

December  
1999



# MRAA NEWS

## The MRA AGM

**F**irst thing to say is thanks to all who turned up. Sometimes being on the MRA board is a bit like, well, nothing I've ever encountered before! For some of us on the board this was the first chance we had to meet members in any numbers. The AGM discussed a lot of issues and gave the board a chance to explain to members some of the difficulties we were encountering. It gave members the chance to explain to us that some of the changes we wanted to make, the constitution stuff, wasn't going to be as simple as we had hoped. We have updated you on the changes and plans since the AGM and these were as a result of that meeting and discussions that took place there. We must thank Le coq, 272 Brunswick Street Fitzroy, for providing the venue to us, it's a great bike friendly restaurant, drop in if you get a chance.

**Introducing the Board** (Who are going to wish they had made an effort to be here today as I get to decide what to say about them!)

### Dean Balding – President

Dean joined the MRA at a Toy Run a couple of years ago as he thought it was a good event and what the MRA were doing was worthwhile. He offered to assist with the Toy Run the following year. How much time could it take? He was President by the time the Toy Run came around. Dean works full time, plus a lot of extra hours, recently renovated his home and spends as much spare time as he can with his wife and three year old son. Suzanne says, "I don't mind the time Dean puts into the MRA it is worthwhile and he enjoys it, but can he get all that MRA paperwork off the dinning room table and finish the kitchen renovations?" Mathew at three knows all the MRA board members and is getting used to saying good-night to daddy over the phone. (Board comment "We will not call you Mr President")

Dean rides a Suzuki RF900 and has been riding for over ten years.

### Con Tringas – Vice President.

Con has been an MRA member for a couple of years and offered to help out in the Elizabeth Street shop occasionally. This of course led to him being there when the board discussed a vacancy and he

## Diary Dates

**1999**

**12 December** MRA Toy Run

**2000**

**January 29** ADBA Top Fuel World Championship Calder Park - MRA stand Volunteers needed

**March 9-12** F1 GP MRA run security parking – Volunteers needed

**April 20-23** Bathurst Easter motorcycle festival – Possible run

**April 20-23** World Superbikes Phillip Island (provisional date)

**October 28** MRA OZ GP run

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## Swanston Street Re opens

If you feel like taking a ride down the recently re-opened Swanston Street here are **some** of rules, and fines, that apply:-

Its only open from 7.00pm - 7.00am

You can't turn right off it.

Stop for pedestrians getting on and off trams.

The speed limit is 30km/h (fines are 31-45km/h \$105,46-60km/h \$165, 61km/h and over \$220 plus one month license suspension.)

## DOB IN A POTHOLE !!!!!!!!

How often have you headed of on a ride and all of a sudden there is a 150-mm deep pothole in front of you? What about those big shiny steel plates that are put over road works or gravel left on corners?



Well now you can do something about it. One of the outcomes of the workshop held by the VICTORIAN MOTORCYCLE ADVISORY COUNCIL (V MAC) of which Michael Czajka is the MRA rep, is VicRoads Road Condition Reporting line. The number is 9854 2899. If you encounter road conditions that are dangerous to motorcyclists or other road users report it. The more legitimate complaints received the better for all road users.

## MRA LEGAL EAGLE

Have you ever been involved in an accident and not been seriously hurt but just had a sore neck or shoulder and not done anything about it or just visited your chiropractor? I did just that. X-rays showed that nothing was broken and the torn ligaments will heal. It wasn't until I contacted Grace that I was told that because I was admitted to hospital I didn't have to pay the usual TAC excess of \$460 and my chiropractor visits, that I had paid for, can and should be reimbursed.

Grace Placencio has been involved with the MRA for many years and has helped many motorcyclists with their legal problems. Grace now works with RMA Lawyers( Ryan Maloney Anderson ). If you think Grace can be of any assistance to you please ring or fax her and be sure to let her know that you are an MRA member. Grace can be contacted on 9867 7769 or 0408 908 418.

## Bathurst Easter Motorcycle Festival

The return of bikes to Bathurst promises to be an action packed event. There is a full program of road racing, motorcross and many other activities. We are considering organising an MRA ride to the event and would like to hear from members and other riders who would be interested. Please call us to register your interest and any comments or suggestions. We will then make plans.

**We would like to thank the organisers of this event for supporting us and other MRA's throughout Australia.**

*(Continued from page 1)*

became Vice President. Con manages the family business which means he can rarely spare time to come in on weekends. Realising Con may feel left out, as act of generosity, the rest of the board gave him the MRA OZ GP run to organise. Which he did. (Board Comment "We now expect him to make it bigger and better next year.")

Con rides a Kawasaki GPX 600R which he has had a couple of months.

### **Kerri Ritchie – Secretary.**

Kerri joined the MRA at the insistence of her former housemate. She occasionally called into the shop on a Saturday to help out with mail outs and you guessed it was there one day when a board meeting was on. Kerri thought she was being smart staying well away from the meeting and says she's not really sure how she ended up being secretary. "I'm sure I told them having a full time job and being a part time student meant I didn't have enough time to spare."

Kerri rides a Kawasaki GPX 250 is recently off restrictions and is thinking of trading up but says "that will loose the best excuse I have for not keeping up with the rest of the board on rides." (Board comment "except for Phillip Island she has always found an excuse not to go anyway")

### **Faye Kerridge – Treasurer**

Faye has been a member for a few years and often helped out with computer work at Elizabeth Street. Faye says, "When they asked if I would help out by being treasurer I told them I would give it a go. I had done this with another group so had some idea what I was in for. No one told me the books hadn't been done for over six months." Faye has recently taken on a new job which means lots of extra hours and the occasional interstate trip.

Faye has been riding for several years and rides a Suzuki GS 500

### **Garry Yip – Membership Secretary**

Garry is currently studying and was talked into taking on the role of membership secretary at the AGM. He had been helping keep the membership records up to date for some time but managed to avoid being railroaded onto the board. Garry is particularly interested in working on learner rider packages and as he told members at the QGM he has a special interest in female riders.

Garry rides a Kawasaki ZX6 R and has been riding for several years.

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## **ADVERTISING in MRAA NEWS**

**D**o you know of anyone who wants to advertise in MRAA News? Perhaps you have a product or service that you want to advertise? If so, please contact the MRA on 9699 1811 at any time and leave a message and contact details. Someone will return your call as soon as possible.

Alternatively you can send your details directly to the MRA at  
22 Ross Street  
South Melbourne 3205

**Send us stories useful advice for other riders and ideas for articles too!**

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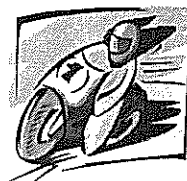
## MRA OZ GP Run

This was a well organised and well supported run and we must thank Con for all the work he put into getting it off the ground. Having Mick there was certainly a bonus. If you would like to order badges we still have some left and these (if available) will be on sale at the Toy Run. Cranbourne residents know how to welcome us and must be thanked for their enthusiasm. Thanks must also go to the Police who helped with the run and also to those who were just around on the weekend.

A couple of interstate riders asked me "what's was wrong with the cops in Victoria, they haven't stopped us once." They felt that in their home state an event like this would have attracted the revenue raisers and had seen no evidence of this here.

If you have never participated in this event come along next year.

The action at the track was good even without Mick racing.



## MRA Toy Run 1999 - Swanston Street to Moonee Valley (Leaving from LaTrobe St end of Swanston, this means we face the other way)



Several members have asked why we changed the destination of this event and the answer is simple. We were no longer able to use the St Kilda site. Parking was becoming a problem due to Luna Park, the stalls along Ackland St and the sheer numbers of bikes that are participating. We searched for another venue nearby without success and tried many other options. Moonee Valley Race Course kindly donated their center carpark to help make sure the event continued. It is easy to get to and is in a good location. Food and drink vendors and entertainment will be available at Moonee Valley. Puckle Street is only a short distance away and has many cafes. Mt Alexander road is only a short distance away and has a number of Pubs.

We have negotiated with our supplier and been able to reduce the cost of Toy Run badges to \$5.00. We are also hoping that we will be able to run a raffle and ticket sellers will be needed.

For information on runs into Swanston street here are the contacts:

Footscray – Michael, Western Suburbs Riders, 9311 8256

Cambellfield – Jan or Tony 9459 7243

Ferntree Gully - Cheryl, Eastern Suburbs Riders, 0416 214 256

Cranbourne – Barbara 5998 2424 or Ron 9754 3196, Ulysses Club

**Bring NEW toys, tinned food, games and other suitable gifts**



## Miscellaneous MRAA Information

### Membership Fees Due?

If your fees are due please help us by paying by cheque or money order where possible. We are having a little difficulty with our credit card facilities at the moment and cannot process the payments. It also saves us a fee of around 10% for credit card payments if you can pay by cheque.

**Office Hours.** We are all still struggling to have the office open as much as possible. There is usually someone there on a Saturday afternoon and often after hours on weeknights. Business hours are the hardest time to catch us! Please call before coming in on 9699 1811 and if possible leave an after hours phone number. If you can't remember, the new address is 22 Ross Street South Melbourne.

## THE COMMITTEE WITH THE MOSTEST!

**T**he committee with the most clout in things legislative is The Victorian Motorcycle Advisory Council (VMAC). This committee has been formed to advise the Minister for Transport on things motorcycling. What's more, it's made up almost exclusively of motorcyclists. Even more impressive is the level of motorcycle expertise represented at the table. We have the likes of Honda and Yamaha (industry) rubbing shoulders with the MRA, TAC and the Monash University Accident Research Centre. Even the TAC and Monash people have motorcycle experience.

These motorcycle specialists mean we don't have to explain elementary points to nonmotorcyclists. Many of the committees we are on get stalled by well-intentioned but uninformed non-motorcycling members. Have you heard the constant "motorcycles are unsafe," mantra that some spout? Well, in the past 18 years (1980 to 1998) there was a 59% decrease in the numbers of motorcyclists killed on Australia's roads (442 to 181).

The 17-25 age group, which usually comes in for the most criticism did best with a 79% decrease in fatalities. These figures are rarely considered by people who normally see month to month trends or at best year to year. People fail to recognise that 20% of fatalities are "unriders" (unlicensed &/or unregistered) who make up only 6% of riders. Many of the people killed are getting on a bike they have never ridden before. Many only get on once! If you drink and ride you increase your risk factor dramatically. Don't do any of these things and your odds of having a crash decrease dramatically.

Increasingly we are coming to the recognition that a person's attitude on the road is the most important thing in preventing fatalities and injuries. The new training video help change this mindset. New computer based training procedures encourage this direction by allowing riders and drivers to be put in dangerous situations without the risk of injury. This is the new leading edge of training. However, even the simulator that Vi-croads now employs has resulted in a lot more riders taking responsible, defensive approaches to motorcycling. For more information on the videos call 03 9663 2164.

VMAC has a lot of influence with all such decisions. The Minister is ultimately able to control most of these outcomes. What's more the Minister is interested in what the committee has to say. He directs questions to us for comment and we advise him.

Currently on the committee's plate:

- Footpath motorcycle parking.
- Recreational off-road riding
- 50cc Light Motor Scooters (once called mopeds)
- Learner Approved Motorcycles (LAM)
- Motorcycle crashes

### Footpath parking

Footpath parking is legal anywhere in Victoria. It is illegal if you block traffic (pedestrian or otherwise). It is also illegal to ride on the footpath. Melbourne City Council (MCC) has been the most frequent opponent to footpath parking. Feedback the MRA receives is mainly about shops blocking the footpath not individual riders. The MCC complain that the law is unenforceable but have never taken anyone to court over it.

They complain about riders riding on footpaths, This law has little to do with footpath parking. There is no problem fining offending riders. So why don't they? I have never met a rider who has been fined and am unaware of any infringement notices that have been issued for the offence. Come on guys! If you're not willing to enforce it how can you complain it's not workable? How can you call for the abolition of footpath parking without proof that you have a problem? The problem appears to be that which they have caused themselves.

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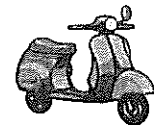
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### Recreation Riding

Yes Minister exists! To cut costs TAC rules have been amended so recreational riders (trail bikes) are not covered unless they are riding on land gazetted for the purpose of riding bikes. Guess how many places have been gazetted? Right! Not one we can find!

Gazetting is a process in which a place appears in the official government gazette. This is not as easy as it sounds! Does the TAC need to cut costs? Every year the road toll goes down. When it goes down the TAC pays less. TAC ads are no longer getting results. TAC it's time to try other means of reducing of casualties instead of reducing the number of people and places that you cover. We do have ideas on how to do it.

I estimate at least an extra 30% of costs (not injuries or fatalities) are addressable but the TAC has to come to the party with better figures so that we can better target preventative actions. The TAC does not currently know how many unlicensed and off-road riders it pays benefits to. What else doesn't it know? Would it make a difference if it did? Sure would. How else do you decide where your "prevention dollar" goes and on what? Ask your marketing company? The TAC is one road safety authority with the money to make a difference. The Minister has the power to guide them.



### 50cc Light Motor Scooters (LMS)

The Minister is looking favorably at allowing 50cc LMS to be ridden on a car license. In other states where this is permitted there has been no corresponding increase in crashes. The MRA's position is that LMS's on a car license will provide a net road safety benefit. In the first 5 years car drivers will get used to more two-wheelers in traffic and some will improve their car skills by using scooters some of the time.

### LAM's



Learner Approved Motorcycles are a real possibility. No more L-platers on supersport 250's. You'll probably see more 500 and 600's, sensible ones. Plenty of torque, good handling, light, good brakes and realistic top speeds. Ideal beginners bikes. The LAM scheme will probably be based on a power to weight ratio.

### Crash reduction

Want more policing of motorcycling? Well neither do we. The Minister will listen to sensible suggestions and we've got bags full of them.

Committees like VMAC are not common. Many community groups would give a lot to have this kind of access to a Minister. We've got it because of the hard work of the MRA. Don't forget when you pay your membership you get much more than just a magazine. You get the MRA's aims as well

- 1). Road Safety
- 2). Fair and sensible legislation
- 3). A better image for motorcycling.

Motorcyclists save hundreds of dollars each year because of the MRA.

Can you afford not to be a member?

Michael Czajka is the MRA representative on VMAC

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