

THE MOTORCYCLE RIDERS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA.
Vic.Br.Inc.

To all Registers.

8 June, 1989.

Dear MRA Members,

you are probably aware that there has been a change of leadership of your Association. I attach a media release that lists your new State Committee.

Since I resigned as President in 1985 the MRA has been in the doldrums. Each year the committees have been reduced in size until, for the last year or so, Dave Hornsby has been the sole committee person. He has refused help. Even an offer of the OZ GP Rally was rejected.

The MRA's finances are a mess. Income has dwindled as have memberships. Our account has been overdrawn all year and currently is over \$2000 in the red. Bills appear to add up to over \$15,000. But I cant give you accurate information because, in spite of repeated, written requests, the past President has not yet handed over the MRA's financial and membership records. As of the new financial year (July 1) the MRA will have a new set of books and membership records.

The new State Committee has a hard job ahead of it if we are to get the MRA back into a growth pattern. It has been elected to manage the affairs of the MRA and to do that some hard decisions have had to be taken.

The MRA office in Northcote will close saving on rent, rates and related expenses. The image and administration of the Association will undergo a comprehensive review. The last review, or "think-tank" as it was known, has had since 1986 to prove its reforms would work. It has failed. That is not to say the current constitution is not a good document. But it definitely needs some changes if the MRA is to halt its decline.

Four significant meetings have taken place. Sunday, May 14, State committee removed by unanimous, secret ballot motion of no confidence. The President does not accept it and calls another meeting for May 27. The meeting starts nearly an hour late with a prepared statement by the President saying that the meet was adjourned and that he had been to the Police to charge Mark Reed. The meeting was angry. Another motion of no confidence was passed by overwhelming majority. The

President left. He seemed to accept the decision but made no arrangements to hand over the MRA records. He had been asked to bring the books to either of the meetings or to leave them at the MRA office. Wednesday, May 31. The caretaker committee had an informal meet at Mac's Hotel, Melbourne. The meet set the tone of the new committee. Mark Reed, Steve Duggan, Rhys Johnson, Russell Lovel and I attended. Sunday, June 4, the new committee was installed and Mark appointed.

Tuesday, June 6, Vice President Steve Duggan, arranged to meet the past-president and take over the books and records. Steve waited but Dave Hornsby had other commitments. We still do not have your financial and membership records.

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We will start new records and books at the beginning of the financial year. We will pay only those bills which are documented. All other demands for money will be referred to the past committee until we have the appropriate records.

An example of our problem is the Motorpass bill. We find it incredible the Association, which has not owned a vehicle since 1986, could run up a "petrol account" for \$5727.89. This account was meant to be closed after the CEP grant money ran out. It was never supposed to cost the members anything. It was part of the grant. But, it seems it has been well and truly used after the grant and now the members are expected to pick up the cost. The past-president blames past-secretary Guthrie and claims the MRA is not liable. The fact is it is the MRA's account and it has gone to court. The MRA was not represented and found "guilty". Until the past-president decides to accept the will of the members in two votes of no confidence, these and all other legal actions against the MRA will be referred to him.

To give you an idea of where we are financially here are just 3 bills. Motorpass, 25/5/'89, \$5727.89. Westpac, 5/5/'89 \$2110.28. Jim Gurry, 24/4/'89 \$5510.75. Total \$13,348.92. These are not all our liabilities. We believe the Association needs 18 to 20 thousand dollars to get back into the black.

We now have an excellent state committee and we are convinced that with support from the Registers we can end the coming financial year not only in the black but with a higher profile, legislative reforms and a stop to rising third party rates. Third party rates will rise about \$115 in NSW. That takes them well over \$400 per bike over 300cc.

It is very important that we begin immediately to rebuild the MRA and ensure the values and enthusiasm of the late seventies returns. Each Register committee is asked to do the following.

First: Please mail to P.O. Box 64, Collins Street, Melbourne, 3000. records of any money owed to the Register by the state committees. These debts will be included in the new books but only those bills in by June 30 will be accepted.

Second: Communication within the Branch is poor. Please send us a copy of the minutes of general and committee meetings. We will copy them and send them to all other Registers.

Third: Please send us your main event dates for 1990. We will prepare a calendar and publicise your function. Those who do not set their dates by June 30 may be left out. The dates do not have to be firm but they will guide us in planning the year.

The changes will not suite everyone but they are for the common good. With Register cooperation we can get back in the black and politically viable again with minimum changes to Register "lifestyle".

Newsletters have been a problem. Now we have two committee members who write regular columns in Australian Motorcycle News. In a way we have a newsletter every fortnight. This has led the committee to consider the saving in cost of producing a high quality annual instead of an unreliable quarterly. We are working on a special deal to get AMCN home

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delivered at a very reduced rate for our members.

As the newsletter has had its problems so have general meetings. The constitution demands we hold public general meetings monthly. But this has not really happened for the last 5 years. State committees should face the members and give reports but this has not happened. We will go to quarterly meetings on a Sunday. This will give the country Registers a chance to come to the City and get involved at the grass roots level. The first of these meets will be noon on November 5. Following meets will be February, May and August 1990. August will be the next election meeting.

Please note the following dates. The Driver Awareness Run will start the motorcycle month on the second weekend in November. It will be followed by the DA Rally. That is the weekend after the general meeting. The Toy Run may not go ahead this year. But if it does it will move to the Sunday. That is December 10. Unfortunately this will clash with the Bendigo Toy Run but we will have to work around this.

Membership fees will rise from \$15 per person per year to \$20. However, the new fee will include both laminated card and a choice of patch or badge. The joining fee will rise from \$5 to \$10. This brings us more up-to-date with other clubs and associations and provides greater financial incentive for Registers to sign new members.

Finally, there will be a sale at the MRA office, 208 High St., Northcote on Saturday, June 24. Stock, office equipment and second-hand building material will go out at bargain prices to raise urgently needed funds.

With your help we can put the MRA on a firm financial base in the nineties while getting it back into the lobbying it was set up to do. We have withdrawn from interstate organisations which have done nothing for our members but cost them money. We will represent Victorian motorcyclists to all levels of government and the media.

The West Coast Register closed last February. The Northern Suburbs Register did not get started. We will not be establishing any new registers until the state MRA has its act together.

Please send the information we have requested. Please inform your members that changes to dates etc. will be published in Australian Motorcycle News.

Sincerely,



Damien Codognotto
MRA President
NMC Director
MTA Councillor.