

CENTRESTAND

JUNE 2008



let those who ride decide

The journal of the Motorcycle Riders' Association of SA Inc. Printpost approved No. PP:530028/00014

IN THIS ISSUE : VALE: BRYAN WHITE, MOTORCYCLE & SCOOTER SAFETY SUMMIT, 'BIKIE' BILL, MOTORCYCLE NEWS



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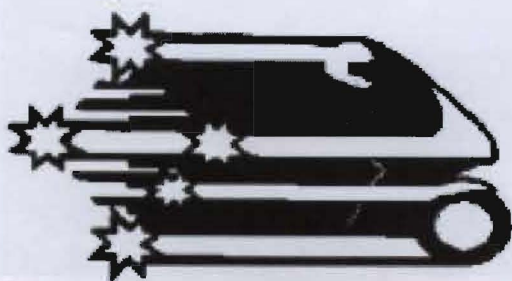
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EDITORIAL

By the time you read this the MRA make a Wish Ride has been and gone and a little boy with cancer is now one very happy little boy. His wish was to ride on a Harley so the MRA without any fuss set out to make his wish come true. But somehow the word got out and we were fielding offers of donations of equipment and money and requests to join the ride. So we made it into an event to give the lad the ride of his life, because that's what we bikers do. We help causes and people and use any excuse to go for a ride with our mates. It worked, and all of you who went can feel proud that you've done it again. (See p.8 for Jock's comments.)

The down side is that the event illustrated a problem (another one?) with the so called 'Bikie' Bill. A member of the MRA in government service asked to put a notice about the ride on a workplace bulletin board and was told that the notice couldn't go up until the powers that be had checked to make sure that the event was not a proscribed event according to the Serious and Organised Crime Control Act. Now this member's boss may have been acting in total ignorance of the Act or may simply have been a serious and committed 'Jobsworth', but it highlights something that is an unexpected effect of the original Bill.

Do people out there now think that they should find out whether any gathering or event of significant (?) numbers of motorcycles are to be vetted – to be on the safe side? If so, who do they think will do this and how? Will we need to provide proof of this, a certificate of compliance with the Act perhaps, to participants, sponsors so that they will feel that they will not be inadvertently breaking the law by associating with known/unknown criminal elements?

As pretty well all motorcycling events and gatherings are conducted in a law abiding fashion by law abiding citizens, similarly to most other aspects of their lives and the lives of other people, how will you feel when you are asked to provide proof or at least an assurance for fellow (non-riding) citizens that events in which you, and they, are taking part as a normal consequence of your lifestyle, are legal?

By the way, remember the article in the March issue about the shameful condition of South Road down at St. Marys? Well, three days after the Centrestand was sent out to members I was riding to work and guess where I saw fresh bitumen being laid, following a stack of diggers and scrapers and all those other blokes that are used to fix roads. They fixed about half of the section I complained about. Wonderful! The power of the press counts. So send in your safety notices and photos. We'll see what we can do.

Ride on, read on, and write in **Harald Lindemann**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The motorcycling community has lost a leader. Bryan White has passed away. Bryan played a significant role in the revamping of SAMRATS before leaving the MRASA to be the inaugural ride leader of SABERS. Bryan was leading a ride when he had an off that claimed his life. His passion and commitment to the motorcycling lifestyle brought many riders into the MRA. (See page 6. for the Remembrance notice.)

The Serious and Organised Crime Bill has gone through SA Parliament and is now waiting to be signed by the Governor to be made into law. I recommend to you the article by Paul Kuhn in this edition of Centrestand (page 5). It is well worth reading.

I represented the MRASA at the first National Motorcycle and Scooter Safety Summit held in Canberra on the 10th and 11th of April 2008. I was initially worried about my annual leave allowance and was fortunately able to swap a couple of days from my planned honeymoon leave. My overriding thoughts in the lead up to the Summit were "Wow, Ange said yes?" and "This had better be worth it". It was. The energy and goodwill at this gathering was fantastic and the information that was presented was amazing. The challenge we now face is turning this information into workable changes to lower the number and severity of motorcycling accidents. (See page 4 for a full report.)

The different approaches between the various state governments was demonstrated earlier this month when the Queensland government released an ad campaign that targeted riders with pictures of a helmet on a grave site and the text read "Will you wake up to the facts before its too late?"

Compare this to NSW that ran an entire campaign on cornering without mentioning the word "Speed". NSW feedback shows strong pick up of the message by the motorcycling community. The moralising Queensland approach makes riders switch off.

The front number plate push has been dealt a blow with a Swann Insurance Media Release. It says in part:

"With the Victorian government's plans to introduce front license plates to motorcycles, Swann Insurance – Australia's leading provider of motorcycle insurance – believe there is no evidence to justify the introduction of front plates and support calls to oppose the legislation.

'Modern motorcycles are simply not designed to display front plates, and the introduction of a metal bracket above the headlamp introduces the potential for some bikers to become unstable and subsequently crash.

The addition of front number plates also has the potential to cause injuries to pedestrians if hit by a motorcycle', says Robert McDonald, Head of Swann Insurance Research Centre."

The MRASA committee has released an incentive for members to attend our organised activities. We will give away a voucher for a GPS for your bike at the 2008 MRASA Toy Run. To get your name on a ticket for the draw, simply attend an organised MRASA activity DURING 2008 and show your MRASA membership card. If you know a non member who is interested in our rides, let them know what they could win by taking out a membership with us. The more events you attend, the more tickets will have your name on them. Events can include rides, meetings and even working bees. ☺

Now this is a prize I would love to have. Jock Rogan may know every road in the state and have an inbuilt GPS but us mere mortals occasionally need to go somewhere without him leading the way. I will still be a follower after the Toy Run as members of the MRASA Committee are ineligible to win this prize. (Bugger)

Phil McClelland
President MRASA Inc.

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MOTORCYCLE AND SCOOTER SAFETY SUMMIT by Phil McClelland

I represented the MRASA at the first National Motorcycle and Scooter Safety Summit held in Canberra on the 10th and 11th of April 2008. The energy and enthusiasm of the 100 people, assembled from around the country, to discuss Motorbike and Scooter safety was incredible. Everywhere I looked I saw experienced riders, senior State Government officials and major motorcycling industry representatives. The various state MRAs, the Australian Motorcycle Council, Ulysses Club, Motorcycle Council of NSW, the Tasmanian Motorcycle Council and Girls on the Move from the ACT were just some of the riding groups there.

The state governments had sent the department heads for Transport and Infrastructure. Public Works engineers mixed with people from Road Trauma Units, Police Forces and Vehicle Standards. Honda and BMW were two of the major industry representatives. There was also the odd statistician and overseas specialist and I quickly realised this was going to be a lively and informative weekend. The front number plate issue did come up and some interesting perspectives were forthcoming.

There is not room here to detail the entire Summit and everything discussed. Instead, I will just touch on four of the key presentations made.

Tony Sharp, Vice President of the UK Institute of Highway Incorporated Engineers and Chair of the UK National Motorcycle Council, Traffic Management, Planning and Transportation Policy Sub Group gave a presentation that I will long remember. He detailed some of his experiences with the British and European Government bodies / Councils. The presentation was full of wonderful examples of how to get it right and how to get it wrong.

I was amazed at the story of an ex motorcycle policeman who assessed a corner with a history of motorcycle fatalities. The low cost solution was based around installing white plastic road side posts that got closer together as the corner tightened. This caused riders to subconsciously slow down at a critical apex point and won a major European Safety Award.

I was appalled at a photo of chevron warning signs of a corner ahead that had been ridden through so many times they were no longer replaced. A different attitude from an outside auditor had a roundabout installed at the intersection before the corner and the accidents stopped.

Dr Bruce Corben of the Monash University Accident Research Centre gave a presentation on the Victorian Motorcycle Black Spot Program. I think the work being done to address Motorcycle Black Spots is needed. These are road locations that would not draw Black Spot funding as the overall total number of accidents may be low but they are mostly motorbike related and serious. Whilst the argument for this program is a good one, I personally have a major problem with the way the funding is raised. A tax on Victorian motorcycle registration is paid by all "riders" but the improvement to the roads benefits all "road users". Secondly, if the road had been designed properly in the first

place to be safe for all users, then the motorcycling community would not be taxed to fix it later.

Dr Michael Kremmer from Griffith University showed the statistical trends of motorcycle fatalities. He cautioned that data can be interpreted to give multiple answers that are not similar. He demonstrated that merely changing the dates used in a graph can greatly change the interpretation. For this reason his **graphs** start with the date motorbikes were first registered. **This results** in all data being evaluated.

I met Dr Kremmer out of the Summit and when we talked of the stats from South Australia he cautioned me to be mindful that when we have 39,000 registered bikes, a fatality range that varied from 5 to 15 from one year to another could be within statistical variation and not related to us doing anything better or worse on the roads.

Dr Kremmer's talk included a warning that "Involuntary Rider" numbers would grow. This is the first time I had heard the term "Involuntary Rider" and he explained it came from riders being pushed into riding a motorcycle or scooter due to economic pressure. The cost of petrol and lowering of disposable income would force people to cheaper forms or transport. These riders would not willingly purchase good bikes or equipment as these cost more money. They would not voluntarily do any advanced rider training and would only wear the minimum of safety gear. They would also be more likely to appear in accident statistics.

Dr Patricia Bryant is the Principal Behavioural Scientist at the NSW Centre for Road Safety. The NSW Roads and Traffic Authority conducted a safety campaign aimed at Motorcyclists. This program is significant for many reasons. Firstly was Dr Bryant's approach. The starting point is the realisation that there is a significant difference between older and younger riders in terms of the way they discuss riding and more importantly, *what* they ride and *how* they ride. The advertising company that won the contract to produce the campaign was selected from the small number that had management and staff that rode motorcycles.

Motorcyclists were approached at popular riding stops for responses to the draft campaign. Amazingly they did not mention the word "Speed" once in a campaign to lower rider accident rates. The result was world class and actually worked. Follow up interviews of riders found they remembered the campaign and the major points it addressed.

Summary

The best programs presented had one thing in common. They had a motorcyclist involved in the decision making. It does not matter if it is designing a road or car park to reduce accidents or changing riding behaviour. The results are better when a rider's perspective is involved. Every person present took away the realisation that to reduce motorcycle accidents is a big challenge. This was two days of information overload and without doubt the best conference I have ever attended.

I would ask any MRA member who would like more info to please contact me and I will pass on an info package. There was some truly amazing research presented and all the presentations including Dr Kremmer's graphs have been supplied to me on a CD.

The Serious and Organised (Crime) Control Act 2008.

by Paul Kuhn

Formerly known as "The Bikie Bill" it is soon to commence in earnest. So the question on everyone's lips is very simply this: "How will this affect me?"

Unfortunately the answer is nowhere near that simple. It is a pervasive Act that has the potential (and I use the word "potential" with great deliberation) to affect all of us in some way. Whether that is directly or through family or friends, we MAY be affected by it. I must stress this part, it is not that this Act WILL affect us or be directed at us as individuals, but it CAN be. It ultimately comes down to whether the police choose to use this Act in a given circumstance or not, as they are empowered under this Act with draconian powers.

The Assistant Police Commissioner was recently interviewed where he publicly made a statement that it will not be used improperly and that innocent people will not get caught up in it. However, if you are charged under this Act, guilt is automatic (it does not require a judgment to determine guilt) so therefore if someone is charged, then of course you are not innocent!

Will it change any of our activities as the MRA, or Honda Club, or Triumph club etc? This is much easier to answer because very simply, no it won't. We are not obliged under this Act to seek permission from SAPOL to run events, we have no obligation to notify of an event or even a ride. The stated purpose of this Act is clearly identified in Section 4 – Objects, where it says:

- to disrupt and restrict the activities of
 - o organisations involved in serious crime; and
 - o the members and associates of such organizations; and
- to protect members of the public from violence associated with such criminal organizations.

Then under subsection 2 it goes on to say:

- without derogating from subsection (1), it is not the intention of the Parliament that the Powers in this Act be used in a manner that would diminish the freedom of persons in this State to participate in advocacy, protest, dissent or industrial action.

This could be interpreted a number of ways but what IS clear in the declaration of the object of this Act is that any individual or organisation who is not involved in serious criminal activity has nothing to answer for under this Act. For example, the MRA is not a cover organisation for criminal activity (say, unlike the Mafia which exists only for that purpose), the MRA does not support criminals in the pursuit of criminal activity (I think none of us would condone activity of a serious criminal nature anyway) and any activity the MRA runs is not for criminal purposes, not even our subgroups.

The MRA (and any other legitimate club) are clearly not the target of this Act. Since we are technically excluded by this Section 4 – Objects, by virtue of both definition and common [reasonable] perception then the rest of this Act cannot apply to us as an organisation.

So that now only leaves us as individuals. This part is not so clear and remains for future legal argument. But this is something that not only motorcyclists should watch, but all citizens of SA. We are no more or less subject to this Act than any other [normal] citizen. The only people who should be concerned are those with criminal intent or are carrying out criminal activities.

Until a charge has been finalised through the courts and a judgment has been made (bringing this into Common Law) we will not have a clear direction of the [judicial] administration of this Act. However, I am confident in saying that if a "normal" citizen, such as you and I are charged, then much legal argument in our favour would arise. If you have no criminal intent then personally I have no doubt you will NOT go to goal.

In essence, this Act is so bad because:

- it assumes guilt without trial,
- if you have a prior record, you CAN go to goal for the original offence, even though you may have already paid your debt to society, this is double jeopardy,
- you are guilty of an offence simply for who you meet, not what you do,
- it denies natural justice (you may have heard of this as "due process")
- you cannot cross-examine certain evidence tendered to the court!

And quite a few more! It is these things as individuals that give rise to legal argument. For a State Government to remove certain "rights" that are accepted at both Federal level and most importantly at an international one (such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of which Australia is a signatory) suggests that this Act cannot be held to be legal in court, or at least portions of it.

My personal opinion is therefore that if you are not of criminal intent then you have nothing to fear. In a nutshell, it is that simple.

The MRA originally got involved with this because we saw it as an affront to motorcyclists (I'm sure everyone has seen all the media articles blaming "bikies" every time something happened) which we saw as creating a public perception that all motorcyclists are bikies and are therefore criminal. We also took a moral high-road for human rights this instance since it had the potential to affect us all (with motorcyclists being a targeted group in general). Our dissent has run its course, the Bill is now an Act (law) and there is nothing more we can do as an organisation, it is now best left to those organisations which deal specifically with human rights and legal groups.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF Bryan White who died 15 June 2008



Bryan passed away doing what he loved, riding with his mates. The reasons for his fall no longer seem significant as we remember a life cut short, but it was a life filled with friendship and good times. Most of those good times revolved around his bikes and riding and he will be remembered for the passion that he poured into his involvement in a lifestyle as a motorcyclist. Bryan rode with skill and was usually out in front. As the leader of our group this is where we expected him to be! He held to a no compromise attitude with his riding and was both criticised and respected for it. This is how many of us will remember him.

Bryan joined the Motorcycle Riders' Association of South Australia with the intention of helping the Association to become more relevant to its members by improving its social side. He did this on weekend bike runs with some mates and helped to bring back to life the SAMRATS, the social and riding arm of the MRA that had been dormant for many years. He was elected Ride captain and through a positive engagement with members and riders who knew nothing of the MRA he helped to build up the quality of runs and the number of people who became involved with the runs. He was also instrumental in getting the SAMRATS more involved in fundraising for charity, in particular for the Leukaemia Foundation.

Bryan's involvement in the MRA, which included other riders whom he drew in to support the MRA, was instrumental in improving the profile of the MRA to riders in South Australia and helped increase the Association's membership. His legacy for the MRA is that the SAMRATS continue to prosper today in part because of what he helped start and in part for the enthusiasm for riding that he left behind. In 2007 he left the MRA with a number of other members to set up a new South Australian ride group that eventually

became known as the SABERS. This was not an easy time for both groups, but time has shown that there is room for ride groups of differing character in our riding culture with mutual respect for each others aims leading to mutual support. The SABERS has also benefited from his passion and enthusiasm and their ongoing success is his final motorcycling legacy.

We will remember him as a distinctive character in the South Australian motorcycling scene. He will be remembered as much for his passion and commitment to the motorcycling lifestyle as for his ability to encourage others to share it with him.

Vale

THE NOT THE GREAT ESCAPE RALLY 2008

By Harald Lindemann

The 'Not the Great Escape Rally' went ahead again this year in May. It was at the usual Marrabel site and as usual when I arrived on Saturday morning a number of tents, bikes and riders were standing about doing what they usually do at a rally, that is, waiting for nothing to happen. And it did. All weekend.

About 25 people turned up on a variety of conveyances, most of them were bikes. This rally is pretty laid back, no facilities (BYO everything) or program, but a chance to get away for a day or two taking it easy. We had a chat with the landowner, Murray, who turned up to see how we were all going and we distributed some badges. These are one of a kind, a reminder that the rally is alive and will continue. Thanks to Peter Mount for arranging to bring the camp toilet. It was much appreciated by all.

The weather was fine during the day and a bit cool at night, but we had the fires and some bottled antifreeze. I had brought along a bottle of vintage Great Escape Rally Port (the Old-timers will know of what I speak) which was praised to the heavens by all who partook of it. The cries of thanks to the Son of God and all his bloody saints are still ringing in my ears as I write. I slept long and deep that night and left my boots outside so that they were soaked with dew in the morning.

I had to leave early in the morning to get to my Dad's 80th birthday party for lunch so do you think that I was impressed when I pressed the starter button on a fully loaded bike and was answered with nothing? Not a bit. It was that intermittent electrical fault again. So unload the bike and see if I could push start it. Thanks go to the chap who helped me push it down the hill with no success. He refused to offer to help me push it back up. Thanks even more to Peter and his booster battery which did the trick and I got back to Adelaide without further incident.

See you there next year.

Vision Zero Motorcycle Road

"A milestone for motorcycle safety", said FEMA President Hans Petter Strifeldt as he officially opened the World's First Vision Zero Road for motorcycles along RV 32 in Telemark County in Norway 7 May 2008.

The motorcycle community has for a long time expressed serious concerns regarding the Vision Zero, the strategy in which road authorities have envisioned how to achieve zero deaths and zero serious injuries on the roads. The concerns are due to the vision depending primarily on bans and regulations instead of adaptation of the road environment to suit all road users - motorcyclists included.

But even if motorcycles have been viewed upon as high-risk road vehicles with regard to accidents, they have been all but excluded from the Vision Zero document. The Vision Zero document has first and foremost given anti-motorcycle campaigners an opening to propose a ban on motorcycles as these, they claim, are not compatible with a Vision Zero. But today, with the opening of this motorcycle friendly road, these claims have been effectively quashed, the FEMA President stated.

The Vision Zero Motorcycle Road is the brainchild of two passionate engineers at the regional Road Authorities, Jan Petter Lyng and Bjørn R. Kirste, who have successfully designed the road exactly as the motorcyclists themselves recommend. It is not much that is needed to make a motorcycle friendly road with regard to preventing injuries in case of accidents: Crash barriers fitted with a sub-rail, forgiving side terrain, well thought out placing of signposts, cutting down sight-hindering vegetation - all in all small modifications and investments that are beneficial for all road users, including bicycles and cars. The price tag for modifying these 15 kilometres of road is estimated to 630 000 euros.

The importance of this stretch of road in the middle of Norway cannot be overrated. It is the first Vision Zero Motorcycle road, not only in Norway, not only in Europe, but in the world. As the representative for Europe's road riding motorcyclists, FEMA will do what it can to promote this road to other nation's road authorities as an example of what is possible to achieve with relatively small means, FEMA President Hans Petter Strifeldt concluded.

(FEMA Press Release 8 May 2008)

NZ Motorcycle Safety Package To Cut Crashes

The New Zealand government has announced a range of measures to reduce the high number of motorcycle casualties on New Zealand roads.

Transport Safety Minister, Harry Duynhoven, says far too many novice motorcyclists, particularly in the over-30 age group, are involved in crashes.

"Since 2001, there has been a 28 % increase in licensed motorcycles, and this figure is expected to grow with predicted rising fuel costs. But over the same period, there has been a staggering 80% increase in motorcycle casualties.

"The package of initiatives aims to address this major road safety problem and to cut the high crash risk of novice riders," said Mr Duynhoven.

The motorcycle safety proposals form part of the implementation of the Road Safety to 2010 Strategy. They include restrictions on the use of powerful motorcycles by novice riders, changes to the Graduated Driver Licensing System to encourage riders to take up more motorcycle-specific training and the introduction of 'safer' motorcycling practices such as improving the visibility of motorcycle and moped riders to other road users by introducing a requirement for all riders to have daytime running lights or their headlights on at all times when riding on the road. *(Must be because they're still living in the Dark Ages...Ed)*

"I am confident there will be strong support for the initiatives as they address many of the issues raised in the "See You There...Safe As!" public consultation programme run in 2006," said Minister Duynhoven.

The package proposes limiting learner and restricted motorcycle licence holders to less powerful motorcycles by replacing the 250cc limit with a power-to-weight ratio based Learner Approved Motorcycle System (LAMS) similar to the one introduced into NSW. It also offers further training incentives to novice riders to progress through their licence and puts a cap on the time riders can spend on a learner licence.

Removal of the 70km/h open road speed limit restriction which currently applies to learner motorcycle licence holders is welcomed by riders. When this speed restriction is adhered to it creates a large difference in the speed of vehicles travelling on the open road, which is a known road safety problem. Road safety research indicates this speed differential outweighs any benefit of lower speed limits for novice motorcycle riders.

MRA Wins Perth Parking

As a result of MRA WA petitioning the City of Perth to improve CBD parking for motorcyclists, the council has approved a number of recommendations made in the petition, which contained some 1500 signatures.

These include:

- increasing short term parking spaces by 28 bays (representing an 8% increase in total on-street motorcycle bays) and keeping the total number at least 5% that of cars;
- providing long term bays at a minimum rate of 2% that of cars and increasing the number when demand requires it;
- reducing metered parking fees to between 1/5 and 1/3 that of cars to reflect the amount of space motorcycles and scooters use, and to promote motorcycle and scooter use.
- recommending that any new high-rise car parks have at least 5% motorcycle bays.

MRAWA welcomed the result, and will continue dialogue with the council regarding free motorcycle parking on footpaths in designated places where such parking does not cause hazard or obstruction and in spaces inaccessible to cars, such as corner spaces, around structural supports and those spaces made inaccessible by bollards.

A City of Perth spokesman said that motorcycle parking is always considered a part of the process of accommodating the changing needs of road users working in, and visiting, the city, and that streetscape enhancements take parking into consideration and ensure that motorcycle bays are included in these works.

Sales of motorcycles and scooters in Perth have doubled in the past twelve months as commuters adopt a more progressive approach to rising petrol prices and traffic congestion (the Lord Mayor is also a scooter aficionado).

Caution Urged For Off-Road Riders

Research conducted by the Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety – Queensland (CARRS-Q) shows that at least a quarter of all serious road crash victims in rural areas could be off-road motorcyclists. Half of the crashes in the study were motorcyclists and half of those again were off-road riders.

The research found that off-road riders are more likely to be young males riding an unregistered bike (53%) for recreation

(67%). Almost 40% were unlicensed (compared with 10% for other off-road and on-road vehicles), 42% were unfamiliar with the road on which they were travelling (double that of other groups), and 73% were classed as harmful drinkers (20% higher than other groups).

CARRS-Q data analyst Dale Steinhardt said, "Riding motorbikes for leisure on weekends is becoming more and more popular, but there are serious risks associated with this behaviour when riders are unlicensed, unregistered, have been drinking and are riding a bike they are unfamiliar with on a road they are unsure of."

Mr Steinhardt said that applying education programs and other interventions to the off-road setting was now needed.

Although the study was conducted in rural North Queensland, where such crashes are three to four times higher than for Australia as a whole, its findings are likely to reflect more widespread trends which rural riders across Australia may find worthwhile considering.

(Info courtesy of CARRS-Q)

MAKE A WISH RUN 2008

Hello all,

It is times like this that "Thank You" just doesn't seem to express my appreciation of the effort so many of you made on Saturday July 19 to support Jayden Green by joining him on a ride to Hahndorf to buy some lollies.

Mandy and David Green are so impressed with your efforts and take so much strength from your support at this trying time. They felt that had they tried to address all of you on the day they would have embarrassed themselves by succumbing to emotion!

I am please to tell you that we were able to provide rides for all of Jayden's family except the babies (well, they followed in a 4x4!) so this was a "family" event for the Green family and as such will remain as a treasured memory.

I appreciate all the photos that have been sent in so far. If anyone has other photos please send them to me at this address. Current photos can be viewed here: http://www.mrasa.asn.au/gallery/view_album.php?set_albumName=album113

More info in the ride report with a long list of thank you's!

Kind regards, Jock.



Tasmanian Motorcycle Handbook Launched

A handbook designed to help motorcyclists ride more safely in Tasmania was launched on March 13 by the Minister for Infrastructure and Resources, Steven Kons.

Mr Kons said the handbook, which is funded by the Motor Accidents Insurance Board, targets both learner riders and those returning to riding after a long break, as well as offering experienced riders an opportunity to understand more about road safety and low-risk riding.

"Motorcyclists are over-represented in crash statistics and, as vulnerable road users, they face a higher risk of serious injury and death on our roads," Mr Kons said.

"This handbook has information on safe riding tips, motorcycle licences, rider management, safe riding, rules for motorcycle riders, motorcycle roadworthiness and offences and penalties.

The President of the Tasmanian Motorcycle Council, Shaun Lennard, said that the Council was pleased to have been involved with the handbook's development.

"With motorcycle riding increasing in popularity, this handbook will be of great benefit to an increasing number of novice riders.

"It's not only for new riders though; information such as the sections on cornering, buffer zones and hazard perception I recommend to experienced riders as well.

"It's surprising how many people put themselves in the wrong position on the road. Better to get a surprise from reading something in this handbook than out on the road," he said.

Mr Kons said that the State Government had already implemented four other initiatives aimed at improving safety for motorcyclists. They are:

- introducing the Learner Approved Motorcycle Scheme that replaced the 250cc engine capacity restriction with a power-to-weight based system;
- increasing the minimum age for obtaining a motorcycle learner licence from 16 years to 16 years 6 months;
- introducing a new and improved pre-learner and pre-provisional training course which has more emphasis on thinking skills and hazard perception; and

- introducing a minimum six months continuous learner licence period for learner motorcyclists.

The handbook can be downloaded from the internet at http://www.transport.tas.gov.au/licence_information_older/tasmanian_motorcycle_riders_handbook

The development of a handbook was a key component of the Tasmanian Motorcycle Safety Strategy released in 2005. The handbook is adapted from the original book developed for the RTA of NSW by Guy Stanford of the MCC of NSW and Peter "The Bear" Thoeming.

The Motor Accidents Insurance Board is also subsidising the Road Skills Refresher Course, which provides a follow-up to basic training and is aimed at older and/or returning riders and newer riders with limited skills.

London to Open Bus Lanes to Motorcyclists.

Motorcyclists will be able to share bus lanes under plans unveiled by London's newly elected Mayor Boris Johnson. Transport For London will develop a scheme to allow motorcyclists on the lanes. A similar move proved successful in Bristol, Bath and in other British towns.

The report shows this change would considerably reduce accidents. The study actually demonstrated that allowing motorcyclists to use bus lanes resulted in a reduction in collisions of more than 40%. After reading the report Mr Johnson has told TFL to go ahead with plans to extend the scheme across London.

The report was completed in September 2007 after a three year experiment. MCIA defended the conclusions of the report leading a successful campaign in support of PTW users' safety.

(From ACEM News from the Motorcycle Industry of Europe June 2008)

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CEN To Improve Guardrails Standards Taking Motorcyclists Into Account.

The European Committee for Standardisation's Technical Committee on Road Equipment (TC226) will "develop a European Standard, which reduces the impact severity of motorcyclist collisions with safety barriers, considering the existing national standards and the possibilities of present day technologies".

In concrete terms, a new part (8th) is to be added to the existing standard EN1317. It will contain "provisions for the evaluation of the performance of safety barriers under impact by a powered two-wheeled vehicle (PTW) rider sliding along the ground". A draft standard should be ready by next year and adopted after internal procedure by October 2010.

(From ACEM News from the Motorcycle Industry of Europe June 2008)

Wire Rope Barriers

Vicroads' key reason for continued use of WRB is that it stops crossover crashes, but it doesn't. On July 24, 2006, a truck ran across a WRB near Brisbane. That truck hit oncoming traffic killing a woman car driver, putting 8 people in hospital and destroying six cars. The highway at Yatala was closed for hours in both directions.

WRB usually has 4 cables with posts no more than 3 metres apart. WRB on Eastlink has 3 cables and posts about 5 metres apart (*See the photo below*). 3 cable WRB is more dangerous for motorcycle & scooter riders because the posts are steel box girder constructions with eye/hook bolts exposed. While the posts will do more damage to a rider sliding on the ground, it is doubtful this barrier will be as strong when a car hits it. How does that make Eastlink safer than comparable roads? How was 3 cable WRB tested, where and when? Does it meet EU safety standards? Does it even meet VicRoads' safety guidelines.



After the fatal crash at Yatala the RACQ called for WRB to be replaced. The manufacturer told the TV news that WRB was never designed to stop trucks.

Recently a car reportedly crossed a WRB on the Monash Freeway at Doveton and careered down the wrong side of the freeway. Miraculously no one died.

(Adapted from an email from Damien Codognotto)

M/C Theft Rising To The Summit

With 6,875 thefts reported nationally in 2007, motorcycles constituted more than 9% of all reported vehicle theft, and 22% of all unrecovered stolen vehicles. Unregistered off-road motorcycles amounted to 5% of all stolen bikes. While 33% of registered bikes were recovered, only 17% of unregistered bikes were found.

Unlike theft of passenger and light commercial vehicles (PLCs) which has declined 52% since 2001, reported motorbike theft has remained relatively stable over the same period, although it has increased 3% over the past year. It is also suspected that a large number of off-road thefts are not reported.

While preventing and detecting any motorcycle theft is difficult, off-road bikes are particularly problematic because they are not affected by the various infrastructure barriers that have been developed for passenger vehicles and registered motorbikes. Portability, demand for parts, unregulated end-use and poor identification all contribute to the overall problem.

The National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council (NMVTRC) will be convening a major national summit in Sydney later in the year which will attract key stakeholders, including import and retail industries, motorcyclists, insurers and regulatory agencies, with an agenda of defining the issues and devising workable solutions.

The summit will aim to establish the scope and potential growth of motorcycle theft, identify what makes the theft different from other vehicle types, examine the feasibility of implementing potential responses and develop a blueprint for a coordinated national response.

In South Australia, 611 bike thefts were recorded in 2007, which was 104, or 21%, up on 2006, with 32% recovered (compared with a reduction in PLC theft of 6% and 84% recovered).

(Info courtesy NMVTRC)

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PHOTO CORNER

Shit Happens!

FRONT NUMBER PLATES – NOT THE LAST WORD

Swann Insurance, a leading motorcycle insurer in Australia recently came out in opposition to the concept of front number plates. The Victorian government plans to re-introduce front number plates to motorcycles claiming among other things that this will curtail speeding motorcyclists.

Robert MacDonald, Head of the Swann Insurance centre says that there is no evidence of speed being the major factor in motorcycle crashes. Research instead suggests that the more important causes are poor braking and cornering, not having crash avoidance space and other drivers failing to give way. He also says that there is no evidence to justify the introduction of front number plates, that on the contrary, they have the potential to cause injuries to pedestrians.

Vic Roads claims that 49% of speeding motorcyclists are not identified because of a lack of FNPs. It also claims that the reintroduction of FNPs would have a decrease in the speed of motorcycles to the extent that there would be a 4% decrease in motorcycle road trauma.

Swann claims that the introduction of FNPs will result in a substantial rise in claims for damage to front fenders, engine damage due to reduced airflow, replacement of screen or bodywork due to minor damage to FNP decals where used.

Initial fit-out is expected to cost \$22.1 million (2009), \$13.5 million by the government and the rest by vehicle owners. Another \$10 is to be spent on promotion of the scheme.

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