



M.R.A. PROMOTIONS PTY. LTD.
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August 6th., 1986.

Dave "Grandad" Ripper.
352 Dale Avenue,
Paraburdoo,
W.A. 6754.

Dear Grandad,

re the 250 law. At the end of the 70's the main group influencing the Vic. Govt. was the Federation of Australian Motorcyclists (FAM Vic.), now defunct. They were wimps and public servants to boot. Their attitude was that you would not get the Govt. to put money into rider training so the capacity restriction was what they considered a compromise.

I did not feel that way. The Govt's official line was "rider training is not cost effective". The MRA put pressure on the Govt. through the media and P MP's and eventually forced them to reverse their policy and, as you know, introduce training. However, the 250 law was introduced anyway. In 1979 I think.

The Govt. claims it has worked but I believe that the introduction of training and the enormous amount of publicity over the last 8 years (Toy Runs etc.) has made riders more aware of bike safety and drivers more aware of bikes.

There is now a major review underway in Canberra of all capacity restrictions throughout the country. Hal Gaston is handling it and I would suggest you write to him at P.O. Box 34, Higgins, ACT. 2615.

I think I should set the record straight too. I resigned at the end of '85 as President. I tried to give the MRA a more professional image, a better magazine and improved operations. I put my own money in and worked 6 days a week in the shop for 2 years with no pay. I begged Tony, and others to help me by being reliable and by doing what his President asked of him. He refused and began to attack. He said on many occasions that he would see me out of motorcycle politics and the MRA Shop, which I had mortgaged my home to set up. I said I could not continue as President without any backup from my committee. I was working 60 hours a week and going bankrupt.

Stories were spread that I had had a break down, had burnt out. I was conned into training one assistant to do insurance. Like a fool I believed my so called friends and brought one Ben Hardiman into MRA Motorcycle Insurance. Within 8 weeks he and Tony had applied for and got an agency and although I still own the business name I have been blackballed from the Shop so they now benefit from the business I took 4 years to build up. I am broke and will probably lose everything.

They then set about changing the constitution and turning the Vic. Branch into a glorified touring club. You will have noticed the drop in quality in "Open Ride" from a magazine to a newsletter. They do not want the responsibility of going full time and running a pro. organization. I am still working for motorcycling but not with backstabbers. I still believe in the original aims of the Association.

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These bastards let the Howqua go down the drain after 7 years because they were too lazy to get into the scrub and find a new site as I did a few years back. I asked them to press release that it was off so guys like you would know not to book your holidays around a non existant rally but Tony just kept saying that he would see that it was put on. Bullshit. Just like he is now saying there will be one next years. The reasons given in Open Rode are crap. In the end I put out the press release myself.

They even lost the City Square for the Toy Run after 8 years. They were too slack to put in the booking and too petty to take my advice on an event that I have run for nearly a decade. When I found out that Tony had done fuck all to save it I popped my cork and went ahead without the fuckers. Toy Run '86, Melbourne's 9th is being run by MRA Promotions and will happen on December 13th.

Please dont be too hard on Hal re the Pilbarra visit. He had to cover Perth to Cairns with 52 stops and 96 media interviews and meetings with a Minister for Transport and several Mayors in just 31 days. Some of the Branches and Registers started organising media events as soon as the word of the trip got out and they were locked into set dates and times. The Pilbarra would have taken a minimum of 2 days and possibly more.

I know Hal regretted missing you guys but it was unavoidable. I know he regrets even more losing a Register because of it. But after whats happened to me nothing surprises me anymore.

Congratulations on your engagement. I look forward to seeing you both when you are over. That is if I can manage to hang on financially till then. I may have to sell up. If they force me to that I will probably hit the road.

Ride safe,

Damien

P.S. Please keep this in
Confidence mate. If
you mention I said anything
rumours will probably start
that I caused the collapse
of Pilbarra Register
