

From : S. Bridges
President,
Motorcycle Rider's Association
Metropolitan Register

To : Damien Codognotto
Director,
National Motorcycle Consultants Pty Ltd

Dear Damien,

Congratulations! You have finally succeeded in getting me to write to you. After receiving your latest mail regarding the HAM Rally, I felt it was necessary to make you aware of a few details. This may help you to understand why the MRA is not going to fail, and how you can help to achieve the level of success that I know both you and I want to see.

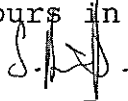
To begin with, let me quote an old saying "time heals all wounds". In other words, no matter how bad the situation was, it will get better. Regardless of what has happened in the past, the constant supply of new members is ensuring that old memories such as the Yellow Brick fiasco, and the HAM Rally are forgotten. This does not only apply to the MRA and it's members, but journalists, police and governments, all have a constant turnover of personnel. These new people have fresh, open minds, that need to be filled with good news, not bad news that has led to embarrassment, and difficult times. All you have succeeded in doing, by dragging out yet another bad memory, is destroy all the good work that has been done so far. If you really want the MRA to survive, don't attack it, or the people who are running the organisation.

This is a fairly hard thing for me to ask of someone who has spent ten years of his life fighting for the rights of motorcyclists, but you must realise that you are not the only one who is capable of performing this task. Every person that accepts the responsibility of a committee position, whether at Register or State level, is dedicated to the aims of the MRA. If they weren't, they would not be elected. These people have different and new idea's on the direction/s that the MRA should be taking, and the organisation is capable of flexing with them. If the old school is constantly criticising their efforts, then there is no progress, and the MRA loses again. I have personally observed this happening in the last two years, and wonder sometimes why I bother continuing myself.

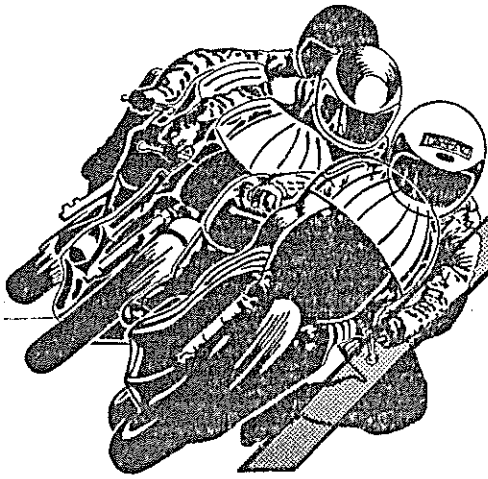
A lot of people within the MRA admire you for your efforts and achievements over the past years, including myself, but you are forcing us to lose faith when just about everything you say about the MRA (and it's people) is negative. As you are the founder of the MRA, I would not have thought you would like to see it collapse, so please just let the people who were elected to do the job, do it.

The current State Committee may not appear to be doing what you perceive to be their job, but they have allowed the waters to settle, anyone that stirs those waters is only making things worse. When the water has completely settled, we will be a strong, unified organisation that will excel. Please give us the opportunity to do this.

Yours in Motorcycling,



Steve Bridges
President, Metro Register



NMC

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10 June 1988.

S. Bridges.
President
MRA Metro Register.

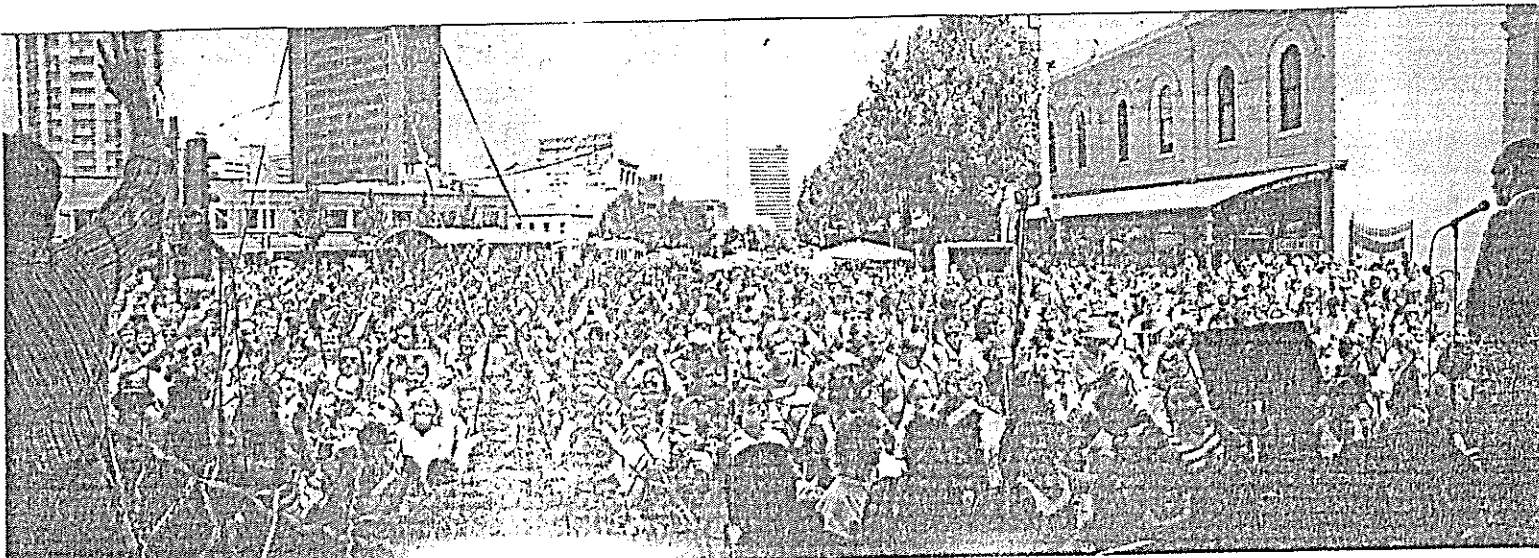
Dear Steve,

congratulations! You have finally succeeded in getting me to give up trying to help the Association. My latest mail had nothing to do with the HAM Rally. You have totally missed the point.

To begin with, I did not initiate that letter, Warren Coward of the Gippsland Register did. I live up to agreements and obligations so as agreed I supplied Warren with the paperwork HE requested at Mac's Hotel. I entered that agreement in an effort to clear my name after the unconstitutional and unjust attacks made against me. I believe that I deserve a fair go under the Constitution. But it seems that means little to you or the membership. It does not matter what injustice is done, dont rock the boat or we might miss the last drinks.

Time heals wounds is a load of rubbish. Wounds heal if they are tender. The MRA is wounded, probably mortally, and when people like me try to help, at no cost to the members and with no ambitions for position or power, we are attacked. And when the MRA unjustly attacks people like me, people like you bury your head in the sand and. In the last year or so your money has been wasted on lawyers used to act against me. The allegations were as obviously contrived as many of the charges laid against spectators at Bathurst. I have never been found guilty of anything except putting up enormous amounts of my own time, experience and money to promote the MRA and fight for riders' rights. The only MRA event that continues to run successfully in this State is the Toy Run and its the only one that I run. I contribute. State Committee does not. When I have been attacked not one of you "members" had the guts to stand up and say that Damien should at least be here to defend himself. Not one of you had the sense of justice and decency to say that you cant try an MRA member in his

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absence - its unconstitutional. But then the MRA has not run by its Constitution since the new one was introduced.

Somehow you seem to have the twisted and incredible view that I am attacking the MRA. The MRA has been attacking me and all I have sought to do is defend my honour and reputation. It was Coward who dredged Hornsby's financial problems up at your pub not me. I have done what I was asked to do in return for which I was told I would receive material kept secret from me by State committee motion. It was cleared for release when the fact that the motion itself was unconstitutional was pushed but unfortunately State seemed to conveniently lose the records. I really hope you are caught in a similar trap one day. Rest assured I won't say a word in your favour.

The purpose of getting new blood on State Committee was the very reason I resigned in 1985 from the position of State President. It did not work. Hornsby is Old Guard as was Scicluna. Guthrie, Fletcher, Bechez, Nicki, Gordon and Hardiman were new blood. What improvements do you see today? I did not get the Gippsland lawyer to threaten my Editor to stop my column. I did not spend MRA funds to stop me from earning a living supplying an insurance service for riders. I did not lose the MRA discount by improper trading. I did not threaten to sack me unless I took the Scicluna/ Hornsby line in the press (Australia does have free speech). The list goes on. The records are despite attempts to destroy them by persons unknown?

I have contributed and when I wanted out to get on with my life the MRA was so badly handled that they went broke just like the HAM Rally and lost services, equipment and the high profile premises. Now who do you think they called to try to get the thing back on its feet in a new location and who do you think dropped what they were doing to put a team together to try to save the thing - me.

In 1987 I personally with my team raised more money and signed more new members than any other member or indeed any Register for the State MRA. Why do you think that good workers bail out of the MRA in droves. Its because of the way they are treated. Give Dave & Lisa a ring in Geelong and ask why there was no Seminar this year. Because the Gippsland Newsletter attacked them. It hurt. Why is there no Driver Awareness Run & Magic Rally this year? Why wasn't the Howqua held for two years and why did it lose national status? Why is there no recovery service and what happened to the truck? What happened to our dark room, computer and more? What happened to the representation we fought so hard for on the Police Road Safety Advisory Committee, the RTA Road Safety Board and more. If you can't see that new blood in the committee has had little effect because the old guard from the La Trobe Valley has spent most of its time and money attacking people like me, Ben Hardiman, Dave Dorman and others which scares off new blood, then you do indeed have your head in the sand.

The people who were elected to run the Association have - into the ground. I, not you have to take the angry phone calls from those who have been given rubber cheques. Perhaps you would like to give me your home and work numbers so I can refer these people, and there are several, and you can explain to them that the Treasurer will have his little joke but he has left town with no forwarding address and the Secretary is not contactable. I not you take calls at all hours of the day and night from people wanting stock which they have paid for or cards that were due months ago. So come on send me your numbers. I want out. I was called back. I came. I worked bloody hard. I contributed. I am still paying for it and you have the cheek to tell me that by stirring up the waters I am making things bad. I gave you (the MRA) the opportunity to have a strong and unified organisation but people like you are so ignorant of the facts that you allow your best workers to be attacked and your organisation to be run unconstitutionally, possibly illegally.

The yellow brick road was not a fiasco and if the court transcripts and other material are read you would see that the impact on motorcycle safety is enormous and on going. The MRA failed to pay its bills to lawyers who had stuck by the MRA for years. I paid them and I will wind up paying the rest because you lot won't under the present committee. I will pay it out of my own pocket because I am an honest man. Contrast that with bills arising from the HAM Rally.

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Your letter was the last straw. Since you wrote it in your official capacity as president I have to assume you speak for the members you were elected to represent. For some time now I have been too ashamed to wear MRA logos in public and that has not changed.

It is clear that no matter who raises the dirt, in this case Warren Coward, or who has been treated unjustly the MRA will come down on me. That disgusts me. I want no more to do with you or it. Just get the people seeking money, stock etc off my back or I will take the matter to corporate affairs.

I will retain the business name MRA Motorcycle Insurance but will withdraw ads in that name since an honest business cant afford the connection. I will run the Toy Run but unless the MRA books its space it wont get one. If the MRA wants to run its own toy run, fine. It wont interfere with the Melbourne Toy Run which will continue. I reckon the colour poster, Magee and Gardner and so on will ensure the event works on its traditional date and venue. I will continue to write for motorcycle news mainly because State Committee tried to stop it.

I wont rock your boat or stir your waters if you call off the dogs. Do not expect me to be there next time the organisation self restructures. Its probably too late anyway.

So get on with the job you were elected to do. Pass this on to the next State Committee meeting. They should be relieved that they have finally got me too ashamed to want to be associated with you lot. start raising money to redeem some of those rubber cheques and pay me the money the MRA owes me. Start fighting for riders rights and I will see you at Parliament, Police Headquarters the Ministry of Transport, the Melbourne Town Hall and other places where I lobby for a better deal for motorcycling. It will be a change to see an MRA rep in some of these places.



Damien Codognotto.
Director.

PS It will be interesting to see if the MRA has the honour to make sure that Mr. Coward lives up to his end of the agreement.