



On the 24<sup>th</sup> of March, the Motorcycle Riders Association of Australia (MRAA) held its Annual General Meeting at its Headquarters at Dandenong South.

List of attendees and apologies is held by the Membership Secretary.

Office bearers for 2007 are as follows:

President: Dale Maggs  
Vice-President: John Karmouche  
Secretary: Tony Ellis  
Treasurer: Rik Van Zuylekom (acting)  
Membership: Anton Lange  
Ordinary Board Members:  
Mick Dabbs  
Detlef Lamp

As only a single nomination was received for each position all members were elected unopposed. No nomination was received for Treasurer however Rik van Zuylekom agreed to continue in that position.

Paul Murphy volunteered to do publicity. Paul was responsible for the MRAA's involvement in the successful Eureka Ride in December and has a background in advertising and has experience in community service films.

A motion that the MRAA examine whether ex-life member Damien Codognotto received natural justice - with special resolution to the Department of Justice disputes procedure was put. Moved D Lloyd, sec M Czajaka  
This motion was lost.

The MRAA has returned to a sound financial footing. Currently it is over \$18,000 in the black.

### **The Year in Review:**

#### **Lane filtering.**

Over the past year the association has had some resounding successes. The most notable being the campaign against the national Transportation Commission's explicit ban on lane filtering/splitting. Incoming 2007 vice-president John Karmouche took on the responsibility for this campaign and ran a successful campaign including rider protests. It is notable that Victoria was the only state to take direct action on this issue. The rider support received on this was outstanding.

#### **Roadside Barriers.**

Other significant MRAA activity has occurred around the issue of roadside barriers. Although the long term aim of removing roadside barriers which are considered dangerous to motorcycles is still

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not yet in sight, some successes were achieved with the location of some barriers placed in dangerous locations (e.g. Thompson's Road) and the replacement of some metal signage with more motorcycle friendly plastic ones.

### **Inadequate Penalties.**

The MRAA (in particular President Dale Maggs) has been instrumental in supporting families of fatally injured riders through the trauma of court proceedings. A particular issue arising from this has been the lack of penalties for those who have killed or seriously injured riders. President Dale Maggs is soon to meet with the Attorney General Rob Hulls (a scooter rider himself) to discuss this issue.

### **Meeting with Minister.**

The advent of a new Minister for Roads and Transport (Tim Pallas) bodes well for motorcyclists in Victoria. A delegation of riders was organised by MRAA President Dale Maggs to meet with the Minister and the Parliamentary Secretary for Transport (Martin Pakula). Neville Gray (Ulysses Public Liaison and VP) was invited to attend as the author of the South Australian Motorcycle Strategy. Also present were Tony Ellis (MRAA Secretary and VMAC member) and Roger Northam (VMAC member and Chair of Barwon Roadsafe). During the two and a half hour meeting issues such as the transport strategy, motorcycle levy, training, learner approved motorcycles and roadside barriers were discussed. The Minister stated that LAMS would definitely be implemented in Victoria and that while the levy would remain for the present, some flexibility was available about the nature. He was definitely sympathetic to motorcycling and nominated Martin Pakula MLC to have specific responsibility for motorcycle issues. This gives motorcycling a direct contact within government for the first time.

### **Sponsors.**

Mention must be made of the support from Industry. Although the supporters are too many to name, the MRAA particularly wishes to acknowledge Bikesales.com.au and Western QBE who have continued to support and encourage the MRAA throughout the year. Their assistance with the Toyrun has been invaluable. Although the MRAA remains totally opposed to the concept of the "safety levy" we must still acknowledge the sponsorship and assistance of the TAC with regards to the Toyrun.

### **Marshalling and Rides.**

The 29<sup>th</sup> Toyrun saw a coming together of around 17,000 riders both in the city and at Williamstown. Run separately to the Williamstown "Bikes by the Bay" this year, the Toyrun was an outstanding success and bodes well for the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary run in 2007.

The MRAA continued to support the Ride to Remember (Blue Ribbon) ride and the Pink Ribbon Ride by assisting with marshalling for these events. The Eureka Ride initiated by Brunswick H.O.G. and supported by the MRAA continues to grow and the MRA Cranbourne GP Run saw tens of thousands of riders making the pilgrimage to Phillip Island again.

### **4Bs.**

The Bent and Buckled Bikies Bureau (4Bs) continued to support injured riders and several were visited in hospital. Comforts such as a DVD player etc. were provided for riders who were long-term patients. As always, more can still be done as owing to the privacy legislation it is difficult for the 4Bs to find out about injured riders.

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### **Other.**

The MRAA maintained its successful ongoing presence at the Motorcycle Show and presented Julio Languiller and his “Scootering around Australia” team with awards for their contribution to motorcycling. Scooter sales have exploded in Australia and they are becoming a major part of our two-wheeled community. Support and advice was provided to numerous members (and non-members) who inquired about issues such as parking, filtering etc. etc. The MRAA forums and web site continue to grow slowly and steadily.

The MRAA maintained its representation on the Victorian Motorcycle Advisory Council (VMAC), the Motorcycle Safety Committee of the ATSB and on the executive of the Australian Motorcycle Council.

### **The Year Ahead.**

The year ahead still shows a lot of challenges. Among the many issues which the MRAA will continue to pursue are:

- ensuring that dangerous roadside barriers of all types (in particular wire-rope barriers) are eliminated or made motorcycle-safe;
- the elimination of the “safety” levy;
- opposition to anti-motorcycling laws and regulations;
- greater awareness of vulnerable road users and a review of the penalties for causing death or serious injury;
- the improvement of driver awareness of motorcycles;
- support for appropriate quality rider training;
- the legalisation of safe lane filtering and road sharing practices. Despite the withdrawal of the NTC proposals, people are being booked for other issues around lane filtering and the MRAA will be campaigning for the explicit allowal of safe filtering; and
- most importantly, the acceptance of motorcycles as part of the solution to transport issues and not, as many bureaucrats see them, part of the problem.

Tony Ellis  
Secretary MRAA