

NEWS

Australian
Motorcycling
Conference

The United Voice
of
Australian Motorcycle Riders
Industry & Sport

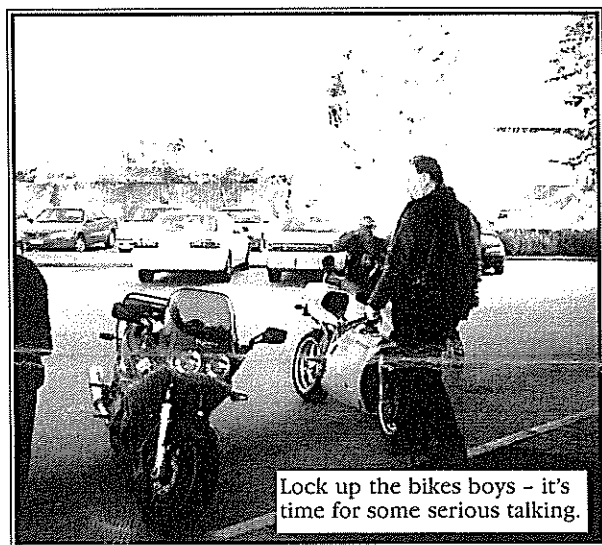
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INTERNATIONAL PROGRESS

*Greg Hirst -
Australian Delegate for the Australian Motorcycling Conference
in attendance at the International Riders Rights Conference -
Mulhouse Stb East France - 15-17 October 1999.*

Four Australians, Robyn Martin *MCC of NSW*, Peter Mount *AMC*, Mag. Vic's Paul Williams and myself invaded the recent FIM sponsored International Riders Rights Conference.

Besides adding a touch of antipodean humour, our contingent ... *continued on page 4*



Lock up the bikes boys - it's time for some serious talking.

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AUSTRALIAN REPORT

*Greg Hirst -
Reporting from the 2nd Australian Motorcycling Conference
held in Sydney Saturday 21 August 1999.*

The first Australian Motorcycling Conference in Melbourne in 1998 was attended by FIM's Rob Razor and IMMA's Tim Hoelter. They oversaw the establishment of a national coalition of riders, industry and sport which is expected to develop into a very powerful national lobby group.

The conference in Sydney was opened by the Federal Minister for Sport and Tourism, Jackie Kelly, who was recently elevated to the higher levels of Government, *the Olympics being part of her portfolio* and is a convinced motorcyclist.

In her opening address Jackie highlighted the themes of driver awareness, lower costs, lower road deaths and the fostering of younger riders, especially into the motorcycle sport.

Ross Cameron, the Federal Member of Parramatta, welcomed us to his electorate and highlighted two breakthroughs made by locally based motorcycle organisations. First was the return of the Bathurst Motorcycle races, originally lost because of crowd control problems and now restored with the full support of the Police, after years of negotiation by the Motorcycle Council of NSW. Secondly was the building of an Aussie motorcycle called the 'Hunwick/Hallam' which will be manufactured locally. Ross also encouraged vigilance of the public perception of motorcycling and the need to constructively engage governments in a professional way.

The bulk of the conference was then set aside for discussion on the issues that should be developed between the three streams of riders, industry and sport and the organisational structure that would make this happen. *continued on page 2*

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While a representative steering committee is continuing to work in between conferences the following issues were identified as those that we held in common and should be developed at a National and International level. They are listed in the order raised, rather than order of importance, although some of them will be raised in a significant fashion during the Mulhouse Conference.

1. POSITIVE RELATIONS WITH THE MEDIA

In Australia, the media tends to focus on the sensational rather than positive motorcycling stories. The conference agreed that a positive relationship with the media needs to be established in order to see the regular coverage of the positive things that exist within motorcycling. Particular note was taken of the rider groups successful National Television Safety Campaign focusing on the need of drivers to become motorcycle aware. The campaign, financed by the combination of rider group fund raising and industry support, was supported by the Federal Government and the Television Networks and received extensive free air-play over a two month period. At the same time the Federal Office of Road Safety Fatality Report shows that motorcycle fatalities immediately reduced when the commercials aired nationally.

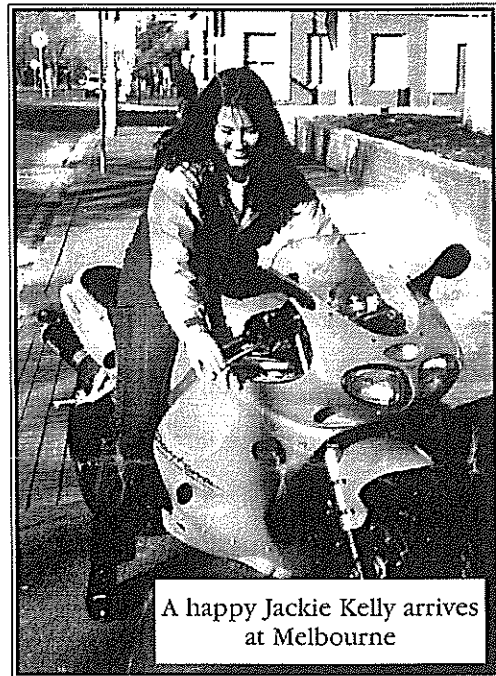
At Mulhouse I did make a significant announcement relating to an upcoming International version involving Michael Doohan.

2. MOTORCYCLE SAFETY IN GENERAL

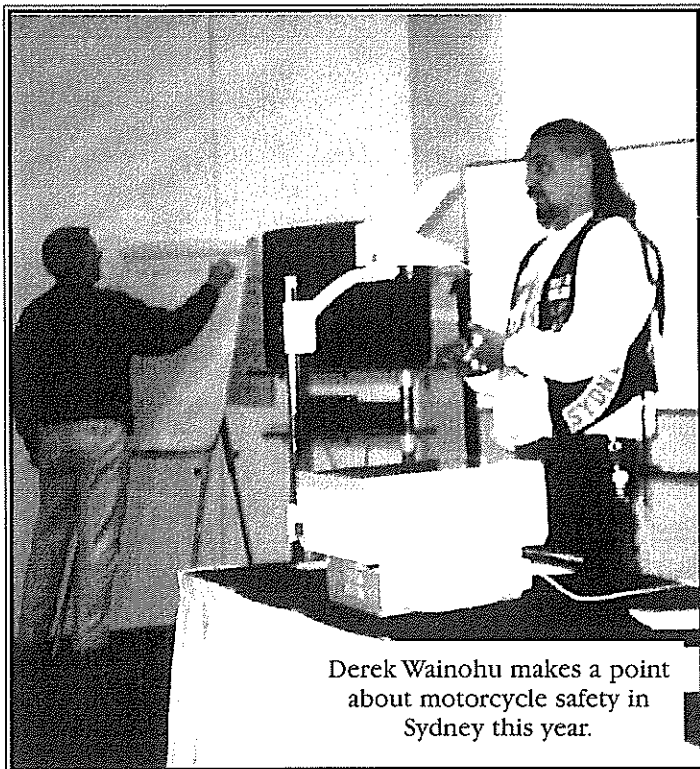
The Conference felt that a coordinated safety campaign be developed that involves education of drivers and riders on this issue. The rider groups' success in convincing the Federal Government to produce material on this theme was noted by Jackie Kelly.

An important aspect is the issue of driver training and the inclusion of motorcycle awareness questions in licence testing.

Issues of diesel spills and awareness literature being sent out with registration papers were also raised.



A happy Jackie Kelly arrives at Melbourne



Derek Wainohu makes a point about motorcycle safety in Sydney this year.

3. ENTRY LEVEL MOTORCYCLES

In Australia learner riders are limited to under 260cc. Rider groups have felt for many years that this is inadequate for larger people and that certain larger motorcycles should be approved for learners. The Conference agreed that this issue requires a national response rather than the current state by state approach and has agreed to develop that approach.

Any decision on the direction to take on this issue, will be made at a future conference.

4. MULTIPLE REGISTRATIONS

With the cost of vehicle registration so high it was felt a new system of moving cost of third party insurance onto the rider and off the vehicle would be appropriate. If successful, a scheme such as this would allow multiple registration at a much lower cost.

This issue is to be pursued for the next years conference.

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5. POPULARISING MOTORCYCLING AMONGST THE GENERAL PUBLIC

With Australia dominated by the motor car, it was agreed that a strategy needs to be developed to popularise motorcycles. The introduction of scooter use on a car licence may help but it is felt the three streams of motorcycling need to work together on this one.

6. DATA COLLECTION

With each state and territory recording their own statistics, it is difficult to identify the crucial safety areas in Australian road use. This, of course, does not stop bureaucrats suggesting motorcycle measures that either don't work or are counter-productive - e.g. *daytime lights on*.

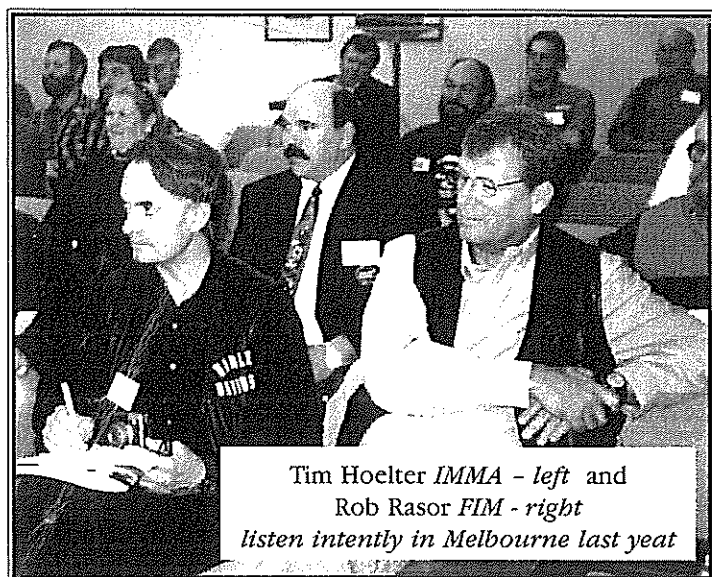
It was agreed that standardisation of data collection occur and that it identify causes of motorcycle fatalities and injuries.

The EOCD approach will be examined for adoption in Australia as well as the current Police reporting methods in our country which have a tendency to record 'wire rope' accidents as 'hit barrier', thus allowing politicians to claim "no accidents of this type have occurred!"

7. NATIONAL LOBBY GROUP

The industry feels very strongly that this coalition should develop into a national lobby group as soon as possible. As a result, the steering committee has been asked to report urgently on how to establish this group in addition to an available national spokesman for the media.

A report on model options, financing, staffing and an office will be sent out to conference delegates soon.



Tim Hoelter IMMA - left and
Rob Rasor FIM - right
listen intently in Melbourne last year

8. CONCERN OVER ALL ROADSIDE FURNITURE

The conference expressed concern at the proliferation of all forms of roadside furniture that were installed without consultation and provide danger to motorcyclists. Special note was made of 'wire rope' and 'steel beam' fences which are regarded as the most serious problems.

It was noted that rider groups are well advanced in a call for a **comparative test* of all forms of roadside barriers, in relation to motorcyclists, that will hopefully be funded and performed in Sydney by the NSW State Government.

**This is something that has not been done anywhere in the world.*

9. GLOBAL HARMONISATION

Tim Hoelter's challenge to help develop the 'right' form of global harmonisation still rings true amongst conference delegates. In order to ensure that this occurs and that European standards don't become the norm, Australia wants to see a representative coordination committee *including IMMA, FIM and rider groups from around the world* set up at Mulhouse to meet and plan an approach for our International Coalition to adopt and ensure that:

- a) agreement is reached on the sort of harmonisation desired,
- b) an agreed approach is developed and coordinated, especially in relation to the lobbying of key National Governments.

The conference in Mulhouse is growing into an international coalition capable of developing united approaches on a range of international issues and so should also open its doors to other groups from around the world, who have so far, not attended.

Then a true International Coalition will have been formed! ☺

IT'S TIME TO HAVE YOUR SAY

Any suggestions for items to be discussed at the next Conference can be sent to:

David White at Motorcycling Australia
10 Hoddle St,
Abbotsford 3067

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seemed to have made an impression on a group that was used to seeing the world through European or American eyes.

Conference Chairman John Chatterton-Ross was very pleased with the report that I wrote on our last Australian Conference, as was Tim Hoelter from Harley Davidson, who commented that it seemed that we have made real progress after the inaugural Melbourne gathering in 1998

The joint efforts of the various Driver Awareness and Rider Training campaigns with the Federal Government drew critical appreciation, as did the re-introduction of the Bathurst Motorcycle Races.

However, it was the Celebration of Australian Motorcycling television campaign that drew most praise from Europeans and Americans alike. In fact, it made such an impression that requests have come in for copies of the campaign to be made available so that a similar campaign can be run in Europe.

Interestingly, one of these requests is from the FIM, who were so impressed with the launch, and commercial concept that they discussed it in depth at their general conference that followed on from the one in Mulhouse. Their conclusion of the Aussie effort; *Very Impressive!*

Another Aussie initiative to be acknowledged was our proposal for the formation of an international steering committee to focus on developing the 'right' form of global harmonisation. With the support of Tim Hoelter *IMMA*, Rob Rasor *FIM* and riders from Europe and the States, it will meet annually to develop strategies that will hopefully develop into a coordinated international lobbying approach to governments on this vexed issue.

The first meeting is scheduled for next May in the USA and I plan to attend *subject to fund raising for the air fares* and bring back a report to the next Australian Conference in August in Melbourne for formal decisions to be made!

Lastly, it is important to mention another major issue that came up courtesy of the British rider groups, who are concerned at the development of technology that could allow a third person to slow motorcycles and cars down via satellite, if they deemed the rider or driver was travelling too fast.

The Conference agreed that it should *Internationally oppose* any device that takes the control of a motorcycle away from the rider!

At the end Rob Rasor invited the delegates back in two years time to the next conference to be held somewhere in continental USA.

At our Melbourne Conference a number of delegates will give a more detailed report. In the meantime my feeling is that we are starting to have an influence

Internationally and with formation of the Harmonisation Steering Committee, we have access to the key motorcycling people Internationally and can bring an Aussie influence early in the decision making progress on issues that we wish to raise! ☺

Back to Melbourne

The next *Australian Motorcycling Conference* will be held in August 2000 back in Melbourne. the steering committee has decided to alternate the conferences between Melbourne and Sydney and will meet again in March to finalise details, date and venue. ☺

See you there!

NEXT ISSUE

The next issue is due out March/April 2000, so stay tuned for further news on the Melbourne conference.

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