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BOARD MEMBER EMAILS

If you have any specific queries, the emails for MRA board members are below.

Brian Beardon, President, president@mraa.org.au

Don McCarthy, Vice-President vicepresident@mraa.org.au

Derek Clarkson, Secretary, secretary@mraa.org.au

Gavin Stilgoe, Treasurer, treasurer@mraa.org.au

Michael Doedee, Membership Secretary, membershipsecretary@mraa.org.au

Shane Brightman, Ordinary Board Member, shane@mraa.org.au

Sarah Merril, Ordinary Board Member, sarah@mraa.org.au

040501 RESPONSE TO POLICE REPORT

With no advance notice of the "alleged 80% at fault" report from police, and no copy of the report, we were unable to give an immediate response. However, we have now reviewed the report and have raised a number of mistakes and concerns with them.

Key things of concern:

- the report concludes 80% of riders are at fault in crashes involving a motorcycle. This figure includes single vehicle crashes where, of course, the rider will be deemed a fault unless road conditions are considered
- in dual vehicle crashes, the very limited study shows rider fault at 63%. We believe this is inflated as riders so often have to take extreme evasive action to avoid inattentive people changing lanes, turning in front of them etc.. The other person invariably continues on their way, leaving destruction in their wake, which is treated as a 'single vehicle' crash
- police have claimed that speed, alcohol and cannabis are key factors but the report shows no such thing. ALCOHOL 87% of riders had no alcohol in their system or were below 0.05. This is far better than the 75% of all road users. CANNABIS 13% of riders had cannabis in their system but this does not mean they were under its influence, as cannabis stays in the blood for 30 days. SPEED & FAULT Police haven't explained how they determined speed, despite requests, nor have they explained how they determined who was at fault.

We believe the report should never have been issued with the number of mistakes it contains and with its clearly biased conclusions that are not supported by the statistics. Other government authorities have expressed the same concerns. We will be issuing media releases and letters to key Victorian newspapers and national motorcycling magazines refuting some of the clearly incorrect claims.

040502 WORKING GROUPS

Anyone who's been involved in the MRA knows the mountains of work that's involved. Thinking six board members can manage it all is fantasy land. To share the load, and to ensure we make the most of members' expertise, we have re-launched a number of committees that stalled over the last couple of years and set up some new ones.

Members are invited to get involved with groups of interest – they meet monthly. See DIARY DATES for details.

(a) Advocacy

One of the MRA's longest running and most important committees, this group works for fair and appropriate laws and consideration of motorcycles in transport planning. Key issues now being addressed are the \$50 tax, roadside hazards including wire rope barriers, unriders and appropriate judicial responses when riders are killed and injured by other road users.

The group is developing formal policies on relevant issues, to ensure the MRA is ready to respond as they arise. Michael Czajka, Wendy Taylor, Rick van Zuylenkom, Dave Bowker, Mick Doedee, Dean Nightingale, Alan Riley, Peregrine Horton and Marcel Smits are involved.

If you have an issue you feel needs to be addressed, particularly if you are willing to pitch in yourself, please contact Michael Czajka on 0403 073 055 or mc1@pobox.com.

(b) Events

This group coordinates the wide range of MRA events including the Pink Ribbon Ride, Dr John Poker Run, MRA Oz GP Run, the monthly social rides and, of course, the Toy Run. With so many events held each year, it is the group in most need of large numbers of volunteers for marshalling, badge selling etc. It's also probably the most sociable group to help – at events, you get to speak with all sorts of interesting riders.

Dale Maggs, Gavin Stilgoe (Treasurer), Shane Brightman (ordinary board member) and Sarah Merrill (ordinary board member) are part of the team.

(c) Communications

In recent years, the MRA has been criticized for not communicating enough with members. We'd like to turn this around and have set up a Communications Committee. The purpose of this group is to keep members abreast of our various projects, ensure the website is up to date and prepare information for the media.

Tony Molina, Neal Collins, Steve Kealy, Martin Taylor and Lee O'Mahoney form the team.

(d) 4B's

Yup, it's up and running again. Hospitalised riders will receive moral and motorcycling comfort from other riders, guided by Rick van Zuylenkom and Geoff Stephenson. Anyone who visited Valerie Gear following her horrific crash last year, or who's been hospitalized themselves, will know how much this can boost spirits, maintain motivation and aid recovery. If you'd like to get involved, contact George by email - thegeorge@dart.net.au.

040503 RECENT EVENTS

(a) Dr John Poker Run

The 2nd Dr John Pigot Poker Run was blessed with beautiful weather, approximately 60 riders, a great route, good road conditions and quality tucker at Gembrook's Ranges Hotel. A dozen riders got their left and right mixed up at a marked corner but soon re-joined the group. Dale Maggs also had directional issues, misplacing his helmet, which he later found safely underneath his bike.

Our thanks to the following companies for donating prizes:
Draggin's Jeans - jeans

Torrini Leathers – Black Rose leather vest
Bike Mart – gloves & neck warmer
Lonely Planet – travel books
Yamaha in Geelong – T-shirt
Marysville's In Neutral Café & Bakery – meal vouchers
TAC and Sharp Tune - videos

Approximately \$1,000 will be donated to the Stroke Foundation. Thanks to riders for supporting the event.

(b) Cranbourne Car and Bike Show

Those Cranbourne people sure like their cars and bikes, with approximately 6,000 – 10,000 people attending this major annual event. MRA volunteers ran a stall, promoting the MRA and its work.

(c) Superbikes

Although we didn't have a stall of our own, as we deemed it not cost-effective, Moto Freestyle kindly gave us space on their stall. The continual playing of stunt riding DVD's drew an ever-changing stream of visitors to the stall, enabling volunteers to talk to them about the MRA's work. Moto Freestyle is a form of freestyle stunt riding. The first international Moto Freestyle Challenge will be at Calder Park on 15th May. Check out www.motofreestyle.com for details. The MRA has secured a number of tickets at a discounted price. For 17% off, book through Derek Clarkson, 0404 053 463 or secretary@mraa.org.au.

(d) HART

Volunteers also gave the MRA a presence at HART's recent open days at Tullamarine.

(e) Social rides

Our monthly social rides have continued to be popular. Check out Diary Dates for upcoming rides.

040504 GP PARKING NO MORE?

The MRA has, for a number of years, managed parking at Melbourne's Formula 1 Grand Prix, which generated a valuable source of income and gave the organisation public exposure. 2004 was the first year the MRA didn't coordinate parking, after the former board returned the contract to the GP Corporation in 2003. We are currently negotiating with GP Corp to coordinate parking for the 2005 event.

040505 MISSING RECORDS

Some former board members have advised that they are in possession of MRA documents. A lawyer has requested their return, so far without response. Correspondence, documentation and financial records for many years are missing, making work difficult.

To ensure the MRA's intellectual property and records are protected, we are now scanning and archiving key documents.

040506 EXPENSE CLAIM

Former president, Alex Money, wrote to the MRA claiming more than \$4,200 in mobile phone expenses. This was followed by a request from lawyers Corrs Chambers Westgarth for more than \$3,400.

Most former board members agreed to pay for phone expenses incurred while in office. Alex's claim appears to be a breach of this agreement. We have been informed that other former board members intend to submit similar claims if Alex's is paid.

040507 BILLS

A. Rehome Pty Ltd have sent a bill for more than \$10,000 for media research services. We have not received a response to requests for an itemised statement of services. Requests for services were made verbally and it appears the former board did not approve the expense.

B. We've received a bill for office supplies. Some of the items are for office equipment the MRA does not have. This, again, is of concern.

040508 NEW MOTORCYCLE LOBBY GROUP FORMED

A new lobby group has been formed to represent motorcyclists. Named the Victorian Motorcyclists' Union, it has been established by a number of former MRA board members. Former president, Alex Money, former vice president, Marcel Gomperts, former treasurer, John Karmouche, are all part of the 'expert management team'. The website, www.vmu.org.au, indicates that Vic Fkarias and Jason Allen are also involved. The group aims to promote motorcycle awareness in Victoria, represent Victorian riders on regulation changes, liaise with government authorities on safety issues and motorcyclist rights and maintain a register of road and traffic conditions.

040509 MRA OZ GP RUN 2004

Shane Brightman and Sarah Merrill are helping to coordinate this year's event, where thousands of riders travel en-masse to the Phillip Island GP in October.

040510 MRA TOY RUN 2004

Gavin Stilgoe is overseeing work on this year's Toy Run. With no opportunity for any handover from former board members, and no records at the MRA office, Dale Maggs and Damien Codognotto have offered to help coordinate the event. We appreciate that many members will be concerned about this but feel it was the best possible option, under the circumstances.

040511 ROSS ST LEASE

The lease of our South Melbourne building is due for renewal later in the year. We believe money spent on rent - a huge proportion of our annual budget - can be better spent elsewhere and do not intend to renew the lease. Instead, we will make use of other venues for meetings and gatherings, as we have been doing for QGM's and AGM's since 2000. Although this means we will have no official 'home', we believe it is in the best interests of the organization.

040512 BUILDING BROKEN BRIDGES

Relationships with a number of organizations and government departments have been damaged by past actions. This includes the GP Corporation, City of Casey, TAC, Williamstown Motorcycle Club, Western QBE, Assured Insurance, The Smith Family and the NSW Motorcycle Council. We are endeavouring to rebuild relationships with these bodies.

040513 DIRT BIKE HEAVEN

An off-road motorcycle park has been proposed at Cardinia Shire in Melbourne's south-east to cater for the large number of off-road riders, including juniors. First aid services and marshals are included. For further info, contact Wayne Maslen on 03 5941 5345 or 0417 054 946 or Dale Maggs on 0412 910 383 or dale.maggs@ozemail.com.au.

040514 MEMBER DISCOUNTERS

A reminder that MRA members receive discounts at the following outlets:

(a) Melbourne

A1 Motorcycles, Brighton & Ringwood - 10% parts & accessories
Allied Commercial Wreckers, Dandenong - 10% 2nd hand parts
Balwyn Jewellers - 10% most goods
Bike Barn, City - 10% most items
Bike Mart, Ringwood - 10% most goods
Draggin' Jeans - 10% clothing
Express Office Systems, suburb - 25% PC peripherals excluding printers;
50% off printer service fee
Grace Placensio, Davies & Co. Lawyers, Melbourne
Mars Leathers, City - free gloves with any purchase over \$300
Pablo's Tyres, Mulgrave - 5% tyres, 10% accessories
Promoto Tyre & Service Centre, Abbotsford - 10% radial tyres & accessories
Redwing Honda, Heidelberg - 10% most parts & accessories
Stafford Motorcycles, Heidelberg - 10% parts & accessories
Top Gear Motorcycles, Seaford
Wiseco Pistons, Heidelberg - minimum 10% excluding sale items

(b) Healesville, Marysville & Buxton

Buxton Pub, Buxton - 10% meals
Country Looks, Healesville - 10% food & drinks, up to 20% crafts
Great Australian Ice Creamery, Healesville -15% all food & drinks
Marysville Bakery - 10% excl. cold drinks

(c) South Australia

Bike Centre, Parafield - 10% parts and accessories
Bike City - 10% parts and accessories
Boltons - 10%
C&D Motorcycles - 10%
City Cycle Electric - 10%
G.P. Motorcycles - 10%
Honda Shock - 15% parts, 10% accessories
Honda World - 10% parts & accessories
Kessner Suzuki - 10% parts & accessories
Peter Stevens - 10%

A new discounter: Kelly's on the Hill, Olinda – tavern/restaurant. One of the owners is an ex production racer and has recently returned to riding, currently serving his 250cc probation. They welcome riders with open arms, as they know the importance of motorcycling to tourism. If you'd like a yarn with a friendly ex racer, ask for Bill. See advert below.

And, a one-off 17% discount on tickets to the first international Moto Freestyle Challenge, Calder Park, 15th May - \$35 instead of \$42.50. To book, contact Derek Clarkson, 0404 053 463 or secretary@mraa.org.au.

040516 MRA E-MAIL GROUP

The MRA has its own e-mail discussion group, which aims to disseminate information to members about the MRA's work and facilitate discussion of relevant issues. To subscribe, send a blank message to <MRA_Forum-subscribe@yahoogroups.com>.

040515 ROAD HAZARD LINE

Flying sofas on the freeway? Deep chasm on a curve? Traffic lights not detecting your bike? Don't just whinge – report it to VicRoads' motorcycle-specific road hazard line.

Reporting by email seems to be more effective than phone. Be courteous – staff fixing the hazard are unlikely to have caused it. Depending on the nature of the hazard, it can take time to fix, but you will generally receive a response. Recent things that have been fixed include a deep trench in the Monash Freeway inbound that could have flipped a bike, removal of sand on a corner and upping the detection limits of a number of traffic lights.

If you aren't getting any action, politely report the hazard again. Phone 03 9854 2899, email vmac@vrnotes.roads.vic.gov.au or lodge the report via www.ozmotorcycles.com. Reports made via the website are automatically lodged with VicRoads and are also displayed on the website, so other riders can be forewarned.

Tell your mates about the line – the more it's used, the safer we'll be. Should a rider be injured or killed from an unsafe condition that's been reported, it may also give them and their family some legal redress.

040516 DIARY DATES

Tue May 4 – Board meeting, 22 Ross St, South Melbourne
Sun May 9 – Social ride - Mt Buller – B class
Sun May 23 – Social ride - Korumburra via Nojee – B class
Tue Jun 1 – Board meeting, 22 Ross St, South Melbourne
Sat Jun 13 – Social ride with Board meet & greet, C class
Tue Aug 3 – Board meeting, 22 Ross St, South Melbourne
Tue Sep 7 – Board meeting, 22 Ross St, South Melbourne unless otherwise advised
Tue Oct 5 – Board meeting, 22 Ross St, South Melbourne unless otherwise advised
Tue Nov 2 – Board meeting, 22 Ross St, South Melbourne unless otherwise advised
Tue Dec 7 – Board meeting, 22 Ross St, South Melbourne unless otherwise advised

If you'd like to talk to the board about any issue, we encourage you to attend a board meeting so you can talk to everyone at once and avoid long-winded email exchanges. Until the Ross St lease expires later this year, board meetings will be held at 22 Ross St, South Melbourne, off Clarendon St, unless otherwise advised.

040517 ADVERTS

Kelly's on the Hill

This log cabin tavern and restaurant in Olinda is a great destination or pit stop for motorcyclists travelling to or through the Dandenong ranges.

Located on the corner of Mt Dandenong Tourist Rd (the road up to the Mt Dandenong Observatory) & Ridge Rd in Olinda, Kelly's on the Hill is a heritage-listed solid log cabin built in 1893. Now owned by motorcycle enthusiasts, it has a unique ambience and fully stocked Irish bar with a number of tap beers available.

Whether you are dropping in for a quick pit stop and great cup of coffee (all types available) or staying for a big feed and relaxing afternoon in front of the roaring open fires catching up on your motorcycle news reading, Kelly's is a beaut way to spend a Saturday or Sunday afternoon. In fact it's a great way to spend any time at all!

Drop in and say hi to Bill, De or Alan, enjoy our great hospitality and get 10% off your bill.

Dinner Wednesday to Friday 5.00pm to late. Breakfast, lunch and dinner Saturday & Sunday. Live music Friday and Saturday night.

Look forward to seeing you soon. If you want to book, call 03 97511056