

CENTRESTAND

June 2010

THIS ISSUE

WORLD M/C NEWS

France and Sweden

AIRBAGS REPORT

On your bike and off it

STEVE AND KAREN'S BIKE RIDE

To Thredbo and beyond!

Let those who ride decide



M.R.A.
MOTORCYCLE RIDERS'
ASSOCIATION OF SA INC.
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EDITORIAL

The motorcycling community, state-wide, nation-wide and globally (spread by Youtube, Adelaidenow and the Press), has expressed considerable concern that a motorcyclist could die through just being in the wrong place at the wrong time, through no fault of his own, with the perpetrator being exonerated on the grounds that he was exercising a reasonable standard of care on the road, despite, or perhaps because of, having comparatively poor vision.

The perennial mantra of "I didn't see him" is still alive and well, still considered a valid excuse, still manages to imply that the victim was somehow at fault. To which we perennially reply, "Didn't see, or didn't look?"

We all run risks out there on the road; it's an inescapable part of sharing the road with a diversity of vehicles and people with a diversity of skill levels and competence. Many people die through being in the wrong place at the wrong time, but unless we stay indoors huddled in a corner, we must trust other road users implicitly to have adequate skills, to take adequate care, to look out for the welfare of others and to take responsibility for their actions. We must also trust our social system to cater for the development of adequate skills and to deal adequately with those who do not employ them. But a system which allows for a driver to be blind in one eye and have 6/20 vision in the other does not remove the onus on them to accept personal responsibility for a deterioration in their faculties. How can we encourage others to determine and accept when it is the right time to give up their 'right' to drive?

Regardless of whether we ride or drive, our survival on the road is primarily up to us as individuals, but I doubt that there is one amongst us who would not argue that luck also plays a part in that survival – that were it not for someone else's awareness or skills, or a vehicle not being where it might have been, or our not being in a certain place when an errant driver wanted to occupy it, we would probably be dead. The luck factor may only occur once in a blue moon or a lifetime, but when it does we know it.

The luck factor clearly did not kick in for Daniel, but did it have to? He was doing all he could on the road to be safe, except having control of the vehicle that killed him. That was the responsibility of the driver, who abrogated it, yet was rewarded with the luck of suffering no penalty. How cheaply are lives taken. Would Daniel's life have been taken so cheaply had he been in a car? Are all road users treated equitably?

However, despite tragedies such as this, we still have to trust others not only to comply with road laws which are intended to help us all survive together, but to apply themselves to making a conscious effort to avoid abbreviating our lives. Just be aware of how vulnerable that trust makes us out there.

Keep your cheeks and teeth clenched
 Peter Mount

All truth is simple... Is that not doubly a lie?
 Friedrich Nietzsche

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Greetings to all members of the MRASA. My thanks to Phil Mc Clelland who has handed over the reigns of the most financially secure MRA SA for many years. It was his understanding of commercial needs to survive that ensures you all still have an MRA to act on your behalf.

By way of introducing myself, let me start with some bike background. I started riding at the age of 17 on a Honda 500/4. In those days to get your bike licence you went to the local police station, filled in a form and there was your learner's permit. When you felt confident enough, you went back to the police station, got told where to ride, came back and you had your licence if you didn't fall off. I have ridden everything from trail bikes to sports bikes to cruisers. I currently own a 2004 Kawasaki Mean Streak.

Now my vision for the MRA. The MRA SA started as a local motorbike lobby group. It has been involved in some bike issues over the past 30 odd years and I remember parking issues and insurance issues being taken to the streets around Adelaide and masses of bikes bring these types of issues to the public attention. These days the MRASA is extremely well known for it's magnificent annual toy run and the substantial contribution it makes to the community as a whole, but more specifically to St Vincent de Paul.

With the general approach to road safety in Australia, it is becoming increasingly clear that the MRA is going to be called upon to voice its members opinion on differing issues over the next few years. This is going to create a some conflicting dilemmas for the membership of the MRASA. The issue of loss of life by riders is one that needs to be addressed as a state wide issue. The Motorcycle Task Force has been working strongly to lobby Government to introduce road safety issues that are motorcycle-specific. To this end a safety barrier is being trialled on the Gorge Rd. This system is designed to reduce the impact of a rider going under the Armco barriers near the dam. It was put to the test within a day or so of its installation.

There will be many opportunities for the MRA to speak out and my aim as President is to ensure that we take every opportunity to be heard and to put the opinion of the riders to the law makers.

The MRASA is in absolute support of any measure to keep our riders safe and alive. I can only ask you, as our membership, to assist in this aim. Slow down if necessary, ride within your limitations, and consider taking an advanced rider course. You may be surprised how little you actually know and how much you could learn. If there are any questions around road safety issues for motorcyclists please feel free to contact the MRA road safety officer, Neville Gray. I

am sure he would love to hear something new that he can get his teeth into.

As a political lobby group we have many different faces and skills on the committee, and many different tasks to undertake. One of the small areas of interest for our committee is that of forming a ride group to present group ride opportunities for our members. This is ably lead by Jock Rogan who co-ordinates rides most weekends and regularly organises overnight runs. There is considerable access to committee members on these rides also as there are 4 to 5 who regularly attend and I will attempt to attend some of the Sunday rides that leave from the BP on West Terrace.

If there are issues that you feel need to be addressed please let a committee member know. They are committed to bringing all issues to the meeting and they will all be addressed. This is not to say that all will get a guernsey, but they will all be addressed. If anyone has an interest in helping formulate the motorcycle fraternity directions for the next few years, we do have some casual vacancies on the committee and we would love to receive the benefit of new ideas.

Phil Cole.

No pessimist ever discovered the secret of the stars, or sailed to an uncharted land, or opened a new doorway for the human spirit

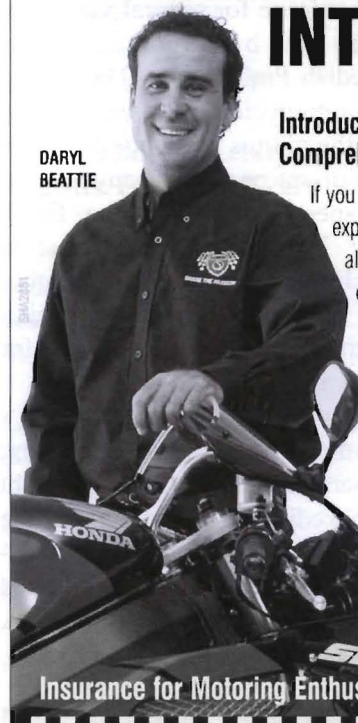
Helen Keller

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DARYL BEATTIE

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M/C WORLD NEWS SNIPPETS

Wayne Gardner Takes On New Role

🛵 Wayne Gardner has recently taken on a new role in road safety as an appointee to the National Road Safety Council. The NRSC consults with a variety of stakeholders around the country – motorcycle groups, road safety organisations and motorcycle trade groups – to gather information and develop policies and strategies designed to lower the road toll. Its main thrust will be to deliver a national ten-year strategy for 2011-2020.

Wayne is on the Council not as a motorcycle rep, but as an expert on matters of motorcycle safety. His expertise both on and off the track makes him well qualified to speak on motorcycling issues and to assess a variety of views that will be put forward on many important issues. He has stated his enthusiasm for the task ahead by welcoming the government's exhortation to *"get out into the streets and find out what's needed"*. We take this to mean that on matters of motorcycling the Council will consult closely with motorcyclists and motorcycle organisations. We sincerely hope that he will speak up on behalf of motorcyclists for fair and sensible policies and strategies and not find it too difficult when the Council's deliberations veer in other directions, as they are likely to do on occasion.

No Front Plates for Swedish Motorcycles

🛵 Recently the Swedish Parliament turned down several proposals to introduce number plates in front on all Swedish motorcycles. This is a real victory for SMC (Motorcycle Council of Sweden).

SMC has been fighting this issue for several years and proposals have been made both by several authorities and members of the Swedish Parliament. The reason behind the idea is that motorcycles can't be fined at speed cameras where all the photos are made from the front. At the same time a driver or rider of any vehicle must be identified by speed cameras to be fined, according to Swedish law. This has raised the question of immunity of motorcyclists. There was also another proposal to introduce new ownership legislation connected to the number plate in front for motorcyclists only. This was also turned down.

The number of speed cameras in Sweden is growing fast with increased numbers of vehicles getting caught speeding. But, with the Swedish law that demands the rider or driver be identified, only 68% can be. Only 5 - 6 % of these are motorcyclists. Most unidentified speed abusers are car drivers with the sunscreen down, hand up or driving a company car.

This is probably the issue that's stirred up most emotions with the Swedish motorcyclists in the last years and the reasons are several. Basically a motorcycle isn't constructed to have a number plate in

front. There is no EU regulation demanding this, and last but not least, it is really ugly.

🛵 Awards and Wooden Spoons

The FFMC, the French Federation of Angry Motorcyclists, awards two prizes to local councils each year – one for the council which has shown an outstanding contribution to motorcycling for the year, with the other being the "Dunce" award, to the mayor of the local council that has been the most regressive, or had the worst record for repair of road surfaces. Each is done with pomp and hilarity and is looked forward to each year by the press and TV for its sheer entertainment value.

(Thanks to Guy Stanford for the last two items.)

🛵 Websites etc.

<http://motorcycleminds.org> a blog about motorcycling – join in.

www.writetoride.co.uk a research based M/C NGO

🛵 Ride for Democracy

This is being organised by AusCivics with the assistance of the Australian Electoral Commission and the support of the Governor-General, Quentin Bryce. The ride is being arranged to raise awareness of Australia's democratic system amongst the 1.4 million young people eligible but not enrolled to vote. The run will gather at Parliament House in Canberra on Tuesday 10th of August 10am to present the GG with an information pack, copies of which will be distributed to schools and local councils around Australia. A film festival on civic topics and issues is also planned.

🛵 Good Science, Bad Science

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety in the US has just released a report which suggests that rider training does not reduce the incidence of accidents amongst new riders. Comparing states that had mandatory training courses with those that did not, the study found that the former had a 10% increase in accident rates over the latter. While not a statistically significant amount for the type of study, it was interesting that the difference in accident rates went in the opposite direction than one might expect. The report noted that while training courses were effective in teaching new riders to handle their machines and make them aware of road rules it did nothing to combat risk-taking behaviour which is linked to this particular age group. Note: take this 'finding' with a grain of salt. The research was based on insurance claim accidents only and did not account for the many other variables that critically come into play and influence the occurrence of crashes. No account seems to have been taken of the training course's weighting of training concerned with the rider's headspace skills as opposed to their roadspace skills.

The Biking Brotherhood is International

Kathy & I spent a very pleasant Easter at our onsite caravan in Normanville this year and with the exception of damn near getting blown off the planet for the first 3 days, the break was great.

On Easter Saturday the caravan site opposite us was occupied by a young bloke riding a Suzuki Hyabusa 1300 and weighed down with more luggage than would decently fit in a Commodore boot. He set his tent up and produced a bottle of Rosé so he was obviously in for the night so introductions were in order.



Our overloaded tourer is a Japanese computer engineer by the name of Shinjiro Moue "call me Shin".

He had his Hyabusa shipped to Sydney from his home town of Tokyo ("Very expensive!" was the comment) and began his trip on Feb 23rd this year. He's taken in just about all of the Eastern seaboard from Sydney south and spent 2 weeks doing the full loop around Tasmania. He then returned to Echuca and rode the length of the Murray into South Oz, including a number of ferry crossings ("Not have such in Japan! Wow!")



A Barossa run was mandatory but the poor bugger arrived in Nuriootpa late-ish on Good Friday, absolutely ravenous, only to find EVERYTHING

closed for the holiday. He didn't go into further detail but I noted teeth marks on his Rossis...

I would have liked to talk to him for hours but his next stop was 3-5 days on Kangaroo Island so he had a boat to meet.

On behalf of the MRASA I gave him my new SAMRATS cap as a souvenir and he was quite moved, waxing lyrical about what generally nice buggers we Aussies are. (Hey, Mr Quartermaster, how about a replacement cap? GRIN!)

A very pleasant encounter with a genuinely nice bloke. He plans on continuing his travels until August when he will again ship his bike from Sydney. He's been supplied with the MRASA website details so we may hear from him again. I wish him well.

Phil Creer

CURRENT COMMITTEE OF THE MRASA INC.

After some pushing and shoving the chairs on the Titanic MRASA were moved around and as the band played musical chairs prospective Committee members sat down and took up their new roles.

The 2010/2011 Committee is now:

President	Phil Cole
Vice President	Neville Gray
Secretary	Sue Rogan
Treasurer	Angela McClelland
Editor 'Centrestand'	Peter Mount
Publicity Officer	vacant
Membership Secretary	Harald Lindemann
Register Liaison Officers	Phil Creer / John (Dutchy) van Halm
Minutes Secretary	Liv Andersen
Stock Control Officer	Sean Beames
Road Safety Officer	Neville Gray
Webmaster	Jock Rogan

General Committee Representative
Andrew Keightley

Sub-Committee Chairs

Toy Run Committee	Harald Lindemann
Scooter Club	Marree Jongeneel
4Bs Committee	Phil McClelland
SAMRATS	Jock Rogan

My short-term memory is not as sharp as it used to be. Also, my short-term memory is not as sharp as it used to be.

4Bs' UPDATE

The 4Bs monthly meetings are held at the Benjamin on Franklin Hotel, 233 Franklin Street Adelaide, on the first Wednesday of the month at 7:00pm. Many of the 4Bs members arrive early to share a meal prior to the meeting.

The Hampstead Rehabilitation Centre was asked to suggest the best way we could use the \$1,017 donated from the 2009 Ridden On Ride. The Centre has asked for a laptop computer, loaded with games and DVDs for use by the patients. The April meeting approved a quote tendered by BTP. Unfortunately the \$1,017 will not cover the laptop we chose to donate and we will draw on the money raised for the 4Bs by Jodie Christie.

All 4Bs members have been allocated \$25 budget and asked to scout around and find some second-hand PC games to install with a hand-over of the laptop planned for the end of May 2010. The Royal Adelaide Hospital DVD library started by the 4Bs in the orthopaedics ward is in need of updating.

The RAH has informed the 4Bs that 2 of the original 4 personal DVD Players have been worn out. They are in constant demand and usage. Around a half-dozen of the original 50 DVDs have been lost or thrown out. The rest are still in use. We have tested a portable DVD player that will plug into the TV installed beside every bed. The DVD player will work on the TV even if the unit has not been hired. This will lower our replacement cost and increase the screen size for the patients. Six DVD players will be purchased at a discounted price of \$30 each and donated to the RAH. We are currently arranging to purchase some ex-rental current-release DVD movies and hope to donate a further 6 movies every 3 months, budget allowing. All the donated products will have a sticker identifying them as being donated by the 4Bs and where a significant discount was offered, naming the company assisting us.

We owe a huge thank you to Andersons Solicitors. They have donated the new 4Bs visitor cards we will be handing out to injured riders in our hospitals. They offered us two new designs and we were split on which one to use. We loved then both. Robyn sorted it out by having 250 of each printed. We can choose which one suits us and the person we are visiting.

Thank you Robyn, thank you Andersons Solicitors. Of the two ways you can have a look at the new cards, I recommend you come along to a 4Bs meeting.

Ride Safe
Phil McClelland
4Bs Coordinator 2010

AMC CONFERENCE IN ADELAIDE

The 2010 Australian Motorcycle Council's annual conference will be held in Adelaide at the Richmond Hotel, 128 Rundle Mall, on August 14 and 15 this year. Time frames will be 10 – 5 on the Saturday and 9 – 2 on the Sunday.

MRASA members may attend as observers with prior notice, but may not contribute directly unless by invitation of the Chairman. If you are interested in attending, please call the MRA's AMC delegates: Phil McClelland (0408 607 788) or Neville Gray (0416 050 189).

AMC AGMs are conducted in various states and territories from year to year. It was last held in SA at Victor Harbour in 2002.

Inaugural MP Ride a Success

The AMC's inaugural Members and Senators Ride in March was quite a success, according to the AMC Chairman, Shaun Lennard, with a number of MHRs and Senators participating, along with guests and media, bringing the total to about 20. The ride included morning tea, and breakfast the following day in Parliament House, which also had around 20 people in attendance, including nine MPs.

The breakfast was followed by meetings with Minister for Transport, Anthony Albanese, Opposition Leader, Tony Abbott, the Greens, and a number of associated party representatives.

"The key outcome - other than the success of the ride - is that all three major parties have agreed to consider a policy proposal from the AMC on what we believe should be in a national motorcycle strategy leading into this year's election. We'll be looking to take the basic elements of the UK Government strategy, the Victorian strategic action plan and key recommendations of the 2008 Canberra summit and put them into a policy proposal. The final proposal may also include approaches to farm use and off-road recreational riding," said Shaun.

2010-2011 MRA S-E Register Committee

As with the main MRA committee, there were the usual musical chairs, with the people to blame now being:

President	George Osis
Vice-President	Robert Thomson
Secretary	Talia Butler
Treasurer	Andrew 'Crazi' Butler
Publicity	Turbo
Rally Coordinator	Andrew 'Crazi' Butler
Committee Members:	Frank Koennecke, Steve Trembath

SAFETY CALL by Harald Lindemann

We have come to expect airbags in cars for both drivers and passengers. Some models even boast six airbags to cover both the front and back seats. Airbags are now standard issue in cars and we all acknowledge the safety benefits of having them. Mercedes is also developing an inflating seatbelt. These ideas have not been as fast to catch on with motorcycles. I remember the amusement that moved through the motorcycling fraternity about ten years ago when an Israeli manufacturer touted a prototype. Another manufacturer was toying with the idea of an inflatable suit that in the event of an off would have you looking like the Michelin Man. They both seemed like fairly ridiculous ideas and a bit pie-in-the-sky.

Both these ideas however are being taken very seriously today and are worth thinking about by all riders. In fact, if you google 'motorcycle airbag' you come up with 232,000 sites to look at.

The idea is simple: in the event of a crash, unlike in a motor vehicle where the driver and passengers are restrained by seat belts (also proven to inhibit the seriousness of injuries), the motorcyclist has nothing to absorb the kinetic energy imparted by the speed of the vehicle and so continues to travel when the motorcycle comes to a sudden stop, usually as a result of impacting with another vehicle, roadside furniture or something else solid like a tree. The only cushioning the motorcyclist has is usually his or her own limbs and flesh which invariably get damaged in absorbing all that kinetic energy. The airbag or inflatable clothing is able to absorb much of the kinetic energy with the result being fewer attendant injuries for the rider. If you accept the above premise then you may feel inclined to have something absorbent between you and any possibly fast-approaching solid object.

So what's happening in this field? Well, Honda has been working on the viability of a motorcycle airbag since 1990 and is only now releasing a 1500cc Goldwing with an airbag as standard issue. Honda has researched accident statistics, solved the problems of delivery of the airbag, found an optimum shape for the airbag, designed crash test dummies to help with the testing and has even done testing on large scooters. What this means for smaller scooters and bikes we don't know yet.

The company that makes the Kalashnikov machine gun has also been in the business of building motorcycles (1929-ish) and has come up with the Izh 2012 concept which is designed as an ultra safe motorcycle. It has a



radar system, on board cameras to measure safe braking distances, traction control, ABS and a frontal crumple zone. It has proximity side sensors to detect blind spots and the handlebars vibrate to warn the rider of an impending crash. It also has an airbag with arms which wrap around the rider in the event of a crash.

Dainese is developing an airbag that is fitted to the back hump of a racing suit and which uses sensors to deploy in the event of a crash. The airbag is released in 40 milliseconds providing protection for the neck, shoulders and collarbones. The sensors allow the airbag to deploy before the rider hits the ground therefore providing maximum absorption of energy and protection for the rider. It is primarily designed for and will probably be mainly used in racing situations. It is currently being tested in the 125cc and 250cc classes by riders Simone Giorgio and Marco Simoncelli.



For the everyday rider inflatable vests and jackets are available. The jackets look just like regular motorcycle jackets but contain an air bladder and are inflated by a CO₂ cylinder. The jacket is hitched to the motorcycle by a cord and when the rider comes off the bike enough force is generated to trigger the CO₂ cylinder to inflate the bladder (about 500 milliseconds). Parking and stepping off the bike and forgetting to unhook the cord will not provide enough force to trigger the cylinder. The jacket's airbag is generally designed to cover the neck, shoulders and lower back. The slow inflation speed is considered a drawback as the rider may have already hit the ground before the jacket is fully inflated. However, they have had considerable success in limiting injuries.

Commercially available jackets are Impact Jacket, HitAir, Motoair and Airetronics. Some of these are available in Australia although the prices that I have found of around \$1,000 per jacket would be likely to put many riders off. If you are serious about safety and want to give yourself an edge against injury or worse, then the options presented above are probably worth looking at. If you are not yet convinced then remember that the idea of traction control and ABS for bikes was once considered a fantasy. Check out the websites for more information.

References : <http://www.gizmag.com/go/4744/>,
<http://www.gizmag.com/dainese-d-air-motorcycling-airbag/8710/> and various links.

Note: The MRASA at this stage has no official policy on the use or efficacy of either motorcycle airbags or inflatable clothing.

FIRST INTERNATIONAL MOTORCYCLE CONFERENCE

The First International Motorcycle Conference, entitled "Motorcycling into the 21st Century" and organised exclusively by rider groups themselves – the Federation of European Motorcyclists' Associations (FEMA), the Motorcyclists Confederation of Canada (MCC) and the Australian Motorcycle Council (AMC) – was held in Brussels on June 28 and 29.

AMC Chairman, Shaun Lennard, a member of the organising committee, was in Brussels the previous week assisting with final preparations for the event. "Our original target was around 100 conference participants, but it's pleasing that there were actually more than 150 people involved. The FEMA people have been very welcoming. The AMC's participation in this event has been supported directly by the European Commission, and it's an honour for our organisation that the AMC's participation is seen as a key to the success of this inaugural event."

Prior to the conference, Shaun and Matt Bennett from MA's Riders Division spent an hour with the Australian ambassador to Belgium and the EU, Dr Brendan Nelson. "Brendan was very interested to hear about the conference program as well as recent developments with motorcycle safety in Australia," Shaun said.

Shaun delivered a presentation to the conference assessing progress with motorcycle safety initiatives in Australia from the perspective of riders. He also moderated and chaired the session on *The Next Generation of Motorcycles*. James Holgate, Director of Road User Safety at VicRoads, made two presentations focussing on Victoria's Road Safety and Transport Strategic Action Plan for Powered Two-Wheelers, released in 2009. The AMC also participated in the conference media presentation on the afternoon of Day One.

One evening of the conference was set aside for the 13th annual MEP (Members of the European Parliament) Ride. This consisted of a two-hour police-escorted ride for around 90 people through the Belgian countryside, and included media, a number of ECE and MEP staff, and representatives from the motorcycle industry in Europe and FEMA.

Conference speakers included CEOs, HODs, MPs, representatives and delegates from governments, NGOs, universities, transport authorities, research bodies, the motorcycle industry and motorcycle organisations from around the globe.

The agenda focussed broadly on the following:

- European Motorcyclists Forum
- Safety and Mobility – Users' Needs and Policy Measures
- Intelligent Transport Systems and their Impact on Motorcycling
- The next Generation of Motorcycles
- Demonstrations and Test Tracks
- Workshops: Behavioural and Ergonomic Factors in Motorcycle and Scooter Accidents – the 2BeSafe User Forum; and Improving Infrastructure
- The Role of Powered Two-Wheelers in the Future Transport Mix

Shaun has provided AMC members with a few conversational observations of the conference:

It seems that some of the messages and principles from the 2008 OECD workshop in Lillehammer are finally starting to flow. In Spain, the retro-fit of rub-rail to W-beam fence has been a massive project covering around 1,600 kilometres. There is also a trial of advanced stop lines for motorcycles in selected locations in Barcelona.

It's also very interesting to hear from the industry what's developing in terms of intelligent transport systems or ITS. There's far more to this than ABS! It's more than safety features too; the sorts of things that more and more cars are starting to have, such as live alerts on traffic blockages.

For a number of years we've referred to the 2005 UK Motorcycle Strategy as the benchmark, but many of the rider rep groups in Europe commented that the Victorian strategy was the best they had seen. VicRoads Director of Road User Safety, James Holgate, made presentations on Victoria's motorcycle policy and its approach to safer infrastructure. Having a representative present from one of the Australian state governments was seen as a key to the international success of the conference.

In my presentation assessing the overall situation on motorcycle safety in Australia, I made it clear that, while the thrust of the Victorian strategy is supported, the fact that a levy funds many of the initiatives is a major sticking point in many motorcyclists' eyes.

Azhar Hussain, founder of TTXGP, spoke about the emerging zero carbon grand prix series and their electric bikes. Three of the electric GP bikes were on display and Azhar invited me to ride the Mavizen TTX02 – the road-registered version – at the end of his presentation. The test track at the conference venue was quite short, but since these bikes only have one gear, you're never going to get out of 'first' anywhere!

The 13th MEP Ride was a great success too. Around 90 people participated, including the Australian ambassador, Dr Brendan Nelson. The route took two hours – one hour through the streets of Brussels and then an hour out of the city of country roads and lanes. The ride is very well supported by the motorcycle industry, which supplies most of the bikes for MEPs and other guests such as Brendan and myself.

This was really well-organised by both FEMA and the Belgian police. Rather than massive numbers of police to stop traffic at every corner, they had a mobile fleet of about a dozen FJR1300s and as soon as the group cleared an intersection, the last cop 'leap-frogged' the group – at some pace – to then get ahead of the ride and stop at an intersection some distance in front. Not only did they stop all the traffic at all the intersections, but on the quieter country road section they stopped all *oncoming* traffic too! This went on for two hours!

The conference outcomes and recommendations will be provided in the September issue of *Centrestand*, along with direct links for those interested in pursuing more details.

MRASA NOTES

Quartermaster's Comments: Sean Beames

We are now doing MRA, SAMRATS, Scooter Club and Toy Run logos on your own T-shirts, skivvies, windcheaters and the like for all sizes that we don't hold in stock (i.e. you supply the garment – really small and really big). We can print any size garment from kids to adults. If you're interested, call the Quartermaster on 0430 018 572

Membership Message: Harald Lindemann

Hi folks. If you're moving house and therefore changing address, let the MRA know. A phone call to me on 0421 289 714 or leaving a message through the website will work. That way our records are kept up-to-date and *Centrestand* will get to you instead of being returned to us.

Toy Run Trivialities: Harald Lindemann

Just an idea - this is the time of year that a lot of toy stores have their mid year sales. How about going out and getting some bargains for the Toy Run. Admittedly, you will have to hang on to them for a few months and make sure that the kids don't find them but it could work. Don't forget the older kids – 12 and up; fluffy toys only go so far.

4B's Farce

The 4Bs have been meeting for some time on a regular basis at the Franklin Hotel in the city. This was considered to be a friendly place until recently when the meeting was told that they could not meet in the newly-refurbished Benjamin's Lounge and would have to meet in an outside area. The manager was unapologetic to the group for this even though a member in a wheelchair was unable to access the area from a side entrance because of parked cars. Also think about the weather we have been having recently – not really time for meetings in beer gardens. When approached about the unreasonableness of the situation the allegedly intoxicated manager declared that "We don't want your kind here anyway". Whether this referred to our disabled colleagues or to the motorcycling "kind" who were present, is unclear. Either is mega-uncool. There was also an alleged threat by the manager to "damage the MRA name amongst Adelaide's hotels". In any case the MRA and the 4Bs will not be patronising that establishment anymore, as was probably the manager's intention. What you do about it is up to you. The matter has also been referred to Kelly Vincent's office (Dignity for the Disabled member of the Legislative Council) which is very interested in the lack of disabled access at the hotel.

News Just In

Caroline Liebich has returned to Adelaide after a serious motorcycle accident in Victoria. For a period

she served as Minutes Secretary to the MRASA Committee. Caroline is outstanding because she doesn't own a motorcycle but has attended many MRA and other motorcycle activities by organising rides. We honour her passion and wish her a speedy recovery. Cards and well wishes can be sent to the Griffith Rehabilitation Hospital, 13 Dunrobin Road, Hove 5048.

Ride for the Child

The Ride for the Child was held on Sunday 18 July in the pouring rain. Thanks to the sixty odd dedicated motorcyclists who turned up to ride and help out. The ride was held to raise funds for Canteen and the Brookman Ward of the Women's and Children's Hospital and to remember Jayden Green who died of cancer two years ago at the age of eight. A special thanks to all those who collected for the cause: Dutchy, Jock and Sue Rogan, Harald Lindemann, Neil Watson, Malcolm Trowbridge, Allen Piert, John Calder, Ken King, Tony Wesolowski, Andy Stump, Dan Blackman, Ally Cunningham, Todd Stennett, David Vaselli and Paul and Natalie Jarmaine. An extra thanks to Terry Kerin of Ezyfit Hydraulics who donated \$500 to the day.

A total of \$3,200.50 was collected before the day with Dan Blackman taking out the prize for the most collected at \$872. Other funds were raised through selling badges and donations. It looks like we will have around \$4,000 to pass on to the above charities. A great result.

Thanks to our sponsors who helped make the day:
\$500 Mirror prize - Peter Vivian from Pagel Glass.
Gift vouchers from Bridgelands Motorcycles \$200,



Victor MC \$150, Coast Yamaha \$100, K&M Motorcycles \$50, George Mueller from the Mt Pleasant Showgrounds for the use of the shed and the firewood. Thanks also to Neil and Caroline Carson for organising the BBQ Breakfast and lunch and not to forget FLOTEK for the use of their premises for breakfast and the now famous FLOTEK BBQ. Music on the day was supplied by DJ Tilt.

STEVE AND KAREN'S BIKE RIDE TO THREDBO, NSW

We left home at around 10am and the heat was already starting as the forecast for Adelaide was 33 and for Mildura was 35. We were in for great weather with sunny days varying from 35 down to 16 degrees at Thredbo.

On the way to Mildura we made a quick stop at Blanchetown followed by a lunch break in Renmark [38 degrees and really hot]. I was very happy to take off from Renmark and get some breeze into my jacket to cool down. We arrived in Mildura around 3.30pm Victorian time and couldn't wait to get our protective gear off to cool down in the cabin at the Calder Holiday Park.

The next morning we headed for Swan Hill. There wasn't much in Swan Hill to talk about – all the shops had closed and the streets were deserted by 1pm. We decided to have a look around and try and find somewhere that might have live entertainment – after all it *was* Saturday! All the pubs had nothing on but they did tell us to check out the Golf and Country Club, which was on the NSW side of the border approximately 4 km out from the town. We headed out for this club at about 40kmh when I noticed a bright green car behind us. I moved further over to the left and slowed down to 30kmh to let it pass but it sat behind me – then on closer inspection through my mirrors I saw the blue and red lights on top – we were being followed at 30kmh by the police!

After a couple of kilometres we had a lucky break with a speeding motorist going in the opposite direction, which prompted the police car to do a U-turn and chase it. We continued on to the Golf and Country Club whereupon entering the car park we quickly realised this was not the place for a couple of motorcyclists to be and doubted if we would be welcomed with open arms inside, so it was back to the town centre where we found the giant cod on the riverbank where we took some photos. We also found the largest Moreton Bay fig tree in the southern hemisphere that was planted by Burke and Wills in 1860 – the trunk itself was more than 4 metres in diameter.

Sunday March 21 was the same as the last two days – a beautiful mild morning with a sunny day of 31 degrees forecast. Today we were heading for Albury, NSW – 350km away. Deniliquin, about half way, is known as the ute capital of Australia and every October they have the great ute muster over the long weekend, and a ute on a pole in the town centre. We arrived in Albury mid-afternoon and booked into the New Albury Hotel, which was the entertainment hub of the town as they had live music out the back in Paddy's bar which went until late that night. We travelled 16km north of Albury to visit the Ettamogah pub. This pub is an exact replica of the cartoon and incorporates a drinking pub, museum and dining and picnic areas.

Leaving Lake Hume we decided to follow the road along the border to Corryong before climbing into the Snowy Mountains via the Alpine Way. On the way the bitumen suddenly ended and we found ourselves on a loose gravel road. It was too far to divert back to Wodonga so we endured this precarious road at 40kmh for about 20km before meeting up with the highway to Corryong. The bends on the gravel road were extremely thick with stones

and it was quite scary trying to control a fully-laden bike but we were able to get out of it okay.

The highway up to Corryong and Khancoban was a magnificent road of left and right hand sweepers of 100kmh. This quickly changed after Khancoban when we entered the Alpine Way climb up to Thredbo. This road has signs up for no caravans, buses or articulated vehicles of any kind due to the narrowness and steep climbs combined with corners of 15kmh – which were just that. This section of some 70km took almost 2 hours to do – Karen said she would have been more scared doing it in a car than on the bike.

While in Thredbo we did the chairlift up to the weather station then a 13km return hike to the summit of Mt. Kosciusko, various walks around the village and a day ride down the Alpine Way to Cooma via Jindabyne. This part of the Alpine way was motorcycle heaven - 90 to 100kmh sweepers all the way to Cooma. The weather in Thredbo had cooled down considerably from the days before – our first morning there it was 4 degrees but daytime temps were still up around 20 which made it very pleasant. On the summit of the mountain it was 11 degrees but the wind chill sent it down to around 6 degrees, but it was very sunny. Leaving Thredbo we headed down to Jindabyne, Bombala, then down the Monaro Highway to Cann River, Orbost and Lakes Entrance. The Monaro Highway and Great Dividing Range was a truly awesome ride with fast sweepers all the way and very few straight sections of road.

While in Lakes Entrance for 2 days we did the usual tourist things in the town then did a ride to Paynesville, Metung, Bairnsdale then up the Victorian Great Alpine road towards Omeo and back to Lakes Entrance. Leaving Lakes Entrance we travelled down to Bairnsdale, Sale, Morwell, Warragul, Pakenham then across to Koo Wee Rup then Frankston and down the Mornington Peninsula freeway to Sorrento. The trip down the freeway was most extraordinary and a test of one's patience because every couple of kilometres there was a roundabout stuck in the middle of the freeway where you had to slow from 110kmh down to 40kmh. From Sorrento we caught the car ferry to Queenscliff then continued the ride to Geelong, where we stayed the night.

When we left Geelong the weather forecast was for showers approaching Melbourne that night. The plan was to do the Great Ocean Road and stop in Mt. Gambier for the next 2 days. I found the Great Ocean Road from Torquay to Apollo Bay scenic, windy and full of annoying slow drivers. We arrived in Apollo Bay at lunchtime where they were having a street music festival. We stayed for about an hour and within 15 minutes of leaving Apollo Bay the heavens opened up. By the time we got to Warrnambool we had had enough of being wet so we got a cabin for the night. We spent the afternoon drying all the clothes from our bags.

Our next and last stop was Mt. Gambier and the next morning it was up early for our final leg home. We left the Mount at around 8am and followed the road to Kingston, up the Coorong to Tailem Bend then home by 2pm.

Over the 12 days we covered nearly 4,000km averaging 19km per litre with the bike being fully laden. Fuel prices averaged around \$1.35/litre with the dearest being at Thredbo where it was over \$1.50 /litre.

ROAD SAFETY REPORT

Neville Gray

The Centre for Automotive Safety & Research (CASR) has put up an idea that motorcyclists wait another year until they are 17 years of age before they can get their m/c licence. Car drivers however can get their licences at 16 years of age. I have written an argument against this idea and have recently spoken on channel 7 and 10 as well as drive time ABC 891 radio on this matter.

Argument against raising the age of obtaining a motorcycle license by 12 months.

The following figures were obtained from the Department of Transport, Infrastructure, Regional Development and Local Government website for motorcycle fatalities for June 2008 to May 2009.

Age in Years	0-16	17-20	21-25	26-39	40-59	60+
No of Fatalities	2	22	35	92	82	20
%	1	9	14	36	32	8

Assuming that the 0-16 age range contains information only about licensed riders, then the number of 16-year-olds fatally injured in the period is 1% (there could be riders under the age of 16 years in this group, the number of legitimate riders would then be even less.) I have used the national figures because of the greater numbers involved.

These are the very new riders who have just graduated from rider training and who will be targeted by any change in the age at which they can obtain a motorcycle licence.

The figures clearly demonstrate that the problem lies in the 26-39 age bracket (36%) – a fact we have known for some time. The 16–20 age bracket constitutes 10% of the total number of fatalities and is under-represented within the total. These riders are fresh from compulsory rider training and are relatively safer than those riders 20 years their elder.

There is compelling evidence that clearly indicates that riders make better car drivers. The heightened attention levels needed to successfully ride a motorcycle are carried over when riders drive four-wheeled vehicles. Their crash rate is lower if they have a motorcycle licence.

Motorcycle dealers will have half of their customer bases removed for a year as the sale of LAMS motorcycle dries up for 12 months if this recommendation is adopted. Will the Government compensate these dealers for loss of sales?

Currently, car licence-holders can ride scooters of 50cc capacity. If this recommendation is implemented then we will see a huge 12-month influx of 50cc scooters invading the roads controlled by un-trained riders of 16 years-of-age. The subsequent rise in fatalities will be very apparent. Is this what we want – a rise in serious injuries and maybe fatalities?

In many European cities, a moped licence can be obtained at an age of 14 years. As riders get older, they can avail themselves of larger capacity machines until they are allowed to get a full motorcycle licence and a car licence. These countries clearly acknowledge that the learner process starts on two wheels and then graduates to four wheels with increased road experience. Can this many countries be so wrong?

The proposed GLS (Graduated Licensing System) for motorcycling licences will certainly be a more complex and expensive process, and will inevitably deter some people from gaining their motorcycle licences. This, and raising the age limit, will lead to more "unriders" whom we know add to the road toll.

University students and low-income earners will be severely disadvantaged if this idea ever comes to fruition. Should these people be punished?

There are absolutely no benefits to anyone in implementing this idea in South Australia.

Motorcycle Attenuator (BASYS)

Some weeks ago the SA Department of Transport Energy and Infrastructure installed the first piece of a 2 km trial length of 'Motorcycle Impact Attenuator' to an existing stretch of W-Beam barrier on the infamous Gorge Rd just outside of Adelaide where many motorcycle fatalities and serious injury crashes have occurred over the years.

The SA Motorcycle Task Force was negotiating with the DTEI for a 200-metre trial section of double W-Beam installation on a motorcycle blackspot area. The initial idea was to simply add an additional lower rail to the existing structure. We were rather surprised some 8 months ago to be invited to a presentation to Departmental Engineers of the BASYS system from Spain – see www.basyc.com.au. This system is well-entrenched in Spain and universally acclaimed by motorcyclists there and the rest of Europe generally.

As a follow-on from the presentation and constant haranguing from members of the Task Force, the Department finally authorised a \$140,000 trial project to test this stuff on the Gorge Rd.

I attended the initial rollout where the Spanish Engineers were present as well as their Australian

counterpart and agent Mr. Swami Nathan. The barriers need to be expertly installed under a constant tensile loading and it was obvious that the departmental personnel were having initial difficulties with this process. Eventually however a 200-metre stretch was installed and was constantly visited by interested motorcyclists as we received good TV news coverage of the event.

These 'impact barriers' are not cheap and the cost will certainly control the amount of use. Currently W-Beam costs in the vicinity of \$130 per metre (with 2 metre distances between supporting uprights). A flat steel additional rail under the beam will cost an additional \$45 per linear metre. We are being charged \$70 a metre for the BASYC system which I am sure is a special introductory offer. Normally expect to pay \$100 a metre which makes the total cost a rather substantial \$230 per linear metre, so we will not expect to see this initiative at all motorcycle blackspot locations where appropriate.

At the initial installation were two transport engineers from Queensland Transport to view the proceedings with the idea of implementing this in an around the Brisbane area. They were enthusiastic to the idea but thought that the cost would be prohibitive and therefore the lower flat steel beam addition would be the recommended way to go in Qld. There really is no comparison on the effect that both systems would have on an 'out of control' motorcyclist sliding into these barriers. One only has to view the videos found on the BASYC website to plainly see the advantages.

We will be closely monitoring the Gorge Road area to check on these barrier enhancements – I don't think we will have to wait long until some errant motorcyclist tests these in real life. The rest of the 2 km trial length will be placed shortly on the Gorge Road. Another smaller trial will be held some 40km away on the Sedan Hill Road, also a motorcycle blackspot area.

I will keep you all updated as to the performance of these enhanced barriers.

SA SCOOTER CLUB NEWS

Rene Borst

The MRASA's SA Scooter Club exists to cater for those of us who prefer scooters to motorcycles but with the same level of enthusiasm for riding in groups on a social basis.

2009 was a quieter year for the Scooter Club. Although we conducted a club ride each month, the rides were not quite as well attended as expected. We have had some new members come and go, and some members only attend rides on an ad hoc basis.

The highlight run for the Scooter Club was its annual birthday run, which retraced the route of the inaugural run back in 2006. This ride saw club founder Anthony Chan and others join us for a most enjoyable ride. We look forward to another good run in 2010.

In October we participated in the Pink Ribbon Ride. The Scooter Club held its own event which started at the Burnside Village with the WIMA run, but then made its way to Gawler for lunch.

The annual Toy Run is always enjoyed by all, for the camaraderie, the ride and whole atmosphere that is the Toy Run. At the 2009 Toy Run, Wayne and Brutus did us proud with their excellent displays showcasing both the Scooter Club and their own interstate tours.

2010 started off quietly but hopefully will improve as the year rolls on. We had a reasonable turnout for the Ridden On Ride in February. In March we had our AGM which resulted in a change in leadership.

Marrie Jongeneel was elected Club Coordinator. Rene Borst, Phil Creer and Andy Stump were elected as Ride Coordinators. The coordinators work well together and devote valuable time to planning rides suitable for all capacities.

*Scooter Club
Coordinator Marrie
with son Nik on their
Bolwell le Grand
(200cc)*



With a few more maxi-scooters having joined our ranks, ad hoc rides such as weekend getaways or near country runs are also available. We are also looking at reconvening our popular Friday night runs.

The Scooter Club is also a great source of valuable information for anyone looking to buy a scooter, due to the variety of machines within the club membership. This enables people to obtain factual information as opposed to sales spin.

So, for those wishing to explore the world of scooters, in and around Adelaide, you can visit us on the forum, on the website or come and join us on a run. All are welcome ☺. The Scooter Club conducts a run on the third Sunday of each month. Details of our runs are available on our forum or on the website.

Rene Borst scooter@mrasa.asn.au 0407 505 506

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Precursor:

Last May, a one-eyed delivery driver, Neil Spooner, was cleared of dangerous driving and driving without due care after his van hit and killed a scooter rider, Daniel Rafael, from behind while he was waiting to turn right off Unley Road almost four years ago.

In his verdict, Judge Rauf Soulio said expert evidence provided during the trial offered a credible explanation for why Mr Spooner did not recognise the lights on Mr Raphael's scooter until it was too late.

'I am unable to conclude beyond reasonable doubt that Mr Spooner's driving was such a grave departure from the standard of care expected of road users,' the judge said in his reasons.

The prosecution had argued that Mr Spooner was driving too fast in wet conditions, that he changed lanes just before the impact in a dangerous manoeuvre, and that despite being licensed to drive, his poor vision was no excuse for Daniel's death. Mark Norman, prosecuting, told the court, "Mr Spooner did not slow down, he did not brake, he did not swerve - he simply did not see Daniel at all, though he was right in front of him and had three full seconds to see him."

"Anyone with two eyes conducting that manoeuvre, in those conditions, is driving dangerously," he said. "For Spooner, therefore, it's inherently dangerous."

The following letter from our Vice-President and Road Safety Officer was recently sent to *The Advertiser* on May 28, but has not been published to date.

Dear Editor

Motorcycle and scooter riders were recently appalled at the news that a severely vision-impaired courier driver who killed a young scooter rider, Daniel Raphael, was acquitted of a charge of 'death by dangerous driving' and 'driving without due care'.

The innocent victim's family and friends are equally incredulous at this devastating news. The system has certainly broken down in allowing this incompetent remorseless driver to even be on the road in the first place and letting him off to continue driving after publicly stating that 'it could happen again'.

The often heard phrase of 'Sorry mate, I just didn't see you' now has a sinister new meaning for all vulnerable road users. He is now back on the road. To all fellow riders and pedestrians - 'be afraid, be very afraid'.

Neville Gray, Motorcycle Riders' Association of SA

As Road Safety Officer, Neville has been in contact with Daniel's father, Joe, who has given *Centrestand* permission to publish his letter of concern to Neville:

Dear Neville

Thank you for helping. We are beside ourselves with this disgraceful verdict which virtually tells us that any motorcyclist can be killed with no consequences to the offender. Absolutely unacceptable especially since our son Daniel was stationary and rear-ended.

This man in his interview has publicly stated in the papers that it will happen again! Unbelievable that a judge can pass a verdict like this and to a man who has only slight vision in half his right eye and no eye in his left and employing himself as a courier driver! And no remorse! He only apologised when he came out of the court and was confronted by media!

Are we the public so accepting of this? We have had people contact us and voice their anger but we need them to complain to the people who can do something about this. We are trying to have this issue raised at the next parliamentary sitting.

I have spoken to many road safety advocates and no-one seems to support that a visually impaired driver with a history of causing a fatality should be allowed to remain on the road, continuing to drive as a courier driver commercially.

My family will continue to push for road safety for the benefit of all road users. This news has reached newspapers all over the world. What a disgrace!

Thank you for your support
Joe Raphael

As a first step in examining avenues by which Joe's concerns and those of the wider motorcycling community can be addressed, Neville will revisit earlier such cases, including that of Elliot Coory, who was killed by a truck doing an illegal turn on Germantown Hill few years ago.

Elliot's father, John, single-handedly brought the errant driver to justice, whereas the Police had said that they were not interested in pursuing the matter, and it looked as though the driver was going to walk free. John's intervention resulted in the driver receiving a huge fine and a 12-year ban from driving.

A second step may consist of an interview with *'The Advertiser'* on the subject along the lines that all vulnerable roads users had better be aware as the driver is back on the road again and is reported to have said that it could happen again.

Letters to the Minister for Transport, the Minister for Road Safety and the Attorney General deploring this travesty of justice will be sent as well.

MORE NEWS FROM OZ & THE WORLD

Major Trail Bike Facility for S-E QLD

Thanks to motorcycle lobbying, the Queensland Government has set aside 745 hectares of crown land at Wyarelong for SEQ's first trail bike facility.

In announcing the project, Qld Premier Anna Bligh said, "This \$4 million investment will help develop the land into a dedicated off-road facility that will give trail bike riders a legal and safe riding environment that won't disturb neighbours."

Planning for Stage 1 is expected to be completed shortly, and is likely to include a base camp facility, about 30 km of trail, a natural terrain motocross course, a parking area and toilets.

Stage 2 will involve installing power and showers in the camping area, building a race tower, spectator area and starting gates at the motocross track, additional trails and signage, and a café or kiosk.

The site at Wyarelong was chosen because the terrain is well-suited for trail bike riding and the natural landscape of the area means that noise and dust will be largely contained in the park area.

WRSF Continues to Kill

"Wire rope barrier has failed to stop speeding trucks at least four times since 2006, and at least three drivers are dead at WRB sites, probably more," argues Damien Codognotto, spokesman for the Independent Riders' Group. "Logic dictates that roads that carry more big vehicles at speed are a greater risk," he said.

Damien pointed out that wire rope barrier (Wire Rope Safety Fence – WRSF) does not stop large vehicles, nor even four-wheel-drives in many situations, and that it does not do what road authorities say.

"There has been no real research into the safety of wire rope barriers in Australian conditions. See the 2005 Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Crashes Involving Roadside Objects - Executive Summary and Chapter 8. Wire rope barrier has a very short working life, is easily damaged and requires expensive maintenance and repairs. It is a hazard to all road users and a huge waste of public money, he said.

Damien added that the Motorcycle Riders' Association was right to call on VicRoads to stop all wire rope barrier installations immediately.

Progressive Euro Initiative

The European Safer Urban Motorcycling Project (eSUM) is a collaborative initiative between the motorcycle industry and local authorities and

universities of the principal European motorcycle cities to identify, develop and demonstrate measures designed to deliver safer urban motorcycling. The project aims at improving diagnosis of the urban PTW (Powered Two-Wheeler) challenges, identifying and applying good practices in Urban Motorcycling Action Plans, demonstrating advances in the state-of-the-art and adopting good safety practices through preferential treatment in the implementation of urban traffic management policies and strategies. www.esum.eu

Europe Takes Lead from Oz

Coincidence or did the Euro people learn (*through the March Centrestand, d'you reckon?*) of the presentation of the *Good Gear Guide* booklet by Liz de Rome at the SA Motorcycle Forum in February, in which she discussed the value of riders wearing quality clothing to improve their safety?

With the aim of encouraging a wider take-up of protective gear, ACEM, the Motorcycle Industry in Europe, has released a booklet in seven languages with recommendations on which equipment to choose. This brochure has been developed within the eSUM Project involving cooperation between ACEM and four European motorcycling capitals (London, Paris, Barcelona and Rome). The goal is the identification, practical demonstration and adoption of measures for the safer use of powered two-wheelers in the inner-city traffic.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) can help motorcycle, scooter and moped riders reduce the effects of accidents. Nonetheless the benefits of good quality motorcycling clothing are still widely underestimated.

While much is being done on aspects such as vehicle safety features, training and raising awareness, improvements in road safety can also be achieved by promoting protective motorcycling wear adapted to the type and the use of vehicle.

Most riders use helmets, however moped riders and commuters tend to neglect the benefits of PPE with regard to safety and comfort. In Mediterranean countries, for example, due to their warm climates, users are still widely unaware that good apparel can combine comfort and safety.

The goal of this booklet is to provide some simple guidelines supported by scientific evidence to help increase the number of motorcyclists equipped with appropriate protective clothing. Studies have established a 'protection factor' for every kind of garment which indicates the percentage of crashes in which the protective gear has mitigated or prevented injuries. Knowledge about the benefits of wearing the correct apparel will help users in making the right choice and contribute to their safety.

WA M/c Licensing & Training Revamp

According to the WA Department of Transport, motorcyclists in Australia are between 23 and 29 times more likely to acquire fatal injuries than operators of other vehicles travelling the same distances. Between 2002 and 2007, WA has seen a marked increase in fatality rates for motorcyclists, averaging 7.7% against the national average of 3.1%.

To address community concern, changes are being proposed to the ways that motorcyclists are licensed, trained and assessed in WA. Based on the recommendations of a review of best practice in motorcycle rider training and licensing, the changes are proposed to introduce a system that more thoroughly prepares and tests new riders, promoting safety on the roads.

The Department of Transport in conjunction with the Road Safety Council, Motorcycle & Scooter Safety Action Group and Office of Road Safety has launched a project to enhance the Graduated Rider Training and Licensing System (GRTL). The multi-year project is targeted for completion in 2012 and is comprised of three stages:

1. Consultation
2. Regulation
3. Implementation

Topics for discussion in the consultation stage include:

- Power to weight restrictions / LAMS
- Moped use
- Pre-learner training
- Competency-based assessment
- Motorcycle theory test questions
- Handbooks/education material
- Provisions for returning riders

The consultation stage will involve a number of workshops and surveys with participation from all areas, including Broome, Karratha, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Albany and Bunbury, during the first half of 2010. This will be followed in the second half of the year by a review of legislation and regulations. Implementation will commence in 2011.

Fingernails to Die For

A 49 year old woman in the USA was recently convicted of felony reckless homicide after the car she was driving struck and killed a motorcyclist. She had been painting her fingernails at the time. Her lawyer argued that she was merely negligent and not reckless, but the jury disagreed. She is likely to be sentenced to at least five years in prison. The American Motorcyclists' Association supports enhanced penalties for drivers who kill or injure others as a consequence of their deliberate, inattentive behaviour.

SIGNPOSTS CAN KILL YOU

by Harald Lindemann

Have I got your attention? Well, it's really not surprising because many of them are made out of steel pipe and are concreted into the ground and if you hit one they have a tendency to try and make you stop very quickly and if you happen to hit the sign itself you are likely to be slashed to ribbons by its sharp edges just to remind you that this was not a good idea.

So why are they made so strong? Well, my theory is that successive generations of motorcyclists kept hitting them and knocking them over and some council guy had the job of picking them up and putting them back up. So now they make sure that we can't knock them over and the Council can be more efficient by putting the sign putter-upperer to better use, like sealing the rubbish bins in parks so we don't fill them up and some council guy has to come around and empty them all the time.

Seriously though – really, the intro was actually a bit of levity, tongue-in-cheek, or just a bit of cheek. Seriously though, the problem of injuries caused by motorcyclists hitting signposts is...well...serious. Injuries range from broken and crushed bones to lacerations to internal injuries. Any of which could put you in hospital or at worst be fatal. So the hunt is on for a signpost that will be a bit kinder to the human body.

A group called 'Frangible Safety Posts' from somewhere in Europe claim to have the answer. The problem is making a signpost that will willingly collapse on impact but still be strong enough to hold a sign up. They make a signpost that is only 4.2 kilograms in weight which is strong enough to hold a sign and withstand 25-year wind events.

The secret is in the composite materials used and in the manufacturing process which pultrudes the material which ensures that the materials' fibres are put under a degree of tension which survives the manufacturing process. The resultant signposts made from this material have the lowest impact resistance of any conventional signposts currently on the market.

So next time you go to hit a signpost, let's hope that it's going to frange on you.

Information courtesy of World Highways.

STOP PRESS

Suicidal twin kills sister by mistake
Something went wrong in jet crash, expert says
Police begin campaign to run down jaywalkers
Panda mating fails; veterinarian takes over

MRA COMMITTEE

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MRASA South-East PO Box 909 Millicent SA 5280

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Redline Exhausts discount on request
Red Lion Motorcycles discount negotiable
Shannons Insurance club discount available
Victor Motorcycles 10% parts/acc
Yamaha World discount on request

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.

MRASA Inc MEMBERSHIP FORM

MEMBERSHIP FEES: CIRCLE ONE

Table with columns for Standard (Individual, Family) and Concession (Individual, Family) membership fees for 1, 2, and 3 years.

Date: / / 2nd Card Name if Family M/ship:
Scooter [] Bike/Other [] Male [] Female []

New Member [] or Renewal [] if so Membership No. _____

Provide Blood Donor Information: Yes []/No [] (This is followed up by the Blood Bank)

Name:

Address:

Postcode: Telephone:..... Mob:.....

Email:

Occupation: D.O.B...../...../..... Other Clubs?

Signature:..... Register:.....

I agree to abide by the Articles, Rules and the Constitution of the MRA Inc, SA. (Constitution available from the Website or the Secretary)

Payment by Cheque [] or debit Visa [] M/Card [] B/card []

AMOUNT \$..... EXPIRY DATE/.....



Name as printed on Credit Card Signature.....

Please make cheques or money orders payable to MRASA Inc.