

MRA

Motorcycle Riders' Association

MRA HOUSE
184 BRUNSWICK ST.,
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(03) 417 2718
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NATIONAL CONFERENCE

M.R.A. HOUSE

JUNE 25 & 26

WELCOME by Victorian President

- (a) Chairman's Opening Address (Preface)
- (b) Delegates - State, Names and Committee positions, Number of Financial Members represented.
- (c) Registers
- (d) Visitors

FOUNDATION PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

AGENDA:

1. Change in procedure at Conference - two delegates from each Branch allowed to speak. (One vote per Branch retained).
2. Registers input at National Conference.
3. Vote on the establishment of M.R.A. Australia.
4. Starting date (1st July?). Details to be worked out later, when the National Constitution (by-laws, guidelines or whatever) are discussed.
5. National Newsletter. Mike Hanlon, Editor of A.M.C.N., will speak at 11.00am Saturday.
6. Statement of financial membership numbers.
7. Statement of finances.
8. Finance of M.R.A. Australia.
9. National functions, e.g. Rallies, Toy Runs, Road Safety Months, and dates.
10. Future of M.R.A. Western Australia.
11. Future of M.R.A. Great Britain
12. Future of the A.M.C. and A.M.C. Representation
13. Interference of, or action by, Branches in other States' affairs.
14. M.R.A. Australia Constitution.

NB: A representative of Western Underwriters will attend on Saturday afternoon to answer questions on the operations of M.R.A. Motorcycle Insurance in Victoria.

A.C.T., New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia,
Tasmania, Victoria, Western Australia and Gt. Britain

let those who ride decide

THIRD NATIONAL CONFERENCE

CHAIRMAN'S OPENING ADDRESS

In summary, the Aims of the M.R.A. include: A change in the unjustified public image of motorcyclists, by charitable community programs, and at the same time; to provide a link between riders, Government, the general public, other organisations and further, to generally improve motorcycling activities.

However, the major undertaking was, and is, to promote road safety by road user education in general, (including riders) and car driver education in particular.

Knowledgeable, experienced and practical input, by our expanding and maturing Association, to State and Federal Government must be reinforced if future legislation is to be in part, the result of our efforts and therefore, effective in reducing the death and agony of Australian motorcyclists.

Ladies and gentlemen, as Committee representatives of your State, as always, but especially at this Conference, you are charged to continue in the service of your Members, via the objectives of the Association. Having read the Agenda, it seems to me that if you fail to resolve the listed items, you may deny Australian motorcyclists their right to a better image, status and safety, on roads across the Nation, regardless of State boundaries and I dare to say - even Internationally.

Referring to the National Road Toll of Motorcyclists and Pillion Riders Mr. Gordon Trinca, O.B.E., F.R.A.C.S. said:

"..... Strict licensing procedures, preceded by intensive rider training, and tough legal sanctions, rigourously enforced, are urgently required."

National Chairman,
Road Trauma Committee, R.A.C.S.

During this conference, my duty is to assist you to arrive at Resolutions, that after careful consideration, you believe will further the agreed aims of the M.R.A. To that goal, I MUST act impartially, according to the standard Rules of Debate. Further, my given powers are to preserve order and regulate the proceedings so as to give all representatives reasonable opportunity to be heard and vote.

Attached: General Rules of Debate
& Table of Formal Motions.

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EXTRACT FROM NOTES ON THE M.R.A. NATIONAL CONFERENCE
JUNE 25 th. 1983.

M.R.A. HOUSE. MELBOURNE.

Hal Gaston, A.C.T. : 'Perhaps we are taking too much time. Should we go to item 3. (Vote on the establishment of M.R.A. Australia)'?

MOVED A.C.T. : That the Foundation Presidents address be deferred.

SECONDED QLD.:

RESULT : 4 States for the motion

2 against

1 abstained (Vic.)

A.C.T., New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia,
Tasmania, Victoria, Western Australia and Gt. Britain

let those who ride decide

FOUNDATION PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

In relation to all the other nations on our planet, Australia is rather unusual. Geographically it is huge. More than 3 million square miles. However, population wise it is rather small - 14 million people, mainly in coastal cities.

Historically Australia's huge distances have caused problems in communications. Our cities and State Governments have developed characters of their own.

In some ways this is positive. But as we move towards the year 2000, just 17 years hence, these individual characteristics will in some ways be negative.

We Australians are also unusual on the world scale in that we have a high standard of living. Advanced technology is becoming more and more available to individuals and to organisations.

The M.R.A. has been growing for just 5 years. In that short time both the M.R.A. and Australia have seen massive changes although our defense mechanisms may, at times, prevent us from seeing these changes in their true perspective, or from even recognising what is happening to us.

The changes are happening at an amazing rate but few Australians realise it. Our defense mechanisms are perhaps over-protecting us as a nation from future shock.

In 5 years we have seen air travel change from modern Fokker Friendships, DC9s and 727s to Airbuses, 737s and 767s. Home computers, video recorders and tiny calculators are taken for granted. Soon we may see a satellite that will mean an event in Hobart will be seen in seconds in Port Hedland.

It is already possible to talk to a person in Elizabeth Street, Melbourne from M.R.A. House as quickly and easily as it is to speak with someone in Darwin.

The future of the M.R.A. lies in having the guts and imagination to understand and use current and future technology as it becomes available.

Using current and future technology costs money and therefore, the future of the Association lies in having the guts and imagination to generate funds. To operate as a business and grow.

We, the Australian Motorcycle Community, have been held hostage by the system since World War 2. We have been paying our ransom in the fees we pay and blood on the roads. Our captor, the system, has treated us badly. We have been held as second class citizens and had NO say in matters relating to our conditions.

In the last 5 years we have broken out.

Motorcyclists have formed groups to improve our conditions, to break loose from our captors and become first class citizens.

The most effective group is the M.R.A.

However we are not free yet. The System holding us for ransom is still powerful. The partial freedom we have won has given rise to a disease effecting many motorcyclists and their groups.

That disease is "Holloway's Syndrome". We have to prevent that disease from crippling the M.R.A.

I will read part of Holloway's View from A.M.C.N. Volume 32, No. 24.

"The 'Copenhagen Syndrome'. If not Copenhagen, then Helsinki or some such Scandinavian city describes the behaviour patterns of passengers on a hijacked aircraft. It was called the 'Copenhagen' syndrome because that is where it was first recognised and described.

People released after having been held hostage for a period of time in a hijacked aircraft show many emotions: joy, continuing fear, nervousness, etc. But the most remarkable facet of their behaviour is the way in which they have come to identify with their captors, the hijackers. They become their chief apologists, often even supporting their cause.

Maybe the reason for this is that being held for an indeterminate period of time in such a confined space at such a high level of utterly helpless fear, the mind loses its identity. And loss of identity, whether individual or group, is the ultimate degradation. It can happen to a prisoner, an aboriginal - or a woman who has been raped. The mind is left numbed and defenceless. It is shattering. Like a new-born duckling, the mind is wide open to imprinting - maybe even wanting to be imprinted: for beyond loss of identity lies the Black Abyss of madness.

The hijackers are in their turn captives of the security forces outside the aircraft and hence subject to similar pressures. In this hothouse of jumbled emotions and insecurity, a new sub-culture and ideology is quickly formed. And, 'The ideology of a culture is the ideology of the ruling class'.

Thus, the hijackers, the ruling class, define the rules of the game (the ideology) for the hoi-polloi (the passengers) and the passengers play their role in this new game. So strong is this imprinting that it can, and does, continue after their release.

After we study Motorcycle accident statistics and examine unjust laws and our second class citizen status, the anger subsides. The brain's defence mechanisms take over and the 'whys', 'what ifs' and 'if onlys' of anguish take over. I could blame drivers, myself, motorcyclists, government, or a list as long as your arm, but this would still not define the cause, let alone the cure.....

The 'Holloway Syndrome' - so named after the person who first described it, is a syndrome which characterises many motorcyclists. It is similar in many ways to the Copenhagen Syndrome.

The typical sufferer has been indoctrinated into a sub-ideology (our road safety system) which has been generated by the ruling class of drivers. He had little say in the generation of this system but since he is part of it he conforms and even supports it as being necessary. Although he dislikes drivers, or more particularly their behaviour on the roads, he accepts them as being the ruling class. Among other motorcyclists, he spends much time complaining of drivers' behaviour. This happens in hotels where, when he recounts his latest tale of driver incompetence, it is difficult to tell whether he is boasting or complaining. (This may sound like a condemnation, but it is not. In fact, such behaviour is, as will be seen, a sign that a cure can be effected.)

He rides with the attitude, 'my survival is my responsibility' and as a cure for the disease of driver error it must be admitted that this is top medicine - absolutely vital. But he fails to realise that prevention is better than cure. This is either through lack of wit or his indoctrination by the power group's ideology. When, in the glimmerings of his brain the thought generates then it is quickly suppressed by his second-class citizen belief.

This belief has been taught to him for as long as he can remember: Honest Upright Citizen v. Hooligan Biker. It states that cars are the norm and if

he steps outside of this norm then he must accept the consequences. That when he has an accident then society automatically assume that he was in the wrong - or at least made a major contribution to his injuries by failing to protect himself with a car. The media constantly reinforces this by telling him that motorcycles are dangerous and he is responsible for his own safety. He plays their game and wears more and more protective clothing.

However the media and ruling class are strangely silent about the effect these policies have on pedestrians whose fatality figures approach a figure fifty percent greater than for motorcyclists. Their policies wont work so they are not talked about.

The motorcyclist however is different. He is a weirdo minority group with no political muscle and can be used as a scape-goat when 'something has to be done'. The poor Holloway's Syndrome sufferer goes along with it. Magistrates often reinforce the belief. The police consider him fair game and young officers straight out of training school sharpen their teeth on him. He accepts it - thereby reinforcing in himself and others his second-class status.

To maintain a modicum of self-respect, he sometimes joins a club where, at worst, he can be among fellow sufferers; or at best, try to do something about the situation. For some of these clubs are dedicated to this aim. They organise events such as toy and blood runs which, although altruistically good, are often done with the aim of improving Joe Public's image of them. Second class status - QED. Any suggestion of more radical behaviour is greeted with cries of 'we must hurry slowly' and 'Rome wasn't built in a day' - dammit, the whole bloody world took only seven.

Other symptoms of the syndrome are a belief that you cannot do anything about it (a belief which borders on masochism) and also on the inability to differentiate between types of danger. For example, they will sometimes enhance the pleasure derived from riding by riding near the limit. This can be dangerous for them but they accept it - for it can be part of the pleasure. But danger also exists for them in the behaviour of other road users. The sufferer fails to see the difference between these types of danger - of playing Russian Roulette; or have someone else play it with the gun pointing at your head. And no choice in the matter.....

You cure a disease but a syndrome is a behaviour pattern; and you break a behaviour pattern. You give the sufferer a new ideology to believe in. Not just a tatty revision of the existing but something new to believe. And the will to act on it, for any belief that is not worth acting upon is pious claptrap.

You have to break his second-class cap-in-hand thought patterns and make him feel superior - which he is.

For he rides a much safer form of transport than a car. Safer, that is, according to his new ideology. Whether he is a Bob Maron or Paul Watkins blasting interstate on a road test, or a put-put commuter, he knows the score and accepts that his mistakes will hurt only himself. This differs from drivers, whose mistakes hurt others.....

Just think it through. We are not talking here about justice and being reasonable. Justice is no more than what we say it is. We are discussing the means of breaking a syndrome - and the benefits that will accrue.

Once we believe, and demand, that injuring another road user is The Cardinal Sin on the road (and as motorcyclists, we can fairly demand that) then it is a new ball game completely. As allies, we will have pedestrians and cyclists and suddenly we will have donned the holier-than-thou mantle worn by drivers for so long. What could follow from this is mind-boggling.....

Being reasonable is maiming people like you and me every day. I want an end to rule by driver because it is not in MY interests.

I am superior to drivers - and so are you if only you could see it. So get off your knees, dust the dirt off your knuckles, put your cap back on your head and walk tall. The sun shines out of your exhaust pipe so demand a road system geared to YOUR needs....."

M.R.A. Victoria, the founding and largest branch, believes that M.R.A. Australia is necessary. Such a body would ensure that the M.R.A. becomes an even more powerful force to protect the future of motorcycling in this country. It would also protect the spirit of the Constitution and National Image of the Association.

Government Departments are slowly beginning to think Nationally. Transport, Education and Police Departments are gradually moving in the direction of National Organisations. They are a long way behind businesses and unions. Most important organisations in this country are making use of modern technology and looking to the future of Australia rather than individual locations.

Failing to recognise these trends has led to the fragmentation and/or collapse of several bodies. For example, the Federation of Australian Motorcyclists was the major force in motorcycle lobbying. It is now virtually non-existent.

The Auto Cycle Union has a peak council but it is weak and as a result that organisation is fragmented. A result is that motorcycle sport in this country is not promoted as a National Sport but as individual club activities. Motorcycle sport has not yet reached the '80s. The car clubs, (N.R.M.A., R.A.C.V.,) etc., likewise are fragmented and their future nationally is limited. However, it appears that they may be making moves towards greater national unity, albeit slowly. They have recognised the value of business interests and modern technology. It is NOT suggested that the M.R.A. adopt similar techniques to the car clubs. The M.R.A. must remain a grass roots organisation, protecting members' safety and rights and supplying services to motorcycling. However, to do that the M.R.A. must prepare for the future and recognise the trends and directions of our Nation. It must take full advantage of the facilities Australia has to offer and be prepared to maximise the benefits of future facilities as they become available.

The ground work must be done in 1983 to ensure that this Association is united and flexible enough to use such facilities for the good of motorcycling.

The M.R.A. has demonstrated the worth of its Constitution through its growth and achievements over the last 5 years. But it is not time to relax and fall into the trap which caught F.A.M. and the A.C.U. The M.R.A. must think in terms of the '80s and '90s and work to ensure a strong future.

Our proposals for M.R.A. Australia are based on 5 years experience and expertise which has made M.R.A. Victoria a successful, growing and professional organisation. Also, by travelling to, and in some cases working with other States' M.R.A.s, Victoria has learned a great deal about the operation of the Association on a National level.

The recent visit of the President of M.R.A. Great Britain, Paul Hillock, indicated the future value of an International M.R.A. These proposals are designed to decrease the workloads of the various M.R.A. Committees and increase their profitability to allow them to better serve their members while promoting a strong National image.

Our proposals for M.R.A. Australia will not:

1. Lessen the power or effectiveness of M.R.A. Committees
2. Take funds or gains already won by M.R.A. Committees
3. Interfere with the work of individual Committees

Our proposals will:

1. Increase the earning capacity of the Branches and Registers.
2. Improve the facilities available to make work in various areas and locations more effective.

3. Ensure a strong National image and promote unity.
4. Give the M.R.A. a system of Federal representation should the A.M.C. fail.
5. Increase the M.R.A. services and goods available to ALL M.R.A. members.

As Delegates and Observers you have a responsibility to members in your area to represent them and make decisions in their best interests. You also have a responsibility to ALL M.R.A. members, so the welfare of members throughout the Association must be taken into account.

5 YEARS' EXPERIENCE

The Motorcycle Riders' Association began in Victoria. The three founding members were introduced to each other at Broadford in 1977. The first official meeting of the M.R.A. was held in a hotel in St. Kilda in May, 1978. That night the first 16 members of the Association formed the Melbourne Branch. The idea was to build an organisation that was universally acceptable, yet strong enough to fight for motorcyclists' safety and rights. This organisation had to be public to fill the gap in motorcyclists' defences left by the soft sell Federation of Australian Motorcyclists. The two organisations were to complement each other. They were to work together.

The form, operation and image of the new organisation was extensively discussed that night in May. Even the name was a long time in coming. The name had to be universally acceptable. It had to say who and what we were. We were not to be a club. Discussion of the situation led us to the conclusion that what was needed was an organisation that was a union and a service group. A group that worked with other lobby groups to fight for a better deal for motorcyclists.

It was M.R.A. Victoria that put forward the concept of a National Run to Canberra. It was M.R.A. Victoria that worked with F.A.M. A.C.T. to hold the 12,000 bike run on the Nation's Capital on the Australia Day Long Weekend in January, 1980.

M.R.A. Victoria has been involved with the establishment of, and supports the Australian Motorcycle Council. We were at the first Narrandera Conference in September, 1978.

We had a name and a basic concept. Further discussion led us to the conclusion that the M.R.A. should have a constitution to ensure that future members and committees understood what the M.R.A. was for and how it should look and why it should operate in a certain way.

Part of the Constitution was to ensure that all motorcyclists, members or not, could have input to committee policy-making decisions. Public monthly meetings should be held as forums to receive and distribute information and opinions.

Since the work of the M.R.A. would effect ALL riders it was felt that two-way communication with the motorcycle community was most important. This could be achieved by public meetings, by mail and through the media. Public activities would also play a major role in this communication.

Offices were not available at that time and it was necessary to have a mailing address. It was decided that a post office box was the best way to ensure that the committee was kept in touch with people who could not attend meetings.

It was also decided that records of finances and meetings should be kept and be available to be seen by anyone who had an interest. It was to be an open and democratic organisation.

The aims of the Association had to be universally acceptable too. They had to be easily understood and benign. They had to be aims that you could quote to the media and they could find nothing negative in them.

The aims of the M.R.A. are:

1. Road Safety
2. A better image for motorcyclists
3. Fair and sensible legislation

Policies were developed with those aims in mind.

The First Aim

The most important and most neglected area of Road Safety was Road User Education. It still is.

The Second Aim

A better image did not mean that the motorcycle community was going to change. It meant that by using the media, especially at well-run public activities, the motorcycle community would be seen by the general public to be a caring and intelligent section of our society; motorcycles would be seen as a legitimate and contributing part of our transport system.

The Third Aim

The aim of achieving fair and sensible legislation meant that good legislation regarding motorcycling would be supported. For example we would help develop and support the introduction of a skill test for learner permit applicants.

We have done this. However, it also meant that we would fight bad laws. For example, front number plates, excessive insurance premiums, no mods laws, differential speed limits, the 250cc restriction, etc. We are doing this.

Many laws were being made by Authorities who had no practical knowledge of motorcycling. They did not see the motorcycle community as having anything constructive to say. They do not say it openly but many feel that we are of sub-normal intelligence and a negative influence in the community as a whole.

They are still making ill-informed and unjust decisions concerning motorcyclists. They are still discriminating against us and treating us as second class citizens in many cases. They reflect the feelings of some members of the general public.

The M.R.A. was formed as a union to fight injustice and discrimination against motorcyclists.

THE STRUGGLE TO ACHIEVE THE FIRST AIM

Riders die and are maimed at a rate greater than the tolls for the Vietnam or Korean wars. In the same length of time more of our people become casualties than Australian Servicemen became casualties in those wars. We have nothing to lose by fighting for our rights. More than 20,000 Australian riders were killed or injured by other Australians in cars between 1975 and 1980.

Think of that - 20,000 casualties caused by car drivers.

More than 75% of all multi vehicle accidents involving a motorcycle are found to be the fault of a car driver. We are involved in a Civil War. A hidden war.

The Federal Government was made aware of the statistics in a speech to Federal Parliament by the Labour Shadow Minister for Transport in September, 1980. He was the Honourable Peter Morris. He had been to the rally site and attended the 12,000 bike run to Canberra in January, 1980.

The Federal Government ignored his plea on our behalf. The Federal Transport Minister ignored the 12,000 bike run. His representative turned up late. He was at the cricket.

Peter Morris' statistics were frightening. He said this:

"More than 40,000 motorcyclists have been either killed or injured on Australia's roads since 1975. The majority were young and inexperienced riders who, through lack of proper rider training or driver awareness schemes, had little chance in an accident situation. In 1980/81, it (the Federal Government) expects to increase its revenue from petrol taxes to \$3,978m., an increase of 27%. Less than 0.0002% of this petrol tax revenue will be spent on road

safety. That is the value that this Government places on the lives of the motoring public. However, this is not the only implication of the Government's petrol tax for road safety. In effect, it has set in train fundamental shifts in the modes of personal transport..... Given the inadequacy of the public transport system and the highly decentralised urban areas an increasing proportion of the motoring public is turning towards motorcycling as a form of personal transport. This shift is reflected in statistics which indicate that national sales of motorcycles increased by more than 45% in 1979/80. The average purchaser is a married man with 2 children in a single income family situation. On average, the motorcycle purchased is a commuter, medium sized road cycle with much greater potential for economy than that of a small 4 cylinder motor car..... Government expenditure on motorcycle road safety has been less than ONE HALF OF ONE PER CENT OF TOTAL ROAD SAFETY SPENDING SINCE 1974/75. Motorcycles are an efficient and low cost form of personal transport and their use should be encouraged. It is the Government's responsibility to ensure that the motorcycle rider receives adequate training before being exposed to the hazards of the open road "

40,000 casualties. Some civil war.

What the Honorable Peter Morris was saying was that one half of one per cent was not enough of the road safety money to spend on motorcycling. Considering the amount of petrol tax collected and the cost to the community of 40,000 casualties, the Federal Government had been neglecting the motorcycling community. They still are.

After his speech, in the corridors of power, Peter Morris was asked by other M.P.s why he bothered with the "bikies". They did not listen to the statistics, or did not want to. Such was their lack of care. Were they conditioned to react against intelligent input from the motorcycle community?

Perhaps it was not a conscious discrimination. Perhaps they felt that one half of one per cent of the road safety spending was enough for motorcyclists. Perhaps they felt that we would all be dead soon anyway.

In 1981 I put the idea of a National Motorcycle Safety Month to the Parliamentary Advisory Committees on Education and Road Safety. (P.A.C.E.R.S.) I am the A.M.C. Delegate to that Committee.

In Victoria we have just held our 3rd annual Safety Month. They have all been successful. I showed P.A.C.E.R.S. a 2 minute video tape and other material M.R.A. Victoria had obtained from the U.S.A. where there are several successful Motorcycle Safety Months. I was given about 8 minutes at the end of a 6 hour meeting which was primarily concerned with re-designing a leaflet that has still not been printed.

I was told that the Federal Government would not be involved in a Motorcycle Safety Month.

THE MOTTO

"Let those who ride decide" was also borrowed from the Americans. It is the M.R.A. motto. It does not mean that we want to make the laws to suit ourselves. It means we want fair and sensible input into decisions that affect our rights and safety. It was picked because it was a talking point. It would arouse interest in why the M.R.A. existed. It would promote dialogue and give us the opportunity to explain what we are about.

Similarly M.R.A. Victoria designed "lights on stinks" stickers. They were meant to provoke conversation with people who thought we were crazy not to want the compulsory daytime use of headlights. They were meant to give us a chance to put our case. They were very successful. Sadly the motto and the stickers were condemned by some people they were meant to help. They said "too militant. We don't want to be seen to be table-thumping."

40,000 casualties. Don't table thump.

They should spend some time observing in a Melbourne casualty ward. They should talk to the 4B's. The 4B's started in Melbourne too.

THE IMAGE

To do its job properly, the M.R.A. had to project a credible image. It had to be seen as a well organised, representative body of people who did their research and wanted reasonable things. It had to be a strong image. People do not respect other people who make idle threats. Who cry wolf. It had to project a benign image. An image that represented people who cared for their community. M.R.A. Blood Runs, Toy Runs and charity work started in Melbourne. It had to project an image that said we work within the system to improve the system.

The name of the Association gave rise to the initials M.R.A. A Letraset type face, "Pump" bold was chosen because it was a benign rounded style. It was bold and highly legible and would be readily available in years to come. The large full stops could suggest wheels to some. The letters shown in a western style type face may have suggested cowboys to some. And so on.

Those three initials were to be, and are, representative of what the Association is. Just as the B.M.W., Shell, Red Cross and Qantas have their logos. You do not have to see their names written. A familiar logo is more eloquent than the written name in many cases. M.R.A. in pump represents the Motorcycle Riders' Association.

Since the media was to be one of our weapons and television is the most powerful medium, we needed colours that would compliment the work of the logo. The colours had to be very legible, readily available, fade resistant and easily distinguished from a crowd on camera. Black and white was the obvious choice because it stood in contrast to a coloured surround in nature and on camera.

Some have since felt that black was negative. We felt that it was as negative as a Government vehicle, formal wear or a nun's habit. Just as white is as positive as a virgin bride. Black and white are the M.R.A.'s "colours".

M.R.A. Victoria is proud of the achievements all over Australia that the black and white represents. Some of us wear our black and whites daily, and with pride.

OTHER BRANCHES

During 1979 the M.R.A. in Melbourne was gaining a reputation, via the media. Concerned motorcyclists contacted the Melbourne Committee hoping to establish M.R.A.'s in their areas.

Since the work of the Association dealt with Governments it was logical to have Branches close to the seats of Government in the capital cities. But riders in other centres needed an organisation to deal with local issues and represent those riders to the Branch and so to Government. The idea of Registers for those centres was formed.

Registers catered for the needs of riders outside the capitals and worked under the Branches.

Just as there was a need for Branches and Registers there is now a need for a National Body. In the future there will be a need for an International Body. It too will need a strong and respected image.

In 1978 there was only one Branch with 16 members. In 1983 there are more than 40 Branches and Registers, one Branch is in England. There are 10,000+ members. That has happened in just 5 years and the Branches that have held true to the original Constitution are growing. That indicates that there was a need for an organisation like the M.R.A. and that the original Constitution works.

The M.R.A. in Melbourne wanted to leave the way clear for the democratic growth of the Association so it checked out the riders who wished to start Branches and Registers as best it could. We asked that they uphold the spirit of the Constitution and the good name of the Association. We said that only minor

things in the Constitution, like the numbers to make a quorum could be changed. We said that Victoria set the standard for colours and logos until a National Body was formed and a majority vote could be taken.

Other concerned riders asked us if they could use our Constitution. We did not force them to start Branches and Registers.

As remaining founding member of the M.R.A. holding a Committee position, I am most concerned that the spirit and image of the M.R.A. should not be watered down or corrupted to the advantage of those who place personal gain, in whatever form, before the reduction of our road toll and the defense of our rights and liberty.

We have achieved much in 5 years. Victoria's growth indicates that our original policies are in general correct. We have a long way to grow.

The M.R.A. is at a cross roads. It is the same cross roads where the car clubs, the A.C.U.s, the F.A.M.s and other have failed. Political boundaries are negative for most purposes. We can have one strong, unified image and Constitution if we forget the petty State and National boundaries where possible. Leave the little empires to others. The people who make the bad laws for us, and neglect our safety.

No matter what or where we ride, we ride. That is what the M.R.A. was born of.
