

Dear Editor.

As the Patriarch of the Motor Cycle Protest/Lobby movement here in N.S.W. the attached may be of some interest to your readers as some untruths are starting to come forward in the on-going debate between gentlemen of the Motor Cycle Lobby Groups.

Yours Sincerely

RUSTY SPOKE

Brian Greenfield

PART 1

The Editor  
Australian Motorcycle News  
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Dear Editor,

I'm afraid my old mate Damien C. has gone off half cocked again, for someone who occupies so much space in your erstwhile Publication and yet is so ill informed I find appalling.

Apparently Damien thinks that B.C (Before Cogdognotto ) Motorcycle Lobbyists did not exist, well I remeber in 1950 BC how groups of Motor Cyclists lobbied their members <sup>M</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>AGAINST</sup> the introduction of compulsory Stop Lights to motorcycles in NSW, readers may smile, as the stoplight is now an exepcted fitment, but at the time this issue was just as emotive as "The Yellow Brick Road". The Lobbyist again sharpened up their pencils when in 1965 BC <sup>C</sup> the idea of one compulsory rear vision mirror was mooted.

But the issue that caused the greatest furore was Compulsory Helmets, the battle raged hard and long , letters to the editor, protest meetings, approaches to State Members ,but rightly or wrongly the Motor Cyclist lost out in 1971 BC. perhaps this was because it was an era before public protests and street demmonstrations, this form of protest surfaced when LBJ arrived in Australia, and the Vietnam War protest was at its height. but today even the most piddling issue calls for a Demmo ride by bike riders.

Damien also made the comment, that he did not think the ACU had any place in bike politics, who does he think looked after the interests of Motorcyclist in NSW from 1923 BC to 1968 BC the ACU of course, there was no other bodies in existance, It appears that Damien also presumes that an ACU Affiliated Club consists of riders who take a competition Motorcycle from one venue to another on the back of a truck or trailer, this is not so, in my Club at least 75% of the membership own Registered Road Motorbikes this percentage would most likely flow on throughout the 8.000 affiliated members of the ACU, also Damien the ACU is not an observer group on the NSW Motor Cycle Council but a full member with the same voting rights as other organisations.

I am sure that the ACU delegates on the Motor Cycle Council of NSW don't see their role as rabid protestors but more like consumer representatives for their 8.000 members. I totally reject the DC suggestion that I join another organisation, especially after 40 years membership in my ACU affiliated club to get some representation on matters that affect my enjoyment and passion of Motor Cycling.

Yours Sincerely - Damien C.

## PART 2.

Now for Damiens edification I will outline a potted History of the growth of the Motor Cycle Political Lobby here in N.S.W. over the past 78 years.

My earliest records show that the Pioneer Motor Cycle Club was the sole governing body of Motor Cycling here in NSW in 1908, <sup>BC</sup> but over the next decade or so in true Australian fashion other groups were set up to run their own race and push their own barrows. so that in 1922 <sup>BC</sup> there was the Motor Cycle Club of N.S.W. which had club rooms in the I.O.O.F. building in Elizabethg St Sydney with 4 billiard tables and a soft drink bar MCC of NSW had 23 other clubs affiliated to it outside of this group were other motor cycle clubs, and after much bitterness and faction fighting they all came together as the Auto Cycle Union of N.S.W. in 1923. <sup>BC</sup> OF MOTORCYCLING

This body looked after the affairs <sup>^</sup> in a low key fashion in a more gentle and restrained era, until what was known as the "Reggo Rip Off" took place the State Govt. of the day decided to increase Registration charges by 100% for motor cycles, this really got the Motor Cyclists off their backsides, a public meeting was called to try and get some commonsense back into the issue, from this meeting the Motorcycle Action Committee was formed in 1968 BC, a rather loose group with no rules, no fee's just a brief from the rank and file motrcyclist to get their Third Party Insurance back to a sane level. It was a real kitchen table organisation, financed from taking the Helmet around, meetings in members homes, silk screening posters in members garages, and even printing a Newspaper, which now in hindsight was close to being Libelous, in a members printery at 3am.

The culmination being a Demonstration Ride that attracted a Thousand Riders straight down the main street of Sydney, an unheard of means of protest by a motoring group, Violence erupted on the route to the city as Motorists tried to cut into the parade, scuffles broke out at intersections as Marshalls tried to seal off intersections.

The ride had the desired effect, because the size of the protest astounded those in authority, and the door of the then Minister for Transport which prior to the Demmo had remained firmly closed was now opened and the Motor Cycle Action Committee invited infor disscussions the upshot being that the rise were watered down.

The MAC went into limbo until 1974 until the Govt. again decided to put the boot into Motor Cyclists by again trying to increase 3rd Party Insurance fees. for a 100 cc. cycle it had risen from \$3 in 1969 to \$12 in 1975 and the proposed rise was to \$18. the bike riders were once again incensed a 500% rise in 5 years, so again the

M.A.C. was reformed under a differing name

"Motorcycle Action Group" was the new title, an Election was not far off so this time the MAG arranged a meeting with the then Shadow Minister for Transport Mr. Peter Cox, invited the ACU to take part as a considerable number of road riding ACU members were affected, laid their cards on the table the upshot being a commitment that 3rd Party Insurance would be tied into the CPI but sadly this has all gone by the board now, without a whimper from the present day NSW Political Lobbyists.

From these discussion, the then Premier elect Neville Wran was invited to Bathurst where he made his "Sermon on the Mount" to the assembled captive Motor Cyclists, the rest is history the Wran slide and for the past 10 years <sup>MOTOR CYCLISTS</sup> ^ have had a good rapport with the NSW Govt. especially with Peter Cox who when he was Transport Minister made sure that Motor Cyclists were invited to regular discussions on any proposed Legislation to be introduced.

All through the period 1970 to 1980 the Federation of Australian Motorcyclists was working away Politically in the interest of its membership. 1972 BC saw some earnest lobbying and research when an attempt was made to introduce Compulsory Headlights once again the Bureaucracy was astounded as to the depth and quality of opposition offered by the Motor Cycle Groups, there has been another belated attempt to re-introduce the Headlamp issue again rejected by a much stronger group now since the formation of the Motor Cycle Council of NSW.

In about 1978 BC an attempt was made to get a Council together but as only 3 groups were involved and there were no pressing issues at the time, the effort failed.

As Motorcycling moved from the late 70's into the 1980's Motorcycle Politics was the in thing, everyone jumped on the band wagon here in Sydney to my knowlege we had 7 groups, MRA, ACU, MAG, Bikers Ltd. Motor Cycle Liberationists, and Brotherhood MCC. all firing off arrows at varying Politicians and Departmental Heads a situation that was counter productive, so the Motor Cycle Council of NSW was formed and without any great drama's has functioned smoothly and will continue to do so in the future, providing sane men and women sit around a table and discuss the issues logically, sure opinions will vary, but the idea of a Council is to put forward the rank and file members opinions not your own,

There it is Damien, stick it on your wardrobe for reference as to what has taken place in New South Wales.

YOURS SINCERELY  
RUSTY SPOKE