

CENTRE STAND

MARCH 2008



let those who ride decide

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IN THIS ISSUE :Ridden On Ride 08, Bikies Bill, Front No Plates



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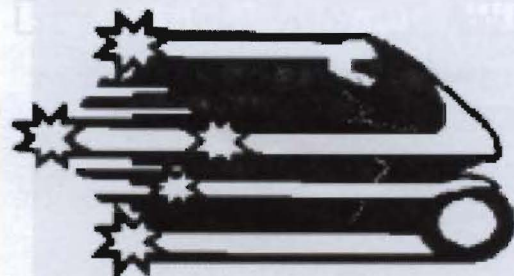
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EDITORIAL

Well, the Serious Crime Control Bill is on its way through parliament as we write. There is more to read about it in this issue. The impetus for the Bill is Mike Rann's desire to curb the criminal activities of bikie gangs. He has made no secret of this, but because of the problem of passing laws to govern only a small section of the community, the so called 'Bikie Bill' has morphed into something that could cover any organised or disorganised crime group.

Now the MRA does not condone anyone breaking the law, bikie, biker or otherwise, but we feel that there are already laws available that are adequate to the task. They need to be properly applied and the police force needs to be adequately staffed and funded so that they can do their job. The political grandstanding that we are seeing over this issue is divisive as it creates a situation where the community is impressed negatively about motorcycling and motorcyclists.

The MRA does not oppose the bill only on these grounds. We feel that the bill is badly drawn up in that it gives unprecedented discretionary powers to the police, the sort of powers that eventually will be misused to suit other purposes (probably against motorcyclists and others with no connection to criminal activities) and allows little flexibility for the judiciary. It does not provide for due process of the law as we are accustomed to and does not allow for natural justice in that evidence can be kept secret and will be unable to be challenged in court if the police wish it so.

The details of the bill are an attack on freedom of speech and association for a small section of the community of which we are considered a part, or at least of which we could be suspected of being a part if we associate with the wrong people, wittingly or unwittingly.

We believe that if this bill is passed through the Parliament and becomes law then we will eventually see a greater degree of harassment of motorcyclists, a greater number of instances of police using the freedoms or perceived freedoms of the legislation to control the movement of motorcyclists on the road, the result of which will be to discourage new motorcyclists from engaging in the lifestyle and others from continuing to ride.

The motorcycling business community should become aware of the implications of this bill and think about the long term effects on their businesses and have the courage to stand up against it. For more information read about it elsewhere in this issue and on the MRASA website.

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

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Thank you for electing me as your President for 2008.

I welcome the new faces onboard the committee and am pleased to see some experienced members taking on new challenges.

The new committee will have a busy year with many items already on the agenda. These include:

1. Responding to the attack on bike clubs.
2. Fighting the push for front number plates (again) at a national level.
3. Working for a sensible scooter licence in SA. Proposed is the abolition of riding a 50cc scooter on a car licence. A scooter-only licence is under consideration with the size capped at 175cc.

We have formed a sub-committee, coordinated by Peter Goodrich, to focus on the "Anti-Bikie" Bill and to come back to the MRA SA committee with recommendations for action.

The Toy Run was truly amazing. The number of motorbikes may vary depending on who you talk to, with estimates ranging from 15,000 upwards, but the result is very clear. A record \$300,000 of toys was donated. Also a record was the estimated 30,000 people at Hahndorf Oval who had fun helping children have a better Christmas.

There are about 39,000 bikes registered in S.A. and about 40% rode in the MRA Toy Run. It makes you stop and think about what we can achieve when we work together towards a common goal.

A big thank you to Flotek Engineering and the business community for their financial support. Thank you to Ebike Insurance, Acquired Home Loans, Toll SPD, Star Track Express, City of Holdfast Bay, Mt. Barker Council, SA Police and the Mt. Barker SES. They have ensured that we can go all out with planning the 30th MRA SA Toy Run for December 2008. We were happy that Ebike Insurance came on board as a supporter, and we were very, very appreciative when they helped us out with the Toy Run poster.

The Toy Run sub-committee and all the people who helped to make the day happen richly deserve the congratulations that have been forthcoming for organising an event that the entire motorcycling community can, and do, support.

The annual "Ridden-On Ride" is growing. The day grows in numbers of people participating and in importance as a day to remember "Ridden-On" riders with family and friends.

On a personal note, whilst standing on the pier at Second Valley last year, I cast my mind back to think of riders, "mates", that didn't get the opportunity to live a long life. I was shocked. Really shaken to recall the names and vague faces of three riders I rode with in the 1970s who lost their lives on motorbikes. Years have passed since I had last thought of them. Lots of years. It doesn't even matter who was in the right in the "accidents" that claimed their lives. The sad reality is they are not around anymore. This day brought them back to me. The Ridden-On Ride means they are not forgotten.

The MRA SA website at www.mrasa.asn.au is the place to keep up-to-date on what is happening with your association. Jock Rogan continues to spend huge amounts of his time working at keeping it current and informative (thanks Jock ☺). Have your say on a wide range of topics and give us some feedback. Your input is valued.

Another way to keep current on MRA SA activities is to turn up at the BP garage, West Terrace, on the first Sunday of each month at 9.30 pm. You can chat with or join the riders on a SAMRATS social ride.

Stay Upright,
Phil McClelland
President MRA SA

PS. For the latest information about speed cameras turn to p.6

MOTORCYCLE AND SCOOTER SAFETY SUMMIT

The inaugural Australian Motorcycle and Scooter Safety Summit was held recently in Canberra. Participants included motorcycle riders, police, road authorities and injury prevention experts from around Australia, plus a number of international keynote speakers.

Speakers from overseas and Australia presented their findings on practical and proven ways to reduce motorcycle crashes and injuries and on research to enhance motorcycle safety.

There seemed to be a genuine willingness by the experts to listen to the views and experiences of motorcyclists and to find ways to improve communication with motorcycle rider groups. The summit was considered to be a positive experience for all attendees with positive outcomes for road safety.

The MRASA sent President Phil McClelland to the Summit. A full report will be in the June issue of Centrestand.

OPEN LETTER TO MRA MEMBERS

6 April 2008

To the members of the Motorcycle Riders' Association of South Australia.

The MRA SA has adopted a different approach to our ongoing fight against the Serious and Organised Crime Bill (The Anti-Bikies Bill).

This campaign has, up to now, been based on informing our members, along with the general public, on the very real concerns we have over the proposed changes to our civil liberties. The biggest challenge we face is the public's lack of knowledge and therefore lack of interest in proposed bills. It seems most people only get fired-up when they are personally affected.

We have, of course, worked hard in approaching and tendering submissions to the elected representatives who want this absurd piece of legislation.

It is scary when we ask our elected politicians, who passed this bill in the Lower House a couple of weeks ago, about a possible/probable ramification and they respond with an amazed voice, "I didn't know it would do that," and "This will only be used to target rebel bikies, trust me."

This proposed law has the potential to affect a large number of people who will have to rely on SAPOL not charging them. A charge under this bill will result in a conviction and 5 years in jail. The bill specifically states that court evidence cannot be challenged if the Police wish it to be confidential, and a judge must accept it as valid. You will not be able to challenge the evidence they will use against you.

Fines are not an option. The judge must award JAIL time, up to 5 years!!!

OK, so who are the innocent people who could be caught up in this legislation?

Do you know someone who has fought a speeding fine? If they lost, then they have a conviction recorded against their name. They and anybody else who has a conviction, like a friend of mine who a few years ago was an idiot and got caught drink driving, will be found guilty of a new offence if they socialise with another person who has a conviction 6 times in a 12 month period. Not just that person, but that can be one meeting with 6 different people. By socialise I really mean to contact. Like go on an MRASA SAMRATS ride. Include in that, attend a meeting or get a phone call or even an email or sms. Chat with a rider at Lobethal or even at the Toy Run and you could be gone.

I have had a few people ask why the MRASA is wasting time and resources fighting this proposed legislation when the MRASA is not at risk of being a banned organisation. We are assured that the bill will be only used to target the feral bikies.

This bill can, and will, put at risk many of the freedoms that we as citizens take for granted. Those freedoms are worth fighting for. Members who have stuffed up and been charged for an offence in the past have a right to associate

freely with other people without fearing they may have a volunteer spy for SAPOL reporting who they ride with or when they have a cuppa with a mate. (The spy for SAPOL reference relates to another bill going thru our Parliament to recruit unemployed people to do surveillance for the SA Police dept. That one is someone else's battle). These members have already paid the price for the offence that landed them in court and should now be able to move on with their lives. Can you imagine having to ask friends if they have a conviction before you can ask them around for a BBQ to ensure two convicted people don't meet and you are then guilty of abetting a crime? If you have a conviction you would live in fear of meeting a person who would decrease by 1 the safety margin between you and 5 years in jail.

Consider the number of indictable offence charges laid in SA. The following info was taken today from an SA Government website:

Total offences reported in 2006 are: 263,369.
Total offences reported in 2005 are: 272,599.

I would be surprised if ANY club or association with more than 100 members did not have a few members who WILL be caught up by this horrific bill.

An MRASA member convicted of an indictable offence charge would not be able to ride a bike with us again for fear of another convicted person joining in on a ride. Wouldn't you want the MRASA to fight for your rights if this was you?

This is the most dangerous attack I have ever seen on the freedom of association that we all take for granted, and is not only worth fighting but MUST be fought.

This is not as simple as riders having to put headlights on during the day or paying too much for a licence. This is not about unfair laws that cost us money because some chair-warmer who rides a swivel-chair thinks he understands riding a motorbike.

This is an attack on personal freedoms.
Fall foul of the law just once and...

It is as serious as that.

Phil McClelland
President MRASA Inc.

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RIDERS CONCERNED ABOUT GPS SPEED CONTROLS

A high-tech satellite tracker built into vehicle navigation units has been developed which identifies changing speed limits, beeps drivers to slow down and can disable vehicles that speed.

The device is currently being trialled by the RACV, which says the alarm could be a key road safety tool, but has called for more studies into the safety of the advanced levels of the device that cut engine power and bar speeding.

RACV spokesman Brian Negus said the trials needed to determine whether drivers stopped speeding when the alert told them to because many drivers said they had trouble detecting speed limit changes. "It could be a key road safety initiative, but we need to see whether it will change driver behaviour," he said.

Only the first level is being tested, but the device also has second and third levels that cut engine power and an extreme level that stops vehicles from speeding by stopping the engine and cannot be adjusted. Trials are not yet being conducted on motorcycles, although the device has the potential to be applied to any vehicle.

The Motorcycle Riders' Association in Victoria has announced its unequivocal opposition to the introduction of GPS-based tracking and control systems for vehicles.

Vice-President John Karmouche stated that since the stability of a motorcycle is highly dependent on precise throttle control, any attempt at remote engine cut-outs or control could place riders in extremely dangerous situations.

UK trials have been carried out using this technology and rider groups have condemned the results as having the potential to place riders in hazardous situations.

"Beyond this, however, the issue is about the sort of society in which we wish to live. Being able to track all vehicles all of the time and to know where anyone is at any time is just too dangerous an ability to allow any authority to possess," said Mr Karmouche. The UK Motorcycle Action Group expressed similar concerns: "Let's keep this one simple: we don't want it - not today, not tomorrow, not ever. Withdrawing control from the rider is fundamentally what we were set up to oppose.

"If people abuse that control and fall foul of the law then that is a different issue, but when technology is deployed to directly control motorcycles then a big line is crossed. This is ultimately a philosophical issue: it's not just about safety, it's about what sort of society we want to live in. We don't want to live in a society with the level of control which this technology can make possible."

(Courtesy MRA (Victoria) and Herald Sun)

Editor's note: The possibility of developing such a device was first raised at an Australian Transport Safety Bureau's National Road Safety Strategy Panel meeting in 1996. One wonders whether expressing an idea leads somebody else to turn it into reality, or whether the government's agenda (in this case) was to develop it anyway. We live in a science-fictional, Orwellian world where we dare not have any nightmares lest they become true.

UPCOMING RALLIES 2008

April 4-5 **Redbacks** at Coonalpyn Hotel
Andy 0411 212 076 or 8571 1157

April 19-20 **Booborowie Aidan** 8346 4071

May ?? **Roaming Swagman BTB**
Lefty 8633 1516

May 10-11 **Great Escape Rally BTB**
BYO everything just like 2007
MRASA Inc. see website for details
Harald 8260 4461 or 0421 289 714

June 7-9 **Wintersun Mildura**
John 0350 237 218

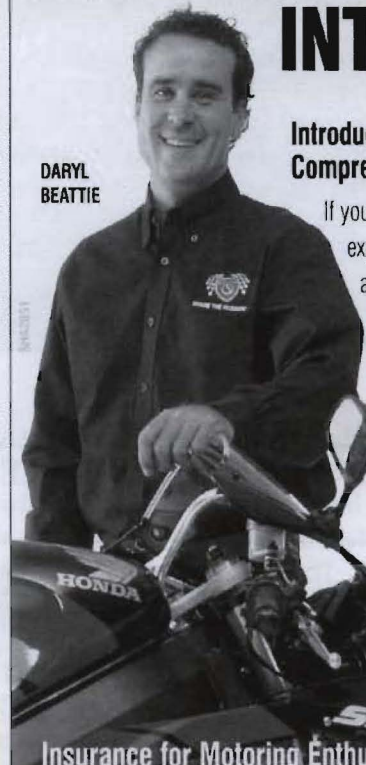
June 28-29 **Radiata MRA South East**
Frank 8765 1030

(Note: BTB – Back To Basics)

Thanks to Meataxe for the information

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DARYL BEATTIE



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4Bs REPORT

It's been a long time since I wrote for this 'stand but be assured the 4Bs is still going strong. Joanne, Andrew, Phil and I continue to visit the RAH and in 2007 Jodi joined in our quest to support injured motorcyclists and foster positive relationships between the MRA and the public at large. Jodie is well known to some of you and she's doing a great job. We hope in the near future to expand our service to other hospitals. Of course, Les Dicker still visits the Flinders occasionally and we've been ably supported by Rosemary our secretary. Rosemary has decided to take a break from her duties and we farewelled her at our October meeting. We are grateful for her 15 years of service to the 4Bs.

There have been a few highlights over the last 12 months which include:

- The \$700 raised by the Ridden-On-Ride for the 4Bs and donated to the RAH. The money will be spent on DVD players and a DVD library for the orthopaedic wards. The MRA will be acknowledged by labels on the equipment.
- The new information form (formerly known as the 'Horizontal Sheet') has been approved by the RAH Ethics Committee and will be used to gather accident data from patients. The 4Bs appears to be the only group gathering such information.

We look forward to another good year, hopefully with fewer people to visit in the hospitals. I must thank the MRA Committee for their continued support, in particular our President, Phil, whose guidance is much appreciated.

On a more personal note, I'd like to thank those in the MRA who supported my nomination for Life Membership which was officially awarded at the 2008 AGM. The plaque I received is a very fine object indeed and I am very proud of it. I've always regarded my involvement with the MRA as the most positive of all my undertakings. I am always impressed by the commitment of workers within the group and also inspired by the positive attitude and resilience of people I meet as patients at the RAH and, of course, their dedicated carers.

Cheers
Greg Janzow.

WIRE ROPE BARRIERS STRIKE AGAIN!

Following an horrific death of a young Auckland rider, New Zealand motorcyclists are joining the growing number calling for the banning and removal of wire rope barriers.

The young rider was thrown from his bike into the wire barrier and was severed at the waist.

Veteran Auckland motorcyclist Lou Giardin, a former Ministry of Transport patrolman, said he did not believe the wire barriers were acceptable anywhere and suspected NZ Transit was driven by cost considerations, "If you set out to

design something to mutilate the human body, you couldn't do any better, he said."

NZ Transit's national operations manager, Dave Bates, denied there was much difference in cost between wire and steel barriers and said the main reason for using wire barriers was its greater effectiveness in protecting most road users.

He could recall no previous deaths of motorcyclists hitting wire barriers and did not believe they would have much more of a chance against traditional W-section steel guard rails.

Asked whether NZ Transit might now review plans to extend the barriers, Mr Bates said it investigated every fatal crash on its network "to see whether there is in fact anything we can do."

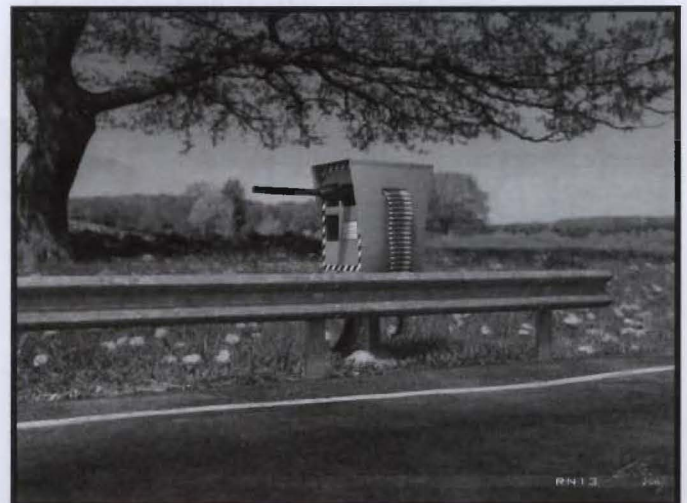
For more details on this story go to :
http://www.nzherald.co.nz/section/1/story.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10471320

Thanks to the MRAWA The Edge for this story.

WATCH OUT FOR THE NEW SPEED CAMERAS

We all know that the government operates in a culture of secrecy. Sometimes we don't get information until the last minute. But we have a mole in the corridors of power who is also a biker and who feels that the latest efforts of Transport SA in liaison with the Defence Department in keeping our roads safe should see the light of day. The new cameras have been designated as 'Zero Tolerance Traffic Control Devices' and are planned to be introduced to South Australian roads soon.

The new cameras look different to the normal cameras, so I have included a photo so that you will be familiar with them and able to make sure not to speed when approaching the test areas. Please take this warning seriously as you will not get another chance. Till then be assured that questions will be asked in parliament. The media, for some reason, has been strangely silent to date, so will have heard about it here first.



THE STATE OF OUR ROAD

by Harald Lindemann

If you travel down South Road from the northern suburbs to the south as often as I do then you get used to the road and the traffic and their quirks. The things that you don't get used to are the dangers that lurk along the way. Much of the road has been repaired and upgraded in the past and the area around the new underpass will be very sweet to ride on when it's finished, but there are some sections that, as a bike rider, you will be uncomfortable with when the weather is fine and where you will learn to manage your braking and lane-changes to avoid the bad spots. But what if it is wet and dark and you don't know the road or you are a novice rider, what then?

For example, approaching the corner at Edward Street at Clarence Gardens, just before the Castle Plaza Shopping Centre heading south, you will see this little gem of a manhole cover as shown in Figure 1 below. It certainly looks like it's more than 25mm (old 1 inch) below the surface of the road, though the road surface itself isn't that clear. Suppose you were moving to the left and unexpectedly hit this, or worse trying to avoid it by moving further left into that ugly lip of melted tar alongside it, not to mention the striations left from the unfinished roadworks of some time ago to help your tyres track. Not a pretty thought.



Figure 1

Just on the other side of the lights is a nice stretch of road that has been shaped to suit just about every other road going vehicle except motorcycles. The South Australian summer heat and the fondling of tyres from cars, trucks, semi-trailers, tractors etc have moulded the tarmac into running ridges that undulate across the surface of the road like the Gibson desert sand dunes. The pie-crust edges make you think twice about trying to ride out of the hollows should you get caught in them. Figure 2 gives a pretty good picture of what you will be up against in attempting such a crossing.



Figure 2.

This extends right up to the next set of lights at Kedgworth Road alongside MacDonalds. See Figure 3 below. For all of you riders of small bikes and scooters who insist on riding on the far left so as not to tangle with the faster vehicles, take another look. This is the road that you have chosen. Better invest in something with moto... as a prefix.



Figure 3.

As a rider experienced with this section of road, I still occasionally get caught out, usually under brakes and when the traffic is heavy, and I'm looking out for this section. Can you believe that this is all happening in around 500 metres of road? The northern track is just as bad in places.

The SA Department of Transport, Energy and Infrastructure (DTEI) is responsible for keeping our major arterial roads in good shape, so we'll be sending the guys at Walkerville a copy of the mag and maybe they'll write back to us explaining why we should be expected to put up with roads in this condition.

And don't forget to send us your piccies and comments of your horror spots. We'll send them on as well.

RIDDEN-ON RIDE 2008

This was held on February 7. It set off from the Victoria Hotel at O'Halloran Hill, went to Second Valley for a short remembrance service and then on to Victor Harbor for lunch. About 140 people attended, more than the 70 of last year. Centrestand caught up with a few of them to find out what they had to say.

CS: What do you expect people to get out of the Ride today?

Jock Rogan (ROR Organiser): Well, perhaps I could explain the purpose of the Ride and how it came about. It was felt it was needed after Wendy von Gasteren collided with a pedestrian, TJ Maxwell, just down the road from here and that sent a ripple of grief right through the motorcycling community. A few weeks after that we lost Andy Caldicott in the Paris-Dakar which then sent another ripple through our community and so many motorcyclists felt that they needed a way to come together to remember better times... happier times, and also to deal with their grief. By uniting motorcyclists here today it lets everyone mingle, everyone meet and everyone share a commonality of feeling

It's also an excellent opportunity from the MRA's point of view to show everyone that we care about what happens on our roads, that we care about each other and our community



Terry from Salisbury

CS: What brings you here today?

Terry: I just thought that it's a good thing when I saw it the first time last year, the Ridden-On Ride. An opportunity to just remember guys ... and the women too that have come to grief on their bikes and also people who have just lost loved ones over the years. It's a good concept, I think.

CS: What do you expect to get out of the ride?

Terry: I guess a bit of reflection when we get down to Second Valley, just take a bit of time aside to think about things.

CS: Do you think that going on the Run will change your attitude on the road?

Terry: No, mainly because I like to act responsibly all the time. The club that we're with, the Cruiser Club, our big promotion thing when we try and sign up new members is

the safety aspect of our rides, and I think that if everyone keeps that in mind its gonna help things a lot.



Bernadette from Basket Range

CS: What brings you here today?

Bernadette: I think it's very sad to see how many people have to die on the road. Since I had a major accident myself a few years ago ... I want to support this as a way to get safe on the road. Yeah.

CS: What do you expect to get out of today?

Bernadette: I hope that the government looks after us a bit better and that the roads get safer and that they do more for us.



Ray from Warradale

CS: What Brings you here today?

Ray: Well, it's a memorial for all the fallen riders. There's a couple that I know actually and so I guess just to remember them.

CS: Do you think that going on the Run will change your attitude on the road?

Ray: Yeah, I think so. Since I bought my new bike my attitude and my skills have changed quite considerably in the last 12 months so I think that the Ride is very appropriate.

(YET ANOTHER) FRONT NUMBER PLATES PROPOSAL by Peter Mount

The agenda for the Roads Modal Group (RMG), which met in Sydney recently, included the national introduction of "front identifiers" for motorbikes. The RMG is a committee of transport department CEOs. It advises the Standing Committee on Transport (SCOT), which is the national council of transport ministers.

The frontal ID proposal sent shock waves through the motorcycle community and industry. Frontal ID for motorcycles was developed as a policy statement of the Pedestrian Council of Australia (PCA), and went to VicRoads for consideration in 2005. That led (in part) to VicRoads drafting a regulatory impact statement (RIS) on frontal ID for bikes.

VicRoads had been commissioned by the federal government - or rather, had offered - in the late 1990s, to look into the viability of reintroducing front numberplates and examining alternatives for frontal identification. The RIS is the culmination of that project, but it has not been without contention and dispute from motorcycle and industry groups across the country and internationally.

Members of the Victorian Motorcycle Advisory Council (VMAC, chaired by Neill O'Keefe, former Parliamentary Secretary to the federal Minister of Transport) and the NSW Motorcycle Council (NSWMCC) were affronted that neither VicRoads nor the PCA (which is based in Sydney) sought any input from their groups or from the motorcycle industry in the development of the RIS. When VMAC had questioned VicRoads on progress of the project, it was led to believe that frontal ID was a "non-issue" and was not being pursued. VMAC only became aware of the RIS by accident.

The Australian Motorcycle Council (AMC) has backed strong opposition from the NSWMCC and the Victorian-based MRA Australia (MRAA) to the VicRoads proposal to see front numberplates (FNPs) for motorcycles reintroduced in Australia.

AMC Chairman, Shaun Lennard, has written to all state transport ministers and state transport department heads highlighting significant problems with the proposal, which had been circulating the country in secret between road authorities until it was recently leaked to motorcycle representatives.

"The level of consultation over this has been appalling," said Mr Lennard. "But worse than that, the data and information presented is grossly flawed. Any proper motorcycle safety initiative in 2008 would recognise the huge increase in motorcycle numbers on the roads in recent years. That fact is omitted altogether.

"The proposal from VicRoads is claimed to be based on road safety but it's not. If road authorities across the country accept this factually faulty bluster from VicRoads, we're in trouble as a nation. It has taken VicRoads eight long years spending the money of Victorian riders trying to design something that just won't work."

Mr Lennard said that road authorities have continued to install fixed front-facing speed cameras knowing full well that motorcycles do not have front plates, and that the VicRoads RIS amounted to a proposal that riders across Australia pay for being overlooked in the development of public policy.

"Riders around Australia are united in their opposition to this ridiculous idea. Road safety has been politicised for some time and this is another example," he concluded.

Front plates were removed from motorcycles in the mid-1970's due to injuries to pedestrians, bicycle riders and motorcycle riders.

Now, 30 years later, frontal design of motorcycles has evolved without any way of including them. With two or three exceptions, no other country on the planet uses front plates, and in some it is illegal to fit them due to their risk to safety. Those few that do allow them have shocking road safety statistics, particularly for motorcycles.

The proposal is predicated upon enforcement strategies using front-facing speed enforcement cameras. This strategy was flawed at inception in relation to motorcycles, which were known to have no front numberplates when front-facing cameras were deployed.

Now, a failure in one strategy is generating an expensive retro-fit as a patching strategy, amounting to an estimated \$12mil, with the federal government allowing \$10mil for a public ~~propaganda coercion persuasion~~ information program. *(Imagine what real motorcycle safety initiatives could be achieved with \$22mil...Ed.)*

This failure of public policy is viewed with scorn by riders, as evidence of the failure to include motorcycles in transport or roads policy. Where rear-facing speed enforcement cameras are used, there is no problem in identifying bikes.

In the UK, a multi-angled camera van has been developed as part of a bid to address the issue of speeding motorcyclists. The van, which has multi-direction cameras and recording systems to enable motorcycles to be identified from front, side and rear, is claimed to be the UK's most advanced weapon in the casualty reduction fight.

Academics, the industry and motorcycle groups have also strongly criticised the RIS for its systematic manipulation of data to support the introduction of FNPs and the omission of both data and information that would not support the VicRoads prop[osal].

Concern has also been expressed regarding the legal liability issues in the event of injury caused by FNPs. Although VicRoads was made aware of these issues, there is no mention of them in the RIS.

The RIS is also considered inadequate because it does not clearly identify and articulate the problem to be addressed by regulatory measures, and has been widely condemned for its inconsistencies, irrelevancies and contradictions.

(Info courtesy of AMC, MRAA, Damien Codognotto, Guy Stanford)

A GOOD DAY FOR A RIDE?

Are you ready to ride? Here's a self diagnostic test which will help you decide just how well you and your bike are ready to combat the road and the elements today. Ignore the results at your peril. Tick the most accurate description – if individual answers don't fit exactly then pick the closest answer with the highest score.

Bike

Tyres

- ① Brand New
- ② wearing out the pips
- ③ centre worn, sides still good
- ④ bald
- ⑤ canvas

Brakes

- ① good as new / top stoppers
- ② worn but working well
- ③ worn down to the red line / spongy
- ④ squealing / shudders / bike changes direction
- ⑤ no brakes to speak of

Mechanical Condition

- ① tuned so that it purrs
- ② just out of tune enough to be annoying
- ③ getting a bit rattly, blowing a bit of smoke
- ④ I don't know which is louder, the chain or the exhaust (for chain drives)
- ④ the transmission clunks like its about to implode (for shaft drives)
- ⑤ rattles / blows smoke / ready to expire / will it get me home?

Road Conditions

- ① Excellent condition
- ② Generally good
- ③ Mixed / Variable
- ④ A bit slippery
- ⑤ Bad (sand patches, potholes, patches etc)

State of Mind

- ① Ready to take on the world
- ② Feelin' All Right
- ③ I was OK yesterday, but now I'm not sure
- ④ Since My Baby Left Me ...
- ⑤ Suicidal

Physical Condition

- ① Super fit
- ② City Bay in less then 60 minutes
- ③ Couch Potato
- ④ Breathless climbing stairs
- ⑤ Still drunk from last night

Last Hour Activities

- ① Sex
- ② Relaxing / Yoga / Massage
- ③ Just watched Casey Stoner win again
- ④ Argument / Fight
- ⑤ Booze up

Weather

- ① Perfect Day
- ② Slight Breeze, temperature a little bit more or less than preferred
- ③ Weather changing / changeable quickly, wind picking up, clouds coming in
- ④ Too hot or too cold or too wet / uncomfortable
- ⑤ Wet, windy, gusty, low visibility etc.

Score : Add up the numbers corresponding to your answers to find your 'At Risk' score on the chart below. And NO going back to change the answers!

8-10 Go for it, don't hesitate, watch out for the idiots on the road who are your only competition. Don't be over-confident. I wish I were you.

11-20 You trust yourself and your bike and know your limitations. Have a good ride. You can ride in front of me.

21-30 I'd be real careful out there if I were you. Think twice about it. Is your will up to date? Average is just not good enough. You'd be better off spending some time in the shed with your loved-one.

31-40 Stay at home. You're one of the idiots. Trade in your bike, your attitude and your lifestyle.

So, how did you do? The main point of the exercise is to help you to be aware of yourself, your bike and your riding environment. What can you do to improve your safety in all of those areas?

Compiled by Harald Lindemann. Feel free to copy and share.

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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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