

Riders Advocate

Motorcycle Mobility under Threat!



Up to 250-300 riders demonstrating their presence and what it may be like in a non-lane splitting world if the NTC gets its way and manages to convince State Governments to explicitly ban the practice. (Above, riders approach the end of the Eastern Freeway, Melbourne.)

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Contact the MRAA

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Tuesday - 7pm to 9pm

Saturday - 10am to 3pm

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February 06 AGM

The February 06 Annual General Meeting (QGM) will be held at MRA HQ, Quist Court in Dandenong, on Saturday, 25th February, commencing at 1 pm sharp. Please check the MRA website (listed below) for updates.

MRA Website

<http://www.mraa.org.au>

MRA Forums

The MRA has an online web based forum where you can get involved in policy discussion, hear what's happening, and generally chat to other members. Surf to:

<http://www.mraa.org.au/forum/>

The MRAA also has an email mailing list via the Yahoogroup lists.

<http://go.to/mraa>

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From the Editor's Desk

Lane Splitting to be Outlawed

As you're probably aware, either by the various motorcycle publications or online forums, the National Transport Commission has put forward submissions to effectively outlaw the practice of lane splitting or filtering. Naturally, this has raised the ire of the more passionate of motorcyclists.

At the time of writing there are some 55-600 submissions that have been received by the NTC from interested parties. All of them are against the proposal and they cite darned good reasons too.

It appears that the NTC's reasons for this recommendation is that motorcyclists should do what other road users have to do – be stuck in traffic with the rest of them.

Research indicates that the reasons the NTC has put forward are flawed. Certainly, they're not based on safe motoring practices, as we've found, no-one has been killed while filtering through to the front of the traffic at traffic lights, or on congested freeways. In fact, a rider is more at risk from being shunted from the rear if he or she is propped between vehicles.

While the NTC is putting forward the proposals, it's up to the individual state government as to whether they're implemented or not. We highly urge you to lobby your local MP. Don't just email him, or write a letter to the local paper. Physically sit down and write a letter to him. Post it off. This year is an election year. While the incumbents will be doing its best to pork barrel electorates where their seats are marginal, (the outer eastern corridor along the former Scoresby Freeway is probably a bit of a worry to them) we need to put our best foot forward and see if we can get this somewhat stupid proposal quashed before it even gets up.

2005 Toy Run.

The Toy Run was a major success. Again, many thousands of needy families will have had some Christmas joy courtesy of the generous riders who took part. Let's see if we can continue the good will and make a positive contribution to the community, not only in areas like the toy run or blood challenges, but in other parts as well. We'll have had the Blue Ribbon Foundation ride which perpetuates the memory of members of the Victoria Police killed in the line of duty through the support of worthwhile community projects within Victoria. There's also the Pink Ribbon Ride, to support breast cancer research and the Dr John Pigot Poker run, which is in honor of our former president who sadly passed away, while in office, of a cerebral haemorrhage. The funds raised go to the Stroke Foundation.

2006 AGM.

Don't forget the Annual General Meeting, coming up on Saturday, Feb 25th. Starting at 1pm sharp at Quist Crt HQ, we'll go over the past year's business and elect new office bearers. The MRA, more than ever needs active volunteers

to help with the work that we need to do to help make motorcycling a safer and enjoyable experience.

Finally, with motorcycle deaths up on last year, the spotlight will be on us. Please, take it easy out there. If you feel like a bit of hooning, take it to one of the excellent and well run Phillip Island Ride days. Leave the Reefton Spur for relaxing runs where you can enjoy the road, as well as the scenery without becoming a part of it.

Membership Discounts

If you know of someone who might be willing to offer an MRA discount, feel free to approach them on behalf of the MRA to see if they would like to be a part of the list of goods and service providers who offer MRA members discounts.

If they agree, then please send me the details for inclusion in the newsletter.

Coloured Newsletter

Would you prefer your newsletter in colour? It is produced in colour for those who wish their copy to be emailed to them.

If you'd prefer a PDF version instead of a hard copy, please send an email to membershipsecretary@mraa.org.au and I'll get that sorted for the next issue.

Michael Doedee
Membership Secretary

Motorcycle injury?

Talk with us.

Speak with Tim Connor, an Accredited Specialist in Personal Injury with 15 years experience dealing with transport accidents.

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MOTORCYCLE SAFETY GREAT OCEAN ROAD

Road Safe Barwon Chairman Mr Roger Northam has launched a new motorcycle safety strategy for the Great Ocean Road and the Otways region.

He said the safety issue was such a concern Lorne Emergency Services and Road Safe Barwon have held a Media Conference inside the Lorne Hospital Trauma Unit.

Mr Northam said the lowering of the speed limit on the Great Ocean Road and the road condition improvements have helped, but he said more riders are expected this summer and the new motorcycle safety strategy was essential.

“Over the summer period there are at least eight major events being held that will attract a significant increase in motorists along the Great Ocean Road. This is not even accounting for the increased tourism expected from the Commonwealth Games”. “When you have this amount of extra traffic you have more road casualties”.

He said the strategy takes a multi action approach that involves: advocacy for road condition improvements, educational activities for riders and drivers and special police enforcement activities.

He said the first component of the education strategy involved a new rider training program. “Road Safe Barwon together with Honda Australia Rider Training have developed a special course for those requiring a brush up or those returning to riding after a break.” Over the past few years over one hundred local riders have undertaken this special course at a discounted price. Mr Northam also encouraged riders to undertake more rider training.”

Mr Northam said there are many hazards that riders face that they do not face on other roads. “For this reason Road Safe Barwon has also produced a brochure “Motorcycling the Great Ocean Road and the Otways.”

Mr Northam stressed the need for riders to telephone Road Safe Barwon on 52 252513 to obtain a free copy.

He said due to the nature of the road, the mountainous terrain, the high rain fall and trees close to the road, the road can have a hidden hazard around any corner, and on this road, most corners are blind corners”.

“The road condition has improved in recent years but the mountains, the changing weather conditions and the tourists that sightsee while they drive are a constant threat to danger”.

Further information: Roger Northam 0419 254 525

Police support Great Ocean Road safety program

Police have strongly support the multi-pronged Great Ocean Road summer motorcycle safety program aimed at reducing the road’s high accident figure, Sergeant Pat Cleary, Officer in Charge, Surf Coast Traffic Management Unit, said yesterday

Sgt Cleary said the approach involved road condition improvements, educational activities for motorcycle riders and car drivers and special police enforcement activities.

“Police are serious about this issue that in addition to the usual policing operations, we will also utilise the helicopter squad as well as special covert operations”.

“Because of the number of riders and drivers observed speeding, crossing double lines and other unsafe and dangerous overtaking practices we will be employing all methods available to them in an all out effort to reduce this behaviour,” he added.

Sgt Cleary said while the condition of the road had improved significantly and the reduced speed limit of 80 kph had helped to improve safety, a greater volume of summer traffic was expected.

“We have noticed an increased number of highly dangerous incidents and this campaign is designed to remove erratic

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BLACK ROSE

and dangerous riders and drivers from the Great Ocean Road and other roads in the Otways”.

Police were also involved in proactive activities to help inform riders new to the region of the special hazards that exist.

“Many riders from Melbourne and interstate, travelling to Lorne and or Apollo Bay are not equipped for sudden weather changes, have the wrong tyres for the conditions, are in too much of a hurry and are not allowing for hazards such as fallen rocks onto the road,” Sgt Cleary said.

Police had special concerns for the many riders of sports bikes.

“Many of these riders depart from Melbourne early on Sunday mornings and because sports bikes are not built for touring, they tire by the time they reach Anglesea, let alone Lorne,” he said. “And then they return to Melbourne that afternoon”.

Fatigue was a crucial factor in many Great Ocean Road accidents, with riders attempting to go too far in a single day.

“This summer, police will establish road blocks at high risk times to stop all riders, issue road condition warnings and give away copies of the popular Road Safe Barwon information brochure, “Motorcycling the Great Ocean Road and Otways”.

Further information Sgt Pat Cleary (03) 5261-3884.

MOTORCYCLE ACTION GROUP

December 14 2005

Parliament demands ban on cable-barrier

This week, Parliament has adopted two motions that are of great importance for de Dutch motorcyclists. In the first motion, Parliament states that cable barriers (a guard-rail system made of thick steel cables, suspended on little poles) should be banned.

The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) has the opinion that a motorcyclists, who, after a slide or an accident, contacts a cable barrier will suffer severe physical injuries and urged Parliament to take measures against building cable barriers.

After the motion was adopted, Member of Parliament Max Hermans (LPF), the person who submitted the motion, said in an interview with MAG:

“The motion is adopted and it is de wish of Parliament that there will come a ban on erecting cable barriers en the government has to comply to that wish. That also applies to the cable barrier in Groningen. I assume that we won’t see any cable barriers any more in the Netherlands”.

Along the N 860 between the cities of Groningen and Hoogezand, a cable barrier has been placed at the side of a canal over a distance of about 250 meters. The MAG filed protest at the Province of Groningen and organised a protest ride on Saturday September 10th 2005. On the occasion, in a playful action, the cable barrier was covered with bales of straw. The MAG will now point the Province of Groningen to the motion of Parliament and insist on immediate removal of the steel cables along the N 860.

The ban on cable barriers fits, according to the MAG, very well in the increasing awareness of the controllers of public roads that the infrastructure should also be suited for and safe to the drivers of motorised 2-wheelers. On October 26th 2005, secretary of State Karla Peijs has committed herself to make, in cooperation with MAG, an inventory of the locations on the Dutch national highways where making the guard rails “motorcycle-friendly” should be started. Guard rails can simply be adapted to the safety requirements for motorcyclists by mounting an extra board below the rail and the MAG has started negotiations with the Ministry of Traffic and Water Management.



Euro parliamentarians examining a much friendlier to motorcyclists barrier that could be adopted rather than WRBs.

The second motion that was adopted by Parliament urges the government to pay specific attention to motorised 2-wheelers in the future and modify the budget of the Ministry of Traffic and Water Management. At this moment, motorised 2-wheelers don’t have a special status in the “Mobility Memo” of the Ministry of Traffic and Water Management.

MOTORCYCLE IMPACTS TO ROADSIDE BARRIERS - REAL- WORLD ACCIDENT STUDIIES, CRASH TESTS AND SIMULATIONS CARRIED OUT IN GERMANY AND AUSTRALIA

*F. Alexander Berg Peter Racker Marcus Gartner Jens
Koenig DEKRA Automobil GmbH
Germany Raphael Grzebieta Roger Zou Monash University
Australia
Paper Number 05-0095*

Concerns have been raised by the motorcycling community about potential injuries resulting from collisions between motorcycles and wire rope barriers. To date little research has been undertaken to confirm or deny any concerns.

The concrete barrier simulations seem to indicate that a motorcyclist impacting such a barrier in an upright position will sustain survivable injuries because of low decelerations during impact.

However, the motorcyclist is exposed to considerable risk when catapulted over the barrier into the hazard being protected by the barrier, particularly if it is a median barrier and there is oncoming traffic on the other side.

Simulations of the wire rope barrier collisions showed that regardless of angle or speed it is unlikely that the

motorcyclist will clear the barrier very cleanly. In many cases the motorcyclist's extremities became caught between the wires. This results in the rider being subjected to high decelerations and possible high injury risk secondary impacts into the road.

In all the simulated wire rope barrier collisions, the wires guided the motorcycle into the posts leading to heavy contact with the post. The motorcycle and the rider were subjected to large decelerations because of this snagging effect and hence elevating the injury risk for the rider.

While the simulations in this report are preliminary, and work is continuing to refine the MADYMO models and calibrate them against the DEKRA tests, they show that the risk of injury to a motorcyclist colliding with either a wire rope or a concrete barrier will be high.

The findings also suggest that while the current design of flexible barriers has safety advantages over concrete barriers for passenger vehicles, the opposite may be true for motorcyclists. Most of all, it has highlighted the need for further research into the area of motorcycle collisions with various crash barriers.

Survey Exposes Rear End Collision Rider Terror Thirty percent of motorcycle riders have been "rear ended", according to a survey conducted on the popular Netrider online motorcycle forum (www.netrider.net.au.)

A further 46% of riders indicated that they know someone who has been involved in a rear end motorcycle collision. Many riders have documented their experiences and lament that in some instances, had they chosen to Lane Split, the "rear ender" could have been avoided. Others state that, "This is why we lane split."

The Netrider survey supports information given to the MRAA stating that Rear End collisions were 23% of all Queensland vehicle crashes in 2002 (Queensland Transport Annual Road Traffic Crash Report: 2002). Two rear end motorcycle collisions, resulting in motorcycle fatalities have gone before the Victorian Coroners Court in the last 5 years.

Riders Feel Left Out of Congestion Solutions

Motorcycle riders, Australia wide, are upset by the way that they are being swept under the carpet in relation to the positive contribution they can make in solving traffic congestion. They are mystified at the National Transport Commission's proposed ban on Lane Splitting, despite there being no evidence to show that it is dangerous, rather, Lane Splitting is seen as a way to stop errant car drivers rear ending them as they wait in traffic.

Left: The Monash freeway during peak hour traffic. Note, this photo was taken before the Hallam Bypass was constructed. Today, traffic densities are much the same following its completion. It's crazy to suggest that motorcyclists not take advantage of their small size and to enhance their safety by not filtering through the traffic.



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Motorcycle Riders Association ask Governor General's Intercession

During an interview on Canberra Radio Station 2CC last Friday, 13th January, the MRAA called on the Governor General to knock back the recommendations put up by the NTC's proposed changes to the Australian Road Regulations that will see Lane Splitting banned.

During the interview, MRAA spokesperson on Lane Splitting John Karmouche addressed an appeal to the Governor General. As John asked that the Governor General needed to be aware that he would be signing a document that was a congestion and safety hazard and that it would have the opposite effect to what was intended by the changes, since:

- Accidents/injuries caused by lane splitting are statistically insignificant. John also questioned why the law even existed;
- There is a congestion problem in our capital cities and not legalizing Lane Splitting will only make things worse; and
- Not allowing riders to Lane Split actually puts them at greater risk of being hit from behind.

John also stated that 10,000 bikes would be in the ACT on the 28th of January for the Ride to Canberra 2006 celebrations and that all riders attending will consider this subject important.

On the issue of driver jealousy, John responded by pointing out that for every bike that Lane Splits, a car is one space nearer to the end of the traffic snarl. He stated that forcing riders not to Lane Split actually will make life worse for drivers stuck in traffic.

The MRAA continues to maintain that to make this accepted practice illegal will not only increase congestion but also reduce the safety of motorcyclists.

Draft Policy – Filtering

Policy

The MRA supports filtering when done in a safe, responsible and respectful manner.

Rationale

Research shows that filtering can reduce accidents. There is no evidence to suggest that filtering is dangerous.

Definition

Filtering is the practice of riding between lines of stationary traffic. *Nb. Riding between moving traffic is known as 'lane splitting'.*

Background

Until 1999, there were no laws restricting filtering. In 1999, the Victorian Road Safety (Road Rules) Regulations were revised. A new clause was added preventing overtaking to the left of a vehicle if in the same lane as that vehicle (Rule 141 Road Rules Victoria 1999). The revised rule means that filtering may now result in a fine *Nb.* It is still permitted to pass to the right side of the vehicle but to the left of the white line.

Evidence

- The Hurt Report concluded that filtering reduces crash frequency compared with sitting in stop and go traffic¹.
- The US Department of Transport supports filtering as it reduces congestion while providing possible safety benefits².
- Rear end collisions were 23% of all Qld crashes in 2002 (Queensland Transport Annual Road Traffic Crash Report: 2002) *Nb.* Rear end collisions can be prevented by filtering.
- 2 rear end motorcycle collisions resulting in m/c fatalities have occurred in front of the Vic Coroners Court in the last 5 years
- Many countries have legalised, and encourage, filtering eg. UK & US

Filtering benefits all road users:

- Riders benefit from improved visibility and space when they filter to the front of traffic lights.
- Prevents riders from being 'sandwiched' between two vehicles in stationary or slow moving traffic
- Reduces traffic congestion for all road users.
- Increases road carrying capacity.

Recommendation

Filtering should be further legalised and filtering encouraged.

References

- 1. *Hurt, H.H., Ouellet, J.V. and Thom, D.R., Motorcycle Accident Cause Factors and Identification of Countermeasures, Volume 1: Technical Report, Traffic Safety Centre, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California 90007, Contract No. DOT HS-5-01160, January 1981 (Final Report)*
- 2. *US Department of Transport, <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/> 2/5/05*

Lane Splitting Protest Run

Wed, 25th Jan 06.

Today, over 250 riders congregated on the Eastern Freeway for a group ride into Melbourne's CBD on their way to work. John Karmouche, the MRA spokesman for this issue claimed it as a success. In attendance were the media, including Seven, Nine and Nine's news helicopter. A news cameraman even went for a spin on the back of a bike to capture the moment at ground zero.

The ride wasn't without its incidents, though. There was at least one car driver who took exception to the riders legitimately using the roads, who attempted to carve a path through the group.

Some expressed disappointment at the lack of police presence during the ride. However, it should be seen that we don't usually appreciate a constant police presence in our day-to-day riding. And this was what this ride was about – riders riding to work, not lane splitting or filtering. It wasn't about riders going out of their way to hold up traffic. It was to demonstrate that this is what happens when riders can't take advantage of their smaller footprint in order to maintain a constant headway to progress smoothly and safely through the congested traffic.

Already, there are calls for informal "Ride to work" Wednesdays, where groups can informally join up as they ride to work.

The 2005 Christmas Toy Run



Every picture tells a tale



Traffic Congestion

The MRA's submission to the government enquiry

The MRAA has recently submitted a response to the Vic Governments Inquiry into Traffic Congestion.

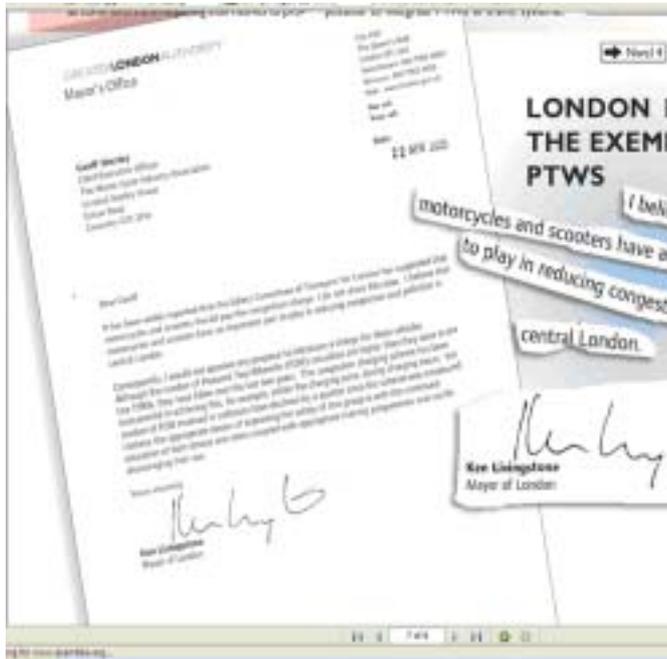
This is a copy of the Executive summary from that submission. The full submission may be viewed at: <http://www.mraa.org.au/downloads/files/Congestion%20paper%20MRAA.pdf>

Tony Ellis – Secretary MRAA

This report is a response into the Inquiry into Managing Traffic Congestion initiated by the Government of Victoria. It is an analysis of literature and research into motorcycles¹ and their role in reducing traffic congestion. Among many sources of information, an invaluable source with a specifically Victoria viewpoint has been the report for VicRoads carried out by Dr Marcus Wigan and Oxford Systematics on behalf of the Victorian Motorcycle Advisory Council “*Motorcycle Transport – powered two wheelers in Victoria*” The motorcycle is an efficient means of personal motorised transport that reduces fuel consumption, road wear and traffic and parking congestion. Several initiatives will better integrate the motorcycle in State transport planning and enable society to reap the benefits of this beneficial transport mode.

Unlike parts of North America and Europe, Australia is suited to year round motorcycle use and motorcycle registrations have risen by more than 18% in the past year.

Motorcycles are a cheap and practical form of personal mobility which contribute to the easing of traffic congestion. It is in the interests of all road users to encourage the use of powered two wheeled vehicles.



A recent flyer recommending that bikes and scooters (Powerer Two Wheelers or PTWs) be allowed free access into London where vehicles are charged a congestion tax. If it works there, then it can work here.

Many of the policies in place at present seek to discourage motorcycling on perceived safety grounds; however experience

from Britain and the efforts to control traffic congestion in Central London show that by decreasing the number of cars and increasing the number of motorcycles motorcycle accidents are significantly reduced. Other policies such as that of discouraging filtering through traffic have arisen from a lack of knowledge by legislators of the advantages and a wrongful perception of the “risks” involved.

Motorcycles provide significant advantages:

- ✓ They are the most efficient way of utilising road space;
- ✓ They have very efficient parking space utilisation;
- ✓ They have reduced emissions;
- ✓ They provide easy access ; and
- ✓ They provide enhanced mobility.



Motorcyclists demonstrating the benefits of commuting by motorcycle in heavy traffic.

Providing improved mobility for motorcycles in traffic contributes to a decrease in congestion. This mobility may be improved by numerous methods;

- ✓ Directly and explicitly permitting motorcycles to filter between lanes of stationary or slow moving traffic;
- ✓ Permitting motorcycles to overtake stationary or slow moving traffic on the left hand side in the same manner as bicycles;
- ✓ Provision of advanced stop-lines for motorcycles at intersections in a similar manner to those provided for cyclists;
- ✓ Permitting sharing of bus and taxi lanes by motorcyclists; and
- ✓ Allowing sharing of bicycle lanes on roads by motorcycles (under certain conditions).

There is no evidence of a safety issue regarding motorcycle lane filtering and explicit legalisation of this practice would further improve its safety. If this practice is explicitly legalised and an extensive “share the lane” advertising campaign carried out, motorists would be made aware of the fact that this practice eases congestion and would also make them more aware of the presence of motorcycles.

¹ Unless otherwise stated, motorcycle means motorcycles and scooters throughout this document

MRA 2006 Calendar

2006 AGM

25th February

2006 Quarterly General Meetings

27th May

26th August

25th November

Monday Nights

Advocacy meetings, normally on the 1st Monday of the month are on hold for this year. Due to a lack of attendees and that Michael Czajka will be undergoing full time study this year, there aren't the resources for this year.

Michael's involvement in the MRA and associated committees such as VMAC, ATSB, AMC, CARS & other ad hoc committees will also be reduced or cease. We will be looking for volunteers to take over from Michael where possible. You can put your hands up at the AGM if you're interested.

Tuesday Nights

Board Meetings, 1st Tuesday of the month, 7.30pm at Quist Crt. All members welcome.

Events Committee, 2nd Tuesday of the month, 7.30pm at Quist Crt.

4Bs, 3rd Tuesday of the month, 7.30pm at Quist Crt.

MRA HQ in Quist Crt, Dandenong for coffee and nibbles, while we watch our own local home grown bike show Two Wheel Torque on Channel 31.

Trivia nights are held at the Quiet Man Irish pub at 271 Racecourse Rd, Flemington. Our team usually meets at the pub around 7:50pm. Just look for the helmets.

Friday Nights

Riders meet for coffee at around 6pm at the Bear Brass Cafe, Southbank and usually finishes up around 9pm. It's not an MRA specific event. All riders are welcome.



MRA HQ at Quist Crt, where you can drop in for a cuppa and pizza and watch Ch. 31's Two Wheel Torque bike TV show.

RIDE CALENDAR 2006

February - March

Ride Classification.

'A' class rides. Not suited for 'L' or 'P' plate riders.

'B' class rides. For those that enjoy country rides.

'C' class rides. Structured for 'L' and 'P' plate riders, along the 'buddy' system to gain more experience.

All rides leave at 10AM at the designated points, have a full tank of petrol and drinking water.

MRA HQ - 5 Quist Court. Dandenong, refer to Melways 95 - D5

February

Sunday 5

'C' class ride to Portsea

Start point: MRA HQ at 10 AM

Ride leader; Don (DJ) McCarthy

Mob: 0403 997 213

Sunday 19

'A' class ride to Seymour

Start point: Shell S/S Todd Rd 10 AM

Ride Leader: Alois Zimmer

Mob: 0418 344 551

March

Sunday 12

'C' class ride to Queenscliff

Start Point: Shell S/S Todd RD 10 AM

Ride Leader: Tim Traill

Mob: 0414 933 908

Sunday 26

Dr John Pigot Poker Run

Start 11 AM at Safeway S/S Diamond Ck Rd

Melways 11 D 7

For further info ring 0413 995 424



Look at who you can meet up with when you go on an MRA social ride. This was taken at Marysville in January.

Any MRA member who would like to lead a ride or has an interesting ride. contact Ride Coordinator on 0413 995 424

Anton Lange

Ride Co-ordinator.

Your Say

Lane Splitting

I have just heard about the report regarding the NTC's recommendations to outlaw the practice of lane splitting and lane filtering.

Apparently there is a claim in the recommendation that the practice is "inherently dangerous". I have personal experience of being rear-ended by a vehicle while being stationary in traffic. I have also avoided being rear-ended on two occasions, once by escaping into the gap between two lanes and once by escaping onto the footpath. In both those instances, the car eventually stopped in the space that I had previously occupied. I have no doubt that I would have been seriously injured in both cases.

It concerns me that we are introducing laws and rules that are going to put people at risk. It is my opinion that a rider is much safer in front of traffic than sandwiched between two vehicles.

I don't know if this is a fair comment, but I have found that the likelihood of being 'merged into' by another vehicle is considerably less when lane-splitting than when travelling in your 'own' lane.

Also, who will be at fault in the situation when a vehicle moves into the lane you are using and you are suddenly 'sharing a lane'? Where does a motorcyclist go in this situation? I have in the past 'lane-split' in order to get to a safer position on the road, especially in peak-hour traffic, where the next 'safe' position of the road might be two or three cars ahead in the traffic. Slowing down is not always an option, especially with aggressive tailgating drivers.

It is all very well making up rules that we have to follow for the normal situation where all the motorists around you are obeying the road rules, but there seems to me that there are a lot of extraordinary situations that we have to deal with on a daily basis, primarily a result of motorists disregarding the road rules that apply to them.

Griffith Young, via email

Who Can Repair a Tyre?

Mate, you don't know me from a bar of soap but I have an interesting yarn to tell you and you can do with it as you see fit.

Last weekend I had the misfortune to pick up a bit of metal in the centre of my rear tyre which is a Michelin Pilot Power which has a ZR speed rating.

I took the wheel and tyre to a well known bike shop to have it repaired and gave them the instructions not to use a plug and only to use an internal patch.

When I went back to pick the repair up they had used a 6mm mushroom plug repair insert. I was really pissed off with this and told them so.

The answer was that the technique they used was the only one available that they knew of.

I also wanted to know how much the tyre would be de-rated due to the repair.

I can be very anal on certain things so I set out to find out if there is another way and after talking to several tyre manufacturers' representatives and numerous bike shops I came to the realisation these professionals were lacking in knowledge and conviction.

Mind you, I am no brains trust myself so I decided to investigate this further with e-mails and phone calls to Vic Roads, the VACC and any other number I could find. To date I have yet to hear back from any of these authorities. *(Ed, the VACC is not an "authority". It's an industry representative group whose first obligation is to its members – the automotive industry. Consumers are best to talk to consumer groups such as MRA, RACV or Consumer Affairs Victoria...)*

It was now time to hit the Internet to get the answers after four days of trying to talk to people. By this time my wheel is still in the back of my car as I am not going to put it back on the bike until my curiosity is satisfied.

Anyway I end up on the ISO standards site in Europe and the Standards (British Standard AU159f:1997) site in England and also the sites of a few world wide motorcycle tyre manufacturers and guess what?

Any tyre that is higher than "V" rating is not permitted to be repaired by any method; this was the common stipulation by all information sources.

6mm plugs are only permitted on tyres with a rating of "J" or less.

Once I had this info I went back to the shop that did the repair, bought a brand new tyre and had my hand shaken for telling them something they didn't know. *(Ed, I'll bet they shook your hand – sales of new tyres are about to escalate...)*

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So who is the group of people who gives the repair guidelines to the tyre fitters and repairers in this country?

How many people are riding out there with repairs that are not allowed in the eyes of the manufacturer and the European governing bodies?

I tried to find a standard that covers motorcycle tyres here in Australia but I had no luck.

As you know tyres are high tech and I maintain that good tyres are better for your health than comprehensive insurance so why does this practice continue?

I know you don't have the answers but I was so annoyed I just had to drop you a line.

Sorry if I come across as a crack pot, I have been riding on the road since I turned sixteen which gives me about 34 years on the road, I am no expert, I just have learnt how to stay alive. My current ride is a 2004 Fireblade that I bought back in April 04 and enjoy the heck out of it.

M. Chadwick, via email

2006 Annual General Meeting. Call for Nominations

(...reprinted from the December 05 issue)

Our AGM is on February 25th. AGMs are never the most exciting event on the MRA calendar, but they are a very necessary one, as they ensure that we have office bearers to keep the organisation running and that the process of office bearer selection is democratic.

I've been to three MRA AGMs in my time as a member. Of those, there has rarely been a contest for any board position, making it all very quick and simple.

Unfortunately, it's also a sign that members are not that interested about who represents them to various bodies, government representatives and politicians.

I appeal to EVERY member to a) come to the AGM so you can at least watch the board selection process in action and b) consider nominations seriously - if you don't wish to nominate yourself, talk to another member and see if they might be interested in accepting a position.

I warn you that there is a fair bit of work involved and at times tempers can become frayed, but that's part of the process. It's also very rewarding knowing that you are out there battling for motorcyclists' rights and safety.

There is a nomination form with this newsletter. Please feel free to use it and, indeed, distribute it. I'm hoping that all board positions are contested, as we have more members now than at any of the past three AGMs. It's time for new people to get involved - it's YOUR organisation and it's only as strong as YOU want it to be.

Michael Doedee

Membership Secretary

A1 Motorcycle Gazebo Supports

One of the problems that we have when organising events, particularly when we have a stand or two set up for marshalls, ticket and money collection, is that the volunteers usually are stuck out in the sun.

Setting up some sort of shade is always a good idea. Unfortunately, a simple umbrella on its own isn't good enough, particularly when the wind blows up. Public liability being what it is means that we have to be more vigilant than ever, aside from the fact that we don't want to see anyone get injured.



At the November QGM, Nick Chippett (*above*) demonstrated some new bollards that were donated by one of our sponsors, A1 Motorcycles. They can be filled with water or sand to act as ballast. The poles of the gazebo are then secured in the bollard to provide a stand and a means of securing it.

So, if anyone is organising an MRA event and wishes to set up a stand or whatever that requires shade, then these bollards can be used. They can also secure other furniture as required.

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Melways 19 - G10

Suggested Constitutional Changes

As a part of the ongoing review of the Constitution here are some suggested changes to Constitution. They can be discussed at the February 2006 AGM and if accepted will be voted on by the membership for inclusion in the Constitution.

A review of the constitution was carried out looking for key items that have impeded the healthy functioning of the MRAA.

It found 4 items:

Regulation:

16.1.3.1 On application in writing.

Amend to "On request"

Remove:

Section 16.1.3.2 "With the approval of the MRAA"

Bylaw

Remove both:

B16.1.1 On application in writing and

B16.1.2 With the approval of the MRAA

Explanation:

Regulations and bylaws merely mirror each other. Therefore we are really only dealing with 2 issues even though 4 entries appear in the constitution. This duplication is redundant and confusing. Stating these matters once is sufficient.

R16.1.3.1 & B16.1.1

Access to MRAA books and documents is a right of members and should be encouraged. Any request by a member should be sufficient to get access. This section is frequently used to frustrate access to these documents. This was not its intended function and it should be removed.

R16.1.3.2 & B16.1.2

It was never intended that the MRAA have a final say in whether or not documents are provided. This section was added at the insistence of a previous committee and can be used to frustrate the intention of this regulation. It should be removed.

These changes will improve the openness of the MRAA. Open administrations are the most desirable and these changes to the constitution will encourage such behavior.

Annual MRA Awards

There have been some heated discussions over recent times regarding the awarding of Life Memberships to MRA members. The idea is a noble one, but it's been argued in the past that they've been awarded to members, who while having contributed significantly to the organisation and to motorcycling in general, haven't really been around long enough to give the title justice.

Therefore, it's suggested that we adopt the practice of giving out annual awards to members who have been noted for their outstanding performance over the past 12 months. It's something that all other clubs do, but we apparently do not.

For example, the "Clubman" award for someone who has been active in the club over the past year or so in helping with all the chores that keep the club going that we take for

granted. A Life membership award would typically be given to someone who has been in the club for a long time and who is consistently up there with the annual awardees. A multiple Clubman award winner would be a suitable nominee.

Clubs usually have an honor board where each year committee members and award winners are listed. Perhaps we can do the same, where it could hang in our club rooms.

If anyone has any suggestions on this, I'd like to propose that they be included as an agenda item at the 2006 AGM in February.

Martin Taylor

Blood Challenge News

There have been a number of movers and shakers recently. For one, the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games staff are starting their late charge, with 12 forms received so far and around 35 bookings for the next week or so. The HOG team came in to visit us at Southbank recently and received a lot of media attention for their assistance. The bike riders are now in a strong position in second place, trailing only the great CFA who are well ahead of the rest of the pack.

With just a month to go there is still plenty of time to get those tallies up on previous years.

The Top Ten organisations at the halfway point of the challenge are:

1. Country Fire Authority (295)
2. Motorbike and Scooter riders (178)
3. Scouts Australia (126)
4. Victoria Police (111)
5. Victorian SES (60)
6. Bicycle Victoria (59)
7. Department of Human Services (53)
8. Guides Victoria (50)
- Eq 9. Freemason's Victoria (42)
- Eq 9. Sporting Shooters (42)



The MRA Blood Challenge trophy. Let's see if we can wrest it from the competitors this year!



Membership Form

MEMBER RENEWAL

Member No: _____

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-OR-

NEW MEMBER

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Address: [Unit / Street No.]	
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[Suburb, Postcode]	
AH Phone:	
BH Phone:	
Mobile:	
D.O.B: [d/m/yy]	
Email:	
Occupation:	
Bike Model:	
Bike Make:	

PAYMENT METHOD:

Cheque Money Order

VISA Master Card

Name on Credit card:

Credit Card Number:
[4 digits per column – 20 digits max]

_____ - _____ - _____

Expiry Date: _____ / _____

Signature: _____

Please make cheques and money orders payable to:

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We'd like to know whether members would use the following service:

Do you have access to the Internet?	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
What's your internet connection speed?	
28.8k <input type="checkbox"/>	33.6k <input type="checkbox"/>
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