

CENTRESTAND

SEPTEMBER 2006



let those who ride decide

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M.R.A.
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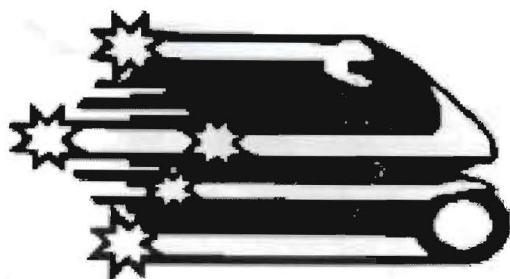
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**COVER PHOTO: Ridersafe Rally August 2006
 by Arwen Lindemann**

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EDITORIAL

What a rally! It's been seventeen years since the last one, and none too soon. Although we've had some wins in that time, such as getting the federal Lights On legislation rescinded, getting SA's 250cc limit for learners replaced with a power-to-weight ratio and contributing to the development of the SA Motorcycle Safety Strategy, the government has paid scant attention to the safety needs of our riders except when we encounter the statistical anomaly of a number of fatalities within a short space of time, as we have experienced recently.

Motorcyclists are a tightly-knit group, and we are all saddened when any riders are killed, for to us they are not just a nameless person but one of our community. Although many non-motorcyclists conclude that motorcycling is inherently dangerous and that those of us who die on the road are either behaving foolishly or are foolish to have adopted such a lifestyle and must have a death wish, in fact the MRA believes that only a very small number behave irresponsibly – probably the same proportion that is found in all walks of life – and that motorcyclists celebrate their love of life through motorcycling and all its diverse aspects.

So yes, when one of us dies, we mourn. But what can we do to minimise the number killed? Let's put it another way. Why did the MRA come into existence? One of its primary purposes has always been to do what we can to improve our safety on the road. Over the years the MRA has had a significant effect in this regard, identifying the main problem areas, taking the initiative where we can, lobbying for change, working with community and government organisations, but these gains have all been hard-won.

We know that many other groups also clamour for the finite resources, but experience tells us that the state government rarely allocates more than a miniscule amount to motorcycle safety, regardless of need, viability or cost-benefit ratio. If a genuine concern for motorcyclists' safety exists, then dialogue of a high quality needs to be effected whereby motorcyclists' proposals – born of intimate knowledge of factors related to their own safety – can be seriously considered. Only then will our safety improve and our deaths minimised.

Let's hope the discussions with the Minister for Road Safety generated by the protest rally bear fruit.

Ride on, read on, write in

Peter Mount

Never cut what you can untie

Joseph Joubert (1754-1824)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Harald Lindemann

MOTORCYCLE CRASHES IN SA

This has not been a good period for motorcycling. In the past three weeks there have been at least four serious crashes involving motorcycles, some including fatalities at Moana, Glenelg, the Adelaide Hills and Gilman.

The media is apparently at a loss to explain this phenomenon as they keep asking me for comments. I have been on the TV news three times recently to try and explain what is going on. This is something I would rather not do. Every motorcyclist injured or killed makes us all look bad and irresponsible regardless of the crash situation. Oddly enough, the same disapproval is not aimed at all car drivers after car crashes but rather at the individuals concerned.

According to the reports, in the Hills crash (a single vehicle crash), a following motorcyclist left the scene of the crash without helping out; neither rider nor pillion were wearing helmets in the Glenelg crash and at Moana the motorcyclist was riding an unfamiliar bike. In the Gilman crash the motorcyclist apparently T-boned a truck.

All these incidents highlight the need to take care when riding. Know your limits and those of your bike. Don't fool yourself - most riders and drivers are not as good as they think they are. Do an advanced rider training course and you will soon find out how good you are. Don't find out on the road.

Be responsible to yourself and those who depend on you – wear the proper safety gear, especially a helmet, and make sure that your pillion is properly attired. Don't take short cuts. There is a simple equation, in the workplace and on the road – safety equipment saves lives, if you use it. Try this item from an intelligence test: hard hat is to building site as what is to motorcycling? Get it?

We all love motorcycling, we love our bikes and we love going for a ride, whether alone, down to the shops or for a run with mates, and we want to keep doing it for a long time yet.

RIDERSAFE RALLY

The rally to protest against the increase in Ridersafe fees on August 5 was a success. Thanks to everyone who came along and for the words of support from those who would have liked to come along but were prevented because of work or family commitments. About 600 bikes plus pillion for a total of over a thousand turned up for the trip from Oaklands Park to Parliament House, the media coverage was great and all went to plan. Thanks to Ray Newland from the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries and to Martin Hamilton-Smith, Shadow Minister for Transport, for their speeches and support.



The Meeting at Parliament House

The MRA had a meeting with the Minister for Road Safety, Carmel Zollo, to discuss the increase in Ridersafe fees. While the Minister did not budge from the Government's user-pays full cost recovery position, a dialogue was started and our views on this and other issues were listened to. The Minister promised to consider a proposal to discount Ridersafe fees for people on pensions or unemployment benefits. We intend to present the Minister with the views of the MRA on other issues in the future.



The Gathering at Oaklands Park

SAMRATS

Members need to be informed regarding the current situation with the SAMRATS. Some of the organisers of the SAMRATS have, without permission from the MRA Committee and without prior notice, incorporated an association under the name "South Australian Motorcycle Riders Association Touring Squad (SAMRATS)" - Phil Mitchell (President), Rob Dempsey (Public Officer). They intend to operate independently from and without accountability to the MRASA Inc. while running the SAMRATS operation as it currently stands.

The Committee attempted to change this course of action by arguing a number of points:

- The names "Motorcycle Riders' Association of South Australia" and "SAMRATS" belong to the MRASA and cannot be used by any other organisation;
- Allowing the use of the name will cause confusion so that members of one organisation will be unclear to which organisation they belong. The similarity of names will also cause confusion in the minds of outsiders when dealing with either organisation;
- Splitting the MRASA in this way would be detrimental to the organisation at a number of levels.

The MRASA has no problem if anyone wants to start up a new ride club. We welcome any new motorcycling initiative. We believe that they are just not able to use the names that we have been using for years or to appropriate our resources and our reputation for their own purposes. That seems a fairly reasonable stand. Whatever their reasons for wanting a separate ride group, whatever their grievances with the MRASA that led them to this action, this was the wrong way to go about it as it will in the long run damage the MRA and its standing in the community.

Some members will still want to go for rides under the banner of the MRA and deserve to do so without confusion about who is who.

The MRASA Committee has had meetings with officers of the new SAMRATS Inc. in order to see if the differences can be resolved and it has been

made clear that they have no desire to operate as part of the MRASA Inc. They have indicated that they remain firmly in support of the MRA's activities viv-a-vis motorcyclist representation, will support the Toy Run and other MRA initiatives and look forward to a close association with the MRASA.

While we have entered into discussions with the new organisation in a spirit of cooperation and conciliation, recognising that confrontation will benefit no-one, we have made the point that we regard the SAMRATS name as belonging to the MRASA Inc. and have made representation to the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs objecting to their use of the name. Until this dispute is resolved, again in a spirit of cooperation and conciliation and with an eye to future relations, the MRASA Inc will not be actively using the SAMRATS name in relation to our activities.

A note to MRA members. Until further notice all MRA rides will carry the notice "Sanctioned by the MRASA Inc." in their publicity. This will ensure that MRA members can take part in the knowledge that they are protected against any problems regarding safety, injury, damage and loss by the MRA insurance cover.

The situation is disappointing, but the bottom line is that the new organisation exists and will continue to, whatever name it ends up operating under. Some of the social operations of the MRA will disappear and we will probably lose some members to the new organisation in the long term. This is not, however, a disaster for the MRA as some have been predicting. If anything it will provide an impetus for us to improve our member services and to be more responsive to members' needs.

For the last year I have been working with some great people in the MRA. People who have the drive, the energy and the ideas to move the MRA forward. Some have been around for a while, some are new and some have just been elected to the MRA Committee and I can say with confidence that any loss to the organisation due to the SAMRATS split will not prove to be significant in the long term because these people believe in the MRA and what we can achieve for motorcycling in South Australia. Give them your support and they'll come through for you.

Ride Safe Harald

WE WANT YOUR BLOOD

This week, (at the time of writing) is National Blood Donor Week, so we want to bring something important to your attention. The SA Blood Bank is generally and continually short of whole blood and blood products. It is really easy to rectify this situation. If every healthy person made a deposit then stocks would increase. The Red Cross will accept your deposit at the Blood Bank in Pirie Street week days during business hours. It takes about 30 minutes to an hour and is painless (relatively). Withdrawals at need are guaranteed and are made with interest. You can give blood every three months.

Do this and you will qualify to purchase one of our nifty blood donor badges from the MRA stock list. It shows a red drop of blood on a white background map of SA.



Ring the Red Cross on 13 14 95 to make an appointment or visit www.donateblood.com.au. Help save a life.

TOY RUN REPORT

by Paul Morgan, Coordinator

We are now into the business end of this year's Toy Run.

We are still looking at bands for this year. Once we have decided on a band, they will be playing from 12 noon till 4.00 p.m. with a short break at 1.00 p.m. for the speeches and thanks to those who have helped put the run on. This will take approximately 15 minutes and then it will be back to the music.

There will be free entertainment for the children which will include a merry-go-round, bouncing castle and, of course, Santa.

Many companies support the Toy Run by having stalls with a diverse range of item for sale. Please support them so they will continue to support us.

Talk to as many bike riders as you can and tell them when the run is on. The more on the run, the better image we portray to the public of SA.

Once again we are after toys for the older age group, 12-15 years. Some ideas are sporting goods, books, games, etc.

Remember the date: Sunday, December 10, leaving Glenelg at 11 a.m.

At Glenelg from 8 a.m. there will be a BBQ selling egg and bacon sandwiches and drinks. All profits will be going to charity.

Get there early, be patient and follow the direction of the marshals and the police. Once the run starts, no bikes are allowed to overtake Santa, unless they are a marshal. Please remember this is a run, not a race.

Let's make this another safe run.

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WORLD'S SHORTEST FAIRY TALE

Once upon a time a guy asked a girl, "Will you marry me?" The girl said, "No." And the guy lived happily ever after and kept his motorcycle and went to rallies a lot.

THE END

ROAD SAFETY ISSUES

By Peter Goodrich MRA Road Safety Officer

Information on Rider Safe Fee Increase Campaign

Saturday, August 5, 10 a.m. This was the start of the Ridersafe fee increase protest rally. Nearly 1,000 motorcyclists together with many pillion riders departed the Oaklands Park Rider Safe training venue en route to Parliament House. It was a short ride but it drew a lot of attention. Many years have passed since this number of bikes cruised their way through the city streets. The objective was to get the government's attention and for it to listen to the motorcycling community.

Without warning and without consultation, the state government increased the Ridersafe learner rider training fees from \$169 to \$545 excluding additional costs. The government was hoping it wouldn't be noticed and nobody would complain. They were WRONG. The motorcycling community took great offence at the government exploiting learner riders. Consultation with the motorcycling community would have provided a greater insight into the issues involved and may have avoided confrontation.

All states and territories, with the exception of Victoria and WA, have compulsory rider training programs. In Victoria and WA, gaining a licence without training is very difficult with many opting for training. Victoria, WA, Queensland and New South Wales have a choice of training providers while Northern Territory, Australian Capital Territory, Tasmania and South Australia have single providers. NSW and NT have subsidised rider training with NT being funded by the Territory Insurance Office through its Motor Accident Compensation Scheme. ACT has compulsory training for learner's permit only. SA, NSW and Tasmania require courses to gain learners and provisional/probationary status while NT requires a third course to gain the open class licence (>250cc). Victoria and WA have mandatory testing yet it is advised that riders undertake training. In Queensland, riders have a choice of testing through Q-SAFE or training and testing through Q-RIDE.

The costs of these courses are outlined in Table 1. These costs are the rider training fees only and exclude booking fees, administration fees, licence fees, etc.

State	Learner	Probatio -nary	Full	Total	Subsidy
SA	290	255		545	N
TAS	215	230		445	N
VIC	215	230		445	N
NT	95	95	140	330	Y
ACT	215			215	N
NS W	69	104		173	Y
QLD					
WA					

Table 1 - Rider Training Costs \$

State	Learner	Provisional	Full	Total Duration
SA	2x4 Hours	4 Hours		12 Hours
TAS	2x4 Hours	8 Hours		16 Hours
VIC	8 Hours	8 Hours		16 Hours
NT	3x4 Hours	2x4 Hours	2x4 Hours	28 Hours
ACT	9 hours			9 Hours
NSW	2x3.5 Hours	7 Hours		14 Hours
QLD				
WA				

Table 2 - Course Duration

(Chart compilation by Peter Goodrich from a variety of sources. Any errors or inconsistencies aren't his fault.)

What becomes clear is that the cost of rider training in SA is comparatively very expensive at \$545, with Tasmania and Victoria having the next most expensive at \$445. WA and Queensland riders pay on an hourly basis costing approximately \$50/hour. Another point to note is the duration of the courses. Similar times for Tasmania and Victoria at 16 hours, SA at 12 hours, ACT at only 9 hours and NSW at 14 hours. What is staggering is NT at 7 half days of training probably equating to 28 hours before gaining a full licence. It is a reasonable assumption that rider skill is proportional to rider training. Because each state has its own system, comparison is difficult.

On September 6th, a delegation from the MRA consisting of Phil McClelland, Rob Dempsey and myself met with Minister for Road Safety, Carmel Zollo, to discuss the Ridersafe fee increase and the Motorcycle Road Safety Strategy. With regards to the fee increase, the delegates tendered very strong arguments including an outline of the survey. The Minister along with her assistants put their arguments that were all refuted but for two.

The main argument of the protest rally was that increasing fees will lead to an increase of unlicensed riders and therefore a larger proportion of the riding community will be at risk. At the moment, motorcycle fatalities of unlicensed and/or unregistered vehicles stands at 33%. These fatalities cannot be linked to the rise in fees. Some even pre-date the fee rises. However, these are still early days and there is insufficient data. The other argument from the Minister is that the fee rise is "cost recovery" and on this the Minister is standing very firm.

The reason for the high level of \$545 is to cover the cost of "excellent" facilities (e.g. St Agnes) and the quality of training. Yet they avoided the argument of the Government's "social responsibility". Working on the average number of courses per week at Ridersafe being 114, the proportion of Stage 1 or 2 are not known yet to calculate in the Government's favour by using the higher figure of \$290 for Stage 1. The difference from the old fee of \$90 is \$200. Determining the subsidy over 12 months is \$1.2 million which, considering the estimate of the revenue raised in 2005-6 for motor traffic infringement fines is \$95.9 million, it is a slap in the face for motorcyclists. Compare it also to the estimate of revenue for vehicle registration fees (registration

fees, stamp duty in initial registration and transfers and emergency services levy on mobile property) is a staggering \$393.9 million.

Traffic infringement fines are taken in the name of road safety. Subsidising Ridersafe is a road safety issue. Instead of continually taking from motorists, the Government should consider putting back funds to finance road safety. Ridersafe in the big scheme of things is cheap and should be subsidised. The campaign to reduce the fees will continue, as it is "cost recovery" of taxpayers' money.

NEW PROPOSED ROAD RULE

It has come to our notice that Australian motorcyclists may be prohibited in the future from carrying passengers under eight years old.

Under the Australian Road Rules, motorcyclists may no longer carry pillion passengers under eight years old. It is now proposed that children under eight may not be carried in sidecars.

The new proposal was to be considered in August by the Australian Road Rules Maintenance Group. An amendment (Rule 271 (5A)) was agreed in the 5th Australian Road Rules amendment package, to prohibit motorcycle riders from riding with a child under eight years old as a pillion passenger.

It was proposed to amend Rule 271 to extend the prohibition of the carriage of children under eight years old on motorcycles to include prohibiting their carriage on sidecars.

At this point we have no information as to whether or not the amendment was passed, or even the justifications for proposing such a road rule change. Is there evidence that children below the age of eight have a higher risk of injury when riding in a sidecar or is this a "dogs on tanks" type of regulation change? Or is it a matter of "it looks dangerous therefore it must be dangerous" – an argument based on emotion rather than evidence.

What we would like is to hear from sidecar enthusiasts regarding how this change in the road rules would affect their family lifestyle.

**INDECISION
is the key to
FLEXIBILITY**

CENSUS 2006

Dear Editor

I am a motorcyclist, and have been for some 16 years now, as well as being the Editor for the Ducati Owners Club of SA, and I would like to bring to your attention one of the questions on the census which I found objectionable

The question was: How many registered vehicles do you have at your house? Then underneath it says "except motorcycles and scooters" Why have we, a minority group been neglected? I rang the census hot line and asked why we were omitted from the question, and asked if we were not important. I was told "no", but that the people who wanted the details did not want to know if we had motorcycles or not. When I read the census information brochure, it says that the reason for filling in the census is to provide facilities/structures for everyone (clearly except motorcyclists).

Did the MRA know about the exclusion of motorbikes and scooters from this question? Can the MRA lobby the government to question why we have been omitted? As the Editor of the Ducati Owners Club, I have taken a photocopy of that question, and have asked the census people if I can re print their census in our magazine without getting in trouble, and they said that would be ok. I will be writing an article about this in our next newsletter (due out in September), and feel very strongly that we have again been ignored.

My self and my partner, as our own form of protest that motorcycles were omitted have stated that our religion is now "motorcyclist" and would perhaps like to get your members to follow suit (perhaps if there is another census in the future, which I'm sure there will be).

Trish Osterman
Editor, Ducati Owners Club of South Australia

"Census question 54 explains to us that motor vehicles owned indicates a person's standard of living. It tells us to exclude motorcycles but not other vehicles like trucks. A class-conscious question that ignores choice for environmental or congestion reasons. It assumes those who choose to be motorcycle owners belong to a low socio-economic group and can't afford a car. Cripes, keen motorcyclists like James Strong, Chairman of both Woolies and IAG Insurance or Minister for Defence Brendan Nelson are exposed. Have pity, these poor blokes must be only just scraping by."

Guy Stanford NSW

In our household, we take pride in our two wheel vehicles and have added an answer to the form identifying our 5 registered motorcycles which if you look at the capital investment eclipses your average Mercedes.

While I don't encourage people to break the law I would like them to consider putting forward their opinion when they complete the census. It may be nugatory but you feel good afterwards.

Peter Major ACT

I just read through the Government census form and I am incensed.... no, outraged to find that motorcycles and scooters are specifically excluded from the registered vehicle tally in question 54. This is sheer lunacy! What do these pencil-necked, cardigan wearing, anal-retentive bean counters hope to achieve by denying the existence of a group that represents just over 2% of the motoring public?

Even if we as a group indicate that we travelled by motorcycle as a response to question 45 of the census, are the fools responsible for interpreting the data likely to make the link between the preferred mode of travel and vehicle registrations, or will they just assume that we are all illegally riding unregistered vehicles. The claim that this data will be used to assist with future urban planning is obviously farcical, an absolute crock!

Rick

(Thanks to Trish for bringing this issue up. Of course, our objections are like putting the dog out after the cat has left the yard. Rather than write an article about the issue I thought that I would give you some comments that have been made about it. These become more significant when you realise that motorcycling organisations made similar recommendations to the Federal Government after the last census, and after the one before that, and were assured that the oversight vis-à-vis motorcycles would be rectified. So what else is new? ... Ed)

FUEL PRICE INCREASES EXPLAINED

A lot of people can't understand why we have to pay so much for oil here in Australia when we have our own supplies.

Well, there's a very simple answer - nobody bothered to check the oil. We just didn't know that we were getting low. The reason is purely geographical.

You see, our oil is located in Bass Strait and off the coast of Western Australia. Our dipsticks are located in Canberra. All clear now?

Thanks to the Razors Edge MRAWA for this gem.

SAMRATS Saturday Ride by Jock Rogan26th August 2006

Some days you can just smell it! You close your eyes, talk a deep breath and you can smell it! Spring! Then you open your eyes see the grey clouds and you know it is still winter. Well, we didn't have the day the weather man promised us, but we had some seventeen bikes gather at the Crafers Deli and a couple with pillions expecting a good day. We had dry roads so at eleven we started off on our latest adventure.

We headed out along the Old Mount Barker Road turning left into Rangeview Road. We followed this to Greenhill Road at Carey Gully. We turned right then almost immediately turned left into Deviation Road. At the intersection of Lobethal Road we turned right and followed this to Lobethal where we met another rider.

Once we left Lobethal, we followed the road through Mount Torrens to the intersection of the Adelaide - Mannum Road. Here we turned left then right into the Tungkillo Road which led us into Mount Pleasant, stopping in the Institute Car Park. From here we crossed the road and obtained lunch from the Steam And Whistle Rail Bakery.

We left Mount Pleasant and followed the road to Angaston rather slowly, partly due to Marcus discovering a nail in his back tyre and partly due to numerous cars flashing their lights at us. This raises two important issues.

Firstly, as we head towards warmer weather, riders are encouraged to pay attention to their bike maintenance. I need to point out that it is almost impossible to know when you will find a nail. I also know for a fact that Marcus is meticulous about his bike's maintenance. So these comments do not pertain to him.

For all the people who seasonally register their bikes or those who only ride on the Toy Run (coming soon) or who are new to riding, it is so important to check your machine before leaving home. Check your chain and engine oil and fuel even if you don't attend to anything else! If you don't know how, ask your bike mechanic.

Now there is another idea! If you read this and you are one of the riders who only ride on the Toy Run, why not join in some of the MRA rides and

hone your group riding skills before the Toy Run event? On the second point it is worth remembering that many zones in the Adelaide Hills have had their speed reduced. Rider Beware!

Upon reaching Angaston, we followed the main road through to Tanunda stopping at the famous Lolly Shop! After a brief pause we headed toward Gawler. At Lyndoch we turned left then right just before Williamstown. This road took us through Cockatoo Valley and was a lovely change of scenery. Thank you Rohan for showing us this route.

Once we reached the Mobil service station in Gawler we called an end to the ride. After a chat and a refuel it quickly became apparent that many riders had time to burn, so Dave and I headed to Meadows via Kersbrook and almost everyone followed us, peeling off as a route home appealed to them! An interesting way to end a ride!

Thank you to all who joined this ride, and those who sent apologies. You have given me a great day and some fond memories. It is also good to see how you are sharing ideas and tips with each other when we stop to chat. We all learn new things this way!

I look forward to an opportunity to share the road with you again soon.

bfm

Saturday Ride Leader: Jock - 0411 273 184
or email jock77@westnet.com.au

EVENTS COMING UP***BUCKIN' BIKE RUN & RALLY Sept 23/24**

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Tony 0412 602 272 or Mick 0415 828 544 or
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Please support these shops, as they support our members. Don't forget to show your membership card when requesting discounts.

Note: Discounts are not given on specials or with other discounts at most businesses so check before paying. Other conditions may also apply.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

(This is for all your mates who are not yet MRA members)

OFFICE USE ONLY

<u>Meeting</u>	<u>Run</u>	<u>Magazine</u>	<u>Function</u>	<u>Other</u>
<u>Card issued</u>		<u>Stock Issued</u>	<u>Entered</u>	

MEMBERSHIP FEES (circle one):

	<u>Standard</u>		<u>Concession</u>	
	Single	Family	Single	Family
1 Year	\$20	\$30	\$16	\$24
2 Years	-\$38	\$57		
3 Years	-\$56	\$85		

DATE: / / MRA Register: _____

PLEASE TICK APPROPRIATE BOXES:

New Member Renewal _____ M'Ship No.
 Male Female

Name:

Address:

..... Postcode

Telephone: ()

Occupation: D.O.B. / /

I Agree to abide by the Articles, Rules and the Constitution of the MRA SA Inc.. (Constitutions are available from the Secretary)

Signature:

Comments:

I AM , AM NOT A BLOOD DONOR.

I would like further advice regarding blood donating.
 Cheques/money orders to be made payable to MRA SA Inc.
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