

CENTRESTAND

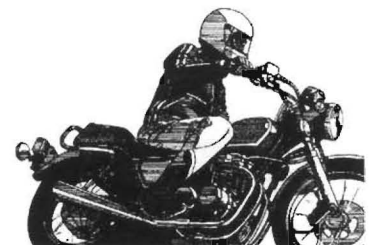
SEPTEMBER 2008



let those who ride decide

The journal of the Motorcycle Riders' Association of SA Inc. Printpost approved No. PP:530028/00014

IN THIS ISSUE : OECD WORKSHOP, 30TH MRASA TOY RUN, LIGHTS ON, BOOK REVIEWS, MRASA MEDIA UNIT, BLACK SPOT \$



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COVER PHOTO AND COMPOSITION

by Nigel [REDACTED]

MRASA Inc. is a member of the Australian Motorcycle Council (AMC)



Australian Motorcycle Council Inc.

EDITORIAL

September has not been a good time for motorcyclists. Four serious crashes in as many days, two fatal. Our thoughts go out to the victims and their families and hope that they have the strength to get through this difficult time in their lives.

Inevitably many people will be asking "What's going on?" Why so many accidents all of a sudden? There is no rhyme or reason. Motorcycles have not become more dangerous all of a sudden. When you consider those weeks when there have been no crashes we don't see headlines declaring that motorcycles have become safer all of a sudden. You might as well say that there has been a national swing towards Labor because they lost a state election, while ignoring local issues that were influential. The media are too often guilty of overstatement and hyperbole because they make for great headlines and provide simplistic explanations to the public upon which politicians will eagerly seize to promote their own pet agendas.

This is a case in point. Because of these crashes the Adelaide Advertiser immediately ran a survey asking if people thought that motorcycles were a menace on the roads. How more loaded a question could you ask? Why not "Do you think that motorcyclists have a death wish?" You would get similar responses. Fortunately, readers in this instance showed a bit of common sense. In an online forum run by the Advertiser three out of four comments either thought the question was inappropriate, didn't agree with it or tried to present a balanced point of view.. Typical comments were:

"Regardless of choice of vehicle, there are a minority of road users that are reckless. Universally a minority tarnishes the majority that practice good behavior."
 (comment no.20)

"Do you ever see a motorbike crashing into a car and killing all its occupants?" (comment no.21)

"Menace? Motorcyclists do not eat breakfast, do their hair and makeup or talk on mobile phones while they ride ..."
 (comment no.22)

The MRA does not want to incessantly bag the media, but we remember that their object is to sell newspapers and advertising so constructive and responsible journalism are not always apparent. We will continue to sound off and complain when motorcyclists are unreasonably treated in their columns. Our complaints, by the way, have consistently been ignored. Not even an acknowledgement.

Go to the Advertiser website and have a look at the forum. See what you think and next time leave your comment.

Ride on, read on, and write in **Harald Lindemann**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Jock Rogan and Harald Lindemann have put their heads together and recent back issues of the Centrestand are now available for download on our web site. Thanks to Jock, our web site is full of photos, info, news and upcoming rides and is the best way to stay up to date, outside of getting along to a meeting. ☺

The MRA SA has nominated two replacements on the South Australian Motorcycle Taskforce. The MRA offers a sincere thank you to Anthony Chan and Uncle Pervie for their work with the Taskforce. The application for Paul Kuhn and Phil Cole to join the Taskforce as Rider representatives has been submitted to the Director of the Office of Road Safety DTEI for forwarding to Transport Minister Pat Conlan. Currently chaired by a SA Police Detective Inspector, the SA Government officers, Motorcycle Industry leaders and Motorcycle Rider representatives discuss ideas and strategies on Rider Safety and changes to legislation. Their recommendations are forwarded to the Minister for Transport. This is the peak body for motorcyclists with the SA Government.

The Dept of Transport released a Taskforce based strategy 5 years ago titled "Motorcycling Road Safety 2005 – 2010". It can be found at <http://www.transport.sa.gov.au/pdfs/safety/mcsafety2.pdf>. We are now half way through the 5 year life of this plan to increase rider safety. I invite feedback on both the targeted key points that have been implemented and suggestions for incorporation in the next plan.

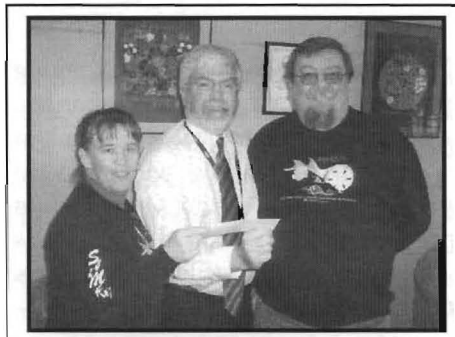
The Australian Motorcycle Council has requested that questions regarding motorcycles be added to the next census. Information on motorcycles or PTW (Powered Two Wheeler) is essential. This data is required to ensure motorcycles, err PTW, are considered in future transport planning.

Planning for the 2008 MRA Toy Run is well under way. We are very pleased to announce that Flotek Engineering has returned for a second year as our primary sponsor and the lead ride group is the Honda Club. I would appreciate anybody who knows where we can borrow a large marquee/tent to contact me. Corporate marquee/tents would give us some shade and the owner some advertising. As I am sure you know, shade has always been a problem on the oval when the weather is hot. Large shade tents simply cost too much for us to hire or purchase.

Spring is here and so is some great weather to ride in. Don't forget to get your bike in shape if it has been hiding out of the rain and I will see you on one of Jock's rides soon.

Phil McClelland President MRASA Inc.

FLYING DOCTOR PRESENTATION



The MRA was pleased to present the Royal Flying Doctors with a cheque for \$1306 dollars. This being the amount raised so far from the

Ridden-On Ride Badge sales.

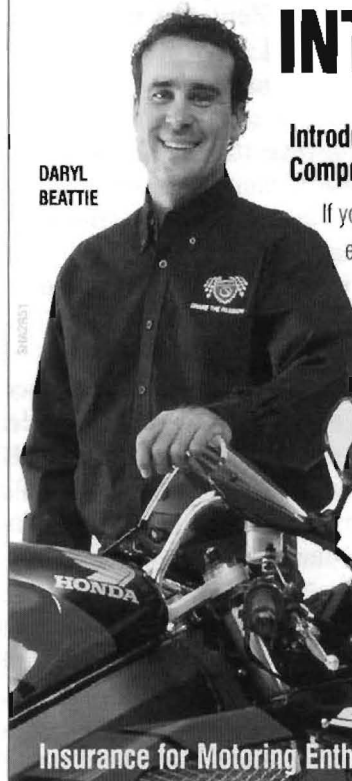
These badges are sold from the Ridden-On Ride date until the Toy Run of that year when all remaining badges are destroyed. Hence they become a memento of the memory of the rider(s) of that year. This ride is quickly becoming a very special event for many riders.

Here we have Sue Rogan, MRA Secretary, Rod Curtis accepting the cheque of behalf of the RFDS and Jock Rogan, SAMRATS coordinator.

If you want a copy of the 2008 badge then contact Paul Morgan or Jock (see p.11 for contact details) or check out the MRA website. You have until the Toy Run.

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OECD MOTORCYCLE WORKSHOP HELD IN NORWAY by Peter Mount

In June the AMC Chairman, Shaun Lennard, along with 100 other expert participants from 21 countries, representing the world's major stakeholders in motorcycle safety, attended a 2-day workshop in Lillehammer, Norway, arranged by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. This was the first time that so many high-profile stakeholders had met at an international level.

The objectives of the workshop were to identify the real problems of motorcycle safety, discuss practical solutions to those problems, and propose a set of measures to improve safety.

The workshop was officially opened by the Norwegian Minister of Transport and Communication, Mrs. Liv Signe Navarsete, along with Mr. Jack Short, the Secretary General of the International Transport Forum (ITF).

During her opening remarks, the Minister emphasised that motorcycles have a natural place in the transport system. At the same time, the vulnerability of motorcyclists required a range of policy responses including increased training and awareness as well as responsible behaviour from the individual road users.

The Minister made it clear that there are no contradictions between Vision Zero and motorcycles. (*Vision Zero, which originated in Norway about 10 years ago, is the concept that no road crashes should be considered acceptable and all organisations and individuals should strive towards this ideal...Ed.*)

Mr Lasse Lager, Deputy General Director of the Norwegian Ministry of Transport, said, "Since its inception Vision Zero has evolved to contain both accident prevention and injury reduction, as these are of equal importance to the safety of all road users."

Mr. Short pointed out that motorcyclist fatalities were rising in many countries and that the problem needed urgent attention. He also stressed that Norway was the perfect place to hold the workshop because it is a leader in road safety, with many local initiatives having been adopted by other countries.

Participants at the workshop identified a number of measures that could be implemented in the short term to make motorcycling safer:

- The over-arching principle was the need to support continuing dialogue and cooperation between those involved in motorcycle safety, including policy makers, researchers, manufacturers, and motorcyclists themselves.

- A fundamental recommendation was the inclusion of motorcycles more fully in transport policy and infrastructure policy and management, so that an integrated approach can be developed.
- Motorcycle crash counter-measures need to be developed on the basis of evidence-based research into car driver and motorcycle rider behaviour. Evaluating the success or otherwise of the measures introduced is a key aspect of developing effective safety programmes.
- Better training is a key counter-measure. This means developing a tiered approach to motorcycle training which builds upon existing standards, focusing on risk awareness and risk avoidance and an understanding of the limits of rider and motorcycle capabilities.

Regarding practical measures, the following ideas were supported by participants:

- Including in the general training for all drivers a component on awareness and acceptance of motorcyclists.
- Expanding the introduction of advanced braking systems for motorcycles.
- Partnering with motorcyclists to develop and implement programmes on safety issues that affect motorcycling communities.

Petter Strifeldt, President of the Federation of European Motorcyclists' Associations (FEMA), called the workshop 'a giant leap forward for motorcyclists', saying it was crucial for motorcycle safety that all stakeholders meet in order to find an integrated approach to the challenges. He observed that "This effectively puts to sleep any arguments from the nay-sayers: there are absolutely no contradictions between riding a motorcycle and being included in road traffic strategies."


"The fact that motorcyclists were present at this workshop is a demonstration of a sound principle: one needs to put the motorcyclists at the table when discussing how to solve challenges facing the motorcyclists."

It may seem obvious, but this has not been the case in many countries. An integrated approach where the riders are included from the beginning is so novel that Mr Jack Short named it 'The New Thing'.

Mr Lennard reiterated one of Mr Lager's most valid points with emphasis, that "We must all stop the finger pointing...which undermines the will to commit to constructive cooperation."
=>p.5

TOY RUN REPORT by Paul Morgan

The Motorcycle Riders' Association of South Australia Presents the



30TH

MRA TOY RUN

Sunday, December 14, 2008

Leaving Anzac Highway, Glenelg 11am Sharp. Arriving Hahndorf Oval 12 noon

Proudly Supported by:

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TRILL

We are now well into the planning of the 30th Toy Run.

We finally have a band booked, The Smarty Boys, plus the usual kids entertainment, including a face painter and blow-up castle.

As this is the 30th run, we have designed a *Special* badge, so make sure you get yours from the MRA tent. There will also be a new baseball cap on sale featuring the famous Toy Run Bear, so make sure you get one of these, they will be selling fast.

By the time you read this, the poster (at top) should be out. If you want to purchase a 30th Toy Run, 4 colour poster, send \$10 along with name and address to the MRA P.O. Box. There will only be a limited number available. The size is A2. Check it out on the MRA Toy Run webpage.

There will be some different food stalls this year, so get your taste buds ready and try them.

This years Toy Run is Sunday, December 14.

Paul Morgan Toy Run Coordinator

<= p.4 (OECD Workshop) A few references to Australian resources and experiences were discussed, with particular interest in the NSW Motorcycle Council's publication, *Positioned for Safety*, which was seen as a very positive measure, and the front numberplate proposal as the sole national motorcycle 'safety' initiative in the 2005/06 National Road Safety Strategy as a negative measure, with accompanying ridiculous photograph. The discussion on this item at such a high international level was seen as in no way beneficial to those parties pursuing the measure.

The results from the Lillehammer workshop will be considered at the OECD High Level Road Safety

Seminar in Paris in September and also at the ITF (of which Australian Federal Transport Minister Anthony Albanese is a member) in October. (The ITF is the International Transport Forum, an inter-governmental organisation within the OECD family. The ITF is a global platform and meeting place at the highest level for transport, logistics and mobility, whose aim is to foster a deeper understanding of the essential role played by transport in the economy and society.)

Shaun Lennard said, "The outcomes of this unique workshop should provide the framework for a significant change in the engagement with motorcycling by Western governments, but we should not under-estimate the amount of work involved in bringing about a change in mindset"

BLACK SPOT FUNDING

The federal government intends providing \$4 million to help fix 21 dangerous black spots on local roads in South Australia. The projects include building roundabouts, improving dangerous intersections, installing speed warnings and traffic signals, and upgrading pedestrian crossings. Federal Minister for Transport, Anthony Albanese, said, "We are committed to reducing crashes on our roads. The Black Spot program targets roads that either have a history of crashes or a significant risk of crashes occurring."

The program is funding sites like the Northern Expressway and Main South Road upgrade, and will increase by 33 per cent next year up to \$60 million nationally. SA Black Spot Panel Chairman Mr Georganas said, "For every \$1 spent on fixing black spots, around \$14 is returned to the community through a reduction in the number and cost of crashes. At least 32 deaths and more than 1,500 serious injuries have been prevented as a result of the program over the past three years."

It is not clear whether any of this funding will be specifically utilised to address motorcycle black spots. It is generally assumed that safety measures, such as Black Spot identification and rectification, will benefit all road users, although we know that this will not always be the case. The Government in Victoria recognises and feels so strongly about the uniqueness of motorcycle safety and the needs of motorcyclists that it has introduced a motorcycle-specific levy for just such a purpose, thought by many to be a penalty against riders in lieu of designing and maintaining motorcycle-safe roads (which, of course, would benefit all road users).

Anyone can suggest a location or a section of road for black spot funding using a nomination form that can be downloaded from www.auslink.gov.au.

DAYTIME RUNNING LIGHTS ON CARS AND TRUCKS FROM 2011

In an attempt to reduce accidents on the roads the European Commission will introduce compulsory Daytime Running Lights for all new cars and trucks from 2011. PTW (Powered Two Wheelers) are not included in the Commission's proposal. If the European Parliament approves the new rules, they would come into effect for cars on February 2011, and for trucks and buses 18 months later. In countries which have already made DRL obligatory the experience in the field of road safety is very positive.



The aim of the directive is to make cars, trucks and buses more visible, increasing road safety and contribute to the reduction of fatalities on European roads whilst being more fuel efficient than existing lights.

According to available research, Daytime Running Light (DRL) is important for road safety. All road users, including pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists, can detect, recognize and identify vehicles equipped with DRL, better and earlier.

ACEM welcomes this measure as it aims at making the European roads a safer place for all users. The mandatory introduction of DRL by 2011 will ensure that the uncertainty of the potential safety implications of a mixed environment, with lit and unlit vehicles, is reduced to the minimum.

Since 2003 ACEM manufacturers introduced the "Automatic Headlamp On" solution to make PTWs visible at all times of day.

A majority of EU countries require by law motorcyclists to have their headlight on at all times, for safety reasons. In order to ensure the respect of this measure and improve PTW safety across Europe, in 2002 ACEM manufacturers began to fit their models with the "Automatic Headlamp On" solution. By June 17th 2003, all new vehicles produced by ACEM members complied with this specification. Automatic Headlamp On (AHO) is an industry standard allowing the headlamp to illuminate as soon as the engine has

started. ACEM supports that this industry standard would be enshrined into EU legislation in order to cover 100% of PTWs sold in Europe.

The Motorcycle Industry has also engaged a large scale research project on a methodology for evaluating PTW conspicuity, which could lead to new lighting treatments.

How do DRLs work

On vehicles equipped with Daytime Running Lights, this light is automatically switched on when the engine is started. When it is dark the driver has to switch on the driving lights manually. In this case the DRL goes off automatically. From an environmental point of view, dedicated daytime running light is an effective solution to improve visibility and conspicuity of vehicles. As the technology is especially designed to be used during daytime it is much more effective and efficient than existing lighting devices. The energy consumption is only about 25-30 % of the energy consumption of the normal driving light. When using LED (Light Emitting Diode) technology for dedicated DRL, the energy consumption is reduced to only 10%.

From Sept 2008 ACEM (The Association of the European Motorcycle Industry) Newsletter

COMMENT by Harald Lindemann

Members of the ACEM have signed off on a Commitment on the adoption of an Automatic Headlamp On (AHO) specification. In part it reads:

"There are two main benefits from the adoption of AHO:

- 1. The conspicuity of PTWs is likely to be improved.*
- 2. A growing number of countries require that PTWs are used with their headlamps on at all times, therefore there is a cost saving through specification harmonization and simplification of switch gear."*

It is the aim of the ACEM that all new vehicles (PTWs) manufactured in Europe will comply with the ACEM specification. The proposed European code will make it compulsory for running lights on cars and trucks while the motorcycle manufacturers comply with a similar voluntary code.

The ACEM is involved with PTW conspicuity research and is seeking "technical solutions aiming at mitigating the perception problem by other road users." This research will take into account a scenario where all road users are using daytime running lights. The research therefore will be based on the assumption that 'Lights On' as we know it, is desirable and necessary. There is an assumption here that AHO or 'Lights On' is effective for all vehicles in all situations, but as we know this is not necessarily the case. => p.9

BITS AND PIECES

THE FUTURE?



I don't know what it is or who makes it but it sure looks like it could be fun. It was sent to Centrestand with the caption 'I Want One'. Me too. Time to join the Jetsons.

RALLIES 2008

**OCT 4,5 long weekend - OASIS RALLY –
PARUNA Lerch 0432 284 529 * Back to Basics ***

**OCT 10,11,12 - GOLDEN DRAGON,
TARAGULLA (near Bendigo) (03) 5449 6081**

**OCT 18 & 19 - REDBACK RALLY - Lake Bonney
IVAN 0403 210 925**

**NOV 7,8,9 - FISH HOLES, PORTLAND
(03) 5523 5991**

**NOV 14,15,16 - NATIONAL SR500 BETHANGA
(NEAR WODONGA VIC.)**

**NOV 21,22,23 - KOOKABURRA CAMP OUT.
AVOVCA STUMP & KAZZA (03) 5465 3859**

Items kindly supplied courtesy of Meataxe
(08) 85402172, Turbo 0427 214 180 and the SE
Register. No responsibility taken for date changes
please check with individual organisers

ROADSKILLS ANNOUNCEMENT

Advanced Rider Training Course, it can now be confirmed that a tentative date has been set for **FRIDAY 28 NOVEMBER 08**. For this day to proceed **CONFIRMATION & PAYMENT of a \$200.00 deposit or full amount of \$350.00** by the 3 October is needed. This can be sent via Cheque/Money Order to; Roadskills Advanced Rider Training, PO Box 2419, Salisbury Downs, 5108 OR Direct Deposit To Account Name: Roadskills Advanced Rider Training Savings & Loans Credit Union BSB: 805-023 Account Number 04207794 Please include your name on transfer

Steve Drury Coach /Partner Roadskills Advanced Rider Training 0418847926 Steve.Drury@health.sa.gov.au

JAYDEN'S RIDE - EPILOGUE

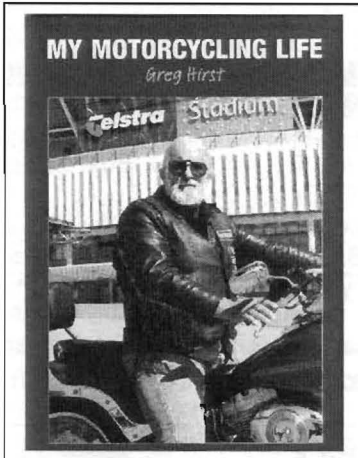
Jayden's Ride on the 19th of July was organised largely by word of mouth. It started small and as more and more people heard about it, they wanted to get involved. They wanted to show support by making donations and by going on the ride. This was never meant to become the scale of event which it finally did, but bikers have generous hearts and things like this can generate a momentum of their own. It generated awareness of childhood cancer and showed the support that was needed for both those who are ill and their families.

It is also well known by now that the mainstream media pretty well ignored the event. This inspired member Nigel [REDACTED] to produce his own news item for his friends. You saw his composition for this issue's cover, here's another one.



BOOK REVIEW

by Harald Lindemann



Greg Hirst has been a significant figure in Australian motorcycle politics for a long time, his work with the NSW Motorcycle Council over the years is probably where most of us know him best, but other aspects of his life are just as significant.

He has now written his story, a mixture of personal and political, but mainly a no bullshit story about biking in all of its aspects and shows how the strength of an individual can make a difference.

It is however, mostly a personal story. Greg presents us with his life which is centered around a passion for riding. He surrounds his other passions – his family, his commitment to a fair go for motorcyclists, his compassion for the down and out and his Christian faith with his motorcycling experiences, none of them incompatible with any of the others.

As a biker I identified with a lot of what he relates about the motorcycling lifestyle; the bikes, the rides, the characters, the camaraderie, the generosity, the acceptance that is found within motorcycling circles. The book is full of stories that illustrate this. Sometimes humorous, sometimes serious, sometimes heartbreaking, but always close to home, and like most bikers he occasionally repeats an anecdote. He has also come up with a few original aphorisms. My favourite when talking about bike reliability or the weather is, "Wishful thinking is a common trait amongst bikers."

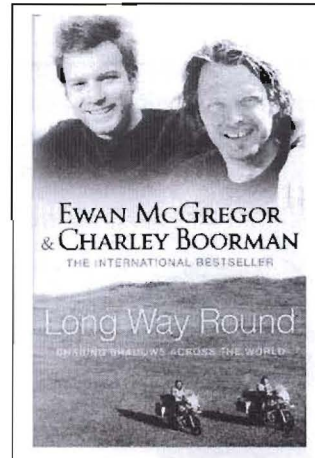
His life has been one of extraordinary energy and activity and this especially comes out when he talks about his work with the homeless and the people, both famous and unsung, who helped him along the way. This is a trip down memory lane, remembering the important times, both good and bad and like at all campfire meetings the life story comes out in bits and pieces leaving it up to the reader to connect the dots.

I expected the book to provide more of an insight, from a particular viewpoint, into the development of motorcycle politics in Australia, but so much of what could have been gets diverted by the personal story. I guess for that we will have to wait until people like Damien Codognotto and Peter Mount decide to weigh in and tell their stories.

If you want a copy check out his website at www.greghirstenterprises.com.au.

BOOK REVIEW

by Harald Lindemann



When Ewan McGregor decided to ride around the world he called his mate Charley Boorman. They had worked together on a number of movies and shared a love of bikes and all things motorcycling.

The idea was to ride overland from London to New York, through Europe, Russia, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Siberia & the USA. Great idea, the type of trip that all of us have at one time or another dreamed about.

So what do you do when you are famous film stars and want to ride around the world? Well, you get the BBC to finance a documentary of the trip, hire a producer, get BMW to donate three 1150 GS Adventures (1 for the cameraman), put together a backup team in a couple of Mitsubishi 4WDs, hire an admin team to do all the background work, decide what kit to take, take three and a half months to put it all together and go.

Preparation included off road training on the bikes, training for survival in a hostile environment, lessons in Russian speaking and getting advice from riders who had travelled in the areas they were going through.

The trip was to take three months and along the way they were, in their role as UNICEF ambassadors, to visit some of the UNICEF centres, in particular orphanages in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia.

As usual on a trip of this magnitude, individuals learn as much about themselves and each other as they do about the countries through which they travel. They tested themselves physically and mentally and tested their friendship as well and won.

Highlights of the trip include eating bull's testicles in a yurt in Mongolia, disappearing roads, pushing the bikes through a muddy river valley in the rain, hospitality from the local mafia in Russia, meeting Ted Simon (of Jupiter's Travels fame) in Ulaanbaatar, crossing umpteen swollen rivers, falling down and picking the bikes up again, falling down and picking the bikes up again (you get the picture) and a rolled support vehicle.

The book is a bonus addition to the TV series and well worth a read. It certainly makes you want to get out and see more of the world – on two wheels of course.

Published by Sphere Books \$24.95 paperback.

<= p.6 (Daytime Running Lights)

On the basis of the success of this research the ACEM is looking forward to making future recommendations to the European Parliament of a regulatory framework regarding DRLs with the aim of having effect worldwide.

This should be of concern to us as we may be affected by this on a number of levels, a significant one being that it opens the whole issue of Lights On again by people (ie pollies and police) who will seize on this research to justify local legislation once again. So be aware, this issue will not go away simply because we defeated it once. The old arguments will be trotted out dressed in new duds.

Go to <http://www.acem.org> and follow the links for more information. Also below is the web address for some of the latest research

A DRIVING SIMULATOR METHODOLOGY FOR EVALUATING ENHANCED MOTORCYCLE CONSPICUITY by Aaron M. Brooks et al

http://www.acem.eu/media/d_EnhancedmotorcycleconspicuityMethodology_78839.pdf If this is too much for you then go to http://www.acem.eu/cms/conspic_method.php for a summary.

MRASA MEDIA UNIT (MMU)

The MRASA is in the process of setting up a media unit. It will be focusing on the best way to get our message through to motorcyclists and the public by using the variety of media forms available today. This includes print, electronic in the form of website, You Tube, podcasts, and whatever else may be out there.

The impetus for this has been the lessons learned through trying to be heard through the traditional media on the issue of the state government's 'Bikie Bill'. We thought we could improve our delivery somewhat.

If you think that you have the skills, artistic, literary or technical for this kind of enterprise and want to be part of it give the MRA a call. We will make good use of you once we get going.

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New Direction for Vic Riders' Voice

Following the MRA Annual General Meeting earlier this year, incoming President John Karmouche said that a new direction was forthcoming for the organisation. Mr Karmouche said the new board contained a good mixture of experienced and new members, which boded well for the future of the organisation.

The most significant change to come out of the meeting was an overwhelming vote to change the organisation's name. The meeting agreed that using the name MRA Australia (MRAA) was confusing on a national level and as the organisation was Victorian-centric it would be appropriate to change the name back to MRA (Vic). The national body representing motorcycle riders is the Australian Motorcycle Council (AMC) of which the MRA in Victoria is a member. MRA(Vic) will continue to work within the AMC to address issues at a national level.

A sub-committee will be formed to examine the relationship of MRA(Vic) with other groups and to consider the aims and objectives of the organisation.

Mr Karmouche said that his goal for the year was to remove the balkanisation that has plagued the motorcycle community for many years and to present a united front on all issues pertaining to motorcycling.

THE CLAYTON'S NUMBERPLATE

WA Police believe embedding electronic identification tags on motorcycles will stop riders escaping speed camera fines and reduce the State's high rate of motorcycle deaths.

The police claimed that the lack of identifying details on the front of motorcycles meant riders were escaping thousands of Multanova camera fines a year and, as a result, many were risking their lives through routine speeding and reckless riding because they felt "above the law". Already this year 17 motorcycle riders had died on WA roads and police believed speed had been a factor in nine of those crashes.

Front number plates have not been required on motorcycles for more than 30 years after a coronial finding that a metal motorcycle plate decapitated a pedestrian (*among many other serious injuries to both pedestrians and riders...Ed.*).

Motorcycle Riders Association WA President David Wright advised that MRA WA's recommendation had always been the simplest approach of 'turning the cameras around', as all vehicles had rear licence plates.

CRASH RATES *DROPPING* – NOT INCREASING

The Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, commenting on figures released by the Federal Transport Minister Anthony Albanese, showing a 3.1% increase in motorcycle fatalities over the past 10 years, said that he had been unaware of the motorcycle crash statistics up until that time, and that the Government would be working to develop national strategies to address what he described as an “appalling” situation.

While welcoming Mr Rudd’s interest in motorcycle safety and the recommendation of the Australian Transport Council (comprising all Ministers of Transport) to establish a national road safety advisory council, Australian Motorcycle Council Chairman Shaun Lennard advised that taking the figures out of context or implementing action based on incomplete statistics could lead to misinterpretation of the problem or an inappropriate response. He recommended that the complete facts always be considered in formulating plans.

Mr Lennard provided additional data showing that the motorcycle crash situation in Australia was not as severe as had been represented. “Whilst the number of motorcycle fatalities has increased by an average of 3.1% over the past 10 years, the number of motorcycles on the road has actually increased by an average of 5.1% each year over the same period. Ten years ago there were around 300,000 registered motorcycles and scooters in Australia. In 2008 it’s well over half a million – that’s a massive increase. It’s around 60% in ten years.

“The fatality *rate* has actually reduced over that period of time – for 2007 it was the lowest it had been in the past ten years. This is in part a reflection of excellent work being done by some of the state jurisdictions in consultation with the AMC’s motorcycle rider groups,” Mr Lennard said.

In recognising that more could be done by sharing information between the states, earlier this year the federal government hosted the first ever Motorcycle and Scooter Safety Summit, in conjunction with the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries, with rider and government representatives from every state and territory.

“At the Summit, we witnessed a real willingness of government agencies from across the country to cooperate in improving communication with motorcycle rider groups. Key stakeholders were exposed to different perspectives on crash data and risk.

“Let’s continue to deal with the true situation,” said Mr Lennard. “Even though the motorcycle crash rate in Australia is declining, there are still far too many crashes. The AMC is not into the ‘blame-game’ though; we want to work on realistic strategies that can bring about further reductions.

“In the National Road Safety Strategy, motorcyclists are listed as ‘vulnerable road users’ along with cyclists and pedestrians. ‘Vulnerable’ doesn’t mean more likely to crash – it’s saying that if you are unfortunate enough to have a crash, then the outcome is likely to be more severe. This is why motorcyclist *injury* numbers are above those for car drivers.

“Mr Albanese’s comment that ‘Your first (motorcycle) accident is likely to be your last’ is neither true nor helpful, and only highlights that the Minister has not been fully briefed on motorcycle safety initiatives.”

Mr Lennard agreed that Mr Albanese had made some very positive comments about the motorcycle summit, but he added that the media had generally chosen to overlook reporting these.

“Let’s not have a continuation of what we saw under the previous government,” he said, referring to the 2004 House of Representative Standing Committee on Transport report, *Eyes on the Road Ahead*, whose recommendation of the development of a national motorcycle strategy was ignored.

The AMC will be seeking a meeting with the Minister for Transport to assist with his understanding of motorcycle safety, and the role motorcycles can play in other areas such as reducing traffic congestion.

Mr Lennard said that the AMC fully supports the establishment of a national road safety advisory council, and welcomed the Australian Government’s commitment to improving road safety for all road user groups. “We look forward to the Prime Minister and Mr Albanese being able to make more positive comments about motorcycling in the future,” he concluded.

Harley-Davidson to Acquire MV Agusta

Harley-Davidson announced the signing of a definitive agreement to purchase the Italian motorcycle maker MV Agusta Group. Under the agreement, Harley-Davidson will acquire 100 percent of MV Agusta Group shares for total consideration of approximately 70 million euros, which includes the satisfaction of existing bank debt for approximately 45 million euros. MV Agusta Group is privately held, with the Castiglioni family owning 95 percent of MVAG shares. The acquisition of MV Agusta Group will strengthen Harley-Davidson’s presence in Europe.

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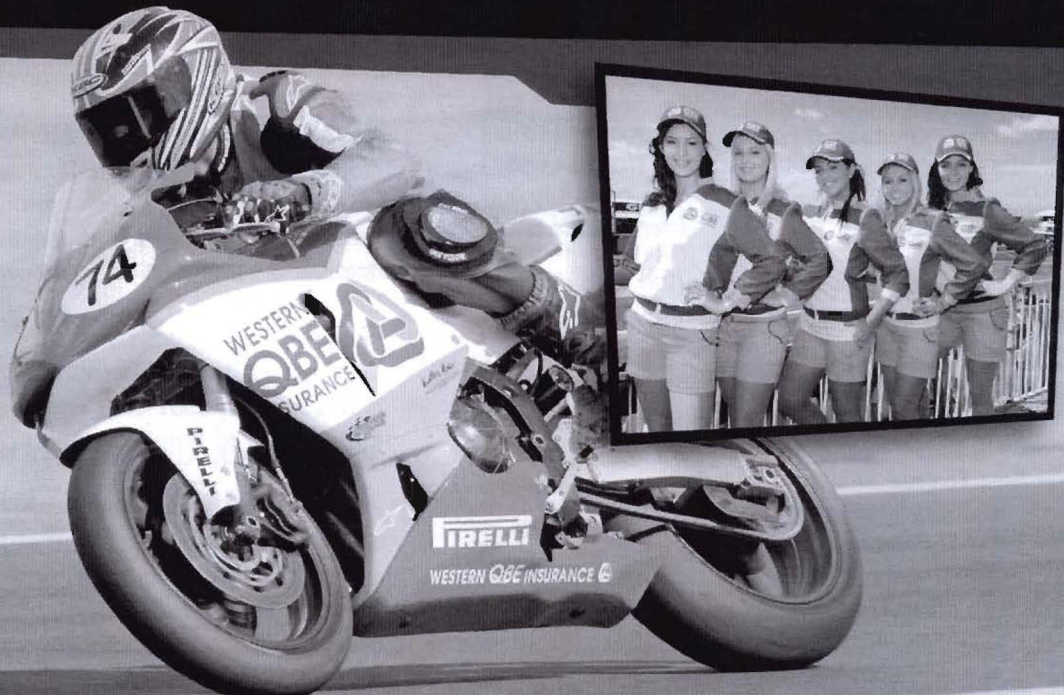
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