

## What is the MRAVic about?

The Motorcycle Riders Association of Australia was founded in Melbourne in May, 1978 as a non-profit, volunteer organization working in the interests of its Victorian members. In 2008 the name was changed to MRAVic. This organization offers support to all Australian motorcyclist social, sporting and interested clubs and organizations through its membership of the Australian Motorcycle Council.

The aims of the MRAVic are the promotion of:

- \* ROAD SAFETY
- \* FAIR & SENSIBLE LAWS
- \* A BETTER IMAGE FOR MOTORCYCLISTS

In attempting to further the aims of the association, MRAVic representatives participate on various state and federal committees including the following; VicRoads Road Safety Reference Group, Victorian Motorcycle Advisory Council (VMAC), Australian Motorcycle Council (AMC), Standards Australia (Helmet Standards), Australian Transport Safety Board (ATSB)



## In this issue

President's Report	P.4
VMAC Communiqué	P.8
AGM 2008 Minutes	P.9
Meeting dates & Calendar	P.12

## Ride for the Hills (bushfire victims' relief 2009)

### Chairman's Report

February 7th 2009 Black Saturday, a day of tragedy that has been written into Australian history as fire storms swept across the landscape of Victoria taking with it the lives of so many. As the enormity of the tragedy began to unfold and the courage of many was put to the test we witnessed the very best in humanity and in the Australian spirit to help a mate in need. Against all odds fire fighters, essential services and volunteers did what they could to protect life and provide support for the fire affected areas.

The need to do something overwhelmed everyone that watched as events unfolded and the motorcycle community that has enjoyed the roads and hospitality of the fire effect areas could not be a silent witness.

The willingness of all involved to work together and make a difference was demonstrated throughout the planning and was reinforced on Sunday 5th April 2009 when approximately 3000 motorcycles riding

Ride For The Hills raised approximately

\$ 42,000 for the Red Cross bush fire appeal and demonstrated the need for continuing support of those affected by the fires.

On behalf of Ride For The Hills we say thank you and congratulations to all of the committee members that worked so hard to make this event happen, to the volunteers, motorcycle clubs and associations, sponsors, Victorian Police and to all the riders that participated.

Ride For The Hills web site remains open for further donations.

[www.rideforthehills.org.au](http://www.rideforthehills.org.au)

## COMMENTS ON ORGANISATION/ASSOCIATION LEGISLATION – “BIKIE GANGS”

Nicholas Cowdery AM QC - May 2009

This legislation has been described as laws against “bikie gangs” and as “gang laws”. However, it is not confined in its terms to “outlaw motorcycle gangs” and its potential reach is much broader.

The *Crimes (Criminal Organisations Control) Act 2009* [“the Act”] has become law with insufficient community consultation and over the deep concerns and protests of the NSW Bar Association, the NSW Law Society, academics and many others. While both the State government and the opposition may be right that something more needs to be done about bikie gangs and criminal groups, especially when they involve themselves in an organised manner in drug manufacture and supply and crimes of violence, this very troubling legislation (which borrows from related legislation in South Australia) is another giant leap backward for human rights and the separation of powers – in short, the rule of law in NSW. One question is the need for further legislation in this area at all. There is already anti-criminal-group legislation in Division 5 of Part 3A of the *Crimes Act 1900*, enacted in 2007, under which successful prosecutions have been brought. There may be more a need for better enforcement, than for new legal powers.

The Act introduces a system of control orders whereby members of declared organisations can be ordered not to associate with other members subjected to control orders. This is not legislation directed, in terms, at “bikie gangs” – it can apply to any organisation, defined in a manner to include any formal or informal grouping of persons, wherever it may be based and wherever those persons may reside.

The machinery of the Act works in two stages. First, the Police Commissioner may apply to have an organisation declared under the Act by an “eligible” Supreme Court judge. That judge must be satisfied (section 9(1)) that members of the organisation associate for the purpose of organising, planning, facilitating, supporting or engaging in serious criminal activity and the organisation represents a risk to public safety and order in NSW. “*Serious criminal activity*” is defined to connect with “*serious indictable offences*” which are offences punishable by imprisonment for 5 years or more.

Secondly, once a declaration is made against an organisation, any judge of the Supreme Court can, on application by the Police Commissioner, make an interim and then a final control order against a person, if the court is satisfied that the person is a member of a particular declared organisation and that “*sufficient grounds exist for making the control order*”. (The Act gives no useful guidance as to what constitute “*sufficient grounds*”).

Section 26 of the Act makes it an offence for a controlled member of a declared organisation to associate (simpliciter) with another controlled member of the same organisation. The purpose of any such association is irrelevant to liability. A first offence is punishable with a maximum penalty of 2 years imprisonment; a second or subsequent offence is liable to a maximum penalty of 5 years imprisonment. Certain reasonable circumstances of association are exempted (for example, between “close family members” or in the course of a lawful occupation, business or profession, during education courses, etc – including in lawful custody), but the onus is on the controlled person to prove that the association falls within such a reasonable exemption. The making of a final control order has the effect of revoking any authority or licence that the person had to carry on any prescribed activity (for example, operating a pawn broking business, a tow truck, selling or repairing motor vehicles, selling liquor, possessing a firearm, acting as a security agent, operating a casino).

The legislation has a number of troubling features, including the following. The legislation does not apply only to bikie gangs, but to any “particular organisation” in respect of which the Police Commissioner chooses to make an application. Where will the line be drawn? This legislation could be applied to any, even small, informally organised group whose members the Commissioner alleges “associate for the purpose of organising, planning, facilitating, supporting or engaging in serious criminal activity”. These words cast a very wide net - far wider than the elements of conspiracy, one of the most broadly defined crimes in the criminal calendar. Why should the responsibility for identifying which organisations warrant being declared under the Act be vested in the Police Commissioner, an unelected official? The spectre of a police state lurks here – an unacceptable slide from the separation of powers by linking the powers of the Police Commissioner with those of “eligible” judges.

It is curious to note that the Act does not apply to organisations organising, planning, facilitating, supporting or engaging in criminal activity that does not satisfy the definition of “serious criminal activity” – arguably for example, gangs of organised shoplifters or street drug dealers.

Only an “eligible” Supreme Court judge can declare an organisation under the Act. To be eligible a judge must first consent to being declared eligible for this purpose and then be so declared by the Attorney General, who has the power to declare (or not to declare) him or her eligible and to amend or revoke the declaration of eligibility at any time.

In other words, if an Attorney General should so desire, he or she has unfettered power to “stack” the hearing of applications for declarations of organisations under the Act with judges willing to enforce it and to revoke or qualify the authority of a judge to determine applications for declarations if he or she does not perform to the government’s satisfaction. This may not be the intention of the present Attorney General, but a provision so drafted left on the statute books is extremely dangerous and potentially open to serious misuse. It is also doubtful that the power to declare an organisation under this legislation is merely an administrative one - its ramifications for the organisation and its members are so serious that such an exercise of power may, in reality, more properly be regarded as an exercise of judicial power as the procedures laid down would seem to suggest. Indeed, these provisions may offend the doctrine of the separation of powers also for that reason.

Whereas section 24 of the Act creates a right of appeal against the making of a control order against a person, section 35 purports, in the widest possible terms, otherwise to oust any review by the Supreme Court or any other review body (excepting investigations or proceedings under the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act) of a declaration or order made against an organisation or a person and to deny any right of appeal or review even when there has been a breach of the rules of procedural fairness (natural justice). In combination with the power vested in the Police Commissioner by the Act and the use of “eligible” judges, this alarming provision constitutes a frightening aggrandisement of power – in effect judicial power – to the executive.

An eligible judge (in the case of an application for a declaration against an organisation) or any Supreme Court judge (in the case of an application in respect of a control order against a member of a declared organisation) hearing an application, is by section 28(3) “to take steps to maintain the confidentiality of information that [they consider] to be properly classified by the Commissioner as criminal intelligence, including steps to receive evidence and hear argument about the information in private in the absence of the parties to the proceedings and their representatives and the public”. One can only wonder what “argument” there can possibly be when affected parties and their legal representatives are excluded from the proceedings.

Part 3 of the Act empowers any judge of the Supreme Court to make control orders against an individual member of an organisation. The definition of “member” of an organisation in section 3 is alarmingly wide – for example, it includes a “prospective member (however described)”. It also includes “a person who is treated by the organisation or persons who belong to the organisation, in some way, as if he or she belonged to the organisation”. This is extraordinarily broad-reaching – this criterion could be fulfilled without the person himself having any intention of being part of the organisation and could be established without any direct evidence of that person’s actual involvement with the organisation.

It is curious to note, however, that the definition of “member” does not include former member. Accordingly, it would seem that if a member received notice of a control order being sought against him or her, all that would be required for the entire process to be frustrated at that point would be for the member to resign.

Section 13 provides that the rules of evidence do not apply to hearings of applications for a declaration of an organisation. Are organisations to be declared on the basis of hearsay upon hearsay, or a police intelligence officer’s “hunch”, or a report of an anonymous telephone call?

Section 32 provides that “Any question of fact to be decided in proceedings under this Act is to be decided on the balance of probabilities” (this does not apply to proceedings for offences under the Act). Such a standard is insufficiently rigorous for the removal of a right as fundamental as the right to freedom of association. Indeed, the Act purports to remove the rights to freedom of association and expression in circumstances that do not come within the permissible exceptions described in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) – for national security, public order, etc.

Section 13(2) of the Act provides that an “eligible” judge is not required to provide any grounds or reasons for his or her decision in respect of a declaration against an organisation (except to the Ombudsman conducting a review under section 39). This is entirely contrary to the general practice in modern jurisprudence that judges should give public reasons for their decisions.

The placing of the burden of proof upon a controlled person to establish that an association with another controlled person falls within the exemptions under the Act (for example, close family members), is a draconian measure, reminiscent of reverse onus provisions that were in place for a time in Northern Ireland during the “troubles”.



This is highly unusual and almost always inappropriate in the context of legislation creating criminal consequences.

The Act criminalises conduct other than by rules of general application in the community – another infringement of the rule of law.

Further legislation has been introduced targeting the recruitment of a person to be a member of a declared organisation, enabling the substitute service of notices on those subject to applications to be placed under control orders and authorising search warrants to be issued by eligible judges upon reasonable suspicion (rather than reasonable belief).

At the end of her term as President of the NSW Bar Association in 2001, Ruth McColl SC (now a Judge of Appeal in NSW) sounded a timely warning for us all. In her final column in the Bar's monthly newsletter she wrote:

*"Lawyers tend to take these core values [i.e. the rule of law and democratic principles] for granted. We work with the Rule of Law every day. We should not lose sight of the fact that the Rule of Law is not as concrete and ever-present a phenomenon to some members of the community as it is to us. At times, the transient, but regrettably politically significant influence of opinion polls can push the Rule of Law to one side and allow pragmatism to prevail over principle."*

The corrupting force may not be just responses to opinion polls. These influences may be exerted openly or covertly by politicians, the media or rulers and policy makers of all kinds.

It matters not that the motives of the urgers or policy makers may be honourable. Justice Brandeis in 1928 warned in *Olmstead v United States* (277 US 438,479):

*"Experience should teach us to be most on our guard to protect liberty when the government's purposes are beneficent... The greatest dangers to liberty lurk in insidious encroachment by men of zeal, well-meaning but without understanding."*

We all need constantly to be alert to the erosion of rights and be proactive in preventing it. In 2000



Justice Arthur Chaskalson, National Director of the Legal Resources Centres in South Africa and inaugural President of the Constitutional Court of that country, addressed a Public Interest Advocacy (PIAC) dinner in Sydney. He said:

*"... (C)ourts are the institutions to which people in democratic societies turn for the protection of their rights and no one has greater responsibility for promoting and protecting human rights than judges and lawyers. If that protection is lacking, if institutions fail, the consequences can be catastrophic."*

*... Although South Africa was ruled [in apartheid times] by a minority regime the same course could (also) be followed ... by majority governments, where the opposition is weak and the courts and the legal profession are either not powerful enough nor vigilant enough to resist incursions upon freedom."*

*... (F)irst incursions into the protection of human rights are often the most dangerous, for they begin a process of erosion which is difficult to stop once it has begun."*

*... (T)he erosion of the power and independence of courts, and the lack of vigilance by lawyers, judges, and organs of civil society, permit those who should be held accountable for their conduct, to go free."*

This is especially a time for vigilance in NSW. Someone once described it as the price of liberty.

I am indebted to Associate Professor Dan Howard SC of the University of Wollongong for the substance of parts of this commentary on the legislation.

## Ride Report

### Ride for the Hills

The ride met (and exceeded) all expectations and many Victorian riders turned out to support the Ride for the Hills.

Pier Road was filled the Beaconsfield Parade end all the way back to well past the pier and out onto the road as far back as the Palais Theatre - That's probably almost 2 kms, packed in tightly at least 6 bikes across.

It took 15 minutes to clear Pier Road and the column was kept intact for the entire journey.

The column stretched for 15 kms. I was told that as the last bike turn off the Hume at Kalkallo onto Donnybrook road the front of the columns was turning left onto Plenty Road (that is just over 15 kms).

500 badges made - which sold out before 9.30am and it looks like they are now a "collectors item".



## Are you Injured?

For free legal advice, phone Grace Placencio, MRAVic Official "Legal Eagle"

Grace has represented injured riders for over 10 years and specializes exclusively in Personal Injury law,

including:

- Transport Accident Claims
- WorkCover Claims
- Superannuation Claims
- Medical Negligence Claims
- All Other Injury Claims

Suite 5, Level 5, 517 St Kilda Rd (opposite The Alfred Hospital) Melbourne, 3004.

Ph. (03) 9867-7769

Fax. (03) 9857-7750

GRACE PLACENCIO DAVIES & COMPANY LAWYERS



## Summer Blood Challenge Results We WON!

Victoria's Motorcycle & Scooter Riders were comprehensive victors over arch rivals Victoria Police, by a final margin of 56 donations. Third were the CFA, with other consistently strong performers Scouts Australia / Vic Rovers and Bicycle Victoria rounding out the top 5. Tasmania's Motorcycle & Scooter Riders made it a double victory for the bikers, 12 donations ahead of ATO Tasmania with Retirement Benefits Fund third. The ten best performers in this season's Challenge were as follows:

1. Victorian Motorcycle & Scooter Riders 309 Donations
2. Victoria Police 253
3. CFA 176
4. Scouts Australia / Vic Rovers 124
5. Bicycle Victoria 97
6. Sporting Shooters Group 76
7. Tasmanian Motorcycle & Scooter Riders 69
8. ATO Tasmania 57
9. Freemasons Victoria 46
10. SKM 42

Congratulations to all of our winners for their outstanding efforts. Over 1800 donations were made in support of this year's Challenge, saving the equivalent of 5400 lives. This is a fantastic result and a credit to you, our Challenge Coordinators and your colleagues. Without your support the Summer Blood Challenge wouldn't be possible. As always, on behalf of all the grateful recipients, thank you very much for all your efforts.

As you know, there is a constant need for blood donations, but demand is particularly strong during the holidays. To provide the public with the opportunity to donate over the Easter period, various blood donor centers are open for longer periods and on extra days. For further information call 13 14 95 or visit [donateblood.com.au](http://donateblood.com.au).

Thank you once again to you all for making the 30th Annual Summer Blood Challenge such a success. I hope you will continue to support and promote blood donation within your communities and I look forward to working with you all on future Challenges.

Matthew McManus  
Summer Blood Challenge  
Coordinator



## Presidents Report

**"Rebels with a cause",**

was the way the media described us when reporting the Ride for the Hills in April. I recently read *The Brotherhoods – Inside the Outlaw Motorcycle Clubs*, by Arthur Venio, and now understand why we find ourselves as being seen as "rebels". Having been a motorcycle rider long enough to remember much of the history described by Venio, it comes as very little surprise that we now live with this title.

As one who rides every day, because I own a business that allows me to be paid to give "those who do not ride" a motorcycle experience, I am frequently confronted by people whose perception of reality is skewed in entirely the wrong direction. After having demonstrated to these people what riding a motorcycle is really all about, by taking them for a ride and discussing motorcycle safety in detail, they go away with an attitude always the opposite to that held before the ride commenced.

It should come as no surprise that when I come into contact with those who have ridden in their past, and for whatever reason no longer own a bike (but wish they still did or could), that they still identify with my riding passion and share my feelings for "those who do not ride".

Many of "those who do not ride" seem to lack any understanding of the way we feel about our motorcycles. Their language tends toward generalisations that we "as those who ride" know to be "not quite right".

Unity was the factor that made me brim with pride at the Ride for the Hills on the 5<sup>th</sup> of April.

***The reputation of "the motorcycle" and the people who ride them has long been misunderstood.***

As I ponder as to the size of our motorcycle family, I realize that it is far bigger than our politicians believe. Our family actually extends far beyond those of us who actually own a motorcycle and hold a licence today and takes in ten times our number in terms of those who can relate to us.

***One only has to count the number of politicians who actually own a motorcycle to see what I am alluding to.***

Unity was the factor that made me brim with pride at the Ride for the Hills on the 5th of April. To share an event like this with my motorcycle family makes one realize that perhaps being a Rebel is a title we should bear with pride. Bringing riders together is the role that the MRA has always striven to achieve in Victoria, and using the MRA brand is something which is available to all riders at things like the Toy Run, the Oz GP Run and the Ride for the Hills as but examples of how the MRAVic will position itself and support our wider family in the future.

*John Karmouche  
MRAVic President*



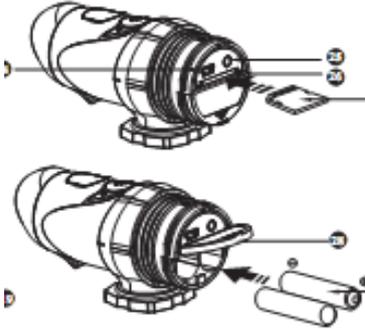
## The Action Cam

After years of watching some remarkably poor driving actions in front of my motorcycle by other road users I wondered how hard it would be to mount a camera to the bike to try and catch some of these on video. At Bike Mart in Ringwood I found the solution I was after in the Oregon Scientific ATC3K Waterproof Action Cam for under \$300.

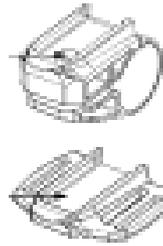
<http://tinyurl.com/dyqo38>



From the manufacturer's description; Weighing just over 200grams (with batteries), this self-contained, hands-free digital video cam delivers full colour digital video in 640 x 480 VGA at 30 frames per second and as a bonus, it's waterproof to 3m! One of the best features is that there are no moving parts inside. This eliminates the jitter errors from older tape based recorders. It records the video and audio directly to a 2GB SD Card in an AVI file format which is compatible with most editing applications. You can connect the camera to your computer via USB or if you have an SD card slot, you can take the card out of the camera and plug it in directly.



This also means you can carry multiple SD cards. At full resolution the 2GB card captures 1 hour of video. There are other modes with smaller frame sizes and half the frame rate which gives longer recording times but the picture quality suffers. The camera is powered by 2 X AA size batteries. I found Alkaline or NiMH rechargeable last about 2 hours, but other types may last longer. I'd recommend a good rechargeable set.



The camera comes with both a handle bar mount and a strap mount which allows you to put it on your arm, shoulder or helmet depending on what you're trying to capture. The field of view is set to 48 degrees which from the handle bar mount I found wasn't quite capturing the wild road user events completely so I'm currently trying different ways of mounting it to the helmet. But from the handle bar it does provide a unique motorcycle viewpoint. The wacky driver's video is still compiling however I've posted couple of videos I made from it at

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=34sDkqCIEww&feature=related>  
and  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w4IGD5yFNYI&feature=related>

By

Grant Delahoy

## Membership report

At the AGM it was voted in favour of bringing in one membership date for all renewals so from henceforth all renewals will be due February the 20th of each calendar year.

All members will receive a new membership card with the new expiry date in the not too distant future as I get around to finding time to do it all, what will happen is you will simply get an extension on your current expiry date that will be amended to Feb 20th 2011, it's anticipated this will make life far easier for the person doing the membership secretary job.

Also as a continuation from my theme of last newsletter, trying to get updated contact details from members, if you have an email address or have changed your email address or indeed any other contact details, please notify me either by phone

0411 183 258

or by email

[membershipsecretary@mravic.org.au](mailto:membershipsecretary@mravic.org.au)

The MRA in order to function at its optimum or even close to it needs help from its membership base, the board of 6 or 7 people can't continually be attending everything, being everywhere and doing everything as frankly they get burnt out and it also leaves no time to have a semblance of a life as such.

Continued Page 11

## Contact the MRAVic

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Phone 03 9877 3004

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Patron: Professor Marcus Wigan, FACS, FInstP,  
FICE, FIEAust, FAITPM, FCILT, MBCS, CEng,  
CPhys, CPEng, Eur-Ing.

### MRAVic Board members

President: John Karmouche  
0419 359 628 president@mrvic.org.au  
Vice President: Grant Delahoy  
Secretary: Tony Ellis  
Treasurer: Rik van Zuylekom  
Membership Secretary: Mick Doedee  
membershipsecretary@mrvic.org.au  
Ordinary Board Members: Wendy Taylor  
Phil Cassap

### Resource Committee

Merchandise Officer: Kim Davies  
Riderdown Chief Facilitator: Mick Dabbs  
(www.4bs.org.au)  
Road Safety Reference Group Rep: Wendy Taylor  
Blood Challenge Co-ordinator: John Karmouche  
Newsletter Editor: Please help  
VMAC Rep and AMC Delegate: Tony Ellis  
Events Co-ordinator: Austin Webb

General Email: mraa@mrvic.org.au



*I gotta get me one of those....*

## Barrabool gets a million dollars in Vic state budget

\$1 million has been set aside in the State Budget to help retain Geelong's Mc Adam Park as a community recreational and motorcycling facility, State Member for South Barwon, Michael Crutchfield has announced.

Mc Adam Park is currently owned by the family of the late Clive Mc Adam, who have indicated their wish to sell the site.

It is now the only remaining off-road motorcycle facility in the Surf Coast and Geelong region. Mr Crutchfield said the Sporting Motor Cycle Club - founded in 1932 - had been operating at Mc Adam Park since 1963.

"The Barwon Recreational Motorcycling Council has been instrumental in helping to source the funds required to ensure the Park remains a hub for motorcycle clubs in the region, and I encourage them to continue this good work as it is an important part of the overall fundraising strategy" Mr Crutchfield said.

"Mc Adam Park is already widely renowned as a motorcycling facility both here in Australia and internationally and the Victorian Government is happy to put a million dollars on the table to ensure it stays that way.

"I encourage other levels of government and the motorcycle industry to give serious consideration to also investing in the acquisition of this important regional sporting facility," he said.

Chairman of the Barwon Recreational Motorcycling Council, Peter Lindeman, said "This announcement is vital to help ensure that the Geelong and Surf Coast regions continue to have this State significant motorcycling complex that could also provide a multi use facility for other community groups."

The Sporting Motor Cycle Club is a volunteer based organization which has been responsible for educating thousands of young people in Geelong about rules, regulations and safety in relation to riding motorbikes.



Photo courtesy – Adam Olive

Front – SMCC members Harry and Jake West

Back – Peter Ovens, SMCC Saving McAdam Park coordinator - Michael Crutchfield MP, Member for South Barwon – Peter Lindeman, Chairman Barwon Recreational Motorcycling Council – Madison Bird, SMCC member

Mr Crutchfield said Mc Adam Park already hosted international, national and state motorcycling events, which help to deliver significant economic benefits to the Surf Coast and Geelong region.

“Earlier this year, Mc Adam Park welcomed competitors in the Motocross and Mototrials events as part of the Australian Masters Games,” Mr Crutchfield said. “The facility also hosts some terrific community events such as the inaugural ‘Back to Barrabool’ social event .

“Geelong Motocross Club also jointly uses the facility providing a usable and safe environment for their club members, following the City of Greater Geelong decision to close their former Breakwater facilities.

“As well as a venue for major and community events, Mc Adam Park also offers new or underage motorcycle riders with a safe place to enjoy the sport they love.

“Mc Adam Park also plays an important role in helping these riders to gain the necessary skills associated with riding recreational motorcycles in a safe and socially responsible way.

Sporting Motor Cycle Club coordinator for the Saving Mc Adam Park campaign, Peter Ovens, said “This is what we have been waiting for and the club is indebted to Michael for his belief in the need to save this Australian icon of motorcycling. Now we have to forge ahead with our own fundraising efforts which are integral to the overall funding strategies.”

“It’s indeed an important community asset and the Victorian Government is delighted to play a leading role in helping to secure its future for the people of Geelong,” Mr Crutchfield said.

<http://www.fullnoise.com.au>

## The United Motorcycle Council (QLD)

The United Motorcycle Council of Queensland’s new website has been launched to take the debate surrounding the Queensland Government’s proposed anti-association Legislation to the world.

United Motorcycle Council of Queensland spokesperson John Parker said the website would be a democratic space and allow the community to get to know the voices on the other side of the public debate around motorbike riders. “If the Queensland Government’s proposed laws follow the precedent set in other states, they will contain harsh provisions that impact on the freedoms and liberties of all Queenslanders,” Mr Parker said.

“While the Government’s stated aim is to attack motorcycle clubs, it will in fact punish every person who has a friend, family member or business contact in a motorcycle club,” he said.

“Even worse, the draconian new powers that will be handed to police could be turned against any Queenslanders,” he said.

“Wherever similar laws have been introduced, they have thrown out the normal checks and balances on police powers. It’s no wonder many of Australia’s leading legal minds are opposed to their introduction,” Mr Parker said.

Mr Parker said the UMCQ website would allow Queenslanders to get the real story behind motorcycle clubs and their members. “The UMCQ is a relatively new group, so it’s only fair people have a place to go and check out who and what we are,” he said. “Our website will allow people to see that we’re more than just men who like to ride motorcycles together; we’re fathers, businessmen, and most of all, we’re Queenslanders,” Mr Parker said.

Mr Parker said he hoped the website would create an online space for all people to keep track of the progress of the proposed anti-association laws in parliament. “Sometimes we’re too laid back for our own good in Queensland. The UMCQ is working hard to ensure that every Queenslanders realizes the importance of these new laws on their civil liberties,” Mr Parker said.

The United Motorcycle Council of Queensland’s website is available at <http://umcinc.com.au/>

## BITS & PIECES

### WA Registration stickers to go

The WA State government is doing away with registration stickers and discs for Western Australian cars, trailers and motorbikes. The Premier Colin Barnett says from the start of next year people will receive renewal notices but will not have to put a sticker on their wind screens. Mr Barnett says stickers are no longer necessary because police can now check registration details using the new Police Metropolitan Radio Network. The information can be accessed through computers in all police cars.

### HONDA DOLLARS AND A CHANCE TO WIN A FAMILY TRIP TO THE GOLD COAST ON ALL FUN BIKES

There is nothing that brings a family together like a day out riding the trails in the Australian bush, and now Honda is making it more affordable than ever by offering a number of promotions on all mini bikes between now and July 31, 2009, as well as a lay by scheme available until December 24, 2009. The deal includes \$250 Honda Dollars on purchase of every CRF150F, CRF100F, CRF80F, CRF70F, CRF50F or TRX90. Customers can then spend their Honda Dollars in a variety of ways within the dealership at the time of purchase, including accessories, servicing or as a discount off the bike.

As an added sweetener, anyone who finances their new mini bike through HMFS (Honda MPE Financial Services) will have their Honda Dollars doubled, taking the total amount to \$500 to be spent in store.

### VMAC Chairman's communiqué from 16 April 2009 meeting

#### "LOOK, LOOK, LOOK AGAIN" FOR MOTORCYCLISTS

The Transport Accident Commission (TAC) presented the initial findings from the evaluation of the "Look, Look, Look Again For Motorcyclists" advertising campaign previously endorsed by VMAC. Initial research indicates that the overall outcomes are positive. The TAC will incorporate this campaign into its rolling campaign schedule.

#### "MAKING ROADS MOTORCYCLE FRIENDLY"

VicRoads with the support of VMAC has recently released a "Making Roads Motorcycle Friendly" seminar package for road design, construction and maintenance engineers. Regional training seminars are currently being rolled out with VMAC members invited to attend and introduce the seminars. VMAC members have supported the requests from other states to make this material freely available for the benefit of all motorcyclists.

#### COMMUNITY POLICING AND EDUCATION PROJECT

Victoria Police updated the Council on the status of the Community Policing and Education Project again highlighting its focus on interaction and education and the new approach within the Victoria Police as a result of this project. Education components of the project to date include:

Motorcycle road safety displays at the Blue Ribbon ride, the superbikes at Phillip Island and at the "Ride for the Hills".

Motorcycle road safety incorporated into Victoria Police recruits' road safety training.

A Senior Constable devoted to the educational components of the project.

21 presentations to schools and groups now incorporating motorcycle road safety.

5 motorcycle awareness courses presented to 50 traffic police by Honda Australia Rider Training (HART).

Victoria Police radio talk-back spot to incorporate discussion on the aims and objectives of this program.

Positive feedback from riders continues to confirm that the project is hitting the target.

#### MOTORCYCLE PROTECTIVE CLOTHING STAR RATING

Investigations continue to progress on the potential to pilot a motorcycle protective clothing star rating system which would be mapped against existing European standards.

The proposal would not require products to be re-tested if they already met the European standards. The preferred model for a star rating system would rely on voluntary participation from industry. If implemented the project would give riders the ability to discriminate between protective clothing based on its safety performance. Work with industry will continue to ensure the proposal addresses the rider needs, as well as industry requirements.

#### Next Meeting

The next meeting of VMAC is scheduled for Thursday 11 June 2009 at VicRoads.

Neil O'Keefe



## MRAV 2008 AGM summary

- i) Toy Run – to be discussed by the board at a later date.
- ii) Newsletter – It was discussed that a quarterly edition was a burden and a hard copy difficult to do on time. Detlef is in the process of producing a new draft of our constitution to accommodate appropriate written notice and he will present this to the board. Date to be advised. Newsletter to be discussed at next board meeting - to be included AGM notice dates, Nomination forms, etc. for single printed copy before AGM, electronic copies bi, tri or quarterly. New template makes for easier construction but formal editor yet to be decided.
- iii) Membership fees – Reduction of membership fees from \$45 to \$25 was moved by Austin, seconded by Gavin and received all 'ayes. All present felt it was necessary to reduce fees to encourage new and renewed membership. Other discussion progressed regarding our need for a larger membership base i.e. larger group to call on for volunteers, social rides etc.
- iv) 3yr memberships – motioned and seconded to cease 3 yr memberships by John, seconded by Austin and Alan and all ayes.
- v) Single date Annual memberships – moved and seconded by John, Austin and Grant and received all ayes. Annual renewal to occur four weeks prior to AGM.
- vi) Honorary Life Memberships – discussed that it is the highest accolade or honour that we can award within our association. There will be a requirement to submit a written nomination to the board and provision for rules regarding such nominations is being made by Detlef. Other recognition may be provided by a Certificate of Appreciation.
- vii) 4B's – Rider Down – Mick Dabbs' goals are to continue working with Richard McCann – Road Trauma Support Team, MRAV and various other hospitals and trauma teams. Sunday Sounds was a success. He wants to continue to create rider support and to maintain such through pamphlets, our newsletter, word of mouth etc but like all of us needs help and volunteers to continue his good work.
- viii) Social/Promotional – it was discussed that we need to revive 'meet and greet' type nights, at Southbank with a view to increasing membership. There is a need to touch base with previous members to see if we can bring them back into the fold. Planned regular rides and social get togethers will help with this. The proposal being that Alan Zimmer takes the social rides on board when his health permits.
- ix) Merchandising – move store to Ebay approved with paypal details to be finalised. Kim to organise photography of stock etc. Membership registration/payments to continue on MRAV website. Meeting closed at 9pm.



## Motorcycle and Scooter Safety Summit Report

The Motorcycle Safety Consultative Committee (MSCC), a forum for consultation between the Australian Government and motorcycle safety stakeholders, convened a Motorcycle and Scooter Safety Summit from 10-11 April 2008 at Rydges Eagle Hawk Resort, Canberra.

The objective of the Summit was to explore key motorcycle and scooter safety issues and to identify the scope for improving existing safety measures and developing new measures. The Summit was expected to provide input to the development of the post-2010 National Road Safety Strategy based on practical, evidence-based recommendations for actions to improve motorcycle and scooter safety.

This report provides the outcomes of the Summit and recommendations developed through workshop discussions.

[http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/roads/safety/publications/2009/msss\\_report.aspx](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/roads/safety/publications/2009/msss_report.aspx)

## Warning over motorcycle distance 'illusion'

TFL (England) is to repeat last year's successful ad campaign aimed at alerting car drivers of the risk they post to motorcyclists and of the 'optical effect' which can make motorcyclists appear further away than they actually are.

At the centre of the campaign are findings from a psychological study which showed participants regularly estimated that motorcycles would take longer to reach them than larger vehicles.

Known as the 'size-arrival effect', this optical illusion is caused by the way the brain assesses approaching objects and could cause drivers to underestimate how much time and space they have available when pulling out in front of approaching motorcycles.

Chris Lines, Head of the London Road Safety Unit at TFL, said the campaign "highlights just one of the ways in which drivers can come into contact with motorcyclists. However, drivers should look out for motorcyclists in all situations, especially during the commuting hours, when a high proportion of collisions occur."

Martin Hoscik

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Feel free to contact Kim, Merchandising Officer, with any ideas, requests or suggestions!

[merchandise@mравic.org.au](mailto:merchandise@mравic.org.au)

## Honda VTX1800C road cruiser test ride

My Honda Blackbird was in need of a service the other day. Redwing Honda in Heidelberg being the closest made it the obvious choice. With the wife away, I was left with the prospect of having to hang around the shop for a couple of hours. The service department came to the rescue here and very kindly offered a loan bike.

Imagine my surprise when he walked me over to a 250cc of some description. I am 6'6" for goodness sake! I didn't enjoy riding 250's when I started out, let alone now. My face must have told a story, as he suggested that maybe I could take out a test bike out instead. And now here comes one of my favourite questions. He asked me "What would you like to ride?"

Without any hesitation, I picked the VTX1800C cruiser. I have always wanted to take a cruiser out and try it. The main reason is that I have a bad back, having done one of my discs in the past and it gets sore on any sports bike after about an hour these days. I have heard opposing arguments from different people that cruisers were either fantastic or really bad for bad backs, so this was my chance to find out.

I have to say that the experience was definitely a surprise in some ways. To give it a good run, I took it over some varying roads. I headed off into the mountains along Maroondah Highway, to Lilydale, turned left at Seville to Healesville, through Yarra Glen and back to Heidelberg. It is a wonderful ride and being early on a Friday, there wasn't much traffic on the road. There are plenty of 100kmh sections, windy roads and you have some delightful scenery. And the best part, it is open again for us to ride on. Going through the fire ravaged Yarra Glen section is certainly an eye opener. When you see how close the fires came to some of the homes and the fire truck tracks, it gives you a healthy respect for the CFA volunteers. Those guys really did make a difference.

## No sore back, but I did get a numb bum.

So what does \$20,000 of Honda cruiser get you? For starters, It is a good looking machine. There is more chrome than on a 69 Chevy and it all hangs together very nicely. You also get 1800cc of stump pulling grunt. This is a sweet engine, with heaps of power in just about any gear. It sits in a frame that actually handles. It is confidence inspiring and after a while I found myself happily pushing the envelope. It flicks from side to side easily and only rarely scrapes anything. If you are about to scrape anything, it will be the heel of the boot, giving ample warming. The only time I found its limits was when I pushed it hard into a bend and hit a bump. It then tended to wallow a bit, but nothing uncontrollable. As far as pulling all this up is concerned, the brakes work a treat. They pull up 450kg of rider and bike without any fuss, even mid bend. Final drive is shaft, so never any hassle with chains and there was not a hint of torque twitch in bends on acceleration. The build quality was as you would expect excellent. Now for the clincher, no sore back. In short, the Honda engineers have built a cruiser that works a treat.

Now it can't be all good now can it, so what is there not to like about it? Well for me the biggest surprise was the gearing. It sits happily in second and third around town and pulls like a steam train. In top however, I found pick up to be sluggish at the legal limit and had to drop it down a cog or two for overtaking. That surprised me. It seems to me that the engineers have gone for top end speed in preference to comfortable cruising characteristics. Why you would do that I really don't know, as at anything above 130kmh, you are just about hanging on for dear life. So for the life of me I can't understand why you would make this machine capable of speeds greater than 200kmh.

No sore back, but I did get a numb bum. The seat looks to be a really comfortable, but after only an hour I needed to have a break. This would be a pain on long rides, which arguably is what this bike is intended for. Thankfully there are plenty of aftermarket cushions and seats you can get, but I wouldn't have thought you would need that.

## Membership report continued

If you have a passion for motorcycling and have a little spare time you can offer, please email or give me a call and I'll add you to our volunteers register.

We don't need massive commitments, rather a bit of time here and there from a number of members would make our lives just a little easier.

It maybe something as little as writing an article for the newsletter or better still, offering to produce it, offering to marshal at the GP Run, come along to a board meeting and offer suggestions, there is always room for more members to do more things, especially as the weather warms up.

The MRAV is present at many of the main events in motorcycling here in Vic, GP RUN, Toy Run, Eureka Run, recently we were also heavily involved with the Ride for the Hills.

As a consequence of that I'm often trying to send out emails to members keeping them updated on what's happening and also sometimes asking for help with various things, so if you have an email address or have changed it recently, please, please advise me either by phone or email so that I can contact you comes the time.

Mick Doedee  
Membership Secretary



The sound of the bike is ....well..... non-existent. They have got muffling down to a fine art at Honda. Part of the attraction for me with cruisers is the sound. There is just nothing like it. An aftermarket exhaust is an absolute necessity. Unfortunately that will set you back between \$1500 to \$2500 and adds to the price.

So would I own one? I can honestly say that if I was in the market for a cruiser that I would definitely consider this bike. At \$20,000 it is a bargain and not everyone either wants or can afford to buy a Harley.

This bike does everything you would expect of a cruiser and does it supremely well. I would get an aftermarket muffler (as you need to with most other cruisers anyway) and a seat cushion and I would be very happy with this bike for many years.

*By Rik van Zuylekom*



Custom 2002 VTX1800 by Jack Heilman



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## NEW HART CENTRE FOR VICTORIA



7 April 2009 - The first phase of work is nearing completion on the massive site at 200 Hume Hwy Somerton in Melbourne's north that will become the new location for Honda Australia Rider Training (HART).

HART has long been considered the preeminent provider of rider training and licensing in Victoria, and will now boast two massive road ranges allowing for both novices and experienced riders to obtain realistic road speeds and situations.

In addition to learners, license, intermediate and advanced road riding courses, the new facility will also offer off road training for kids and novice adults, as well as ATV training on a purpose built track.

"This is one of the most exciting developments since HART's initial opening 20 years ago," said HART National Manager Mark Collins.

"We are particularly excited to be able to appeal to even more riders at the new site as we have access to excellent off road training areas as well."

"I firmly believe that these new facilities as well as the technologies that HART use in training such as the Riding Simulator are firmly cementing us as the industry leader, as well as assisting to reduce motorcycle crashes on and off the road."

For more information, please visit:  
[www.hartridertraining.com.au](http://www.hartridertraining.com.au)



**MRAVic  
Website**  
[www.mravic.org.au](http://www.mravic.org.au)

Make this your new home page with the latest Motorcycling news, calendar and forums to keep you informed, in touch and enjoying the most of your right to ride!

**Upcoming Events** – check the site calendar for more details

- 30-31 May** Phoenix Rally Erica
- 5 June** **MRAVic Quarterly General Meeting**
- 1 August** Yackandandah Charity Bash 2009
- 4 September** **MRAVic Quarterly General Meeting**
- 19 September** 25th Black Knight Rally
- 10 October** Golden Dragon Rally
- 17 October** MRAVic Cranbourne OZ GP Run
- 1 November** Pink Ribbon Motorcycle Ride 2009
- 27 November** **MRAVic Quarterly General Meeting**
- 13 December** MRAVic Annual Toy Run
- 7 February 2010** Ride for the Hills
- 12 March 2010** **MRAVic Annual General Meeting**

All meetings will be held at Bells hotel unless otherwise notified, our website will be updated with any changes should they come to pass.



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Phone 03 9877 3004

[www.mravic.org.au](http://www.mravic.org.au)

## Membership Application

I would like to become a member of the MRAVic for \$25 per annum and gain a voice government and decision makers will hear

Name

Address

Phone  Postcode

Mobile

Email

DOB  Occupation

Renewal  Member no.

Payment method  
Cheque  Money Order

Please make payable to "MRA Australia"

Visa  Mastercard  Bankcard

Card Number

Cardholder name

Expiry Date

Signature