



M.R.A. PROMOTIONS PTY. LTD.

MRA Australia Inc.
Victorian Branch
440 Elizabeth St.,
Melbourne. 3000

Sunday, April 6th. 1986.

Sir,
regarding your letter of 28 / 3 / '86.

For future reference please address all mail to P.O. Box 389,
Caulfield East. 3145.

A point to note. I do not believe that any MRA Committee has the power to "decide that (I) you attend the next monthly meeting". Your letter fails to tell me what sort of meeting it is or when and where it is to be held. That is not a good reflection on an organization that has some 5000 (?) members and spends more than \$100,000 (?) of their funds per year.

An audit may reveal what happens to the members money.

I will not attend "the next monthly meeting" unless you are talking about public meetings where MRA ordinary members get to have a say.

I am joining the ACT Branch of the MRA and as such am loyal to the ACT President and the National President. I will negotiate with the new Victorian President, Warren Gordon and the Membership Secretary, Ben Hardiman, only.

I hereby end all financial commitments to the Victorian Branch of MRA Australia Incorporated. Your committee is instructed that it will have to find new guarantors for equipment such as the computer.

I have been forced to take this action by the Treasurer, A. Scicluna who has publicly threatened me with violence and said that he would see me out of the Shop and MRA Victoria. His power play has been successful.

At a time when the MRA needs professional, full time staff, I cannot accept that the Vice President Dave Hornsby will be good for the Victorian Branch.

As Executive Editor of The Deciding Factor, I have dealt with the letter of D & J Westbury in the proper manner. I wrote a reply and discussed the 2 letters with the Broken Bones Rally organizers. The final say normally rests with the editor Mr. T. Parish. You will find Mr. Parish a man of integrity who will not bow to editorial censors. If he feels it should be published that is his decision and I will support his judgement.

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1/440 ELIZABETH ST., MELBOURNE 3000.
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let those who ride decide

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I find the second last paragraph of your letter puzzling. I am a member and I was certainly not a party to any "unanimous vote" on the content of the Deciding Factor. The Victorian Branch Committee DO NOT HAVE THE LAST SAY ON ISSUES THAT ARE TO BE PUBLISHED.

MRA Promotions was registered on February 9th. 1981, with full committee knowledge and approval. The company has operated continuously for 5 years. It has achieved its aims of supplying services to the MRA Membership, supplying full time staff to the Association at no cost to the members and upholding the 3 original aims of the MRA.

MRA Promotions has given the members 3 Motorcycle Expo's, with another planned for 1988. It has given the members The Deciding Factor which it has developed from a newsletter to a quality consumer magazine. It was responsible for the concept and the finance required to move the MRA to Elizabeth St., and more.

The Deciding Factor is a direct mail publication, financed by MRA Promotions mainly from insurance commissions and advertising. It is registered as a business with the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs by MRA Promotions PTY. LTD. The Deciding Factor has been owned and operated (at a considerable financial loss) by MRA Promotions for more than 3 years.

I have carried that financial loss hoping that the MRA would become more professional and the Factor would supply full time staff for the Association, improve the Associations image and give motorcycling a real consumer voice in this country. It will be a sad day for the members if they lose the Factor because of the actions of the new committee.

MRA Promotions Pty.Ltd. books are in order and are available for inspection by MRA Australia Inc's accountants in my presence.

The Toy Run is already 2 months behind. The committee failed to do anything about this so I have begun to organize the event. I introduced the first MRA Toy Run to Australia in 1978. I have organized each one (8) since.

Toy Run '85. Last year MRA Promotions produced and distributed 1 x TV ad distributed to 10 TV Stations. 2 x radio ads distributed to 25 radio stations. Cost to the MRA around \$1400. Cost to Promotions \$500. This was very inexpensive public relations for motorcycling and that was the second aim of the MRA under the Constitution. "A better image."

Of course, while Mr. Scicluna was the only committee person he virtually replaced the Constitution with the articles of incorporation which he wrote himself. There was no consultation with the members and the Association now runs with no real access by the members to the decision making process nor do they see where their funds are spent. To back his threats against my person he destroyed the authority of the President and stripped the past President, me, of all the normal rights that would apply in this type of organization. I speak of the ex officio vote.

The Treasurer has already decided what the committee will do this year. He told me point blank "you are not doing TV ads this year you know."

I believe that I already have a major sponsor for this years Blood Challenge and Toy Run.

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Whether or not sponsors are found, the Toy Run organization must go ahead. This does NOT require the MRA to outlay any funds. I do not believe that the Victorian Branch has anyone with more time, experience or energy to put into this event. I feel the reluctance to approve the work is part of a paranoia about keeping the past President off the new committee in any form, despite the wishes of the members and the founders.

It seems to me that what is happening here is what happened to the Howqua Rally. The original organizers build the event up for five years then new organizers take over and the event goes down hill until the whole thing grinds to a halt. We have lost the National Rally.

Unless I misjudge the situation badly I feel that there is a good chance that the Victorian Branch will lose not only the Howqua through amateur thinking and petty power games but the Factor and the Shop as well.

The potential of the MRA Shop has been wasted. There is little security. Stock and equipment to the tune of thousands of dollars have been lost in the last 2 years. There is no management, no stock control, no service to registers. Problems with the computer and so on. The Shop needs a manager who is security conscious and who has authority. Hilton McMahon was an enormous help to me while I kept the Shop open over Christmas. Again this year I cancelled my holidays to work unpaid for the members.

The irony is that I had mortgaged my home to allow the move into the shop. I worked there 6 days per week for some 15 months. They were 50 hour weeks for the most part. Now, if the Association paid me for that time at a rate of \$200 per week, no overtime, I would be owed more than \$12,000. But there was no pay even from Government grants and most of the insurance commissions went to build up the Factor.

While I was too sick to attend, a meeting was held where the treasurer decided that, even though the Shop was in my name, paid for with my mortgage, that I was a tenant and that all the shop fittings, carpet etc. should be confiscated in lieu of rent. Last week he said that I owed another \$1200. I have news for you. Contra that and the court costs against my contributions in the last 2 years.

A further irony is that Mr. Scicluna saw a previous treasurer, L. Bordon as a threat to the MRA if he became President. He took weeks to talk me into running against Mr. Bordon. I did not want to be President again. There was a condition. Mr. Scicluna would become another director of MRA Promotions since I could not carry on alone with no income. I mortgaged my house to finance the move to Elizabeth St. I did the dirty work and won the election, committed myself to another 12 months hard work for motorcycling and got into it.

Within 24 hours Mr. Scicluna was a blubbering mess and broke his promise. I was left to try to hold the Shop together for the next 15 or so months. Since that time the Associations management systems have deteriorated.

Important lobbying with the Melbourne City Council was seriously damaged by the lack of action by Mr. Scicluna. I arranged the Dragon Boat for our members as a P.A. effort to help with lobbying for better parking in Melbourne and to remove the "yellow brick road". Out of more than 40 x 22 man crews (more than 800 guest competitors with the Prime Minister and many M.P.'s and Councillors attending the festival) the MRA was

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the only crew to hog large amounts of media as people in conflict with the organizers. Try a role change. What would you feel if a member of a car club, or any other organization, were to come to a Toy Run or a Poker Run as guests, and then interrupt the show trying to get us to put on their band even though we did not feel it appropriate and bad publicity followed. I would be angry.

But it would be unfair to lump the blame on Alan Kent. He spoke reasonably well, considering his inexperience with the media. I wish he had been so passionate about a road safety matter rather than just trying to protect egos and records. The real blame lies with the senior MRA member there at the time. He was a full executive committee member and has the experience to know what the media could use and the lobbying repercussions. He did nothing. Each crew man was wearing the MRA Logo on his back.

In this kind of situation Mr. Scicluna has been known to come out with "We're bikers aren't we?"

That is a juvenile and pathetic excuse, if it is used, for bungling an MRA public relations event.

Finally, I am not on the dole and have not been in the last 10 years. I do not make "cash in hand payments" nor have I taken a position Under the grants received by the Association as Mr. Scicluna has done while being unreliable at his paid position at the Shop and working part time.

I have worked hard for motorcycling in Australia for nearly a decade. I have paid many times more than I have received and I now face a \$25,000 debt due to my involvement with the MRA.

Our lawyers asked the Treasurer to set up a fund to help pay the court costs but he has not done so. Nor has he bothered to make the agreed AMC or MRA Australia payments which has damaged Victoria's relations with other States.

I feel in no way guilty over my actions but very sad that the MRA has come to this. If we get to a stage where we have a constitution again which protects the three original aims and the logo and colours and we have annual audits and monthly PUBLIC meetings and we set up some real management systems so that members and Registers get the service they deserve, then I might consider working through the State Branch again. Till then my boss is Hal Caston.

At the last Registers Conference at Geelong I warned the members that my resources were all but exhausted. I asked for support, loyalty and for the Registers to take a bigger role in supplying organizers. We lost the Howqua. You lost me. You will probably lose the best source of INCOME you ever had the SHOP unless you get your act together and work for motorcycling instead of yourselves.



D. Codognotto
Director & Executive Editor TDF.