

Riders Advocate

Contact the MRAA

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Austin Webb, Mark Ewart

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Michael Czajka

4Bs Co-ordinator:

Austin Webb

Road Safety Reference Group Rep:

Wendy Taylor

Blood Challenge Co-ordinator:

DJ McCarthy

Newsletter Editor: Martin Taylor

Events Co-ordinator: Dale Maggs

Office Hours:

Tuesday - 7pm to 9pm

Saturday - 10am to 3pm

Email: mraa@mraa.org.au

Fred Gassit waves off the MRA Oz GP Run.



ARE YOU INJURED?

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February 06 AGM

The February 06 Annual General Meeting (QGM) will be held at MRA HQ, Quist Court in Dandenong, on Saturday, 25th February, commencing at 1 pm sharp. Please check the MRA website (listed below) for updates.

MRA Website

<http://www.mraa.org.au>

MRA Forums

The MRA has an online web based forum where you can get involved in policy discussion, hear what's happening, and generally chat to other members. Surf to:

<http://www.mraa.org.au/forum/>

The MRAA also has an email mailing list via the Yahoogroup lists.

<http://go.to/mraa>

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From the Editor's Desk

It's been an interesting couple of months. We've had the Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix at Phillip Island, with a well attended MRA GP Run. We've had the WIMA Pink Ribbon Ride, the Melanie Edwards case again rears its head and we had a stand at the Motorcycle Expo in Jeff's Shed..

Everything's on track for the December MRA Toy Run, and the \$50 TAC Levy has been extended for a further 2 years.

TAC Tax

Riders that I've been speaking to, both in online forums and face to face, particularly at the GP, have demonstrated mixed feelings over the TAC levy. It seems that some people hate it, others don't care and there are those who are for it.

Some people support the MRA for its stand regarding the issue, while others accuse the MRA of whinging. It seems that you can't win.

One of the biggest complaints, though, is that VMAC was virtually ignored with its recommendation to drop the levy. The only member to approve its continuation, was VMAC chairman, Neil O'Keefe. Whatever happened to the concepts of democracy and consultation with the stakeholders? If consultation means to tell a section of the community that you're going to do something without accepting any of that group's recommendations, then it seems rather unfair and undemocratic.

2006 AGM

Mick Doedee has put out a call for nominations for the 2006 AGM. It's on Page 13 (hopefully it is not a sign of bad luck). Please consider his pleas for your support.

GP Run

The GP Run was a big hit with record crowds, estimated at around 14,000 riders this year, turning out. However, as with any large gathering, there are those who are intent on spoiling it for everyone. The wannabe stunt riders and racers should confine their antics to the race track. Many riders have complained about the behavior of some other riders and a lack of police to pull these people into line. Hopefully, we'll be able to address the issue in future events.

Pink Ribbon Ride

The annual WIMA Pink Ribbon Ride, which promotes breast cancer awareness had a huge turnout recently. Headed off by former model and now author, Tara Moss, hundreds of riders, adorned in pink rode up into the Dandenongs for a BBQ. They raised over \$10,000 for cancer research.

Blood Challenge

Finally, the annual MRA Blood Challenge kicks off next month. From December through to the end of February, if you donate blood, register as an MRA member when you do so. See if we can knock the cops, scouts, fireys and other groups off their lofty perches.

Membership Discounts

If you know of someone who might be willing to offer an MRA discount, feel free to ask them and send me the details.

Michael Doedee

Membership Secretary

Canberra 2006 National Awareness Ride

Thousands of motorcyclists will ride to Canberra on **Saturday, January 28** in support of a celebrity based motorcycle awareness ride to highlight a range of important motorcycle awareness and safety issues according to Greg Hirst, the organiser for next year's national awareness ride..

Following in the footsteps of the famous **Celebration Rides** in 1996 and 2001, this national awareness ride will bring together a cross section of the whole motorcycle community in Australia in order to bring positive public attention to the importance of motorcycling and making drivers 'more aware'.

Organised by Bikers Australia and Melbourne based Damien Codognotto, the details will be similar to previous rides with a road closure on the Federal Highway and a mass ride through the cheering throng of local residents to New Parliament House. It is expected that members of the Federal Government will be present and already has the support of Federal MP Jackie Kelly.

Previous Awareness rides to the nation's capital have secured an enormous amount of positive motorcycle coverage in the mainstream media across Australia. Indeed the last Celebration ride featured prominently on news bulletins and significantly featured on the front page of the Canberra Times, as well as other papers and national motorcycle magazines.

"As with the Celebration Rides, this **National Motorcycle Awareness Ride** is expected to attract a lot of positive public attention to motorcycle safety and awareness issues as well as to motorcycling itself." Mr. Hirst said.

Motorcycle injury?

Talk with us.

Speak with Tim Connor, an Accredited Specialist in Personal Injury with 15 years experience dealing with transport accidents.

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Your Say

Will it ever end?

Just when we thought it was all over. Melanie Louise Edwards, the motorist responsible for the death of my brother Geoff Lording has lodged her notice to appeal against her sentence (6yrs with a min of 4).

Although this news is devastating it is not totally unexpected. We can only hope that the Supreme Court sees fit to increase the sentence rather than decrease it. Our family has already notified Dale of this news and I trust that he has kept your members well informed. We will notify you of a court date when we have one.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for your ongoing support. I note in one of the forums that someone had mentioned that it has been a long haul and thankfully it's now over. Well they are 100% correct re the long haul but unfortunately it's not all over.

The MRA has provided our family with endless support and I know I can speak for the entire family when I say that we are extremely thankful and indeed humbled by the actions of your members. Geoff's helmet that was provided by your members has pride of place in my lounge room and I am so thankful to all of you every time I look at it, which is often.

The endless attendances of your members in court has not gone unnoticed. I am well aware that you all have family and work commitments but not once has the MRA failed to be

represented and I am proud and I know that Geoff would have been proud and honoured by this showing of public support. Geoff was not a member of the MRA but you guys have stood by a fellow rider regardless and you should be really proud of the manner in which you all conduct yourselves. A special thankyou to Dale who has personally been there every step of the way and has given me and my family far more than he will ever know.

From the bottom of my heart - thank you.

For those of you that wish to pursue this to the very end we will keep you updated. For those of you that are heavily committed please don't feel obligated to personally attend court as those who do attend are representative of the entire MRA. On the other hand please don't feel that you can't attend because we may not know you, we want all there who wish to be there. Obviously this is very personal for my family and me but there is also a big lesson that needs to be learned and we all need to ensure that that message is clearly delivered by the court. Our attendance leaves the court in no doubts as to what that message should be.

Ride on "Goofers" (Geoff) and let's do all that we can to prevent a repeat of the events of October 23, 2004.

Debbie McMellan

Ed. Our thoughts are with you and your family. Hopefully this ordeal will be over soon.

Roadside Rubbish

I would just like to say that our roads are not safe enough with all the rubbish left on our roads. The councils are the ones responsible for it I think! On Easter Monday this year I had an accident on my Yamaha R6 going around a bend on Mt Dandenong Tourist Road. There were rocks (stones) on the road and being night time I didn't see them and fell down doing around about 45 to 50km on that particular bend and fractured my scaphoid, part of my wrist bone. I had an operation done but almost lost my job from my injuries due to the accident and had left me partially unable to lift heavy objects with my right hand due to the fracture.

I still ride my motorcycle even though I had the accident but I have a lot of fear after that incident which could have costed me my life if it was closer to the edge of the turn.

I will join you guys on the great toy run in December because I will need the time to recover and gain my strength back. The councils should inspect all road conditions and should act upon any kind of reports straight away because the longer someone stays upright the longer he will stay safe.

Thank you for you're time reading my comments

Tony, via email

Ed. 2 weeks ago about 20 workmates participated in the Round the Bay in a Day bicycle ride. Without exception they all experienced punctures due to the roadside debris, particularly in the emergency and bicycle only lanes. This issue isn't confined to motorcyclists and it seems to be a never ending problem for all road users.

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Toy Run Protest?

How about using the Toy Run this year also as a form of protest against the renewal of the rip-off Tax.

We are heading into Mr Bracks' "backyard", I believe.

We need some sort of action. The lack of it has resulted in the levy being introduced again this year.

May be riders should be encouraged to show some form of protest, or I don't know block off the Westgate bridge, or something.

Sounds radical I know, but on one hand we give generously to the Community through the Toy run event every year (Salvos), and on the other we get shafted by the Bracks Mafia.

Phew.... feels better!

Thanks.

Serge, via email

Ed – the Toy Run is the one event that is non-political and it needs to stay that way. It's been suggested in the past that the Toy Run be used as a vehicle to push a political point. If we did this, we would only be seen to be exploiting the poor families who benefit from the Toy Run. It's understood that this is one event that all riders get together to help out a worthy cause. To hijack the event in such a manner would only be seen in a bad light. As it is, there are car drivers who resent motorcyclists on a charity run taking over "their" roads. No need to give these selfish people any more ammo is there?

Stolen Motorcycle

In the early morning of Thursday, October 27 my 2005 Dyna Wide Glide was stolen from our garage. The rego number is (or was) EF 962. It's black with red a flame pattern on the tank. It has two leather saddle bags and had just been fitted with a "cruiser seat". Please keep your eyes open for my bike and if you see it drop me a line or phone me on 0421-498-157 (mob) (03)9855-2757 (Home).

Bert, Melbourne.



A Harley Dyna Wide Glide, similar to what was stolen.

MRA Blood Challenge 27

It's time to roll up your sleeves for the Summer Blood Challenge!

Dear Members,

It's that time of year again - time to get competitive, time to roll up your sleeves, time to donate blood for the Summer Blood Challenge!



The 2004/2005 Summer Blood Challenge generated **4,272 blood donations**. Challenges such as the Summer Blood Challenge are essential to ensure that the blood bank has sufficient blood supplies. The efforts of generous supporters such as ourselves during last year's Summer Blood Challenge potentially **saved the lives of over 12,000 people**.

This year is the 27th Summer Blood Challenge since the MRA founded it in 1979 and we are counting on the support of MRA members to ensure that it's the biggest yet!

The challenge will run from 1 St December 2005 - 28th February 2006, with awards presented by the Australian Red Cross Blood Service to the organizations who:

- generate the greatest number of donations
- generate the greatest number of NEW donors
- are the greatest advocates for the challenge and blood donation

So, if you regularly donate blood please nominate the MRAA as your participating organisation.



MRA President, Dale Maggs in last year's Blood Challenge Tug of War.

Toy Run Update



Hi everyone. It's Kate here, reporting on behalf of Derek who's computer has blown up (and I don't think it'll be long before his mind goes with it!)

Well, bit of an update hey? At the moment things are rolling full steam ahead!

With Derek's workload becoming increasingly overwhelming (surprised the guy gets any sleep!) the decision was made to delegate some of the more pressing duties out to other committee members and it looks like all is going well.

By the time you read this, Mark Ewart will have organised the posters you'll be seeing in all the stores as well as flyers and stickers for promotional material.

Rose McCarthy has been looking after merchandise for this year's run and you'll be able to purchase t-shirts and caps as well as the traditional metal badges. Also all the previous year's badges will be available for purchase at both Flagstaff and Williamstown at a VERY discounted price....so if you have been on a Toy Run in the past and didn't get a badge, make sure you head to the MRA marquees on the day to pick one up!

Rose & Mark are also making sure there'll be general MRA merchandise, such as t-shirts and fleecy vests, beanies and cloth badges also available for purchase on the day.

Dale Maggs, as usual is running around like a headless chook, visiting sponsors, gaining quotes etc, just being his usual busy self!

Tony Ellis is our written correspondent this year and has put together all the advertisements you'll be seeing in the newspapers in the coming weeks.

Anton Lange has been doing a fantastic job, working alongside Derek and the Victoria Police, planning routes, organising marshals, and generally making sure the roads are going to be safe for everyone.

When you see some of the gorgeous identification photos and artwork, you can blame DJ McCarthy for this- it's all up to him to make us look a million dollars!

Apart from organising the breakfast with his Bikesales crew Greig Ruthven has also jumped on as a committee member and has been a great help with advice throughout.

And the man who crunches numbers best, Rik, has been, in between his extremely busy schedule (I never know what

country I'm talking to him in!) wheel'n and deal'n, doing his best to get the most for the MRA \$.

Thanks also to Eric Saunders from Race Marshalls who has attended a few meetings throughout and has helped with marshall liaison.

Well, this year it seems things are bigger and better than ever.

With support from our three major sponsors, www.bikesales.com.au, www.spokes.com.au (TAC) and Western QBE this event promises to be big.

We are currently in discussions with the councils regarding the route, road blockages and all the other boring legalities you don't want to hear about, but we can tell you this: There will be:

A HUGE gold coin donation breakfast, sponsored by www.bikesales.com.au, with all proceeds going to the Salvation Army; as well as;

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT from Elephant Gun, whom performed at the pink ribbon ride;

TWO GIANT scooter and chopper bike displays; and; Balloons and face painting for the kids!

Derek has been working on some brilliant artwork (all designs you'll see are his) and this year all staff members, including volunteers will be supplied with a uniform, a backpack with refreshment supplies, mini 1st aid kits and another little surprise that Marie has organised!



Eric Bana & Cathy Freeman at Toyrun 2004

Santa will be at the front of the run in a Thai Xmas tuk-tuk. Of course negotiations are still underway as to what celebrities will be attending this awesome event!

On a more serious note, they'll be a Salvo's truck at Flagstaff as well as two at Williamstown, so feel free to bring friends along to enjoy the day with you and if they want to donate a toy or food they can do this at either end.

If you're still undecided as to what to donate, try logging on to the Toy Run website, www.toyrun.org.au, follow the links. Derek has put up a whole list of suggested toys for the respective age groups- and although its great to buy the teddies etc, remember the kids that could be too old to appreciate the fluffy toys!

This year's event has been a long time coming. With enormous amounts of hours involved in negotiations and decision-making, along with all the truck loads of paper work involved, the one person who will definitely need a holiday when this is over is Derek Clarkson. Apart from his full-time employment, he has been very lucky to have the support of his partner, Marie, in making this Toy Run happen. So when you bump into him on the day, be sure to say a big thank you and congratulations **ON AN EVENT NOT TO BE MISSED!!**

See you there- and come say hi!

Kate Donohue

Event Coordinator

The Secret Green Alternative

(Fuel Efficiency & Emissions)

What's the most fuel efficient mode of transport? What's the only mode of transport not on the Governments green vehicle web site? What mode of transport puts out the least pollutants? What mode of transport would solve many of Melbourne's congestion problems? If you guessed motorcycle/scooter you'd be right.

Motorcycle/Scooter fuel efficiency

The Honda Scoopy 50cc 4 stroke can get up to 75 km/l.

50cc 2-stroke scooters get ~50 km/l

Larger scooters like the Bolwell 110cc 2-stroke get ~35 km/l

250cc motorcycles and scooters get ~25-35 km/l

600-900cc motorcycles get ~15-21 km/l

Car fuel efficiency

The average family sedan gets ~10 km/l

A fuel efficient car like the Daewoo Matiz gets ~15 km/l

The two most fuel efficient cars on the government's fuel efficiency web site get:

Smart ForTwo ~20 km/l

Toyota Prius ~25 km/l

The most fuel efficient scooter is 300% more fuel efficient than the most fuel efficient car!

The average motorcycle is more fuel efficient than a fuel efficient car.

The smaller motorcycles and scooters are all more fuel efficient than the most fuel efficient car!

Newsflash: Honda has just announced that it is aiming to increase fuel efficiency 30% on all larger motorcycles.

Price

The most fuel efficient car is ~\$38,000

The most fuel efficient scooter is ~\$2990

Emissions

Assuming a constant 60 km/h and that each rotation of the engine only displaces half the engine capacity:

A Ford Falcon 4 litre 6 cyl. displaces 2l x 2000 RPM = 4000l/min

Aprilia 1,000 cc at 3,000 rpm displaces 500ml x 3,000 = 1500l/min

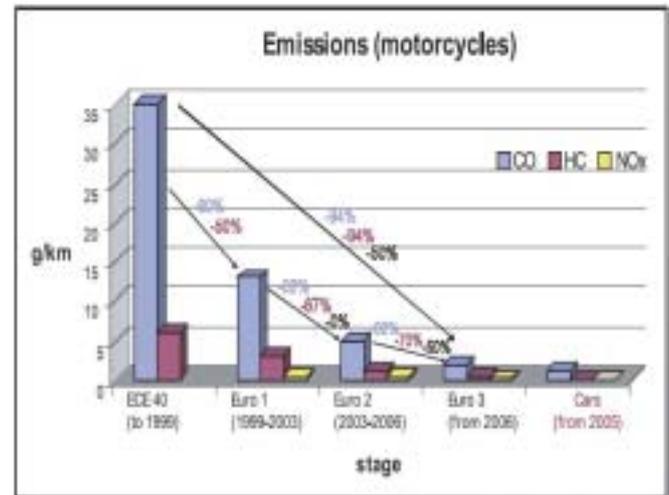
Suzuki Across 4 cylinder 250cc commuter bike displaces 125ml x 4,000 = 1,000l/min

125cc 4-stroke slow revving single cylinder scooter displaces .0625 x 2,000 = 125l/min

50cc 4-stroke scooter displaces .025 x ~5000-10,000RPM = 125-250l/min

Thus the scooter is generating 1/16-1/32th the emissions volume of the car. Another way of putting it is that the scooter or small motorbike has to be 16-32 times as dirty before its output matches that of one taxi. Even the larger motorcycles put out only ~1/4 of a taxi's output.

The ACEM Autumn 2005 magazine has the most conclusive evidence. It shows that motorcycles from 2006 will have almost the same emissions output as cars.



You can get the full article here: <http://ts.puzzleinteractive.be/r/?id=hfe2443,155dcc1,156e5f2>

However even these excellent figures do not do motorcycles and scooters justice because they make no allowance for the volume of exhaust gases produced (as calculated above).

If we factor in the exhaust volumes... then motorcycles move from being merely comparable to cars... to being outstandingly green!

Catalytic converters

Catalytic converters are frequently cited as one reason why motorcycles can not be as green as cars. However many new motorcycles including 2-stroke scooters (Bolwell) have catalytic converters. What most people forget is that catalytic converters clean up stuff that wasn't burned in the engine. If the fuel is burned more efficiently in the engine you don't need a catalytic converter. What's more you'll be getting better mileage and more power into the bargain eg. Some cars and motorcycles now inject the fuel directly into the combustion chamber. Direct injection engines increase power and economy while decreasing emissions.

Congestion

Around 80% of car trips are made with a single occupant... contributing to congestion... which increases the length of the trip, the number of starts and stops... and thus increases pollution.

Time

Professor Marcus Wigan reports motorcycles are 14-46% faster on suburban trips. However in peak hour it takes me ~30 min by motorcycle to get from Sunshine to Kew vs 1.5hrs+ by car (about 30km): a 66%+ decrease in transit time! Remember emissions increase when travel times increase!

So get on a motorbike or scooter and do your bit for the environment. And have fun at the same time!

Michael Czajka

MRA Road Safety & Research Officer

Membership Secretary Report



It's been a hectic 2 years as Membership secretary for this organisation and no more so than the last 6 months. Glad to finally be seeing the light at the end of the tunnel and even feel the sunshine.

When I first joined the board at the AGM in February '04 the MRA was deep in financial strife. We had to deal with law suits from previous presidents as well as having to pay their phone bills.

Memberships were at an all time low with renewals coming back in dribs and drabs. Now 21 months down the track, the MRA is in the black, membership are at their highest since I came into the job (an increase of around 40% since I joined the Board) and it's easier than ever to join the MRA or renew your membership with the online shop located at www.mraa.org.au/shop.

Our merchandise stocks are back up again and increasing in both range and quantity and this is also available at the online shop. although the MRA is in the black we aren't rolling in money by any means but we're doing OK.

On that note I don't intend to contest my seat again at the AGM in Feb 05 as there is plenty of new blood in the MRA now and I think it's time for someone else to step up to the plate.

Our AGM will be held at our HQ in Dandenong on the 25th of February 2006. All seats become vacant, as stated above I don't plan to re-stand and our Treasurer is more overseas than he is in Australia so he is also standing down from his role.

If ever you wanted to get involved with the MRA then please feel free to nominate yourself or indeed nominate someone you know. All accountants that really love your work and your motorcycling, this is the ideal opportunity to combine the both. For those with a little database expertise and wanting to utilise it or indeed expand on it, there is the membership secretary gig.

If you enjoy writing then perhaps you might want to nominate for the secretary's position. Positions also available are President, Vice President and 2 ordinary board members. The latter so called as simply they have no title as such.

There are other roles within the organisation that are of assistance to the board and help take a load off and we are always on the lookout for volunteers.

I encourage everyone to get involved with the organisation. We are only as strong as the membership allows us to be and the more get involved then the more time the board has to concentrate on the lobbying type stuff that is the main reason the MRA exists.

Coloured Newsletter

Would you prefer your newsletter in colour? It is produced in colour for those who wish their copy to be emailed to them.

If you'd prefer a PDF version instead of a hard copy, please send an email to membershipsecretary@mraa.org.au and I'll get that sorted for the next issue.

Michael Doedee
Membership Secretary

MRA 2005 Calendar

2005 Quarterly General Meetings

Last Saturday of, November (26th) at MRA HQ, 5/2 Quist Crt, Dandenong Sth.

2006 Quarterly General Meetings

27th May

26th August

25th November

Monday Nights

Advocacy meetings, 1st Monday of the month at Bell's Hotel, Sth Melbourne, cnr Moray St and Bank St at 7pm. Contact Michael Czajka at MC1@pobox.com or <http://go.to/mraa> to subscribe to the MRA Forum mailing list.

Tuesday Nights

Board Meetings, 1st Tuesday of the month, 7.30pm at Quist Crt. All members welcome.

Events Committee, 2nd Tuesday of the month, 7.30pm at Quist Crt.

4Bs, 3rd Tuesday of the month, 7.30pm at Quist Crt.

MRA HQ in Quist Crt, Dandenong for coffee and nibbles, while we watch our own local home grown bike show Two Wheel Torque on Channel 31.

Trivia nights are held at the Quiet Man Irish pub at 271 Racecourse Rd, Flemington. Our team usually meets at the pub around 7:50pm. Just look for the helmets.

Friday Nights

Riders meet for coffee at around 6pm at the Bear Brass Cafe, Southbank and usually finishes up around 9pm. It's not an MRA specific event. All riders are welcome.

Organised Rides and Events

For more up-to-date details please refer to the MRA's calendar at: <http://mraa.org.au/forum/modules/eCal/>

December

1st Dec thru to end of Feb 06 - MRA Blood Challenge

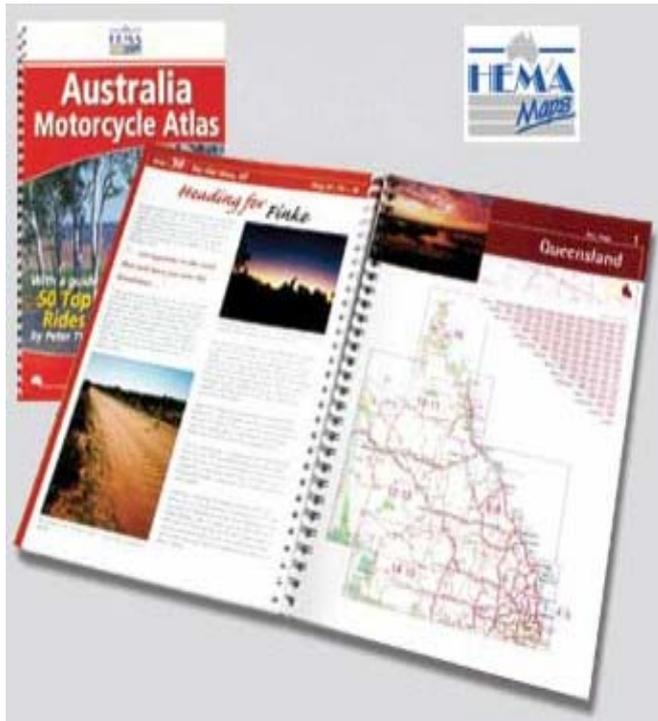
11th - MRA Toy Run

January 06

28th - Canberra Awareness Ride



MRA HQ at Quist Crt, where you can drop in for a cuppa and pizza and watch Ch. 31's Two Wheel Torque bike TV show.



If you visited the MRA stand at the Melbourne Motorcycle Expo in September you would have seen us selling the latest editions of the Australia Motorcycle Atlas and the New Zealand Motorcycle Atlas. These books are specially geared for the motorcyclist and the new editions now detail 100 top rides throughout Australia or New Zealand respectively.

For the Australian version, one of Australia's leading motorcycle writers, Peter (The Bear) Thoeming, details a full page devoted to each of the rides at the start of the book. Rides are described with respect to what to see, rating, distance and start/end locations.

The rear of the book contains a 92-page complete road atlas and each ride is referenced to the atlas. Other sections include a handy guide to packing your gear and a list of all national parks indicating the available facilities.

Naturally a book that would cover every great ride in Australia would be too big to carry so you can only find the 100 best in this book which makes it an invaluable place to start; I wish I had this book on our ten day ride in Tasmania last year. Now I'll have to go back to Tassie for all the places I now know I missed.

The atlas is spiral bound for ease of use on the road and is in a convenient tank bag size (B5). Supplied in a clear plastic wallet, this atlas really does cater to two-wheel tourers as well as day-trippers.

Both atlases are available by order from the MRA either online at www.mraa.org.au/shop or by phoning the office on (03) 9794 5504.

DJ McCarthy

Soft cover, colour photographs and maps, 224 pages.

ISBN 1865002364

Dimensions 260 x 190 x 15mm

NZ version also available

Producer: Hema Maps

WRBs a Waste of Money?

Victoria's Corangamite Shire's soaring road toll has prompted one councillor to question whether government funding is being wasted on unnecessary projects.

Cr Neale Gleeson said the \$4 million being spent on installing wire barriers along the Princes Highway between Camperdown and Colac should have been used to fund overtaking and passing lanes instead.

Cr Gleeson, who is a police officer, told the council's meeting at Derrinallum yesterday that he did not think there was a great problem with vehicles running off the road and crashing.



El Presidente, Dale Maggs showing newly constructed, but as yet unfinished WRBs on one of our roads. Note the lack of clearance between the road and the WRB. Also, note the height of the WRB. How will that stop a large vehicle?

He said more wire barriers were due to be installed between Camperdown and Warrnambool.

"I believe someone's come into VicRoads and that's their baby and they're going to spend \$4 million on it."

Cr Gleeson said he agreed with recent comments by motorcyclists that the barriers were a danger if motorcyclists ran off the road.

Mayor Geoff Smith said the increasing road toll was concerning.

So far this year 14 people have died on Corangamite roads compared to four in 2004.

Cr Smith said it appeared that driver error was the main reason behind the accidents.

He said the shire was improving and maintaining its road network as well as it could with the funds that were available.

The shire's infrastructure and development group manager, Paul Younis, said statistics gathered in past years had shown most accidents in the shire involved single vehicles running off the road.

He said there appeared to be an increasing trend of head-on accidents and collisions at intersections.

Mr Younis said the shire had been working to improve line marking along the sides of roads and installing more guideposts.

The width of the sealed area was also increased as roads were upgraded.

"It's difficult to base things on statistics. A lot of it has to do with driver error but it's a big price to pay for lack of attention," Mr Younis told the council.

Riding in the Outback/Dirt 101

Experienced riders with lots of road experience often run the other way when they hit a dirt track. Other riders venture down them with a great deal of trepidation. This article will explain how to make your outback riding experience a lot smoother.

If you've driven down outback tracks you'll know that it's the corrugations more than anything that make it a challenging experience. What you probably don't realise is that it's all to do with tyre pressures! The lower the tyre pressure the more work the tyre does and the less you do.

On a recent trip down the Oodnadatta track I started off with tyre pressures of ~45psi back & ~36psi front. That's fine for road work especially if you're fully loaded. Higher tyre pressures mean the tyre lasts longer. A normal city pressure might be 36psi rear and 28-32psi front.

At the 45/36psi pressures riding a fully loaded Yamaha XT 600 (Road/trail bike) I was bouncing around over every corrugation and having a hard time keeping a speed of 30-40km/hr. As the Oodnadatta track is ~600km long and the temperatures on it are 35-45oC you want to keep the speed up. Otherwise you won't get the benefit of much cooling from the wind and it'll take you 8 or so hours to cover each 200Km section (the towns are approximately ~200kms apart).

Dropping the tyre pressures to 36 psi back and 26 front... helps a bit. Your average speed goes up to 40-60km/hr... but it still takes way too long to cover a section... and you're fighting the road all the way.

It wasn't till I got about 400km down the track in Oodnadatta that I ran into the Pink Roadhouse. The local mechanic (Adam) was very familiar with bikes. He dropped the tyre pressure to 24psi rear and 16psi front. To check if the pressure was right he stepped on the tyres. The tyres squirmed as he stood on them. They flattened out... but not too much. To test the pressure I took the bike down a corrugated dirt road. Sure enough suddenly the corrugations were no longer creating instability. They had disappeared like magic. If you are going to drop your tyre pressures Adam says it helps to have a heavy duty tube in your tyre.



The "Pink" roadhouse at Oodnadatta. Well, it would look pink if this were a color publication...

With the new lower tyre pressures (I had a heavy tube as well) I was able to maintain 60-90km/hr speeds all the way to Coober Pedy. As you ride down the track you also have to

dodge rocks and stay out of gravel as well. The faster you go the more you have to concentrate. It was possible to go faster... but if you're on holiday... you want to see a bit of the scenery.

BTW: Quads and off-road bikes often drop their tyre pressures even further to only a few psi (which is why some of the advice you get may be confusing). However a much heavier and fully loaded road trail bike needs a bit more than this.

4WD's can have problems too!

While I was on the track I ran into some German tourists in a 4WD. They decided to tackle the much more remote Birdsville Track. Unfortunately they were running normal road tyres... which they thought were off-road (off-road tyres are much chunkier). The local mechanic advised them to use 37psi. They only got part of the way down the Birdsville and had already blown 3 tyres. Adam suggested that they should have been running only 20psi front and 26psi rear (both tyres bulging equally). He says family sedans need about 28-30psi. There is a fairly sandy section further up the Birdsville track... and low pressures or not... it's likely they would have had to be towed out if they had proceeded (an expensive proposition). Fortunately common sense prevailed and they turned back and did the Oodnadatta track instead.

Background

The Oodnadatta Track is probably the most famous track in Australia. It runs roughly parallel to the Stuart Highway and is about 200kms inland from Coober Pedy (~120kms as the crow flies) SA. The Oodnadatta track is also one of the best maintained tracks in Australia. It's also very popular with lots of traffic. So if you have the urge to test a track... this is the best place to do so.



Hey Michael, watch your bike! It's about to fall over... Michael C out back of the outback somewhere....

Coober Pedy is the most famous opal mining town in Australia. Almost everyone in Coober Pedy lives underground where it is cooler. It's one of the most interesting towns in Australia... so make sure you stop and look around.

<http://www.pinkroadhouse.com.au> (Oodnadatta)

<http://outback.mc1.boing.net> (Oodnadatta track) These photos cover a trip to Broken Hill that I did with a group of friends. They went home... and I kept going. You'll find a much more detailed write up along with the pictures.

Michael Czajka

Helmet Sticker Laws, Pt 2

As you'll recall, in our previous issue we had an article on Helmet laws. It stemmed from a Victorian, who'll we'll call "Doctor Mark", who was issued a Traffic Infringement Notice (TIN) by Victoria Police for failing to have a crash helmet that complied with AS-1698, and therefore the relevant Vicroads Road Rule. This was based on the member's judgement that it was because the relevant AS-1698 sticker was not affixed to the outside of the helmet (it was sewn into the lining inside the helmet)

He decided to challenge this.

Below is a letter from Vicroads explaining its position on AS 1698 labelling for crash helmets.

Further, the helmet in question, a THH, has been confirmed by SAI Global, the company that certifies crash helmets to AS-1698 standards, that it is compliant with the standard, and hence Australian laws. The court case in question has yet to proceed, but it's expected to have its conclusion some time this month (Nov, 05).



vic roads

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New Victoria Australia 3101
Fax: (03) 9853 9112
www.vicroads.vic.gov.au

The THH Helmet in question. Note the sewn in AS-1698 label.

Dear Dr

MOTORCYCLE HELMET STANDARDS

I refer to your letter, received 29 July 2005, in which you seek clarification on the road rules relating to motorcycle helmet standards.

I am not in a position to comment on the specific Traffic Infringement Notice issued to you by Victoria Police, but I have outlined the general provisions relating to the wearing and standard of motor bike helmets below.

The Victorian Road Rules, Rule 270, requires the rider of a motor bike and a passenger to wear an approved motor bike helmet when riding or stationary, but not parked. An approved motor bike helmet is specified as one that meets the Australian Standard, AS 1698-1988 Protective Helmets for Vehicle Users. The Road Rules, Regulations and Government Gazette S174 do not specify where the Australian Standard is to be marked on a bike helmet.

AS 1698-1988, Section 8, states a helmet shall be permanently and legibly marked so that the markings can be easily read without the removal of padding, or other permanent parts, and must include amongst other information the certification mark. There is no requirement in the standard for the certification mark to be on the exterior of the motorcycle helmet.

I hope this information is of assistance and if you have any further matters to discuss in relation to this matter please do not hesitate to contact Rodney Blythe on 03 9854 2739.

Yours sincerely

**GEOFF SHANKS
GENERAL MANAGER
REGISTRATION AND LICENSING**

11 / 1 / 2005

Front Number Plates (FNPs)

This is a policy proposal. It's published here to generate discussion amongst interested members. It will be discussed at a future general meeting and will be proposed as official MRAA policy where the members will vote on it.



Above: a sample FNP that's currently being trialled.

Policy

The MRA opposes the fitment of front number plates.

Rationale

The government has proposed front number plates as a safety measure; mainly as a method of improving the detection of non-compliant motorcyclists.

The evidence

Victorian figures from 2002 show that of 3,445,000 car registrations, 95,000 vehicles passed a speed camera but were not issued a fine due to lack of a front plate or an obscured plate.

For motorcycles, figures from 2001 show that of ~105,000 registrations, 3216 bikes passed a speed camera site but were not issued a fine as the photo was taken from the front.

This equates to 2.8% of cars and 3.1% of bikes not fined (.3% difference).

If 2.8% of cars escape fines, FNPs can only reduce motorcycle speeding non-detection to 2.8% NB. a lower rate than cars is unlikely but a higher rate is possible.

Catching a further 0.3% of riders equates to only 316 riders per year.

Therefore, the ~\$10M+ cost of introducing FNPs is equivalent to a cost of \$31,645 per rider caught.

Lack of evidence based research

There is no evidence that even one life will be saved or one accident prevented NB. FNPs are not used in any other developed country.

Waste of scarce resources

No demonstrated safety outcomes and such a small effect suggest a negative rate of return on expenditure. Because of this motorcyclists believe FNPs are not a safety issue.

Alternatives

There are plenty of better ways to spend this money that will show much higher rates of return eg. Funding motorcycle black spot repairs often returns 16x the invested amount.

Government policy

The government has stated its intention to only implement projects for which there is evidence-based research. FNPs fail this criterion.

Priorities

Motorcyclists ask the government to fund motorcycle safety interventions with high safety returns. Riders suggest using a prioritised, evidence based strategy to make such decisions.

Safety in numbers

The old adage of safety in numbers has recently been re-confirmed. A new study has found that pedestrian and cyclist safety increases when there are more of them on the roads.

The Australian study found that when there were more cyclists on the roads, there was a drop in injury rates. This matches overseas research. It also fits with riders' long-held beliefs that the easiest way to improve our safety is to encourage riding.

The researcher concluded that the safety factor was most likely because motorists are more careful when they have been conditioned to expect cyclists and pedestrians on the roads. It has also been proposed that social influence may be a factor – the more people who cycle and walk, the more likely a driver is to also cycle and walk occasionally. We all know there's nothing like personal involvement to increase your awareness of something.

The article concludes that "Any moves that discourage cycling... are... likely to produce real and significant increases in the risk of injury per cyclist."

While motorcyclist safety wasn't assessed, it is likely the same would apply.

To improve motorcyclist safety, reduce traffic congestion, reduce road maintenance costs and alleviate the petrol price burden, the MRA believes the government should scrap the motorcycle-specific \$50 tax and encourage more people to ride.

Source: *Health Promotion Journal of Australia 2005;16:47-51.*
<http://www.healthpromotion.org.au>. Reproduced with permission. By Lee O'Mahoney

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RIDE CALENDAR 2006

January - February - March

Ride Classification.

'A' class rides. Not suited for 'L' or 'P' plate riders.

'B' class rides. For those that enjoy country rides.

'C' class rides. Structured for 'L' and 'P' plate riders, along the 'buddy' system to gain more experience.

All rides leave at 10AM at the designated points, have a full tank of petrol and drinking water.

MRA HQ - 5 Quist Court. Dandenong, refer to Melways 95 - D5

January

Sunday 8

'C' class ride to Marysville

Start point HQ Quist Crt Dandenong

Leave at 10 AM

Ride Leader: Anton Lange

Mob: 0413 995 424

Sunday 22

Blue Ribbon Ride

Start Point: Monash Carpark, Clayton

Wellington Road entry: Melways 70/F12

All marshals required

Further info call DJ 0403 997 213

February

Sunday 5

'C' class ride to Portsea

Start point: MRA HQ at 10 AM

Ride leader; Don (DJ) McCarthy

Mob: 0403 997 213

Sunday 19

'A' class ride to Seymour

Start point: Shell S/S Todd Rd 10 AM

Ride Leader: Alois Zimmer

Mob: 0418 344 551

March

Sunday 12

'C' class ride to Queenscliff

Start Point: Shell S/S Todd RD 10 AM

Ride Leader: Tim Traill

Mob: 0414 933 908

Sunday 26

Dr John Pigot Poker Run

Start 11 AM at Safeway S/S Diamond Ck Rd

Melways 11 D 7

For further info ring 0413 995 424

Any MRA member who would like to lead a ride or has an interesting ride. contact Ride Coordinator on 0413 995 424

Anton Lange

Ride Co-ordinator.

2006 Annual General Meeting.

Call for Nominations

Our AGM is in February next year. AGMs are never the most exciting event on the MRA calendar, but they are a very necessary one, as they ensure that we have office bearers to keep the organisation running and that the process of office bearer selection is democratic.

I've been to three MRA AGMs in my time as a member. Of those, there has rarely been a contest for any board position, making it all very quick and simple.

Unfortunately, it's also a sign that members are not that interested about who represents them to various bodies, government representatives and politicians.

I appeal to EVERY member to a) come to the AGM so you can at least watch the board selection process in action and b) consider nominations seriously - if you don't wish to nominate yourself, talk to another member and see if they might be interested in accepting a position.

I warn you that there is a fair bit of work involved and at times tempers can become frayed, but that's part of the process. It's also very rewarding knowing that you are out there battling for motorcyclists' rights and safety.

There is a nomination form with this newsletter. Please feel free to use it and, indeed, distribute it. I'm hoping that all board positions are contested, as we have more members now than at any of the past three AGMs. It's time for new people to get involved - it's YOUR organisation and it's only as strong as YOU want it to be.

Michael Doedee

Membership Secretary



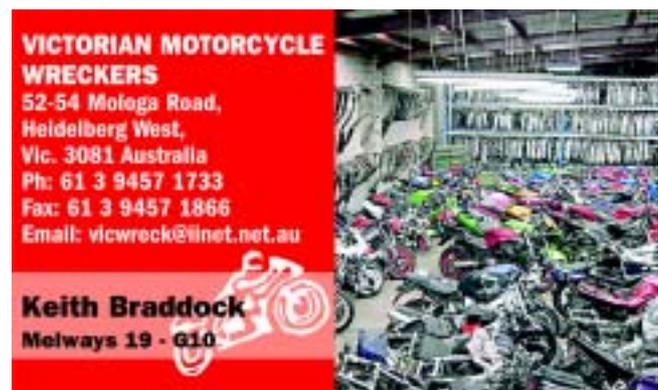
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Keith Braddock
Melways 19 - G10

Around the Globe

UK motorcycle casualties lowest since 1998

Drop in car numbers leads to fewer rider crashes

Statistics released by the UK Department for Transport show that motorcyclist injuries are their lowest in seven years. This is despite a 20% increase in the number of two wheelers on the roads and the distances travelled.

The rise in safety follows the introduction of the London Congestion Charge, which has seen a drop in the number of cars.

“The congestion charging scheme has been instrumental in achieving this”, said Ken Livingstone, Mayor of London.

”For example, within the charging zone, during charging hours, the number of P2W [Powered Two Wheelers] involved in collisions have declined by a quarter since the scheme was introduced.”

The Mayor believes motorcycles and scooters are important in reducing congestion and pollution and said he would not approve a proposal from a London safety committee that motorcycles and scooters pay the London Congestion Charge.

He has also indicated that rider safety is not the ‘intractable problem’ that some Australian safety committees have alleged.

“I believe the appropriate means of improving safety of this group [riders] is with the continued education of both drivers and riders, coupled with appropriate training programmes, and not by discouraging their use.

London’s findings refute the Victorian government’s claims that the increasing number of motorcycles and scooters on our roads will lead to increased crashes. These claims were made in an attempt to justify keeping the very unpopular \$50 per motorcycle per annum tax.

Source: ACEM Info, Autumn 2005, <http://www.acembike.org>.
Reproduced with permission



A letter to the London Mayor recommending that motorcyclists be exempt from any congestion taxes.

Riderwocky

(With apologies to Lewis Carroll)

Twas brillig, and the slithy bikers Did gyre and gimble in the Burvale Hotel All mimsy were the Boxer engines

And the ZZR’s outgrabe

Beware the Pink Ribbon Ride my son The Firestorms - the speeding laws that catch Beware the threatening thunderstorms And shun the frumious Bandit snatch

She took her Fireblade in hand Long time the manxome breast she sought So rested she by the VFR tree

And stood awhile in thought

And as in uffish thought she stood The Cancerous Breast, with cells aflame Came whiffing through the Dandenong Woods And to Maroondah Dam it came

One, two! One, two! The rider’s purse’s went snicker snack We left our tread and with full cred We went GSXing back

Oh, hast thou slain the Cancerous Beast? Come to my arms my BMWish Boy O frabjous day! CBR! Callay!

He chortled in his joy

Twas brillig, and the slithy bikers Did gyre and gimble in the Burvale Hotel All mimsy were the Boxer engines And the ZZR’s outgrabe



Tara Moss with the MRA Board, and volunteers after the Pink Ribbon Ride. Note Dabbsy’s far away look. Even then, he was on the job, putting together the words for this report.. As for Austin and Anton, they probably thought that their Christmases had all come at once...

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Family \$52.50

-OR-

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Single \$40.00

Family \$57.50

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[Street Name]	
[Suburb, Postcode]	
AH Phone:	
BH Phone:	
Mobile:	
D.O.B: [d/m/yy]	
Email:	
Occupation:	
Bike Model:	
Bike Make:	

PAYMENT METHOD:

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VISA Master Card

Name on Credit card:

Credit Card Number:
[4 digits per column – 20 digits max]

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Expiry Date: _____ / _____

Signature: _____

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