making them think about their behaviour are the “thought-provoking ones”, which included (in their words):

- “Where the car is going to crash but stops.”
- “The ones with the stoned guy.”
- “The US or Canadian ones I see on Facebook – they are not like the New Zealand ones.”

**Key influencers of riding style and gear/bike decisions are “preferred motorcycle” and social norms**

When riders were asked about what has been the biggest influence on their riding style, and their approach and decisions around their bike and safety gear, there are a range of responses.

For many motorcycle riders the biggest influence is, in fact, their preferred brand (e.g. BMW) and/or type of motorcycle (e.g. sports bike). That is, their preferred motorcycle influences their riding style, their gear and who they ride with. For example, BMW riders generally ride more conservatively and ride with each other.

Some motorcycle riders also noted particular people who influence their riding style and choice of bike, including older relatives, race-bike riders or friends. A few riders also noted that online information can influence their decisions around bike and safety gear e.g. YouTube clips or online forums. There is also a “social norm” that influences decisions relating to motorcyclists’ safety gear, in that the motorcycling community will actively voice the importance of wearing full gear with fellow riders when out and about.

For scooter riders, parents and friends can be key influencers of gear and bike decisions. However, there is also a “social norm” influence on decisions relating to gear, in that, many scooter riders think that it would be “ridiculous” to wear full protective gear on a scooter.

**Motorbike riders portrayed as unsafe in the media**

When asked how motorbike riders are portrayed in the media, most riders comment that the image portrayed does not represent reality. They state that motorbike riders include a very diverse group of people, including the type of people that are not portrayed in the media (e.g. doctors, grandmothers, good/normal people). However, the image portrayed in the media gives riders a “bad rap”; the words used to express riders in the media included:

- “Outlaws”
- “Tough guys”
- “Wannabes”
- “Idiots”

“The assumption is that all motorcyclists are idiots, but this is not the majority. To a degree, we have a bad name.” (Open road older male, 50 years, Wellington)
Key take away – Based on current campaigns, there is an appetite for positive messages on/for motorcyclists and scooter riders, to remind riders of key safety tips and remind drivers that motorcyclists and scooter riders are on the road. There is also enthusiasm for messaging that puts riders in a positive light, especially given the negative personas delivered in the media.

5. How skilled do riders think they are & perceived need for training

Open road riders (40-65 year old males)

All riders felt skilled, but they have different limits
Most open road riders feel skilled. When riders think about their skills, some riders think about their safety skills (e.g. skills to prevent accidents and look after themselves when something goes wrong), some riders think about the skills that provide the thrill of riding (e.g. taking corners at speed), and some think about both.

“It’s skills for safety, should I find myself out of my depth, probably not by my own doing. There’s no harm at being better at anything… because I’m the one who’s going to lose at the end of the day.” (Open road older male rider, Nelson)

Whether riders are thinking about skills, whether they are skills for safety or thrill, the core skills that they think about, when evaluating their capability, are:

- Braking: e.g. emergency braking for safety, or skilful braking as part of the enjoyment of riding a bike.
- Bike handling: e.g. “picking lines” on corners for safe riders to stay safe and for thrill-seeking riders to go around corners faster.
- Observation: e.g. reading the road, other traffic, looking 1-2 cars ahead.
- Surface hazard skills: Knowing how to handle different road conditions (e.g. painted lines, weather, gravel, etc.).

When judging their skills, most riders feel that they are typically riding within their limit. Riders feel they know what they can and can’t do, based on: their general skills; knowing their bike and their skills on that particular bike; and knowing their skills in different conditions. Because they ride within their (personal) limit, they feel skilled. And, of course, these personal limits vary by rider, e.g. those that ride fast think they are skilled at riding fast.

Some riders know that they push their limit (to improve their skills or for the thrill), whereas other riders are conscious of keeping within the “90/10 rule” (i.e. they ride at 90% of their skill limit, so that if something happens they are not already at their limit).

Modern bikes can make a rider feel more skilled than they actually are
Riders generally feel more cautious on older bikes, due to the wear on the bike and their use of older technology.
Open road riders acknowledge that modern bikes can make a rider feel more in control and more skilful than they might actually be – or at least modern bikes give a lot of power to those who might not have the skills to handle it.

Some riders also have a real understanding of the impact of the different style of bikes, relative to riders’ skills. That is, riders’ skills need to match what the bike is built to do (e.g. sports bikes are better for those with good speed skills, Harleys are good for cruising but harder to corner). As a result, riders pick a bike based on an assessment and a good match for their skills. As an example of this, one rider changed to a bike with ABS and linked brakes after he realised he had poor braking skills in an emergency situation.

Given the above, when on a new bike, some open road riders noted the importance of starting out slowly and cautiously, to build the skills they need for that particular bike.

All riders feel skilled, but they vary in their perceived need for improvement

Below we detail the difference between those who don’t see the need for skills improvement and those that do.

**Type 1: Feel skilled enough and don’t see need for improvement**

**For some open road riders: skills = experience, instinct and habit**

Some open road riders are very confident in their skills, have not undertaken training and see no need for skills training. They are confident in their skills, due to their years of experience – they say that “confidence and skills comes from experience”. Some also state that skills are based on their instinct and habit. These riders are not pushing their skills (e.g. unlike their peers who still enjoy the thrill of speed or fast cornering) and they say that they take a “cautious approach” to riding, so there is no need for improvement. That is, their current skill-set meets their cautious riding style.

Riders also made the observation that some riders whose skills are based on experience and don’t see the need in improvement have great pride in their skills – to the point that taking training would be showing a weakness.

“Some of my mates have all this bravado, ‘oh I don’t need to do this’ and they don’t want to be seen to do it.” (Motorcycle (urban and open), Male, 58 years, Nelson)

Below are a couple of case studies of riders who feel “skilled enough” and don’t see the need for improvement.

**Case study 1:**

Lewis is 47 years old. He rides a sports Suzuki GSX750, which he bought brand new, less than two months ago. He had a range of bikes leading up to this one, including Hondas, Yamahas and other Suzukis. He purchased his current Suzuki for the comfort and the “wow factor”. When purchasing his Suzuki, he went down in bike power and weight – as he feels a 750cc is “fast enough anyway” and is easier to ride. He believes his bike has ABS and
airbags (note: despite the fact that his motorcycle model does not have these features) and feels that “ABS is on most new bikes now”.

In terms of his riding history, he first got his motorcycle license at 15 years of age. He did not ride for 17 years (between 23 and 40 years) and then got another bike in his 40s. In his forties, he uses his bike to commute and to ride on weekends with friends and the Wellington Riders group – which he really enjoys and says it is like his “hobby”. During the week on his commute, he likes that he can get through traffic jams. On the weekends he likes the sense of freedom that riding his bike brings – for him, this is his “time away” with no distractions (e.g. no kids, no phone).

Before he was married, he was in three crashes that were not his fault. These were caused by: a dog at night, a car pulling out, and a car doing a U-turn. These crashes were all at low speed; he was not hurt, but his bike was damaged. As a result of these incidents, he did not change the way he rode because they were not deemed to be his fault.

In his mind, he is a “very safe” and “very cautious” rider. As examples of this caution, he stated that when he is riding on his own, cars pass him and whenever he goes out he thinks “I might have a crash today”. He wears all his armoured and reflective safety gear “all the time” (except when he wears his steel cap boots to go to Wellington, or if he is going to be walking around). He checks his bike after riding it (e.g. checks the chain and tyres) and is “always cleaning it”. The main reason for his caution is that, since having children, he feels the “risk factor is higher” and he is “too young to die”. He also thinks about the financial burden if he was injured and the impact on his partner.

He gives his skills a 7-8 out of 10. He feels he is skilled, as he has 30 years’ experience (note: he counts the years that he did not have a bike). The skills he focusses on and that he feels are most important, are his observation skills and his visibility (making cars aware of him). To make himself visible he has a white helmet, a “high vis” bike, positions his bike sits towards the centre line and in the side mirrors of cars. He doesn’t ride when it is wet, because it is a hassle with his gear and “everything is halved”.

When asked about the impact of a rider’s skill in preventing crashes, he states that “crashes are going to happen, the skill comes in how a rider lands or is able to land”, e.g. by putting the bike down first and putting hands down. When asked why male riders in his age group crash, he states that it is the riders with no previous experience who get on a large bike that they are not used to – they should instead start on a smaller bike.

Lewis has never undertaken any training – he states “I don’t need to”, “I have experience behind me”, “I have learnt from doing it” and “I am cautious on cornering”. He believes training is for first time riders, for professional racers, and for riders who are more unconfident with cornering, braking and dealing with emergencies. He does not know anyone who has undertaken training, but has seen it is available via the Wellington Riders group.
When asked what he could do to improve his safety he states “nothing, it’s all done”, and then on thinking about it he states “maybe I could be more alert”.

**Insight:** Lewis overestimates his years of experience, uses experience to justify his skills and says stays safe by riding cautiously. Not knowing other riders who have undertaken training, he has not seen/heard about the difference that skills training can make. He is not aware that experience may create bad habits and that he may have gaps in his skills. An opportunity to get Lewis to engage in training, is for him to realise the impact of training on rider skills, even for those with many years of experience who ride cautiously.

**Case study 2:**
Jack is 50 years old. He rides a tourer Kawasaki 1000cc - which is his eighth motorbike. With each of his motorbikes he has mostly gone up in power each time. He is very passionate about his current bike; he did his own paintwork and has added personal touches. He admired the bike model when it first came out, he likes that it has a good “history for speed” and that it is an “icon”, however, he says he doesn’t ride it for speed.

When he was 18 years old he had a crash with a car, he came around a bend, a car was stopped, he was about to crash, so he “put his bike down”. He broke his knee cap and his bike was written off. At the time he was wearing jeans, a leather jacket and a yellow rain jacket. Following this crash, he invested in full double-padded leathers. Since this time he has come off his bike a couple of other times at low speed and he has had quite a few near misses when cars cut him off, changing lanes or at roundabouts. His crashes and near misses have made him aware of how vulnerable and invisible a rider is on a bike.

Nowadays, in his mind, he is a skilled, safe and confident rider – as a reflection of his skills when he was younger he was offered sponsorship to race. In his older age, he says he rides cautiously, plans ahead and “always” thinks about safety – he wears fluoro pants in wet weather and has a white bike. He rides regularly – 2-3 times a week – and checks his bike every time he rides. For him the most valuable skills are “observation of others” and knowing how to ride in different conditions. The biggest risk to his safety is other vehicles not seeing him. With regards to speed, he says he does not ride his bike for speed, he finds the “skill side” more appealing; however, he does like accelerating fast and has “opened it up” – which he doesn’t do often, due to the risk of getting caught and for safety reasons.

He is surprised that men in his age group are more likely to have crashes resulting in death or severe injuries. He puts this down to “other riders’” overconfidence.

Jack has never undertaken any training and sees no value in attending training – to him training is for new riders. He has learnt from experience and has “managed to stay alive”. He has, however, recently spoken to a member of the Ulysses Club and he is interested in the training, “little talks” and “practise on tracks” that they undertake.

**Insight:** Based on other riders’ experience, if Jack does get involved in a club he may realise that there is room to improve his skills and, as a result, be more willing and passionate about
skills training. As with Lewis, there is a potential opportunity to shift his thinking that experience does not necessarily equate to good skills.

**Type 2: Feel skilled but acknowledge room for improvement**

**Open road riders who have seen/experienced skills training are humbler about their skills**

Those that have gone through skills training on a track themselves, or who have seen the difference in someone who has, is a key factor in contributing to a humbler self-assessment of their own skills and their openness to training.

When asked about their level of skills, some riders respond that they could always improve. They feel that their skills are good, but from an experience with training or knowing someone who has undertaken training, they realise that they could improve their skills.

As a case study, one 45-year-old “sports-tourer” rider from Auckland, commented that he thought his skills were excellent until his mate went on skills training at a track. His mate had the same riding experience as he did but, following training, his mate’s skills are now a lot better than his (e.g. in the way he rides, especially cornering). As a result of this direct comparison, his perception of his own skills have dropped from “excellent” to “not super-skilled” and he is a strong advocate for training: “Everybody could benefit from training, you can’t learn enough”. However, he has not undertaken training himself (yet), but feels he should do so to improve the way he rides and his experience of riding. The main barrier is not the opportunity or his capability, but that he just hasn’t gotten around to it.

A similar experience was recounted in Nelson: “I’ve had good mates who have been riding for years... my best mate said to me probably 2 years ago that he’d done a course and, you know, ‘I’ve been riding for 25 years and I didn’t know half that stuff’. And if he says that, that’s good enough for me. … Even last weekend [when I was with the riding group and they showed me things with cones] there were skills I didn’t have. I have no problem admitting that, I’m addressing that.” (Open road older male, Nelson)

**Open road riders that like the thrill of speed appear to be more favourable towards training**

Riders that use speed to push their skills and experience acknowledge that they are skilled, but also recognise that they do and can make mistakes. As a result, most are open to and are advocates of training; including push steering, racing lines and how to correct on loose surfaces.

**Some riders feel skilled, until their skills are put to the test, or they are observed**

Some riders feel that they are very skilled at riding until something happens that demonstrates that their skills weren’t as good as they thought (e.g. during emergency braking or cornering). For others, they have found that they thought their skills were better, until a fellow rider comments on their riding style and how they could improve.
Riders that experience training see the benefit in continual improvement
Those that have been on rider skills training feel that they would benefit from training regularly (e.g. each year). That is, they see the benefit of training for their skills, as well as the opportunity for continual improvement.

Key take away –
• In communicating with open road older male riders, there needs to be an understanding that riders do not judge their skills relative to a set benchmark, but do so based on what skills level they feel they need for their riding style.
• There are potential opportunities to ensure open road riders are aware of:
  o the enhanced skills required to ride more powerful bikes, even though modern bikes may initially feel easier to ride;
  o the importance of finding a bike that matches their skill level; and
  o the importance of taking their time to build their skills on a bike that is new to them.
• There are opportunities to dispel the thinking: that good skills are based on years of experience, instinct and/or habit, and that attending training is showing a weakness in riding skills.
• There is also the opportunity to leverage riding groups to improve riders’ awareness of the value of skills training: by getting more riders to join clubs and getting club leaders to observe riders, suggest skill gaps and advocate training.
• Lastly, there is also the opportunity to provide examples of the benefits of skills training that training-averse riders can relate to (e.g. for cautious riders, riders with years of experience, riders who are naturally skilled at riding) and/or demonstrate the difference in a rider’s reactions for those who have been through skills training versus a rider that hasn’t had training but has years of experience.

Urban riders

Experienced urban riders, but not learner scooter riders, feel confident in their skills
With regards to their skills, new scooter riders state they are “still learning” and generally feel unconfident on the road and need to focus more on than handling skills than their observation skills. Scooter riders who have ridden for while, and urban motorcyclists, feel their skills are fine for standard commuting. For scooter riders, the confidence in their skills is based on experience, whereas for urban motorcyclists it is also based on the feeling that riding on urban roads is much easier than riding on the open road.

Key take away – Opportunity to educate scooter riders on the value of training, with a key trigger point being while they are learning to ride or before they get on the road.

Urban riders’ most valued skills focus on dealing with external hazards - but these skills are seen to only help to some extent
Some urban riders feel skilled, but are cautious on the roads due to a real understanding that there are environmental elements that they have little control over (e.g. the actions of other
drivers). They feel that their skills can only keep them safe to a certain extent and if a crash does happen it is probably going to happen.

For urban riders, the safety skills they deem most important relate to dealing with external hazards, that is, skills in:

- Observation: Anticipating what drivers are going to do.
- Spatial awareness: including safe riding distances and knowing an escape route.
- Visibility: To ensure drivers see you.
- Braking: using the correct technique to stop quickly in emergency situations.

**Scooter riders stay within their limits, motorcyclists push their skill limits**

With urban riders it was generally felt that the skills required on a scooter relate to “knowing your limits”, whereas on a motorbike there is more scope, need and desire to “push your skill limits”. Knowing your limits on a scooter for some riders, also related to “knowing your bike”, including the “limitations of you and your bike”.

“I think back to when I was riding sports bikes the skill part was something I thought about a lot. I thought about challenging myself all the time, kind of like challenging the laws of physics... I’m always thinking about the relationship between the grip, the speed, the road surface, and think about my skill, my ability is what controls that... I’ve got to have a certain level of skill, so I was always thinking about improving that... but with a scooter... you can only push the boundaries so far with that scooter...the skill in it’s probably knowing my limits and knowing the road surface and being aware of what is coming up. Being aware of potholes, dodging things, slowing down really quickly and that sort of thing.” (Scooter (but used to ride sports bike), Male, 39 years, Nelson)

**Similar to open road riders, urban riders vary in their perceived need for improvement**

Below we detail the difference between those who don’t see the need for skills improvement and those that do.

**Type 1: Feel skilled enough and don’t think they need any improvement**

**Some scooter riders feel their skills are fine**

Some scooter riders feel that their skills are fine for standard commuting. They either have not ever thought about undertaking scooter training and/or they pride themselves on their defensive driving skills, their experience and feel that if something was to happen it would probably be enviable (due to things outside of their control). This cohort believes that rather than there being a need to improve their skills, there needs to be more focus on car drivers to see them.

**Hamilton case study**: Marama is a 36-year-old scooter rider that likes speed and does not wear protective gear. She would not consider training, as she states she is “overconfident”, happy with her skills for a scooter, learns from experience, and realises that it is important to be cautious if she hasn’t ridden for a while.
“I probably wouldn’t consider training. Because I feel what I need to get done, I can get done. And it’s a scooter, I’m not exactly leaning it into corners or anything. If I was on a big bike, then sure, 100% I’d be doing the skills training. But on a scooter I just pick things up. You go to Rarotonga, you get your license easy, no worries, no dramas. … To me, skills are taking a corner at 90 or 100 instead of 70 and doing it comfortably and more safely. … I indicate for 10,000 years before I move, I try and be courteous, I try and be a good scooterist and stay as far left as I can. … The thing I’m always conscious of, because I scoot up the side of traffic and stuff, I saw a cyclist actually in a cycle lane and a car had parked, he was going for it and the car opened his door and bang. I had never ever considered that happening to me. Just never thought that that could happen to me, but ever since I saw that I’m a lot more careful. I was overly confident. I still am though. … I think it’s something you do need to keep your hand in and do the hours, otherwise you do get a bit rusty. So if you haven’t been out for a couple of months, you take it easy.”

**Nelson case study:** In an interaction between two riders, one rider states that there is no point in undertaking training, because the key issue is cars not seeing him on the road. Another rider comments that training could improve his observation skills, even though that rider himself has not undertaken training.

*Rider 1:* “The reason I wouldn’t go to a course is that it wouldn’t make Joe Blogs down the road see me any better, it won’t make Joe Blogs a better driver.” *(Scooter, Male, 22 years, Nelson)*

*Rider 2:* “Yes, but [training] makes you see him more. It improves your observation.”

But then “the defender” later went on to say that for himself:

*Rider 2:* “Training, yeah, I think everyone should do it. But am I going to do it off my own bat? No. I am confident in my riding ability. I am confident in the roads.” *(Motorcycle (open and urban), male, 31 years, Nelson)*

**Key take away – Communicate the value of skills training to urban riders and, in doing so, focus on how skills training can help riders deal with their key hazard: other drivers. There is also the opportunity to dispel the thinking that experience alone is enough to develop good skills.**

**Type 2: Feel skilled but acknowledge always room for improvement**

**Some scooter riders feel competent, but feel they could benefit from training**

Some scooter riders feel that their skills are fine for standard commuting, but feel there is room to improve their skills once they discuss and think about their skills, skill gaps and bad habits. Some scooter riders commented that “practise through training leads to greater confidence”.

“It’s easy to get into bad habits.” *(Scooter, Female, 30 years, Auckland)*

**Urban motorbike riders are strong advocates of training, especially for new scooter riders**

Urban motorbike riders were much stronger advocates of training than scooter riders. In urban motorbike riders’ opinion, training is important and everybody can learn. They are open to training and encourage it. They especially encourage scooter riders to take part in training, given the benefits they have received from motorbike training and, further to this, they see scooter
riding training as an opportunity to form good habits right from the beginning (especially if they go on to ride a motorbike). This in part is the realisation of the value of training once it is experienced. However, although motorcyclists advocate the benefits of training to scooter riders, some motorcyclists are open to training themselves, but some are not.

“I did a couple of those [courses] and found them really valuable because you do have wrong habits… you do things that are not safe, no matter how many years you’ve been doing it, it’s not safe. I really believe everyone should every two years… just be forced to do it, just be encouraged to do it. I mean, they make it so cheap here, there’s really no excuse…”

(Motorbike (urban and open), Male, 58 years, Nelson)

“I got my license when I was about 19 down in Christchurch… scares me to think what I might have been like on the road in comparison. I’ve done three lots of different lessons this year with a fourth one coming up, the gold course.”

(Motorbike (urban and open), Female, 51 years, Nelson)

“Slowing down made me wiser. Coming off my motorbike gave me huge perspective. I’m on a 50cc scooter now, you couldn’t get any slower… I think I wouldn’t touch another motorcycle until I’d taken to proper measures and the corrective steps to get my riding to a mature level.”

(Scooter, Male, 22 years, Nelson)

Key take away – The potential opportunities for urban riders to improve their safety via their skills are: to get scooter riders to think about their skills, skill gaps and bad habits; to further encourage or enforce scooter training; and/or to leverage those who have experienced the benefits of skills training to motivate others to take part.

6. Riders attitudes towards the training available

Low awareness of scooter training

Some scooter riders are not aware that there is scooter riding training available. One scooter rider commented that other scooter riders are not aware of how cheap and useful scooter training is – she was a sceptic before she went through the training. Some former scooter riders who continued on to get their motorcycle license wish someone had told them about scooter training, as they feel it would have benefitted their skills and safety.

Scooter riders who had undertaken training, did so to have a safe spot to practise and/or they were encouraged by others to do so (e.g. car driving friends).

“I did scooter training because other people were nagging me to do it.”

(Scooter rider, Female, 49 years, Auckland)

In terms of creating awareness, urban riders suggested that motorcycle shops should let them know about training when they buy a scooter or gear, rather than “just trying to sell you things” (Wellington urban group). However, it was noted that not all scooters and gear are bought from
shops, some are bought second hand. Another suggested a method to create awareness of scooter training was to provide information/reminders via registration invoices.

Key take away – To improve scooter riders’ skills and safety, increase awareness of scooter riding training, its usefulness and accessible cost.

Motorbike training opportunities are available and favourable
Many motorbike riders commented on the great opportunities available for rider training. Those who had undertaken training (especially in Taupo, Hampton Downs, and Wellington) were very favourable about the experience and those who had heard about if from others were also very motivated to undertake training themselves. The training available “ticks many boxes”, in that riders know where training is available, believe the quality of the training is excellent, and the subsidised price is value for money (reducing cost as a barrier).

“It was only $20, so I did it.” (Motorcycle (urban and open), Male, 49 years, Auckland)

Some riders recalled slogans related to training that had stuck in their minds, e.g. “Ride to survive”, “Ride forever”, and “Pro Rider”.

Riders need a push to undertake training, despite being willing
Some open road riders were very favourable towards skills training, but had not been motivated enough to take action. To provide them with the push to do it, riders suggested a number of incentives, or barriers to overcome, to activate their participation.

“I haven’t got around to it yet, but it is definitely on my list to do.” (Open road older male rider, Nelson)

Suggested incentive: Compulsory training
Some riders feel that training should be made compulsory – not only to make them do something that they believe in, but also to improve the safety of other riders (who might not realise the benefits/impact of training). A number of options were proposed:

- Scooter and/or “first motorbike” skills training should be compulsory.
- Open road skills training should be compulsory:
  - On a regular basis.
  - If a rider hasn’t ridden a bike for awhile.

Suggested incentive: Incentivised training
Some riders also suggested that there should be incentives for undertaking one-off or regular training. Suggestions included:

- A reduction in the time-period for learner or restricted licenses for those who undertake training, such as a defensive riding skills course.
- A reduction in ACC levy for riders who undertake annual training, with higher levies for those who don’t undertake training in a year.
Barrier to overcome: Duration of Pro Rider training
One rider (a Mum) wants to undertake training and feels that the Pro Rider training is affordable, but the barrier is the duration of the course (i.e. 8 hours). She doesn’t feel that she can take a whole day away from her kids on the weekend to undertake training. She realises that private lessons is an option, but deems these as too expensive. As a result, she concluded that she will just rely on tips and advice from her husband.

Key take away – Opportunity to provide shorter Pro Rider subsidised training courses to get more riders to undertake training.

Other sources of training used
Many riders also refer to online or digital sources of information to improve their skills, including the following:

- Youtube videos: e.g. to find out what to do in certain situations, e.g. if they get “tank slapped”.
- DVDs: these are shared between some riders and some are sourced from bike clubs.
  - E.g. one example of a DVD that a bike rider found very useful was “Twist of the Wrist 2”.

Some riders also commented that they use hard copy sources such as:

- The road code
- Rider magazines

7. Riders’ attitudes towards other road users

Riders don’t trust car drivers
All riders, whether urban or open road riders, have a mistrust of car drivers. That is, they don’t trust car drivers to see them or give them the space they need. They put it down to car drivers not being able to empathise with bikes – due to lack of experience, e.g. drivers have no idea how different riding is to driving a car. On top of this, they acknowledge that the actions of a few riders do not encourage car drivers to give them respect on the road.

However, even though urban riders and open road riders share this view, their attitudinal response is very different. Open road riders view car drivers fairly neutrally, as they feel that car drivers are not so much of a danger to them, given they can “get away/avoid them”. Whereas, for urban riders it is an “us and them” scenario, predominantly because they are more at risk from car drivers, given the denser driving conditions.

Urban riders

Urban riders feel it’s “us versus them”
Urban riders have an “us and them” mentality with regards to car drivers. Scooter riders, who are more likely to travel at or below the speed limit, felt that drivers:
• “don’t see us.”
• “treat us like cyclists.”
• “need to give us more space.”

Commuting motorcyclists who were more likely to travel faster than cars in traffic, are frustrated with car drivers’ inconsiderate reactions (be it verbal or driving behaviour) towards them.

However, commuting motorcyclists in Auckland could also see the conflict from a car drivers’ point of view, in that cars see commuting bikes in heavy traffic as annoying.

“Drivers hate seeing scooters and bikes riding past the, as it is annoying. Because they look like they have little regard for anyone else. The way they are riding can be irresponsible.” (Motorcycle, Female, 48 years, Auckland)

“When cars are stuck in traffic, they see bikes as skipping the line, cheating and annoying.” (Motorcycle, Male, 25 years, Auckland)

Commuting motorcyclists also commented that car drivers are often not tolerant of what they view as unsafe behaviours from riders, which in part stems from car drivers’ concern about injuring urban bike riders when they are, for example, weaving through traffic.

“I have an issue with weavers and ‘unconfidence’. I am worried about them causing injury to others and themselves.” (Motorcycle, Male, 20 years, Auckland)

“Cars see themselves as liable for death, they don’t know if you are doing [lane splitting] legally and so have no empathy”. (Motorcycle, Male, 25 years, Auckland)

Commuters, Mums and SUVs are less likely to see urban riders
Urban riders comment that, generally, commuters are the “most ignorant” and less likely to see them, as well as “distracted Mums” (i.e. “cars laden with kids”). Riders also commented on SUV riders (who are also often Mums), who do not appear to be aware of the size of their vehicles and will “often push bikers off the road”. In Wellington, urban bike riders commented that the constant battle for car parks is an issue for riders, as cars dart to get spaces.

Some feel that those that drive for a living are generally more observant and considerate, e.g. trucks, taxis and couriers. However, it was noted that some “immigrant/Asian” taxi drivers have a different driving culture and, as a result, drive in an “ignorant” fashion.

Key take away – To improve rider safety, there are opportunities to:
• Bridge the relationship gap between urban riders and drivers.
• Improve drivers’ observation and social skills, especially with regards to noticing and providing space to scooters - potentially targeting car driving commuters, Mums and drivers of SUVs.
• Improve awareness or restrict riding behaviours that car drivers deem as unsafe.
Open road riders

Open road riders are fairly neutral to car drivers
Most open road riders are very conscious that they need to be very wary of cars on the road – as car drivers are not looking out for them and don’t see them. This attitude comes with a neutral regard to car drivers. That is, it is just part of riding a bike, it is “not an issue”, and it is “not an us and them scenario”.

However, motorcyclists feel that drivers generally have a negative feeling towards riders
Riders feel that motorbike riders are generally viewed poorly by car drivers and this reflects in car drivers’ behaviour towards riders. They believe that this perception is driven by news reports, the actions of a few riders and lack of understanding of what it is like to ride a bike. A few riders feel that car drivers should be showing them more respect and awareness on the roads.

“Car drivers don’t like us – but there are advantages of having a bike. Cars are safe and bikes are fun.” (Open road older male rider, 47 years, Wellington)

“Motorcycle crashes generally create a lot of stigma in the eyes of the public. When they see something like that, and they see it on the road, they associate it with bad a person, because it’s associated with bad things. Generally speaking, motorcycles aren’t viewed as a good thing by the public, so you get that negativity right throughout public and through traffic, so [drivers] treat you the same way they do on the road, they don’t treat you with care and respect… [and then they view accidents as] always being the rider’s fault.” (Scooter, Male, 22 years, Nelson)

“There’s definitely a deep mistrust. In a way, [drivers] are probably saying ‘you’re idiots, you drive fast, you appear fast’, even if you’re probably within the limit, because a small item looks faster… there’s probably a lack of sympathy or compassion of the vulnerability which is really in play… give them space… cars often pull up to your rear and they don’t know how dangerous that is… I think there’s quite a bit of ill feeling.” (Motorbike, Male, 58 years, Nelson)

“If you are driving a two tonne hunk of danger, which every car is, on a public road, you should be aware of your surroundings at all times. And my argument would have been, you should have seen me, I’ve got my headlights on, I can’t turn them off… you should have seen me coming.” (Motorcycle, Male, 31 years, Nelson)

“Anything that isn’t on at least four wheels, I think the general motor public has a bit of mistrust and a bit of misunderstanding really. … Plus, if you’ve ever been approached by a bunch of motorcyclists on the main road, particularly ones with patches, it can be quite intimidating. They take up a lot of road, they go over the center line and leave it till the last minute… it’s just threatening.” (Open road older male rider, Nelson)

Drivers reactions to riders’ actions on the open road can create a tension between riders and drivers. Open road motorbike riders get frustrated with drivers’ unfamiliarity with a motorbike’s capacity (e.g. being able to overtake quickly), which riders feel results in drivers perceiving their actions as dangerous, when riders feel they are not.
“Because that ute driver has never been on a bike, he doesn’t realise how easy it was for you to zip past. When I’m in a car and I see bikes coming, I make as much room as possible because I know they want to get moving, so I give them room. Whereas, if I didn’t have that experience, I might be sitting there thinking: ‘you’ll never get past me w***kers’, so maybe it’s just because I’ve ridden a bike I have empathy for the bike users and I know he wants to go.” (Motorcycle, Male, 50 years, Nelson)

Some riders are conscious of protecting or improving motorcyclists’ reputation

As a community, motorcyclists try to keep each other “in check” for the greater good of their image on the roads and with other drivers. (Note: this is not demonstrated amongst scooter riders).

“If I’ve just gone down to the shops and got off my bike with jandals and stroll into the shops wearing a singlet… I’ve had other motorcyclists rock up and say ‘hey what do you think you are doing? Riding a bit of a powerful motorbike, you’re making it worse for the rest of us’… I’ve only ever had it from a factor of ‘you’re making us all look bad’ or ‘I’m older, I’m more experienced, I know better’, [not so much we care about you].” (Motorcycle, Male, 31 years, Nelson)

“Even when you can see miles down the road I won’t cross the yellow line, and the only reason I don’t is because cars are there, and I think the perception of car drivers is important to motorcyclists and I guess I’m trying to protect that.” (Open road older male, Nelson)

Motorcyclists appreciate it when cars make room for them or are courteous to them, and riders believe this is a benefit of keeping their behaviour “in check”.

“The cars that pull over let us have our freedom.” (Open road rider, male, 50 years, Wellington)

Key take away – To improve rider safety there are opportunities to improve drivers’ perceptions of the typical motorcyclist and/or drivers’ understanding of motorcyclists’ actions.

Some riders suggested some solutions to improve rider-driver relationships

Urban and open road riders felt that it is very difficult to get car drivers to change their behaviour, because unless they ride a motorbike it is difficult for them to understand, or have an association with, what it is like to be a rider.

Some riders did suggest that all car drivers should ride a scooter before they get their car license, to improve their attitudes towards riders on the road.

Commuting motorcyclists felt cars should be more aware of what they are “allowed” to do, e.g. with regards to lane spitting as a means to stop some of the angst between both parties.
“There needs to be a campaign/message that we are allowed to do this [(travel through traffic)]. Doing this is completely legal.” (Motorcycle, Male, 25 years, Auckland)

Commuting motorcyclists also commented that lane-splitting is a “grey area” and government should provide more guidance on lane-splitting etiquette.

“A lot of people on scooters don’t know how to lane split, are uncomfortable, freak out, or stop when they should filter through.” (Motorcycle, Female, 36 years, Auckland)
Riders:
Open road older males
and urban

Habits / Actions
8. Riders’ approach and actions in regards to safety

In a previous section of this report, we summarised findings in regards to riders’ general mindset towards safety. Below, we document rider actions and habits with regards to rider safety.

Riders mostly undertake responsible practises when approaching other vehicles
Riders are very aware of safety when approaching, or are near, other vehicles. They treat other vehicles as a threat to their safety and, as a result, they focus on being visible and reading drivers’ actions.

“I have this big safety bubble around me… and I just assume that everybody can’t see me, you just have to assume you can’t be seen and act accordingly… you’re so vulnerable… it’s an instinct that comes with time.” (Motorcycle (urban and open), Male, 58 years, Nelson)

“I try very hard to minimise the risk with overtaking, especially on a motorcycle is it easier to overtake vehicles, particularly without spending too much time on the other side of the road.” (Open road older male rider, Nelson)

Open road riders generally ride over the speed limit and consider this safe
For open road riders, 110-120km/h is considered “comfortable” and 160-180km/h is considered “pushing it”. Open road riders judge what is a safe speed based on how much traffic is around, the type of road and its condition, and their skills relative to their bike.

“To me an okay speed on the open road is 120km, 100km is not enough.” (Open road older rider, Nelson)

Open road riders are conscious of the risk of fatigue
Some open road riders commented on the importance of monitoring their tiredness while riding their motorcycle, given they need all their senses to corner, brake and approach other vehicles safely.

“You go slow when you get tired… you start to realise you’re making mistakes, even just small ones, and you know it’s time to go.” (Open road older rider, Nelson)

Most (if not all riders) say they take risks
Both open road and urban riders say they are conscious of safety, but they all take risks. They substantiate these risks as “informed decisions” or “calculated risks”.

Motorcyclists have a mixed approach to the best approach to cornering
For many motorcyclists, cornering is considered to be a key skill and source of enjoyment. Getting cornering right, at speed, is a desired outcome and a challenge that open road riders put on themselves.

However, cornering is also acknowledged as a key safety risk on the open road, from two points of view: riders going wide and crossing the centre line and other vehicles crossing the centre
line. Given this, riders understand the importance of being able to corner safely, giving themselves time to correct their position if needed.

There is broad understanding of the range of skills required for cornering, but not core knowledge or application of these skills, for example:

- “Picking the line”: riders understand “the line” is important but many are unclear about which line to take, or will make mistakes in picking the line.
- Positioning of body and weight on the bike: e.g. leaning off, or putting pressure on the inside leg.
- Steering inputs: both in terms of entering the corner, but also in adjusting the line within the corner.
- Braking within the corner.

A few riders also mentioned that they “don’t go by the signs” on corners and judge the appropriate speed for the corner themselves.

*Key take away – To improve rider safety, there is an opportunity to continue to increase rider awareness, training and practise of the best approach to cornering.*

**Motorcyclists have a mixed approach to best practise braking and are not practising emergency braking**

Many riders acknowledge that braking is an instinct and a few riders are aware that they are likely to brake incorrectly in an emergency situation. In terms of practise, some riders are not practising emergency braking or practising it sufficiently for it to become a habit.

With regards to braking approaches, some riders are not using front and rear brakes, as per best practise. There are also mixed views as to whether the best approach to braking is to use two fingers or all fingers. Some riders feel that they lose some control if they use all fingers to brake.

As a result of this, braking instincts and habits result in riders not being well prepared for emergency braking.

*Key take away – To improve rider safety, there is an opportunity to increase rider awareness, practise and training of the best approach to braking. Furthermore, any communications highlight the benefits of linked and ABS braking would be beneficial.*

**Group open road riding can push skills beyond limits**

Some open road riding groups are very conscious of keeping their riders within their skill limits and undertake safe practices. They have learnt and practice staggered riding and encourage riders to ride at their own pace. They also strongly value on-road rider communication, via signals or headsets. Riders in the “responsible” groups, state that their riding style is a lot more reserved when riding in a group and they need to be a lot more aware of what they are doing, relative to others.
However, in other groups there is peer pressure to keep up, which may push some riders faster than their skill capacity. In this situation, the riders get pulled along by the leader (front rider), or don’t want to slow down the tail rider. Some riders who had experienced this commented that they find themselves “going faster than they can” and feel they are pushed too hard. Other riders get caught up in the excitement and undertake risky behaviours, despite not being reckless as individual riders.

“Group riding does affect my riding style, especially if it is a big group with a leader and a tail end Charlie. Some groups ride faster than normal, so you ride faster so that the guys behind don’t get annoyed.” (Open road male rider, 47 years, Wellington)

“Riding with old mates… it was just like ‘go for it’. And usually, on one of the big rides, we had someone come off. It was like we were 22 again.” (Open road male rider, Nelson)

Some riders are conscious of the differences that arise when riding in a group and state that, as long as you are aware of it, you don’t need to engage in risky behaviours.

“I have no problem letting them go… I think I’m just being practical. I’m a few minutes late, but if I fell off my bike we’d be here for hours, so it’s a case of rushing and losing a bike, a leg, hours of time… So, in fact, that’s how I look at it and that’s how I explain it to them.” (Open road male rider, Nelson)

A few riders in Nelson commented that the Nelson Ulysses group was known for riding fast with riders who are not skilled enough (i.e. the riders think they are skilled enough, but they are not).

Key take away – There is an opportunity to continue providing information to group leaders and those riding in groups, to ensure that good group-ride practises are being undertaken and/or individual riders’ skills are a good match for the group.

**Urban riders have a number of skill gaps**

Scooter riders in particular (or motorbike riders who have been scooter riders), feel that there are a number of gaps in their scooter rider skills - especially given that 50cc scooter riders do not need to sit a license specific to scooter riding.

Urban riders generally state that the key skills that would be helpful to learn from training are:

- Braking: stopping quickly;
- Defensive driving;
- Predicting driver behaviour;
- Positioning;
- Dealing with conditions (e.g. rain, gravel, wind, surface hazards);
- How to be visible;
- Avoiding “auto-pilot”.

Also, a more knowledgeable urban rider stated there are different opinions as to whether you should “ditch” or “swerve” in an emergency situation.
Some scooter riders also comment that, when they start off riding, they have low bike handling skills and, as a result, they have to focus on their handling skills, which takes away from their observation skills.

Key take away – To encourage participation in urban riders’ skills training. When promoting the training, highlight the key skills that urban riders acknowledge are lacking in their skill-base.

Accidents (and close calls) result in learning and caution
All riders commented that every time they come off their bike, they learn something from it and will take a more defensive, and more aware, approach to riding to avoid that type of accident happening again. For urban riders, the key learning after a crash is that “cars often don’t see riders” and so “it comes down to riders’ skills and awareness”. For a while after coming off their bike, urban and open road riders will feel more cautious until they get their confidence up. Some will practise their core safety skills at this point, e.g. emergency braking.

“To reduce the risk of injuries, it is important not to wait for the situation to come. I practise braking in a safe environment.” (Urban motorbike, Male, 49 years, Auckland)

“When the kids were little, I was driving in the wet and thought I would get around a guy, but didn’t. Then, three years ago, I was travelling too quick for the [urban] traffic and I got caught between a car and a truck. In both cases, I was overconfident and was trying to get through quickly. It was in 50km zones and should have cut in. Luckily, I came away with nothing broken, but I was cautious for a while after each accident.” (Motorbike, Male, 45 years, Auckland)

Key take away – A key trigger point for riders wanting to improve or practise their skills in a safe environment, is after a crash or near miss.

Habit is a concern for safety
Many commuter riders stated that habit is an issue for their safety. That is, given that they travel the same way to work each day, they find that they can “drift off” and find themselves not concentrating.

“Being familiar with a road is dangerous. Switching off. You can’t switch off as you ride”. (Urban motorcycle, Male, 49 years, Auckland)

Key take away – Reminders, or tips, to “stay alert” on a scooter or commuting motorbike may benefit the safety of urban riders.
9. Riders approach and actions in regards to visibility

Most open road riders state that their headlights are their best means of visibility. However, a few riders commented that some riders kept their headlights on high-beam, which made it harder to see exactly where the rider was.

Conversely, urban riders (especially in the Wellington urban group) did not feel that headlights helped them to be seen – they felt that “bike riders notice when they have their headlights on, but not car drivers”.

Most riders (urban and open road) also state that they use their riding style to improve their visibility, that is, by:

• using their position on the road (for open road riders this is near the centre line, in the centre of the car, or move to where they can be seen (e.g. in the car’s mirrors, or so they can see the driver’s eyes); for scooter riders this is in the middle of the lane).
• swerving slightly to ensure that car drivers have seen them.
• having a more upright position on their motorbike.
• changing lanes (constantly).
• ensuring they are not sitting in drivers’ blind spots.
• putting indicators on.
• using their horn (more so for urban motorbike commuters).
• maintaining a good distance and providing extra room.
• looking for a good line of visibility when overtaking.
• trying not be too zippy (on a scooter).
• not overtaking (on a scooter).

Some riders wore fluoro jackets on a regular basis; some did so because they were extra safety conscious, for some it was carried over from their health and safety requirements at work, and for others they used it in compensation for poor protective gear. For those that did wear fluoro, it was mostly worn out of habit, however, some would just wear their fluoro jackets on wet days, or at night, to increase their visibility.

When car drivers fail to see them, urban riders commented that they will let the driver know by taking actions such as kicking their mirrors or banging on their car roofs.

Key take away – Most open road riders are using their headlights for visibility and believe this is effective, but some are potentially doing it ineffectively (i.e. on high beam). Most riders use their riding style to improve their visibility, but are all riders aware/using of all of their options for making themselves visible?
10. Approach to planning their journey, including impact of weather

Some open road riders plan their journey (e.g. by checking maps and weather) and others don't. Those that do check maps, plan for things such as the “easiest way to go”. If the rider is going on a familiar road, they are much less likely to plan their journey.

With regards to journey understanding on group rides, some riders commented that leaders are not briefing riders on what to watch out for on the journey, which was a concern for those who were unfamiliar with the route in terms of potential hazards along the way.

Impact of weather

The weather impacts on some riders more than others. Some riders (especially motorbike riders) feel it is important to ride in all conditions to practise their skills.

“I feel confident riding in weather. I halve my skills in the rain. It's a must and you need to learn how to ride in the rain, although I won't ride in torrential rain.” (Motorbike (urban and open, Male, 49 years, Auckland)

However, strong wind gusts stop most riders going out, for example, if the wind is more than 80km/h.

Urban riders were more likely not to take their bikes out if it was raining, especially scooter riders.

“I don't like getting wet, getting wet clothes, and I am more scared of drivers in the wet.” (Scooter, Female, 30 years, Auckland)

Key take away – Opportunity to improve riders' value in planning their journeys, and to ensure group leaders are briefing the group on the ride, especially those who have not ridden the route.

11. Attitudes towards alcohol

Overall, open road riders had a very responsible attitude towards not drinking and riding. Some said they never drink anything while riding, while others limit it to one or two drinks – to stay under the limit. Some riders mentioned that they drink less/nothing if they were riding their bike, but if they were travelling by car they would be more likely to drink more/something. Riders’ general feeling was that they needed to concentrate more and be more alert on their bike, compared to in their car, and the consequences were greater if they did crash on their bike.

“I don’t drink if I am riding. You’ve got to be so much more aware on a bike.” (Open road older male, 50 years old, Wellington)
However, some open road riders were concerned about the level of drinking they observe in other riding groups on weekends.

Most urban riders did not drink while riding. For some, this was due to their general philosophy to drinking and driving (i.e. they never drink and ride), whereas for others, they were more conscious of not drinking on a bike compared to when driving a car.

“I’ve slowed down my drinking since riding. I want to ride my bike to hang out, but I want to ride home without dying.” (Motorbike (urban and open), Male, 25 years, Auckland)

“Same as my car, no drink driving.” (Scooter, Male, 27 years, Auckland)

“Not even one.” (Motorcycle, Male, 49 years, Auckland)

However, some urban riders (in the Wellington group) admitted they currently or used to often drink and ride. As examples, we had three respondents explain their current/past approach to drinking and riding (from the Wellington group):

• One female, aged 29 years, stated that she used to drink and ride quite often on her scooter. She took a very “casual” approach to drinking and riding her scooter. She felt it was more dangerous to drive her car after drinking and wouldn’t drink and drive, but felt there was no issue with drinking and riding her scooter.

• One male motorcyclist, aged 22 years, stated that he often drinks and rides to the point that he is sometimes too drunk to know where he is going and still finds his way home. He feels that it is easy to get away with it on a motorbike compared to in a car, because “you can wobble without being noticed”. He said that, while drinking and riding, he is always on the lookout for a “cop car” and will take short cuts through car parks to avoid being caught. He was quite boastful, seeing his antics as quite an achievement. He did not appear to be worried about his own safety or others.

• One male motorcyclist, aged 38 years, stated that he used to drink and ride, but he got caught, lost his licence and “grew up”. Now he only has one drink as a maximum. He also commented that riding while on alcohol and drugs is “not uncommon” in the “transport industry”. That “our parents did it and now we do it, and it becomes a habit”.

Scooter and motorbike riders commented that it is easy not to get caught drinking and riding, given that Police are generally seen to wave bikes through at breathalyser check points and, on weekends, motorcyclists are seen drinking a lot (e.g. at group ride stops or street racing events) and then ride home without being caught.

Key take away – Overall, most respondents had a good attitude towards drinking and riding. However, there were issues noted in observing large quantities of alcohol being consumed on group rides and in the attitude of some urban riders. These urban riders are not thinking about the consequences for themselves or the public. Drinking and riding a bike seems less risky, as
these riders perceive that there are less consequences if something does go wrong, and it is easy to get away with, given they are “only” riding a small vehicle and they can move around quickly and easily.

12. Attitudes towards registering bikes and rider licensing

Most of the open road riders we spoke to kept their bike registered and didn’t really know of any riders who did not register their bike.

A few riders with two or more bikes, would register one of their motorbikes but not the other bike/s that they would still take out on the road. The reason for registering one bike is that it is considered very expensive to register more than one bike. Some riders suggested that the ACC levy should be charged on a rider basis rather than a per bike basis, given that riders can not ride two bikes at once.

The few riders that were riding an unregistered bike said that they had been doing so for years and had never been picked up. Also, when going on group rides, the group leader would put anyone with an unregistered bike (or without a license) in the middle of the pack, given that if they are stopped at a checkpoint, Police were known to only check the bikes at the beginning or end of the group, but not those in the middle of the pack.

With regards to licensing, there were two motorcyclists who took part in the research who did not have current motorcyclist licenses. One of these was an older male open road rider and he had never had a motorcycle license but had been riding for many years. The other lost his license when he was younger for drinking while riding and had never got a new license. Both of these men were active motorcyclists: one used a motorcycle for work and to commute, and for the other his motorbike (of which he had two) was his main source of transport.

Key take away – Overall, most respondents had a good attitude towards registering their bikes and riding with a license. However, in the research there were a few males riding unlicensed motorbikes and/or riding without licenses. These men had done so for many years, had never been caught and didn’t expect to be caught.

13. Attitudes towards bike maintenance and checks

Bike checks

With regards to checks on their bikes, there was wide variation in the checks undertaken.

Some would do very little in the way of checks or only check/listen to their bike while riding (e.g. check their brakes were working while starting out on a ride, or listen for unusual noises).
“I just don’t think about it… I do it now and then.” (Motorcycle (urban and open), Female, 48 years, Auckland)

“I wake up at 6am and I am too sleepy to do checks.” (Motorcycle (commuter), Male, 25 years, Auckland)

“I do it maybe when I gas up.” (Scooter, Female, 30 years, Auckland)

Whereas, others would routinely check things such as:

- Tyre pressure: open road riders who like speed check their pressure before every ride as they are aware of the safety implications when braking. For others (e.g. urban riders), some would check their tyres (including their tread) weekly/monthly.
- Mirrors.
- Lights and indicators.
- Oil (e.g. via gauge and looking on the ground).
- Nails in tyres.
- Chain (more so motorcycle riders than scooter riders).
- Cables (more so motorcycle riders than scooter riders).

“I check my bike every time I ride. I check the indicators, oil, chain and lights. It takes 5 minutes for the bike to warm up on a cold day – so I have time.” (Open road rider, male, 50 years, Wellington)

**Bike maintenance**

Open road riders varied in the frequency of their bike maintenance, but were actively maintaining it to some level. A standard approach was to:

- Check their bike regularly (every ride to fortnightly), oil change every 6 months and service every year.

Some open road riders would take their bike in for a service before going on a long ride.

Some riders conduct their own servicing on their bike and some take it into a service centre.

*Key take away – Given that many riders are not conducting thorough/regular pre-ride checks, there is an opportunity to improve urban and open road riders’ value and knowledge in pre-checks.*
Riders:
Open road older males
and urban

Physical riding elements
14. Approach towards choosing a bike

For older open road riders, comfort becomes a key criteria in choosing an open road bike

Most open road riders primarily choose their bike based on the style of riding they prefer, i.e. sports bikes for those who like speed and tourers for those who like comfort. Some open road riders commented that they have changed their style of bike as they have gotten older – primarily changing from a sports bike to a more comfortable tourer bike.

Comfort is generally important to some of the 40-65 year old males, whether referring to the comfort of their bike or their gear. Furthermore, comfort was associated with safety by a couple of riders, given that a rider is more likely to become distracted when they are not comfortable. Some open road riders commented that they didn’t know their bike was not comfortable until they took it on a long journey. And some riders had switched to a motorbike that was more comfortable for their partners, who were more likely to be more regular pillions.

Other factors that riders use in selecting their open road bikes include:

- **Light weight/ smaller size**: for manoeuvrability through traffic, “nimble but with power” and not too heavy if they do come off.
- **Lower-powered**: some open road riders were on more powerful bikes than their previous bikes and some had “powered down”. Generally though, many riders won’t ride a very powerful bike because the bike can go too quickly for them, can be harder to handle, plus they don’t need that kind of power on the open road.
- **Easy to handle**: some riders won’t ride low heavy cruisers (e.g. Harleys) because they consider them dangerous for middle-aged riders, given that they are difficult to turn.

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**Key take out – Comfort becomes more important as open road riders get into their fifties and beyond. They feel that lack of comfort can distract riders and they generally start to prefer more comfortable open road motorbikes.**

**A key safety consideration in choosing a motorbike, is the bikes’ match with the riders’ skill**

When open road riders think about the safety elements of a motorbike, most think of safe braking systems, e.g. ABS (anti-locking braking system), twin front disks, linked brakes, etc. However, only a few riders had selected their bike for safer braking systems.

Many felt that the bike’s match with a rider’s skill was the best safety feature with regards to the safety of a bike. And, in a similar light, it is up to the rider to ride the bike within its capabilities.

“Does safety come into play when buying a bike? No it doesn’t. It’s a modern enough machine, it’s Japanese, it’s been built well enough and so it’s going to do what it’s going to do. And if I take it beyond what its capable of, that’s my fault, isn’t it? I’m the safety component of the bike really.” (Open road older male rider, Nelson)

Many commented that a safer bike is also one with enough power (to get out of trouble or overtake), with enough noise (for visibility), and/or is large enough for people to see you.
“Bikes are not safe as such. It is more about the skills and intelligence of the rider. 1000cc+ is a bigger bike – which is better for cars to see you, plus you don’t want to try hard to keep to speed… it also gives you better balance.” (Open road rider, male, 50 years, Wellington)

Only one rider in the research choose the colour of his bike for safety reasons, i.e. chose a white bike. Those who had bright bikes (e.g. bright blue with red wheel rims that light up), did not choose the colour combination for safety reasons, but just because they “liked the look of it”.

Mixed reactions to ABS
When asked about ABS, the range of reactions from motorbike riders were as follows:

- Some riders feel that ABS was “pretty standard” on new bikes and would expect that, if they bought a new bike, it would have ABS brakes.
- A few riders would like a bike with ABS, given the key benefit being that “you are less likely to get into a skid”.
- A few riders had heard ABS was a good option but had also heard that it is “very expensive” to get a bike with ABS.
- Some felt ABS was more for sports bikes.
- Some felt ABS was more for unskilled riders – some riders did not feel they would benefit from ABS, as they felt that they knew how to brake efficiently.
- A few riders changed to a bike with ABS after realising they had poor braking skills in an emergency situation.

“I don’t think ABS is the wonderful thing that people seem to think it is… You can out-brake ABS by just manually stamping – you are essentially doing ABS manually.” (Motorcycle, Male, 50 years, Nelson)

“ABS compensates for lack of [skill].” (Scooter, Male, 22 years, Nelson)

“I have not heard about ABS. No, [I wouldn’t consider it for my next bike as] I know how to ride. I know how not to lock up.” (Open road rider, male, 50 years, Wellington)

“I had ABS on my last bike and on this bike. But I don’t buy a bike for ABS. ABS is on most bikes now. I don’t know anyone who would definitely go for ABS.” (Open road rider, male, 47 years, Wellington)

“I locked the front brakes in a panicked stop and dam-near fell off at speed and thought, that’s it, next bike I’m getting will have ABS. I’ve read enough about ABS to know that it’s better than most guys are, it’s been well proven in lots of tests that most riders can’t out-brake ABS now… it just makes sense… anyone who suggests they are smarter than ABS now, is just deluding themselves.” (Open road older male rider, Nelson)

Key take away – Many open road older male riders are aware of ABS, however, some perceptions of ABS create barriers to riders’ uptake of bikes with ABS. As a result, there is an
opportunity to dispel the myths that ABS are only useful on sports bikes, that ABS are only for unskilled riders and that, in emergency situations, your braking instincts will be right.

The impact of riders’ partners in bike selection
Riders’ partners do not appear to have a strong influence on the bike they choose, other than in circumstances where their partner rides as a pillion, and so the comfort of the pillion seat comes into play. However, a few open road riders said that their partners worry and would probably prefer them to have a slower bike, however the rider’s argument against this is that they do not feel as in control or as confident on a slower bike.

LAMS
A couple of open road riders commented that the LAMS (Learner Approved Motorcycle Scheme) has been a really good initiative, in terms of keeping riders safe with the increase in more powerful bikes on the market.

Safety considerations when purchasing an urban bike
Motorbikes are considered a safer option for urban riding, given that they have more power and weight, which provides the rider with more control and stability (e.g. in the wind). Otherwise, there were no other safety considerations mentioned in terms of selecting an urban bike.

“The engineering of the bikes [can make you feel safer]. I felt more safe on my RGV250 (which was like a racing type 2-stroke) than I do on the scooter, just mainly because of the suspension and the braking.” (Scooter, Male, 39 years, Nelson)

15. Attitudes towards having the right gear

Helmets
Most open road and urban riders understand the importance of wearing a helmet for their safety and feel it is very normal to do so.

“Everyone these days wears a helmet, even on farms.” (Urban rider, Wellington)

Overconfident scooter riders don’t see the need for a full-face helmet
For most riders, a safe helmet is a full-face helmet. Generally, riders felt that a full-face helmet was necessary on a motorbike, but some wore a half-face helmet on a scooter. One of the Auckland scooter riders, who wore a half-face helmet on his scooter, used to wear a full-face helmet when he rode a motorbike, but stated that, on a scooter:

“I feel quite confident; I am a bit of a risk taker. When I rode a motorbike I used to wear everything, but now on a scooter I feel very comfortable – I am used to locking up my brakes.” (Scooter, Male, 27 years, Auckland)
Scooter riders, or younger motorcyclists, will often seek a “cheap option” for a helmet, but they will still spend more on their helmet, compared to any other component of their gear.

**Motorcyclists: generally good attitude and behaviour, a few issues with visors**

Motorcyclists feel it is important to spend a little more money on their helmet. Some use the helmet’s brand to judge its quality, whereas a few feel that any helmet is safe enough and, with expensive helmets (e.g. $1000+), you are paying for the brand. Open road riders look for elements in a helmet that ensure that they are comfortable and not distracted, for example, a helmet that is a good fit, has good ventilation, clear vision and, for some, is good at speed (e.g. aerodynamic).

“I picked my helmet based] on brand. Top of the line brand, its good enough for me.” (Open road older male rider, Nelson)

“My helmet is my biggest expense. $500. What I like about it is that it fits, it’s defogging, has vents, a sun roof, sun visor, it is light, looks cool because it matches the rest of me, it is not all black, as I want to be seen, it’s a bit reflective, and it is easy to put on and off and adjust.” (Open road older male, 50 years, Wellington)

Some motorcyclists did comment on the risks that some riders take in terms of: not being able to see clearly through their helmets (e.g. due to sun and fogging) and riding with their visors up. One of the open road male riders had been stung by a bee while riding on his way to the interview. He said he was riding with his visor up because “it was such as lovely day”.

**Some riders are not aware of using the colour of their helmet to improve visibility**

Most riders either had black helmets (as they are considered “cooler”), or helmets that matched the colour scheme on their bikes. Very few considered using the colour of their helmet to improve their visibility. They did not disagree with the proposition, but instead just hadn’t heard that white helmets stand out more to improve safety. Of those that did have white helmets, most had either been given the helmet, or it was the only colour option in their size. Only one research participant had purposely purchased a white helmet for safety reasons. One female was open to a non-black helmet, but had found that her “head was too small for coloured ones”.

Key take away – Areas to address in terms of helmets are encouraging over-confident scooter riders to think about the consequences of wearing an open-face helmet (even at urban speeds), stress the importance of riding with visors down and having good visors, and create greater awareness of the impact of wearing a white helmet on rider visibility.

**Attitudes towards gear**

**Motorbike riders – some not wearing all the gear in urban/short trips**

For most open road riders or motorbike riders, their gear is key to their perceptions of safety, that is, good gear is a must-have for keeping safe while riding.
This attitude was strongly held for open road riding, but some motorbike riders do not wear full gear on short or urban rides, because the perceived risks on these trips are much lower (due to short duration or slower speeds) and, therefore, they can “get away” with less protection.

“If I’m just going around town, I just wear shorts and jandals and, like I said before, the justification is that I’m not going above 50km/h, I’m not even leaving town... I’m not going to come off any worse than I would if I was to come off a scooter... For sure, maybe it’s confidence/arrogance... it’s a fine line, but I’m not going to put on long pants and motorbike boots. I have all that gear and, if I am going outside of town, absolutely: full leathers. I understand that, without full leathers, I will get more stitches – nothing will change that. I understand that risk and I’m happy to absorb that in my daily commute.” (Motorcycle, Male, 31 years, Nelson)

“Sometimes I pop home at lunchtime [on my bike]... I’m in a shirt and jeans, but it’s around town, and you’ve got to look at the risk... If you come off, you’ll probably drop down to 30km/h before you hit the road.” (Motorcycle, Male, 50 years, Nelson)

“Some people get all crazy and ‘ah, look at that... riding around town without boots and gloves’, but I mean statistically it’s probably more dangerous to do some other things.” (Open road older male rider, Nelson)

Furthermore, these motorcyclists are justifying not “gearing up” for urban rides, based on the norm for scooter attire.

“Yeah, of course, like it’s not sensible, but if you are only driving around town doing 50km/h, you know? I compare it to if you’re riding a scooter, you would never tell someone off for wearing shorts and jandals.” (Motorcycle, Male, 31 years, Nelson)

However, there are open road riders who always wear all their gear and are very conscious of the consequences.

“I couldn’t imagine anything more painful than going down the road [after having fallen off/been hit] in shorts and a t-shirt. It sounds like a slow, painful torture... I’d rather sweat and be uncomfortable and all those things than that. ... I just accept that that’s part of the thing of riding a motorcycle.” (Open road older male rider, Nelson)

Key take away – Key opportunity to encourage “all the gear all the time” by pointing to the risks of coming off a motorbike on short or urban trips.

Scooter riders – many not wearing appropriate gear
Conversely, scooter riders think it would look “ridiculous” to wear full protective gear on a scooter. At most, scooter riders will wear a helmet, good gloves, a thickish top (e.g. jacket or hoody), pants (e.g. track pants or jeans) and closed shoes. Conversely, some scooter riders are wearing open-face helmet, t-shirts, skirts/shorts, no gloves and open shoes.
Older motorbike riders commented that the issue is “teens with no training, on their L plates, refusing to wear riding gear” (Auckland). These older motorbike riders actively tell scooter riders on the road (e.g. at the traffic lights) that they should be wearing more gear, but the general response from these scooter riders is “swearing”, or that they “have gear for their motorbike but there is no need for it on their scooter”.

Reasons for scooter riders’ lack of gear include:

- Scooter riders don’t feel that they are travelling fast enough to warrant it, e.g. they are not travelling faster than cyclists who generally only wear lycra.
- Scooters are used for convenience, the convenience of being able to step on and off the bike, without having to put gear on/off.
- Scooters are ridden for cost-saving measures, so riders don’t have a lot of money to spend on “expensive” gear.
- The consequences of coming off their scooter is not top-of-mind, so good gear is not being driven by consequences.
- Scooter riders’ confidence in their skills and perceptions of being able to control the environment (some refer to this as overconfidence) – which again limits the potential consequences in their mind.
- Scooter riders’ perception that it is car drivers’ responsibility to see them.
- “Fashion choice”, that is, they like to wear normal clothes rather than protective gear, e.g. streetwear such as a thick “hoody”.
- Scooter riders are generally unclear on what the guidelines on safe scooter gear would be.
- Scooter riders don’t have a community that advocates wearing appropriate riding gear, unlike the motorcycle community.

“I realise I should probably wear more gear, but I feel like I won’t get that hurt because I’m going slowly.” (Scooter rider who wears short sleeves and skirts, Female, 30 years, Auckland)

“I know what to look out for. I am confident. I could stand up and jump off. … I can’t be bothered [wearing gear]. I’ve got all the gear but can’t be bothered to wear it. … My scooter is light and I feel I know how to control it.” (Scooter rider who rode a motorcycle in the past who wears an open-face helmet, t-shirt and shorts, no gloves, but wouldn’t wear jandals, Male, 27 years, Auckland)

“I have no actual motorcycle gear - I just wear a jacket and a hoodie and might put a scarf on if it’s freezing cold. I’ve got some woollen gloves… I’m pretty strapped for cash. I just wear whatever I can put together from my wardrobe, and a helmet obviously. … I haven’t been wearing long pants all summer, … Ideally, I’d be wearing leather pants and probably motorcycle boots and probably full leathers with a brand new helmet that was endorsed by some safety regulation. This helmet’s been dropped on the ground a couple of times, so it’s probably not the safest gear. … I’m conscious of the road conditions, the weather, don’t trust anybody else on the road, so I compensate for my lack of safety gear with my awareness with what’s going on around me while I’m on [my scooter]. … What would make me wear more safety gear?... maybe if I had some first-hand experience with crashing. I’ve never had a
crash on a motorbike and, in the past I used to to wear full leathers when I was riding sports bikes… I dunno, since I’ve been riding a scooter it hasn’t really been about safety; instead it has been about keeping myself dry. I wear dishwashing gloves and large plastic bags with a hole for my head in storms.” (Scooter, Male, 39 years, Nelson)

“I just get on and go. I think it is the driver’s job to see me. I never put gear on. I wear jandals, I know, I am everyone’s worst nightmare. I know I should do it differently, but can’t be bothered. It’s very much about convenience. If it’s summer and I have to put a hoodie or a jacket on, I’m just not going to do it. I trust myself on the bike. In my mind, I depend on everyone else to see me. I know it’s naïve, but that’s what I think. I indicate for 10,000 years before I move, I try and be courteous, I try and be a good scooterist and stay as far left as I can.” (Scooter, Female, Hamilton)

Most motorbike riders, whether urban or open road, are shocked at the riders who do not wear the correct gear, for example, those who wear t-shirts, skirts, etc. One open road rider (from Auckland) suggested that “gear” should be part of the Warrant of Fitness for bike riders, or that it should be made illegal to ride without proper riding gear.

Key take away – Scooter riders are poorly lacking in their gear when riding scooters. To increase the number of scooter riders who wear appropriate gear: recognise rider values in gear guidelines (e.g. convenience and cost-savings), get scooter riders to understand and value the outcomes of wearing gear (or the consequences if they don’t, even at slow speeds), create a social norm around scooter riders wearing good gear on their bikes (as is the case for motorcyclists).

Specifics on gear elements

Jackets and Pants
Most open road riders had appropriate riding jackets and pants made of leather or specialised man-made fabrics (e.g. Kevlar). Most also had armour in their jackets and pants – although some only added the back plate for longer drives, given that they found it uncomfortable to wear.

Most scooter riders were conscious of wearing a thick top and pants – but some did not, or did not always do so.

Footwear
Almost all open road riders wore specialised riding boots. However, some opted for everyday or steel-cap boots if they were riding a short distance to a destination (e.g. café, friend’s place, etc) given that riding boots are hard to walk in. Some said that they always wear their riding boots so that they don’t wear their everyday shoes out.

Most scooter riders were conscious of wearing closed-toe shoes on their bikes, whereas some wore open shoes.
Gloves
Some open road riders had summer and winter gloves, and some riders had armour and padding in their gloves, while others didn’t. A few felt that armour was not necessary in gloves, as riders are most likely to skid on their palms.

“I bought the second best gloves at the time. I bought them for the fit, they are adjustable, hard-wearing, there is no armour, but they have good covering – armour on the knuckles is an overkill because skidding is going to happen on the front of your hands.” (Open road older male, 50 years, Wellington)

Some scooter riders did not wear gloves or, if they did, it was more to keep their hands warm in cooler months (e.g. wool gloves) or, in an extreme case, dry on rainy days (e.g. washing up gloves).

Riders thoughts on areas for gear improvements
When open road riders were asked if there was anything they could improve on their gear to make it safer, some commented that they could get more comfortable back armour.

A few female scooter riders, who are not wearing adequate covering, acknowledged that they should wear more clothing, better gloves, and closed shoes. The male scooter riders who were not wearing adequate covering were less likely to say that they will change their behaviour, given that they are unlikely to come off, due to their approach to riding (overconfidence).

Key take away: Female scooter riders appear to be more responsible in terms of their approach to gear. That is, once it is suggested to them that they should be wearing more gear, and what they should be wearing, they seem quite open to doing so. That is, female scooter riders are potentially “low hanging fruit” to convert to better gear. Male scooter riders, on the other hand, appear to be less responsible and overconfident in their skills – suggesting that they may be a harder group to convert.

16. Approach to selecting the right gear (including whether price is a factor)

Motorbike riders

Selecting the right gear is an involved process for most open road riders
Most open road riders undertake a lot of research in deciding on their gear, with regards to evaluating the best features for them and ensuring a good fit (especially for helmets).
Gear price range is roughly equivalent to motorbike price range
For open road riders, how much they spend on their gear is approximately equivalent to what price range their bike sits in. For example, those who feel they have a mid-range bike (in terms of cost) invest in mid-range gear, and those with high-range bikes invested in high-range gear.

When younger scooter riders transition to motorcycles and are looking to improve their gear, they find that the selection of good quality gear in an affordable price bracket is lacking. This is frustrating for them, as they know they will “feel much safer in really decent safety gear”.

The main source of information on gear is online
Most open road riders (in Wellington and Auckland) go online when researching both their gear and bike options, and this is where they get most of their information, e.g. from online forums (e.g. motorcycle news, chat rooms, YouTube clips, brand websites, Ulysses website). As a secondary source of information, they also talk to friends and other riders, as well as retail stores for some.

Some motorbike shops don’t offer good advice on gear
Riders have mixed reactions to using motorbike shops as a source of advice on gear. Riders in Auckland and Wellington have found that retail shop staff “don’t know so much” and don’t offer valuable advice. One rider explained that the staff at the shop he visits are young retail workers rather than motorbike enthusiasts and don’t have any real knowledge on the gear they are selling. Whereas others felt that some shops were a good source of knowledge in helping to determine the best gear for them (e.g. Motomail in Auckland was named as good store for this, as was a motorcycle shop in Nelson).

Scooter riders

Scooter riders seek low-cost gear options
When it comes to gear, scooter riders’ approach to having and sourcing gear is based on cost-savings and not having to dish out money. Scooter riders either have gear given to them, or they purchase low-cost gear. They are mostly focussed on low-cost, as opposed to safety features for their helmet. Some have dropped their helmets a number of times, but don’t replace them due to finances. With regards to gloves and clothing, they typically wear items from their wardrobe, as opposed to buying specific safety items.

“I’m certainly lacking in the gear department… I would feel safer in safer gear… if I was provided with an option to get cheap protective gear I’d have more motivation to upgrade.”
(Scooter, Male, 39 years, Nelson)

Key take away: To improve the choices riders make when buying their gear, there is an opportunity to improve the advice they are getting from retail stores. The cost of gear is certainly a factor for scooter riders and they therefore generally have poorer quality gear, due to their finance constraints.
17. Attitudes towards hi-vis gear

Fluoro gear is not believed to be effective
Many riders were not sure of the impact of wearing fluoro gear. Some had tried wearing fluoro and had not felt any safer with it on (e.g. “cars would still pull out in front of me”). Some even thought it was a disadvantage to wear hi-vis gear, with the thought that “you become a target”. Even those that do wear fluoro gear were not overly-confident of its effectiveness.

“I won’t wear fluoro. My husband does aviation and talks about object fixation… people are more likely to hit a fluoro rider.” (Motorbike (open and urban), Female, 36 years, Auckland)

“I still wear fluoro, but I’m not banking on it. I have a Police friend who wears everything and still can’t be seen.” (Motorbike (open and urban), Male, 49 years, Auckland)

“Fluoro didn’t work; people still didn’t see me.” (Motorbike, Female, 48 years, Auckland)

Reflective patches are a more favourable hi-vis option
Compared to fluoro, riders were more confident in the effectiveness of reflective patches (e.g. on jackets and backpacks).

Reflective patches were also considered a “cool” option, as they blended well into riders’ gear in the daytime. Fluoro, however, was generally considered “uncool”.

“I have considered getting fluoro for wet weather. Nothing is holding me back except awareness of style… although it is a bit better if it is tighter.” (Open road older male, 50 years, Wellington)

Light coloured gear is a good visibility option for a few open road riders
When discussing visibility, a few older male riders noted that they wear light coloured helmets or jackets to be more visible. These riders were however in the minority, with most riders opting for black.

“This time I went with a light jacket. Previously I’d always had black, and everyone else has black, but you do notice people more on the road with lighter jackets… people are more visible out on the road.” (Open road older male rider, Nelson)

Key take away: There is potentially a job to convince riders of the effectiveness of fluoro for visibility, including dispelling criticism regarding “fluoro making bike riders a target”. Given the favourability of reflective patches, perhaps promote these as a good option on gear for visibility.
Riders:
Open road older males and urban

Riders’ conclusions
18. Riders’ conclusions as to how to improve safety

Note: although we don’t recommend proceeding with the dominant viewpoint from respondents, it is worthwhile understanding what respondents propose as the solution to an issue after discussing the theme for one to two hours.

At the end of the interviews and group discussions, after discussing rider safety in terms of skills, gear, values, attitudes, behaviours, experiences, planning, bike checks and maintenance, speed, visibility, alcohol, bike registration, rider licensing, braking technology, training, messages, media, etc; we asked respondents what they felt would have the best impact on improving their own or other riders’ safety.

Most open road and urban riders mentioned an improvement in rider skills would improve rider safety, and scooter riders added that improving their gear would also improve their safety. Urban riders and more safety-conscious open road riders also commented that there needs to be greater understanding and a better relationship between riders and car drivers.

To improve safety, improve skills

Skills training was named by most riders as the factor that would have the greatest impact on their safety – this was concluded following discussions of a broad range of factors that could impact on their safety. This view was shared by motorcycle riders in urban and open road settings, as well as scooter riders.

Below are some quotes from riders, who stated that the one thing that would improve their safety is an improvement in their own skills:

“I need better skills in knowing how to slow down quickly… taking roundabouts in the rain and going over manholes.” (Urban rider, scooter about to buy a motorcycle, female, 29 years, Wellington)

“I know I should do a course, but I do not want to spend 8 hours out with Pro Rider because I feel it is too much out of my day. But to do a course one-on-one is too expensive.” (Urban rider, motorcycle, Mum with teenagers, Auckland)

“One thing that would make me a safer rider is up-skilling – putting myself in more scenarios.” (Urban rider, scooter and motorcycle, Mum with newborn, Auckland)

“One thing that would make me a safer rider is implementing technique changes to deliver a more safety-focussed riding style” (Urban rider, motorcycle, male, Auckland)

“The one thing that would make me a safer rider is more experience and training/time on the road. Especially with regards to training courses around braking. Defensive driving courses should be mandatory.” (Urban rider, scooter, male, 43 years, Wellington)
Looking to the wider rider population, many urban and open road riders believe that the best rider safety message should also relate to improving skills and skills training.

- “[The best message to get across is] ‘Improve your skill set’.“ (Open road rider, sportstourer, Auckland)
- “[The best message to get across is] ‘Develop your skills’.“ (Urban rider, motorcycle, male, Auckland)
- “[The best message to get across is] ‘You actually don’t know as much as you think you do, and you will learn something’.“ (Open road older male rider, Nelson)
- “Encourage scooter riders to do something similar to the Basic Handling Test.” (Urban rider, motorcycle, female, Auckland)
- “[We need to tell riders to] ‘educate yourself’. [This should be done via] the promotion of courses with the cost (since they’re not expensive, but the assumption is that they are). Plus there should be compulsory learner skills for all riders – scooters as well.” (Urban rider, scooter and motorcycle, female, Auckland)
- “[We need to] educate both motorcycle and moped riders [in terms of] rider skills and car observation – to update their skills – and there should be training for new moped riders.” (Urban rider, motorcycle, 49 years, male, Auckland)

Many scooter or past scooter riders commented that, to improve safety, scooter training should be compulsory for new scooter riders.

“There should be mandatory initial training when you buy your scooter, e.g. what to do in the rain, gravel, wind, etc.” (Urban rider, scooter, female, 28 years, Wellington)

“Wet weather riding skills should be taught.” (Urban rider, motorcycle, male, 22 years, Wellington)

One respondent also mentioned that what would make him a safer rider, and as a way to improve his skills, would be to “join a riders’ club with more experienced riders” (Urban rider, motorcycle, male, 25 years, Auckland). This is potentially another avenue to improve rider skills, or at least a way to advocate and connect riders with training courses.

**To improve safety, improve gear**

Some scooter riders commented that the key thing they needed to do to improve their safety, following the group discussion, was to wear better gear. A few were also planning to buy a lighter coloured helmet when they were next in the market for one.

They felt that hearing/seeing more about the resulting injuries (e.g. including “gnarly images”) and the “real stories” would help encourage and remind them to do this.
“One thing that would make me a safer rider is making better habits – always wearing long sleeves, fluoro at night, and gloves every time.”
(Urban rider, scooter, female, 30 years, Auckland)

“One thing that would make me a safer rider is wearing gloves and more protective gear, but I need more visual reminders of the first hand experience.”
(Urban rider, scooter, male, 27 years, Auckland)

“The one thing that would make me a safer rider is always making sure that I wear all my gear, even for short distances from work to the gym down the road. Plus, I should get better gear.”
(Urban rider, scooter, female, 25 years, Wellington)

“I should have] better gear. Definitely. Perhaps if it were more affordable and easier to access.” (Urban rider, scooter, male, 43 years, Wellington)

“Just having ‘full’ decent gear.” (Urban rider, scooter about to buy a motorcycle, female, 29 years, Wellington)

“Scooter riders should wear the proper gear – encourage them to get good gear.” (Urban rider, motorbike, female, 48 years, Auckland)

To improve safety, create greater understanding from car drivers
In Auckland and Wellington, urban riders strongly felt that car drivers need a better understanding of riders and riding - in order to reduce the “us and them” mentality. Some of their quotes were:

“Safety promotion should educate car drivers as to what we (riders) are allowed to do – to get rid of the inequality.” (Urban rider, scooter, female, Auckland)

“The focus of safety promotion should be on educating car drivers about motorbike laws.” (Urban rider, motorcycle, male, 25 years, Auckland)
“Other drivers should be more aware of me, and me of them, and what they can do.” (Urban rider, motorcycle, male, 22 years, Wellington)

“Tell car drivers that we are on the road.” (Urban rider, motorbike, female, Auckland)

“The safety promotion message should be: ‘Share the road’ – education for cars to share.” (Urban rider, scooter and motorbike, female, Auckland)

“Show motorcyclists in a positive light, so that cars drive better towards them… to stop the backlash we get from car drivers, which comes up a lot.” (Scooter, male, 22 years, Nelson)

Conversely, the alternate view related back to skills again. The fact that riders need to rely on good skills, rather than the widespread understanding from car drivers.

“Be aware of other drivers, be ready to react, assume they can’t see you.” (Urban rider, scooter, male, 27 years, Auckland)

Some of the more safety-conscious open road riders, who prioritised safety over speed, also felt that greater understanding from car drivers was the best way forward for motorcycle safety. Furthermore, a few mentioned that car drivers need to understand how to react in response to bikes, e.g. to give bikes space and to know that large bikes are able to pass them quickly.

“Safety promotion should focus on other vehicles. To tell them to look for motorcyclists and about the damage they can do. They need to look properly – 6 seconds – to see what is really there. Be aware and look back.” (Open road older male, 46 years, Wellington)

“Car drivers need better understanding of us. We can have all the safety in the world, but if a car pulls out – you’re buggered. … Car drivers need more knowledge, what to look out for and what they need to do. … They need to know that motorcycles are there and to pull over.” (Open road older male, 47 years, Wellington)

“Safety promotion needs to make other road users aware. They need to know how to react as a car driver.” (Open road older male, 50 years, Wellington)

Secondary factor: Reduce speed
Speeding was not highlighted by riders as a dominant factor that required attention to improve safety. Only a few commented that they should slow down.

“I make me a safer rider… I should be going slower in general.” (Urban rider, scooter, male, 43 years, Wellington)

“The one thing that would make me a safer rider is not being in a rush. I know my ability at speed, but cars can make it unsafe at speed.” (Urban rider, scooter, about to buy a motorcycle, female, 29 years, Wellington)
**Secondary factors: Other consequences**

One urban rider commented that she probably shouldn’t ride when it is wet or windy, as it is probably a bit unsafe. A few scooter riders also commented that they need to be a bit more alert and careful.

> “With the decisions I make, I just need to watch cars when going between cars in traffic… when zipping between.” (Urban rider, scooter, about to buy a motorcycle, female, 29 years, Wellington)

One unlicensed rider in Wellington who admitted that he goes through red lights also commented that he would be a better rider by “being mindful of others” and “not flaunting the law”.

One motorcycle rider who commented that he likes to sometimes “ride dangerously”, also said that he sometimes thinks about his family which can slow him down. A message targeting riders to think about their family in relation to their actions, could be beneficial to some riders.

> “One thing that slows me down is thinking about my family. So, if there was a campaign about the knock-on effect… you know, who else it will effect - I think that would change my behaviour.” (Motorcyclists, male, 50 years, Nelson)
Car drivers

Attitudes towards riders
Understanding how car drivers think and feel about motorcyclists is an important insight. Car driver behaviour is likely to be impacted on by the driver’s beliefs about riders, particularly in terms of motorcyclists’ approach to safety and to other road users.

This research has identified that some traditional, negative stereotypes of motorcycles do exist and that these can and do impact on how drivers interact with riders on the road. Drivers are able to pinpoint and describe the motorcyclist behaviours that reinforce these negative stereotypes. Importantly, however, many drivers are able to look beyond the negative stereotypes and allow themselves to walk in the motorcyclists’ shoes. They understand the benefits and appeal of riding and, as a result, many are able to see the world from a motorcyclist’s perspective.

This ability to empathise with motorcyclists is important. Once drivers move beyond the stereotype, they are able to visualize the motorcyclists as safety-conscious and people who value riding carefully. Again, once the driver can visualize this more responsible image of the rider, the drivers themselves are more conscious of the role they play in sharing the road with who they acknowledge are vulnerable road users.

19. The rider stereotype

When asked to describe the typical motorcyclist, drivers tend to default to established negative stereotypes. The following are examples of these stereotypes:

1. The Die Hard Biker: Someone who has been riding his whole life, thinks he is invincible, but does have a lot of skill and experience;
2. The Born Again: Someone who used to ride when they were younger and gave up, typically to have a family and recently bought a bike again, possibly due to a mid-life crisis. These riders also think that they are invincible but, even though they have the experience, they have lost far more of their skills than they realise.
3. The Young and Reckless Rider: He is young and feels bulletproof. He is someone who engages in risky behaviour with little skill or experience on a motorbike, or even the road.
4. Patched Riders: Generally, part of a gang. He is seen as being a law unto himself on the road.

Drivers are quick to describe the typical rider as someone who thinks of him or herself as invincible. Drivers describe motorcycling as risky and they describe riders as vulnerable. Drivers are acutely aware that riders do not have the luxury of the protective bubble that they themselves value.

At a very basic level, they rationalize the choice to ride within this frame: that to expose oneself to risk and to accept that level of vulnerability, motorcycle riders must be ignoring the risk and believe themselves to be indestructible. Many riders take this view of invincibility further, describing riders as arrogant and overconfident.
This rationalising of why riders would expose themselves to risk is partly supported by driver observations of motorcyclists “behaving badly”. Drivers notice motorcyclists when they speed, when they swerve around them, when they corner and when they appear to flout road rules by lane-splitting. Drivers themselves admit that they are more likely to notice this type of risky behaviour than motorcyclists “who behave more like cars”.

Drivers can also become resentful of riders, especially when they appear to be cue-jumping or taking advantage of slow-moving traffic. These negative associations are combined with perceptions that riders are thrill seekers by nature and that they are loud, fast and reckless.

“They think ‘I wont crash, I’m better than I am’.” (Male, 56 years, Nelson)

“They are all the same – it’s all about speed on the open road and as much noise as possible.” (Male, 64 years, Nelson)

There was also the perception from some drivers that motorcyclists thought of themselves as being “cool”, and had a “look at me” mentality. “Image” was seen as playing a key role in choosing to ride a motorcycle. Again, this adds to the negative stereotype and, for some, generates a level of resentment and animosity.

“Viewed as cool, and feel cool. They think car drivers are suckers.” (Female, 25 years, Wellington)

**Scooter riders are seen as a separate group**

It is important to note that scooters are very much in their own category in terms of stereotypes. Scooter riders have a far different look, attitude and behaviour to motorcyclists. They were seen as young male and female first time drivers, just out of high school or at University. Similar to motorcyclists, they were perceived as feeling invincible, however, very much unlike motorcyclists, they were seen as erratic, slow and often lacking in confidence. They were also seen to have a reckless streak, but more so because of their apparent poor safety standards, often wearing shorts, t-shirts and jandals when riding, and often with an inadequate helmet.

“[With regards to scooters...] they are just playing… when I see them on the road I give them heaps of room because I know they are going to do something stupid. They are just playing.” (Female, 57 years, Nelson)

Key take away: Stereotypes are important, as they provide drivers with mental shortcuts, ways of thinking about motorcyclists that do not require effort of reconsideration. The danger is that negative stereotypes can affect how drivers interact with riders and vice versa. If riders are seen as arrogant, not respected, or are believed to be unconcerned with safety, this has the potential to create situations between cars and bikes that may increase the risk of crashes.
20. What are car drivers’ general attitudes towards motorcycle riders?

While strong stereotypes do exist, drivers do have a range of reactions when discussing motorcyclists, not all of them negative.

**Motorcycling is not seen as a “safety” issue for drivers**

It is important to note that drivers do not prioritise motorcycling/scooters as a major road safety issue. They do not believe that motorcycling itself is a safety issue. They are more likely to point to driver error, driver distraction, excessive speeding, and the use of drugs and alcohol as the main road safety issues that concern them. Cyclists were also raised as an issue for road safety, when motorcyclists were not.

Worryingly, some drivers are not actively prioritising motorcyclists and scooter riders as road hazards. Instead they suggest that they are looking out for any or all hazards and that riders do not come to mind as something they should take extra care to look out for. Many drivers, however, had seen signs while driving, instructing them to be aware of riders, and thought that these acted as a good reminder to watch out for them.

**Riding is a foolish decision**

Some drivers readily acknowledge that riding a motorcycle carries with it heightened risk. Drivers believe riding is an inherently dangerous activity and they acknowledge that riders are more vulnerable, due to not being enclosed in a protective shell as drivers are.

“The male who’s young and brash, I call them when I see them driving. I say to my daughter: ‘oh look, there’s a temporary citizen’…. I say that to her because I don’t want her to get on a bike and I don’t want her to be on the back of a bike, so I purposely try to put her off.”

(Female, 57 years, Nelson)

Combined with the lack of practicality, some drivers simply fail to understand the choice to be a motorcyclist – many see it as foolish. One driver felt that this was symptomatic of a basic philosophical difference between being a driver or a rider. This attitude segregated the two types of road users and became about “us” versus “them”.

“If you think about the choice, if you are choosing to ride a motorbike you are choosing to drive something that’s not as as safe as a car, so you’re after a different experience. And people who drive cars are after something different as well, so there’s cross purpose there, because they are after another experience. Plus, only in Asia do you see motorbikes used as family vehicle… the more I think about it, there are two different types of people of the road… there’s a basic philosophical difference straight away.”

(Female, 57 years, Nelson)

**Riding for fun is not riding safely**

Drivers also acknowledge that a big part of why motorcyclists ride is for enjoyment and freedom and that speed and risk is part of that appeal. One of first things mentioned about motorcyclists is that they are riding for fun or sport and that they liked going fast and enjoyed the feeling of
“danger” that comes with going “fast”. Drivers thought this could be, or often was, reckless behaviour.

“It can be fun at 100km/h, it doesn’t have to be 120km/h does it? Does it make any difference? Do you [riders] get any more wind in your hair if you go 20km/h faster?” (Female, 59 years, Nelson)

Riding without safety gear is noticed by drivers
Riders not wearing protective gear were seen by drivers to be particularly reckless. However, most drivers acknowledged that this was not typical rider behaviour. In fact, many believed that the riding fraternity would frown on this behaviour.

“I see riders sometimes going down the motorway and it’s the classic Kiwi ‘she’ll be right’ kinda thing, but I think a lot of the riding community would look down on it and say ‘you’re an idiot’ as well.” (Male, 23 years, Nelson)

Motorcyclists breaking the road rules
A core part of the negativity directed at both riders broadly and also often specific riders that drivers encounter, is the belief that they break road rules. This is often combined with a belief that riders are doing this “in-spite” of drivers. An element of this is related to resentment about a motorcyclist’s free movement on the road, for example, being able to lane-split.

“There’s some kind of smirkiness in it [when they lane-split], like: ‘hehe, I don’t have to [wait in traffic] - you do, but not me!’” (Female, 57 years, Nelson)

However, many drivers also see a motorcyclist’s greater freedom of movement as a perk of their mode of transport, as was being safer and dry when it rains as a pro of being in a car.

“Some of that stuff is simply the benefits of being on a bike... good on them!” (Female, 59 years, Nelson)

Speeding is also seen as an example of how riders willingly break the road rules.

“They shouldn’t be able to break the speed limit any more than a car should, and they do.” (Female, 59 years, Nelson)

Motorcyclists can be intimidating
Motorcyclist behaviour can also be intimidating to drivers. Motorcyclists can tend to appear more quickly without warning, are noisy, and ride “aggressively”, which can create anxiety. Many drivers can name times when a “swarm” of bikes has overtaken them on the open road, and can vividly remember the anxiety and feeling of their car shaking as they were overtaken.

“They need to remember that there are other people on the road!” (Male, 32 years, Auckland)
Drivers can also be understanding and empathetic towards riders

When the conversation about motorcyclists moved beyond the stereotype, many drivers acknowledged that riders were safety conscious. Drivers do believe that the majority of motorcycle riders are serious about safety and that it is just the minority who fuel the negative stereotypes that are more easily brought to mind.

Most drivers displayed a level of empathy and understanding of riders. Many could understand why people ride both for practical and emotional reasons. For example, motorbikes were acknowledged by drivers as a cheap and efficient mode of transport. This was truer of scooters, which were seen almost solely as a means of transport.

“It’s a great way to get places, if it’s just for you.” (Male, 50 years, Wellington)

Although drivers can readily list the variety of negative “typical” rider behaviour, for the most part they can still empathise and understand them. For most, riders are someone just like them.

“I see them as people being just like me.” (Female, 44 years, Wellington)

Others appreciate the skill and passion involved with motorcyclists.

“Motorcycle riding requires more skill than a car.” (Male, 50 years, Wellington)

Some drivers also have a huge sense of empathy towards riders and will actively look out for them on the road and hope they are safe.

“When I see a motorcyclist on the road, I always think: ‘I really hope they don’t come off that bike’, because they are going to get really seriously hurt.” (Female, 44 years, Wellington)

“My image of them is that they think they are cool, maybe they are cool, but they definitely think they are cool. I just have this image of them going around corners real fast and me wondering if they are going to fall off and am I going to run over them. I like to keep my distance. But I don’t know if they are reckless though, because they look like they know how to handle it.” (Nelson)

“I feel like the motorcyclist gets blamed, it’s all their fault, when I don’t think it probably is.” (Nelson)

Drivers imagine that riders think negatively about them

Importantly, drivers can see the other side, they can put themselves in the shoes of riders and recognise the risk that they, as car drivers, pose to the motorcyclist.

Drivers acknowledge that not seeing a rider can have significant consequences. While some drivers did suggest that they watched out for riders, many did not do this. Instead they believed that they were observant of all hazards and that motorcyclists required no special observation effort.
Drivers imagine that motorcyclists see them as:
- dangerous “tanks”
- incompetent and unskilled
- uncaring about motorcyclists’ wellbeing
- inconsiderate of those around them

Again, a fundamental disconnect between riders and drivers was the belief that riders enjoy being on the road. As such, some drivers acknowledged that motorcyclists might see them as killjoys.

“They think car drivers aren’t as fun-loving and thrill-seeking as them.” (Male, 28, Wellington)

Drivers acknowledge that both cars and bikes can be at fault in crashes

There were very different opinions around who is typically at fault when motorcyclists crash. Some drivers place the responsibility onto the motorcycle rider as, by the nature of their transport choice, they are more at risk and should take more precautions. The attitude that riders are more out for fun (rather than for practical reasons) and take risks for thrill-seeking strengthens the position that riders are at fault.

Conversely, some drivers felt that cars where most at fault in crashes. Drivers articulated that they had a greater responsibility to drive safely and be attentive around motorcyclists, knowing that riders were more at risk and susceptible to injury.

“People don’t have cyclists and motorcyclists on their radar.”

Most drivers acknowledged that both cars and motorcycles have a role to play in preventing accidents. Although motorcyclists should make the best effort to ensure everyone around them sees them, car drivers have the responsibility to do the same thing and keep attentive. This was seen by many as a positive philosophy to follow on the road to keep everyone safe.

“It’s just that people make mistakes and you, as the person coming behind, have to be aware.” (Female, 36 years, Nelson)

Drivers think and feel differently about scooters

Drivers think very differently about scooters. Drivers acknowledge the practical benefits of riding a scooter and were less likely to describe scooter riders as speeders or thrill-seekers.

However, there was a degree of animosity to scooters, with some believing that scooters were “the most dangerous of the lot” (Male, 41 years, Auckland). Scooter riders were seen to have unsafe behaviours and attitudes. Drivers see scooters as slow, unstable, nervous, or erratic (“like cyclists on steroids”). (Male, 31 years, Auckland)

“Can’t decide what lane they’re driving in and they are driving too slow… I don’t know if the scooters are even capable of going 50km/h?... They seem to be, but a lot don’t. If people are
riding scooters, they should be capable of doing 50 and staying up with the traffic.” (Male, 56 years, Nelson)

“I’d approach them with more caution maybe, as they are less experienced on something less powerful.” (Male, 28 years, Wellington)

A key difference between motorcyclists and scooter riders, as observed by car drivers, was that scooter riders often seem to fail to wear protective gear. Drivers did acknowledge that scooters were at somewhat less risk than motorcyclists due to their lower speeds, however, not wearing protective jackets and footwear was seen as foolish and reinforced negative associations of scooter riders.

“I see this little woman on a scooter on the state highway in the morning… and she’s just wearing her work stuff. She looks a bit more vulnerable to me.” (Female, 33 years, Wellington)

Key take away: There is an opportunity to improve the quality of the relationship between riders and drivers. Drivers are likely to misinterpret the behaviours of riders as being reckless or illegal when they may not be. Riders themselves may not be aware of the impacts of their actions on both driver attitudes and behaviours. Creating a more positive relationship between riders and drivers is likely to improve feelings of mutual respect and may translate into safer on-the-road behaviours by both road users.

21. Does motorcycling experience change driver attitudes?

Drivers who have ridden motorcycles, or who know motorcyclists, tended to have more positive and empathetic views towards riders. These drivers acknowledged that they understand what riding feels like and that, as such, they make sure to watch out for riders and will drive respectfully around riders by giving them space.

For those who hadn’t ridden or didn’t know anyone who did, there were two prevailing attitudes. Drivers were either ambivalent and did not actively watch for motorcyclists on the road:

“I don’t ever see them around!” (Female, 44 years, Wellington)

Others held more negative views:

“I don’t regard them highly - I think they’re foolish!” (Female, 57 years, Nelson)

These drivers with negative perceptions acknowledged that their attitude around riders could be changed by encouraging to think about the rider under the helmet. Drivers felt there was value in encouraging riders to be pushed more as human beings, to help create empathy. Campaigns such as: “see the cyclist, see the person”, where raised as great examples of how this had been done successfully in the past and think that motorcyclists would benefit from the same treatment.
“I am not a d**k head, I am a real person.” (Female, 57, Nelson)

“I have a wife and two kids’ - whatever it is that makes that person a real person and not a hoony idiot.” (Female, 59, Nelson)

Key take away: Many drivers simply have no experience or contact with motorcycle riders. This research suggests that personalising the rider has the potential to change driver attitudes.

22. What do car drivers think would improve motorcycle safety?
There was a broad range of options discussed by drivers to improve motorcycle safety. These centred around training, regulatory change, signage, and attitude changes. These different changes or improvements all focussed on improving either the visibility of riders, or the skill of all motorists.

Regulatory change
Regulatory changes to motorcyclists was one of the more popular changes that could be made to improve motorcycle safety. For drivers, one of the biggest safety issues around motorcycles was visibility, and so there was a consensus across most that high visibility vests should be made compulsory. Some drivers also thought this should go further and that motorcyclists should be legally required to wear brighter helmets, gear, and make their bike more visible.

Another regulatory change that drivers put forward was making regular re-testing for motorbike licenses mandatory. Drivers acknowledge that skill plays a large part in motorbike safety, and by ensuring that these skills are kept up-to-date, this would help riders stay safer on the road. Drivers know that they are not perfect, they pick up bad habits and can become complacent drivers. They saw bad habits and complacent driving as being a bigger risk for riders, and thought regular training would give people the chance to right the bad habits and upskill.

Training
More specific training of both car drivers and motorbike riders was another solution put forward by drivers. For drivers, this training would focus on greater driver education around motorcycles and how to be a courteous and respectful driver. This would ideally be introduced from when drivers are first getting their license, so that all drivers go onto the road knowing how to look out for vulnerable road users. This would tackle the issue of visibility, creating a safer environment for motorcyclists to ride in.

Training for motorbikes was also mentioned by drivers as something that would improve safety. Drivers thought that providing cheaper or incentivized training would get more riders to improve their skills and therefore be safer on the roads.

Signage
The current signage around both motorcycles and bicycles was viewed very favourably by drivers. Signage like the “Look for the cyclist” and “Share the road” were recalled positively by
drivers. Having regular reminders when driving was seen as a strong reinforcement of good behaviours and something that drivers thought should be continued and extended.

Some drivers suggesting taking this idea further and even using something similar to the stickers on the back of trucks that say: “If you can’t see my mirrors, I can’t see you”. These could be placed on bikes, although drivers did think that riders may not want to put these on their bikes. These would highlight the impact of visibility and awareness for drivers.

**Attitude change**

Drivers also thought about targeting the attitudes of the public about motorcyclists. Some suggested that there should be a campaign to discourage people from becoming motorcyclists.

Another more encapsulating idea was about targeting the general population who drive or ride to be more considerate to everyone on the road. Drivers recognised that, if you just targeted cars, this would create more awareness, but that there is the perception by many New Zealand drivers that they are good enough already, and telling them to change their driving might not work.

“But there are a lot out there who aren’t [safe drivers for motorcyclists]. I don’t know how you target them because it’s a state of mind, it’s an entitlement that they think they own the roads and they don’t care about anyone else.” (Female, 36 years, Nelson)

Instead of targeting skill, drivers thought a better way to go about this would be to promote being a good and courteous driver. Rather than the “us” versus “them” of motorcycles and cars, some drivers believed that this would have a unifying impact. Beyond that, driving “socially” was seen as being an easier sell to the public because it’s better for everyone.

“Something around courtesy, where it can really drive home to people ‘what it costs you to let someone in who has been sitting there for possibly five minutes and wants into the traffic’.” (Female, 59 years, Nelson)

“A lot of road rage is just because people don’t have empathy on the road... and road rage isn’t necessarily related to the person in front of them, they’re probably angry about something else.” (Male, 56 years, Nelson)

*Key take away:* Drivers are open to a range of initiatives to improve rider safety. Interestingly, driver training (as opposed to rider training) is one of these initiatives. Drivers see the benefit in improving their own ability to observe and to drive with the wellbeing of other road users in mind. This is an important acknowledgement of the role that drivers play in motorcycle rider safety.
Implications for Strategy
23. Implications for behaviour change messaging

This research has highlighted key differences in why motorcyclists ride, the value they place on safety and their perceived level of skill and knowledge.

The research suggests that open road riders value the experience of riding and as such tend to prioritise bike handling skills as a safety factor. While they remain acutely aware of other road users, they tend to focus on the risks associated with open road riding. They focus on reading the conditions, their choice of speed, and their ability to manoeuvre their bike through cornering. Many ride well within their perceived skill limits, others are looking for the “buzz” that comes from riding closer to the edge of their limits. Importantly, all believed that they understood and could identify risks, and that they were confident and capable to safely mitigate these, by applying their skills and experience. Critically open road riders enjoy the experience of riding and believe that their safety is something they control.

In contrast, scooter riders while also capable of enjoying the experience of riding, tend to prioritise the commuting benefits of convenience and efficiency. For these riders, other road users present the greatest risk. Importantly, they tend to downplay the role that skill can play in mitigating these risks. They often equate low speed riding to cycling and tend to adopt a fatalistic approach to safety. The core value of convenience creates a powerful barrier to wearing protective gear, and the lack of a strong safety social norm allows this to happen unchecked. To an extent they believe that their safety is in the hands of other road users, it is not something they feel they can significantly control.

Sitting in-between open road riders and scooter riders, urban riders on smaller motorbikes tend to fit somewhere between riding for experience versus commuting, and feeling in control of their safety versus feeling safety is largely outside their control.

These different rider perspectives highlight two potentially important continuum:

1. **Experience versus convenience** – Riders that ride for the experience can ride for the thrill or the simple enjoyment of getting out onto the open road. However, this perspective brings a different focus and value set when compared to commuter riding.

2. **“I” determine safety versus “others” determine safety** - While most riders acknowledge the risk of other road users, there were some stark differences in terms of the focus on “owning” risk. Open road riders tended to feel that they controlled the risk. While this was in part due to open road riders actively pursuing risk through higher speeds, they also believed that through observation and bike handling they were able to actively reduce the level of risk. This was in stark contrast to the mindset of some scooter riders and to a lesser degree urban riders. This alternative mindset placed risk largely in the hands of other road users. Scooter riders tended not to acknowledge the nature of risks and they tended to lay responsibility of crashes at the feet of car drivers. At worst they simply do not believe that their own actions or decisions can reduce the likelihood of crashes or injury.
Combining these continuums and placing riders on the resulting matrix allows us to visualise the opportunities and challenges.

For open road riders, where they sit on the matrix is appropriate. The opportunity is not to shift them, but rather to reinforce and extend their beliefs around safety, risk and their riding choices. Speed reduction is unlikely to resonate, as for many speed is a valued choice and a core value of the rider experience. These riders do value skill, as it is central to their belief of the role that the rider plays in both risk identification and avoidance. A challenge for this group is the mistaken belief that experience (as in time spent riding) equates to skill. However, the potential for skill “blind spots” is real. Communication to this group should acknowledge that the riding experience is valued, and reinforce the view that the rider can control risk. It should attempt to challenge rider self-perceptions of their own skill levels, without being condescending to more confident riders. This suggests communication to these riders could comfortably include more sophisticated messages related to specific bike handling skills and techniques on the open road.

Conversely, urban and scooter riders do require a more significant shift in mindset. This is unlikely to occur through any attempt to challenge convenience as a value however. Rather, attempts to change mindsets need to acknowledge convenience and ensure that communications and behaviour change initiatives embrace this value. As open road riders are likely to reject messages to slow down, so too will scooter riders reject messages that do not acknowledge the convenience of riding. However there does appear to be an opportunity to shift
urban rider and scooter mindsets towards greater acknowledgment and ownership of risk. Achieving this is likely to place greater value on skill development, and risk identification and avoidance behaviours. Creating greater awareness of the risks (e.g. low speed injuries, lower leg injuries, etc.) and the skills and choices required to mitigate them (e.g. bike handling, road positioning, wearing practical protective gear, etc.) may be the pathway.

However, for urban and scooter riders it is important to recognise the social norms at play. Again, in contrast to the open road rider and to an extent the urban rider where a stronger safety norm exists (particularly around wearing protective gear), this is not the case for scooter riders. In fact it is the opposite. It is normal to not wear protective clothing and footwear, and to a lesser degree it is normal to behave less like a motorcyclist or car and more like a cyclist. Scooters do not identify with motorcyclists and these different safety norms are important to the design of any communications program. Scooter safety norms do need to change and they will be more difficult to change in the short term. Importantly, these norms are both critical barriers as well as potentially powerful enablers to changing mindsets and behaviours. In the absence of more targeted and compulsory scooter rider education, modelling safe scooter behaviour in a way that appeals to the values of scooter riders, and takes place in the context of their riding experience (i.e. commuting), is likely to be seen as relevant and more likely to create the engagement required to impact on their behaviours.

24. Further behaviour change opportunities

This section outlines the full list of the potential gaps in rider safety that arose in the research, as well as the associated pathways to create behaviour change. To structure these gaps and opportunities, we implemented Professor Susan Michie’s Behaviour Change model: COM-B. The key components to this approach include an understanding of Capability (C), Opportunity (O) and Motivation (M) and how these factors contribute to actual behaviour (B).

![Diagram]

**Capability** is about having the knowledge, skills and understanding that enables a person to act as desired. **Opportunity** is about the environment, but also about social opportunity. **Motivation** is about perceptions of value and benefit.
The following tables detail the key gaps in rider safety behaviour/attitudes, as well as suggest pathways to improve rider safety for older open road riders and urban riders, in terms of their capabilities, motivations and opportunities.

### Open road older male riders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key gap</th>
<th>Possible pathways to improve rider safety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Capability</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Some riders lack the skills to keep themselves safe – especially with regards to best practise approaches to braking and cornering. | • Encourage more riders to take part in skills training and do so via:  
  • targeting what riders value: freedom, escape and handling.  
  • realigning the thinking that good skills are based on experience, instinct and/or habit, and that attending training is not showing a weakness in riding skills.  
  • focussing on the core knowledge and skills gaps, e.g. cornering and braking.  
  • not talking about riders’ likelihood to crash, given that they believe “other riders” crash.  
  • acknowledging that sometimes riders like to “push it” and, in doing so, there is a balancing act between improving skills (and fun) and safety.  
  • acknowledging the “tipping point” between confidence and overconfidence.  
  • acknowledging that riders evaluate their skills relative to their riding approach/style.  
  • acknowledging that for some older riders comfort and riding cautiously become more of a priority.  
  • Keep providing reminders and tips on good practises, given riders are favourable towards these and find them useful.  
  • Use riding groups and peers to:  
    • encourage training.  
    • observe each others skills.  
    • suggest skill gaps.  
  • Create greater awareness of the best approach to braking and cornering.  
  • Encourage riders to routinely practise their core skills, e.g. safe braking and cornering.  
  • Demonstrate the benefits of skills training to training-averse riders (e.g. benefits that cautious riders, riders with years of experience, and/or riders who are naturally skilled at riding can relate to).  
  • Demonstrate the difference in emergency reactions for a rider who have been through skills training versus a rider that hasn’t had training but has years of experience. |
| Some riders do not have good knowledge or understanding of ABS (or other types of braking systems) | Realign riders’ perceptions in that:  
• ABS is valuable on all motorbikes (not just sports bikes).  
• In emergency situations, riders should ideally not rely on their instincts and habits.  
• ABS is valuable to all motorcyclists (not just for “unskilled” riders).  
Inform riders of the benefits of ABS and in doing so:  
• target what riders value: freedom and handing.  
• acknowledging that something riders like to do is “push it”.  
• acknowledging that there is a balancing act between improving skills and safety.  
• acknowledging the tipping point between confidence and overconfidence.  
Focussing on the core knowledge and skills gaps, e.g. cornering and braking. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some riders ride with their lights on high beam.</td>
<td>Educate riders on the importance of dipping their headlights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motivation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some riders are not motivated to wear all their gear for short or urban trips.</td>
<td>Educate riders on the risks of coming off their bike on short or urban trips.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some riders do not see the value in wearing hi-vis fluoro.</td>
<td>Either persuade riders of the value of wearing fluoro, or provide another solution that they may be more favourable towards, e.g. hi vis reflective patches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some riders are riding with their visors up.</td>
<td>Educate riders on the importance of riding with their visors down, even on short or urban trips.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some riders are not conducting pre-ride checks regularly or thoroughly enough.</td>
<td>Improve riders value and knowledge of how to conduct pre-ride checks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some riders are not planning their journeys.</td>
<td>Educate riders on the importance of planning their journeys and how to do this.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Some riders choose bikes that are too advanced for their skills. Plus, modern bikes can give riders a false sense that they have the skills to ride a powerful bike. | • Educate riders on the importance and encourage riders to choose a bike that are a good match to their skills.  
• Educate riders that modern powerful bikes can be harder to handle than they first appear.  
• Educate riders that enhanced skills are required to ride more powerful bikes, even though modern bikes may initially feel easier to ride.  
• Educate riders on the importance of taking their time to build their skills on a bike that is new to them. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunity</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some riders are not receiving valued advice from motorbike retail stores – especially in urban areas.</td>
<td>• Increase the knowledge of sales staff in motorcycle retail stores.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some riders are not being briefed well by group leaders and/or some group rides push riders beyond their skill level.</td>
<td>• Ensure group leaders are conscious of the skills and experience of the riders in the riding group and that individuals are briefed appropriately before setting off based on their skills and experience. • Ensure that group leaders allow for and support the range of skill levels in their group, for example, giving riders the opportunity to fall back from the pack if they want or need to, or tailoring their rides.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some riders want to attend Pro Rider training, but the 8 hour duration of the course is a barrier.</td>
<td>• Consider providing shorter Pro Rider courses that are still subsidised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car drivers are a risk to riders and riders feel that car drivers do not value their safety.</td>
<td>• Encourage positive behaviour from drivers towards riders (e.g. to look out for, provide space and be courteous towards riders). • Increase drivers’ knowledge/understanding of appropriate/acceptable rider behaviours, or restrict, clarify, or limit these behaviours (e.g. with regards to overtaking at very fast/startling speeds).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On group rides, some riders are unlicensed on unregistered bikes and some riders observe that other riders drink-ride.</td>
<td>• Make it more difficult for riders to undertake illegal actions in group ride scenarios, e.g. check those potentially “hidden away” in the centre of the group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few riders in the research had been unlicensed and/or riding unregistered bikes (for years).</td>
<td>• Make it more difficult for riders to ride unlicensed and/or unregistered bikes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Urban riders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key gap</th>
<th>Possible pathways to improve rider safety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Capability</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some urban riders lack the skills to keep themselves safe.</td>
<td>• Increase awareness of scooter training, including the availability, usefulness and cost-effectiveness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Encourage more riders to take part in skills training and do so via:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Trigger events such as: when riders are learning to ride, before they get on the road, and/or after a crash or near-miss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Targeting what riders value: convenience and value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Demonstrating the risks at low speed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Promoting how skills can be used to protect themselves from what they see as their biggest hazard: other vehicles and other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>external factors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Realigning the thinking that good skills are based on experience, instinct and/or habit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Informing scooter riders of their limited observation skills when focussing on learning their handling skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Encouraging riders (especially female scooter riders) to stop and think about their skills, skill gaps and bad habits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Encourage riders to practise their skills, e.g. emergency braking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Keep providing reminders and tips on good practises, given that riders are favourable towards these and find them useful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Demonstrate the difference in a rider’s reactions for those who have been through skills training, versus a rider whose skills are based on experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Enforce scooter training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The habit involved in the daily commute results in riders losing concentration.</td>
<td>Provide tips or reminders to enable riders to keep their concentration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some urban riders actively drink and ride over the limit.</td>
<td>• Educate riders on the importance of not drinking beyond their limit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Get riders to think about the consequences for themselves and the public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Acknowledge that riders perceive the risks to be low, given they are riding a small vehicle and they can get around quickly and easily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Consider the perception that riders believe that they are generally waved through at checkpoints.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motivation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scooter riders are not motivated to wear appropriate riding gear.</td>
<td>Encourage riders to wear appropriate gear and do so via:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recognising what riders value: convenience and cost-saving.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Realigning their thinking that they are safe at slow speeds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Increasing understanding and therefore valuing the outcomes of wearing gear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Raising awareness of the types of injuries they could sustain at urban speeds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motorcycle Safety Research  Prepared: March 2016</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Providing gear guidelines (taking account of convenience and cost-effectiveness).
- Creating positive social norms of wearing gear on scooters, through positive examples and communications.
- Increasing awareness of the impact of having an open-face helmet in a crash at urban speeds.
- Targeting female riders as potentially an easier option for changing gear-wearing behaviour, compared to male riders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Some riders do not see the value in wearing hi-vis fluoro.</th>
<th>Either persuade riders of the value of wearing fluoro, or provide another solution that they may be more favourable towards, e.g. hi vis reflective patches.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some riders are not conducting pre-ride checks regularly or thoroughly enough.</td>
<td>Improve riders’ value and knowledge of how to conduct pre-ride checks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some riders are not planning their journeys.</td>
<td>Educate riders on the importance of planning journeys and how to do this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some riders are not aware or have not thought about wearing a white helmet to improve their visibility.</td>
<td>Educate more riders on the value of wearing white helmets to improve their visibility.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Car drivers are a risk to urban riders and urban riders feel car drivers do not value their safety.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Bridge the driver/rider relationship gap (from both sides) to create mutual respect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Encourage positive behaviour from drivers towards urban riders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Encourage drivers (especially commuters, distracted Mums and SUVs) to look out, provide space and be courteous towards riders (especially scooters).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Increase drivers’ knowledge/understanding of appropriate/acceptable rider behaviours; or restrict, clarify or limit these behaviours (e.g. with regards to lane-splitting).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Boost the positive profile of urban riders:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- so riders feel and are viewed less like “a menace”; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- so car drivers are less likely to associate them with undesirable stereotypes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Personalise riders in communications to drivers, to change driver attitudes, especially for those who have no experience or contact with riders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Improve driver training to improve drivers’ ability to observe and drive with the well-being of other road user in mind (car drivers are very favourable towards this).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix
Respondent profiles

- Open road riders
- Urban commuter riders
- Car drivers
### Open Road Riders (16 in-depth interviews)

#### Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender and Age</th>
<th>In Crash In Last 4 yrs</th>
<th>Type of Motorcycle</th>
<th>Make &amp; Model</th>
<th>Engine size</th>
<th>Years experience</th>
<th>Affiliations/Clubs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auckland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, 45</td>
<td>Yes, low impact</td>
<td>Sports Tourer</td>
<td>Suzuki SV</td>
<td>1,000cc</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, 42</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Tourer</td>
<td>Honda CBR600</td>
<td>600cc</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, 57</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Tourer</td>
<td>Kawasaki Z750</td>
<td>750cc</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, 47</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>Honda CBR650F</td>
<td>650cc</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, 60</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Sports &amp; Tourer</td>
<td>Moto Guzzi Mark 3 / BMW K1300GT</td>
<td>1300cc / 1100cc</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, 59</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Sports &amp; Tourer</td>
<td>Honda VFR</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, 48</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Adventurer / Tourer</td>
<td>BMW K1200S</td>
<td>1,200cc</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, 59</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Adventurer / Tourer</td>
<td>Yamaha</td>
<td>650cc</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellington</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, 58</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>Triumph &amp; Suzuki</td>
<td>700cc – 1,100cc</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, 47</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>Suzuki GSX500</td>
<td>500cc</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, 50</td>
<td>Near miss</td>
<td>Tourer</td>
<td>Kawasaki</td>
<td>1,000cc</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, 46</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Tourer</td>
<td>BMW</td>
<td>1,100cc</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, 64</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Cruiser</td>
<td>Suzuki Intruder</td>
<td>1,500cc</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, 63</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Adventurer</td>
<td>Suzuki Vstrom</td>
<td>650cc</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, 48</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Adventurer</td>
<td>BMW K1200S</td>
<td>1,200cc</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, 44</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>Suzuki TL1000S</td>
<td>1,000cc</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Urban commuter riders (4 focus groups)

#### Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender and Age</th>
<th>In Crash In Last 4 yrs</th>
<th>Scooter or Motorcycle</th>
<th>Motorcycle make/model</th>
<th>Engine size</th>
<th>Years experience</th>
<th>Affiliation/Clubs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auckland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, 29</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Scooter (full size)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>80cc</td>
<td>“12 years”</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, 26</td>
<td>Yes, minor</td>
<td>Motorcycle</td>
<td>Yamaha YZ125</td>
<td>125cc</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, 20</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Motorcycle</td>
<td>Suzuki GSX125 &amp; KTM 690</td>
<td>690cc</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, 49</td>
<td>Many near misses</td>
<td>Motorcycle</td>
<td>Suzuki GSX450</td>
<td>450cc</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female, 48</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Motorcycle</td>
<td>Suzuki SV650</td>
<td>650cc</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female, 36</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Scooter</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>50cc</td>
<td>21 years</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female, 30</td>
<td>Yes, minor</td>
<td>Scooter</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>50cc</td>
<td>21 years</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female, 25</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Motorcycle (Cruiser)</td>
<td>Suzuki</td>
<td>250cc</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female, 36</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Scooter</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>50cc</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female, 35</td>
<td>Near miss</td>
<td>Motorcycle</td>
<td>Honda VFR250</td>
<td>250cc</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, 58</td>
<td>Yes, near injury</td>
<td>Motorcycle (Adventurer)</td>
<td>Yamaha RXZ50</td>
<td>250cc</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female, 52</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Motorcycle (Cruiser)</td>
<td>Suzuki</td>
<td>250cc</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Motorcycle Safety Research

### Urban commuter riders (4 focus groups)

#### Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender and Age</th>
<th>In crash in last 4 yrs</th>
<th>Scooter or motorcycle</th>
<th>Motorcycle make/model</th>
<th>Engine size</th>
<th>Years experience</th>
<th>Affiliations/Clubs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wellington (Group 1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female, 29</td>
<td>Yes, 2 in last year (1 with car involved - scraping &amp; minor bruising)</td>
<td>Scooter (getting motorcycle license)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>50cc</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, 38</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Motorcycle</td>
<td>Honda C700</td>
<td>125cc</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, 43</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Scooter</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>50cc</td>
<td>-7 years</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female, 28</td>
<td>Fell off in rain - uninjured</td>
<td>Scooter</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>45cc</td>
<td>-10 years</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, 32</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Motorcycle (2 sports)</td>
<td>Kawasaki Z900</td>
<td>200cc</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female, 25</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Scooter</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>50cc</td>
<td>-7 years</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Nation (Group 4) | | | | | | |
| Female, 51 | No | Motorcycle | Suzuki GW250 | 250cc | N/A | Yes |
| Male, 32 | Yes, slightly injured, has recurring shoulder pain | Scooter (used to ride motorcycle) | N/A | 50cc | 2 years | No |
| Male, 31 | Yes | Motorcycle | Honda Fireblade | 954cc | N/A | Yes |
| Male, 39 | Near miss | Scooter (used to ride motorcycle) | N/A | 45cc | N/A | No |
| Male, 58 | Near miss | Motorcycle | BMW R1200GS | 1300cc | N/A | Yes |
| Male, 56 | No | Motorcycle | Triumph T1120 | 650cc | N/A | Yes |

## Car drivers (4 focus groups)

#### Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Currently rides a motorcycle or scooter</th>
<th>Has a close friend or family member that rides a motorcycle or scooter</th>
<th>Has ridden a motorcycle or scooter in the past</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auckland (Group 1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Hamilton (Group 2) | | | | |
| Female | 32 | No | Yes | N/A |
| Female | 19 | No | No | N/A |
| Female | 31 | No | No | N/A |
| Male | 45 | No | No | N/A |
| Female | 35 | No | No | N/A |

[www.thenavigators.co.nz](http://www.thenavigators.co.nz)
## Car drivers (4 focus groups)

### Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Currently rides a motorcycle or scooter</th>
<th>Has a close friend or family member that rides a motorcycle or scooter</th>
<th>Has ridden a motorcycle or scooter in the past</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wellington (Group B)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nelsen (Group 4)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, in her teens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contact:
Matt Benson
027 290 5010
matt.benson@thenavigators.co.nz