

RESPONSE TO MRAA LETTER

The following is a letter sent to me by the Motorcycle Riders' Association of Australia Inc. My response to the letter, written after September 17 and prior to the November 23, 2002, MRAA QGM, is printed in ***bold italics***. In spite of emails, letters and phone calls to the Board of the Motorcycle Riders' Association of Australia Inc. at no time have I been allowed to present any sort of defence to the allegations in the MRAA letter. I have also asked the new President of the MRAA, Alex Money, at the Motorcycle Expo and at the Pink Ribbon Ride, to talk with me to sort out these problems. He refused.

Tuesday, September 17, 2002.

Dear Damien,

With reference to your email "motion of No Confidence" dated 11th September, and after discussion with the Board, I can respond to the matters you raised as follows, in appropriate order.

The background to this situation seems to be past and present inappropriate communication between the Board and yourself, in both directions. Additionally, we are aware of many various activities you have undertaken without authorisation of the Board or the Chairs of various committees.

It is a requirement of the MRA that all external correspondence is passed through the Secretary, and prior to that, the Chair of the relevant committee.

1. There was no embarrassment to the MRAA at the HBCC (Hobson's Bay City Council) meeting. Marcel as Chair of the (Events) Committee was the appropriate delegate to attend that and future meetings. ***This is not true. MG arrived late and left early. At no time did he contribute to the meeting. The HBCC was set to vote against the Toy Run. (See The estimates on numbers at Toy Runs was from 3500 to 15,000 by the MRAA. Jokes were made about the MRAA hyping up the event. It was embarrassing. The reason the Toy Run vote was deferred was that I found a mistake in the way available bike parking was estimated and put a written question to Council. It is recorded. The HBCC meeting was public, even the media had a special table.***
2. I am advised that your claim that you were voted onto the (Toy Run) organising committee is incorrect as no vote took place. It was suggested at the meeting that you may be able to contribute to the workings of the committee, under Marcel's chair but without formal position or title. ***You were advised wrongly. A motion was put to the MRAA May 2002 Quarterly General Meeting. Copy attached. It was properly seconded then discussion took place. There had been serious problems with Toy Run 24 which MG acknowledged at a meeting at VicRoads. Michael Czajka and Anthony Scerri were both present. It was agreed by all present at the QGM that, since my interest was in community service rather than social activities I be put on the Events committee to work on Toy Run 25 and Blood Challenge 24. It was definitely the will of the MRAA members voted on by show of hands. The minutes of the MAY QGM were not available to me at the MRAA AGM on August 31. This is why all meetings in my MRAA administrations were taped and audio/video dubs were available to members so what really happened was not in dispute.***
3. There was no specific lack of communication between MG and yourself, as there was no need at that stage to have any communication, & no other member of the committee received any communication from MG. ***As Toy Run Publicity Officer, Blood challenge Co-ordinator and Road Safety Reference Group representative I needed to talk to MG about what I was doing and get approval for my work. I explained time and again that to do a professional job within the MRAA I had to have good communication and get my work approved. MG refused respond. Whether or not other Events or Advocacy Committee members received communication from MG is irrelevant, they were not dealing with media deadlines or government meeting dates. This MRAA letter demonstrates he has not given the Board complete or accurate reports on my role in the Events Committee or the Advocacy Committee.***

4. We acknowledge your efforts in arranging the photo shoot, however that fact that you were doing this was not advised to MG. This behavior seems to be a constant with you, in that you frequently arrange activities without involving other committee or Board members until after the fact. *Again, you have been wrongly advised. To get a professional model and her photographer together with an MRAA rep and a WMC rep, takes quite a lot of communication. MG was not only advised as soon as anyone else, he had to approve of the Sarah Jane photo shoot before I could proceed. See emails dated Sunday, July 21. On Thursday, August 1 I rang MG on 0438 383 800 and left a message asking him to please communicate. To this stage the only person I could not get a positive answer from regarding the photo shoot was MG. MG's main concern was that it would clash with an MRAA Social Ride on August 4.*
5. The event management plan is a restricted document (at the authors request) but is available for perusal and comment at the next committee meeting, as it has been at previous meetings. *Again you have been misled. At only one meeting have I seen the cover of the "event management plan" (EMP). When I tried to look inside it was placed out of site. I have asked at MRAA general meetings in front of many members and been refused. At the May QGM Sally McKerrow threatened that if the MRAA Board decided to let me see "her" document then she would take it away and the MRAA would have to do another one. She was not an MRAA member. Her primary aim did not seem to be the children's charity but her professional image and the \$ value of her EMP. This did not make her popular with members present. Over the last year the EMP document has not been available at meetings. My legal advice is that the EMP is about public safety and once submitted to authorities it is public property. Given my experience in founding the Melbourne Toy Runs and running them successfully for 20 years, preventing me seeing, commenting on or contributing to the Toy Run EMP was irresponsible and against the wishes of the members at the May 2002 MRAA QGM..*
6. The MCC has not been advised in any way that they have "lost" the Toy Run. The exact route and arrangements are still to be concluded. *After the August 4 photo shoot, at the WMC pub, MG told WMCC President, Steve Kennedy and I that he had informed City of Melbourne (CoM) Street Activities head, Anthony Scerri, that the Toy Run was being taken out of the CBD. MG said Scerri was not happy and he asked Scerri why. MG told us that Scerri said. "Why would I be happy when I've just lost a major event in the City?" I was delighted at this revelation by MG because Scerri was always a problem when organising bike events in the City. It was his department and the A Team that forced the OZ GP Run out of Melbourne. So when was MG reporting accurately on this? When he told the Board or when he told Steve Kennedy and I?*
7. We acknowledge your efforts and contribution to the Toy Run, and associated publicity, however, I am told that you were advised that all the material generated needed to be submitted to MG prior to dissemination. I am advised that you were specifically requested to refrain from directly communicating with the HBCC, as this was a task delegated to the WMCC (Williamstown Motorcycle Club), who have a long standing rapport with the HBCC. *I made every reasonable attempt to communicate with MG and the WMCC*
8. There is no formal position of "MRAA Toy Run Publicity Officer".
9. The outcome of the council (HBCC) meeting - i.e. a deferment for 1 week to consider additional material submitted by MG became known at the time of the meeting, and as was advised prior, your attendance was superfluous and counterproductive.
10. Please clarify what is the "proposal document". *Since I was given no information on what had been given to the HBCC in proposing that Toy Run 25 end in Williamstown, the words "proposal document" were a hold-all for paperwork, including the EMP, that may have been presented to the HBCC.*
11. Any future changes to the (MRAA) constitution will be advised to all members. Until then, the current constitution applies.
12. You have the ability to move any motion at the AGM.

Damien, it is the resolve of the Board that you can make a contribution to the MRAA, as you have in the past. However, we fully intend to manage the activities of the MRAA in a businesslike manner and formal channels of communication and adherence to specific tasks etc must be maintained at all times. This is a necessary step in the evolution of the organisation from being small, cultish, and personality based into a larger more representative organisation that is run according to proper management and accounting principles.

Therefore, if you wish to continue to contribute to the MRAA, including the Events Committee (eg Toy Run), you can do so under the appointed chair of the relevant committee. Any initiative you may wish to pursue must be agreed upon prior to any actions, by the chairperson. This will allow a coherent and organised team approach to achieving our goals. I believe that personality differences should be submerged in order to make this happen.

Regretfully, if you feel that you cannot work in a team environment, with formal reporting requirements, it may be appropriate for you to resign from the committees in which you are enrolled. Also, if it comes to the attention of the Board that you have acted independently on behalf of the MRAA, without prior approval of the Board or committee, or that you have released correspondence, including emails, outside the MRAA without the approval of the Board, then the Board would have no alternative but to formally suspend your activities.

Yours Truly,

Simon Rosenbaum MD
Secretary MRAA