



## Position Statement – **Mobile Phones**

The illegal use of mobile phones while driving is a distraction. This is likely to result in a driver not detecting a motorcyclist which could result in a collision.

### **Where We Are Now:**

The current position is that mobile phones may be used to make or answer a call, play music or as a GPS, as long as the phone is in a cradle fixed to the vehicle, doesn't obscure the view of the road and can be operated without touching any part of the phone.

Texting, using social media, emailing, taking photos or holding the phone within a vehicle is banned in NSW.

In the US, the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI) in 2006 reported that, "Nearly 80 percent of crashes and 65 percent of near-crashes involved some form of driver inattention within three seconds before the event. The primary causes of driver inattention in this major study included such distracting activities as cell phone use."

In Australia, surveys have indicated that 98% of people believe that using a mobile phone while driving, for example, is very dangerous, and yet 28% of people admit to doing it themselves.

MCC views any driver distraction, including from mobile phone use, as a real danger to the lives of motorcyclists.

It is illegal to have more than 2 stone chips greater than 16mm or cracks longer than 30mm in the drivers half of a windscreen, yet it is common to see phones and GPS mounted where they block a driver's view of the road ahead.

Since 1 March 2020, mobile phone detection cameras, including fixed and transportable cameras, have been targeting drivers illegally using a mobile phone across NSW anywhere, anytime. A pilot was conducted to test the technology from January to June 2019 in both fixed and transportable modes. During this 6 month pilot, more than 100,000 drivers were found to be using a mobile phone illegally.

## **Where We Want To Be:**

Making drivers aware of the danger of mobile phone use while driving should be given top priority in current road safety media campaigns and L and P plate course syllabus.

Penalties for mobile phone use needs to be reviewed to ensure mobile phone use is treated as a high risk / high penalty offence.

That it is illegal to mount any device such as a phone or GPS where it blocks the driver's half of the windscreen.

## **How To Get There:**

- Review the penalties for mobile phone use. Increase the first penalty to 6 points, second instance loss of licence.
- Propose an on-going media campaign which communicates the risks posed by mobile phone use while driving
- Review the licensing process to ensure new drivers and renewing drivers understand the risks of mobile phone use. This may be in the form of a flyer with renewing licences.
- Increased research into the use of mobile phones while driving.
- Improved driver education that includes the risks of mobile phone use while driving and ways to avoid such risks.
- Encourage vehicle design which addresses in-vehicle distractions.
- Lobby for restrictions on the mounting of phones and GPS where they block the driver's view of their half of the windscreen.