

# Riders' Advocate

## MRA Grand Prix Run



*Join the fun as young and old alike lap up the atmosphere at the GP Run*

## ARE YOU INJURED?

**For free legal advice, phone Grace Placencio  
MRA Official "Legal Eagle", Public Officer and  
Life Member**

Grace has represented injured riders for over 10 years, and specialises exclusively in Personal Injury law, including:

- Transport Accident Claims
- WorkCover Claims
- Superannuation Claims
- Medical Negligence Claims
- All Other Injury Claims

Suite 5, Level 5 517 St Kilda Road (opposite The Alfred Hospital)  
Melbourne 3004

Phone (03) 9867-7769 Fax: (03) 9867-7750

**GRACE PLACENCIO DAVIES & COMPANY LAWYERS**

## Contact the MRAA

MRA Australia headquarters:  
5/2 Quist Court  
Dandenong South VIC 3175  
Tel: (03) 9794 5504  
Fax : (03) 9794 5509

MRAA Board Members  
President: Dale Maggs  
(0432-776-458)

Vice President: Austin Webb  
(0421 886 114)

Secretary: Tony Ellis  
(0409 197 056)

Treasurer: DJ McCarthy

Membership Secretary: Kerry  
McKinnon

Ordinary Board Members:

Gavin Stilgoe, Rik van Zuylekom

Other Positions

Vic.Motorcycle Advisory Council Rep:  
Tony Ellis

4Bs Co-ordinator:

Kerry McKinnon

Road Safety Reference Group Rep:

Wendy Taylor

Blood Challenge Co-ordinator:

DJ McCarthy

Newsletter Editor: Martin Taylor

Events Co-ordinator: Dale Maggs

Office Hours:

Tuesday - 7pm to 9pm

Saturday - 10am to 3pm

Email: [mraa@mraa.org.au](mailto:mraa@mraa.org.au)

## August 06 QGM

The August 06 Quarterly General Meeting (QGM) will be held at MRA HQ, Quist Court in Dandenong. on Saturday, 26th Aug, 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 so on. Surf to:

[mraa.org.au/forum/modules/newbb/](http://mraa.org.au/forum/modules/newbb/)

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

[au.groups.yahoo.com/group/MRA\\_Forum](http://au.groups.yahoo.com/group/MRA_Forum)

# ***Sell your motorbike***

- *5 colour photos* • *Advertise until sold*
- *Unlimited changes* • *Monitor your ad*

**\$10** **TOTAL  
COST**



**bikesales.com.au**  
Making your bike go faster.

## From the Editor's Desk

We have an election in November. Recent government announcements regarding road safety have been disappointing. Despite record numbers of new motorcyclists, and with the ever increasing cost of fuel, the current government is intent on ignoring the benefits that motorcycling can contribute towards easing traffic congestion, reduced pollution levels and the easing of the burden on the hip pocket nerve. There are several articles in this issue, including Tony Ellis's excellent submission and feedback from a recent VACC symposium regarding motorcycling.

Recently, a regional MP, Brendan Jenkins, MLA for Morwell was on local WIN news spruiking new road safety "initiatives" for East Gippsland (the electorate of Craig Ingram (IND)). Amongst the various projects was the announcement of yet more WRBs. Jenkins went on to say how WRBs were actually safe for motorcyclists and that they save riders' lives.

News of this "revelation" soon spread and it resulted in representations being made to Mr. Jenkins by concerned motorcyclists. While he stated that he cannot "recant" his earlier claims, he said that he would look into this issue, hopefully with the purpose of educating himself.

There are arguments on both sides of the fence (no pun intended), and even amongst some riders as to how good or bad WRBs are. What cannot be disputed is that if you hit them, you'll be thankful that all the medical expenses (and most likely funeral expenses) associated with the aftermath of the impact will be met by one of WRBs biggest supporters – TAC.

Victoria's new anti-hoon laws came into effect on July 1. These new laws mean that if you're caught performing stunts that the police may deem as "hooning" then your vehicle will be confiscated. 3 strikes and you lose it for good, including being billed for the associated costs of having your vehicle confiscated, transported and sold.

So, if you take off from the lights at your normal pace, will the police view this as "drag racing", and hence, hooning? If you accidentally lift the front wheel, is that hooning as well? Will the police view as hooning you dragging your knee through your favorite corner on your favorite bit of road? It's too early to tell, given that at the time of writing, the laws have only been in force for two days. We can only hope that the police will exercise a reasonable amount of discretion and judgement when enforcing the new laws.

The Board held a meeting of volunteers on 1<sup>st</sup> July, followed by a BBQ. It was a good turnout. However, we can never be overwhelmed by too many volunteers. If you want to pitch in and help with the various activities such as the GP Expo, Motorcycle Expo, GP Run and the Toy Run, I'm sure that your offers of help will be welcomed with open arms.

## 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.

Please note. We now have 51 suppliers and service providers who offer discounts to paid up MRAA members. From bike parts and accessories to food and accomodation, there's sure to be something that will be of use to members. We hope to produce a list of discounters for the next issue.

*Kerry McKinnon, 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.

**MOORE'S LEGAL**

9 Prospect St. Box Hill Vic 3128  
Telephone: [03] 9696 0000 Facsimile: [03] 9696 0333  
[www.mooreslegal.com.au](http://www.mooreslegal.com.au)

**Draggin Jeans, enhancing the pleasure and safety of motorcycling.**

- Draggin Kevlar® award winning motorcycle apparel
- Soft knitted Kevlar® lined jeans, jackets, cargo pants & more.
- Fully breathable, pre shrunk and machine washable.
- Specifically designed for motorcyclists comfort & style.
- Cool in summer, warm in winter & perfect in between.
- A full range of men's & women's sizes for the most comfortable fit possible.
- CE approved optional armour recommended and available for knees, elbows, hips, shoulders & back.

[www.dragginjeans.com.au](http://www.dragginjeans.com.au) > Ph: 03 9696 1622 > email: [info@dragginjeans.com.au](mailto:info@dragginjeans.com.au)



---

## MRA Board notification

**The MRA board hereby notifies the Members that the purchasing of premises will be put to the vote at the August 2006 QGM!**

**Sufficient time will be allocated to discuss this.**

**Whether you support this proposal, or have concerns, the next QGM is your opportunity to have your say and get involved.**

**We need as many members as possible to attend and vote on this proposal.**

**August 26, at 1.00Pm, plan to be there.**

**Arguments for and against can be found in the magazine.**

Motorcycle Riders Association Australia  
5/2 Quist Court Dandenong South VIC 3175  
Ph: 03 9794 5504 | Fax: 03 9794 5509  
Web: [www.mraa.org.au](http://www.mraa.org.au) | email: [mraa@mraa.org.au](mailto:mraa@mraa.org.au)  
ABN: 28 703 101 330

## Traffic Planners Fail to See Two Wheeled Solution

MRAA supports VACC proposals for shared bicycle lane use. Following from the successful VACC forum “Two Wheels to the Future”, the VACC has released suggestions for the successful implementation of some of these proposals; in particular the attached proposals from the “Auto Industry News” regarding shared lane use and traffic filtering

A spokesman for the MRAA on road sharing issues Mr John Karmouche, stated today that “These proposals are very definitely a step in the right direction. Although these proposals may still require further refinement in consultation with motorcyclists, they deserve to be taken very seriously”. The proposal to share bicycle lanes with powered two wheeled vehicles is a sensible proposal and one which the MRAA has been pressing for, for some time, as evidenced in the MRAA’s submission to the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission Inquiry into Congestion (copy attached).

In light of the recent issues with congestion in Victoria and the savage increases in fuel prices it is becoming more and more apparent that motorcycles and scooters have a very considerable part to play in traffic planning, evidenced by the fact that many people are now moving from four to two wheeled powered transport.

Action Required. Mr Karmouche stated that the continuing failure of traffic planners to consider motorcycles as legitimate vehicles, the ongoing failure to recognise their contribution to resolving traffic and environmental issues was an indictment of governments and planning agencies. For further information please contact John Karmouche on 9877 3004 or by email at lanesplitting@mraa.org.au

## El Presidente’s Report

Dear Members

It is my pleasure to advise you that we are going from strength to strength and that our public profile has increased significantly. We have been very active in the media, both in print form and on radio. We have belted the Government at all opportunities.

### Political Issues and Lobbying

The Government has been in election mode, making announcements of its expenditure prior to the November election. The areas of particular concern to us are:

- Transportation Budget - we were somewhat miffed at the lack of content especially in regards to motorcycling and we released statements to show our displeasure!
- We have attacked its policy on the implementation and proliferation of wire rope barriers throughout Victoria. We’ve slammed its ill-informed members (of Parliament) and in particular the sources of its misguided information - Vic Roads.
- We presented an informative presentation to the office of the Minister for Transport and the management of Vic Roads at its Kew headquarters.

We spent ninety minutes addressing issues that covered such things as listed below:

- Hazard Reporting Failures under their auspices
- The lack of communication between bodies directly under their control. ie. contractors and their inability to maintain a “safe environment and work site” with the outcome directly being responsible for the loss of life.
- We also highlighted the need for a better reporting system after a motor vehicle accident where debris has been left at the accident scene or an important part of the road structure or safety feature had been adversely affected such as a lighting tower!
- We stressed the point that either Police or emergency services attending report the damage immediately to the appropriate authority in order to lessen the danger to all motorists!
- We asked once again for a independent Road Hazard Reporting website to established. This is based on the current response time on the current system. In real time you may not even get to the reporting line operator in less than ten minutes! We feel this puts further motorists at risk as it deters callers from hang in there!

Vic Roads has requested a copy of our presentation. Hopefully it will address these shortcomings.

(cont'd page 5)

## BLACKROSE LEATHERS

111 FLOOR 447 GRAMHAM STREET, PERTH WEST AUSTRALIA VIC 6007

**FREE CATALOGUES PH: 1800 054 245.**

From Only

\$595.00

NEW YEAR SPECIAL!

THIS AMAZING LEATHER RIDING PACKAGE CONSISTS OF BRANDO JACKET, PANTS, SHORT BOOTS AND GLOVES ALL IN HARD WEARING LEATHER FOR THIS ONE LOW PRICE.

WE HAVE MANY MORE STYLES AVAILABLE INCLUDING: TOURING JACKETS & PANTS, COLOURED RACING SUITS & JACKETS, CHAPS, TRENCH COATS, SADDLE BAGS, VESTS, AND FULL RANGES OF ACCESSORIES AND WATERPROOF JACKETS & PANTS.

**GUARANTEE: IF YOU ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH ANY OF OUR PRODUCTS SIMPLY RETURN THE GOODS, UNDAMAGED, FOR A REFUND OR EXCHANGE.**

**\*\*WE DELIVER C.O.D AUSTRALIA WIDE\*\***

VICTORIAN MOTORCYCLE WRECKERS

52-54 Mologa Road, Heidelberg West, Vic. 3081 Australia  
Ph: 61 3 9457 1733  
Fax: 61 3 9457 1866  
Email: vicwreck@iinet.net.au

Keith Braddock

Melways 19 - G10

The ability for us to respond to Government bodies' media releases has been performed in timely manner and I must thank our secretary, Mr Tony Ellis. His work in this field has been exceptional.

### **Self Promotion**

We have also received commendations for the MRAA website for its content and layout. It has been relied upon by peer motorcycle groups and segments as a constant source of information so they can update their own web pages. We owe Gavin Stilgoe and Derek Clarkson thanks for this.

Our profile in the community is high. This has been increased due to a regular segment on Channel 31's "Two Wheel Torque" program that is seen by up to 80,000 viewers weekly. We've also had regular articles placed in local newspapers and motorcycling magazines such as AMCN.

### **Events**

Our events program is on track. We have had meetings with Casey Shire Council and are looking forward to a bigger and better MRA Cranbourne GP Run. This will be held in September.

Preparations for the famous MRA Melbourne Toyrun are currently proceeding well with interest from corporate sponsors and TAC.

Other events such as the Australian Motorcycle Expo where we enjoy great exposure to the motorcycle community have been established with us earmarking three sites in the main foyer. We have also entered the Scooter Le-Minz and will take part in the official opening. Paul Newman, eat your pasta sauce out...

### **Corporate Sponsorship**

Contact and relationships with our corporate sponsors have improved. And we would like to thank them all for their ongoing support. Some of our major partners are QBE Motorcycle Insurance, Bikesales.com.au, Holding Redlich Lawyers and Fowles Auction Group. A complete list will appear in a future edition of Riders Advocate. And they're also listed on our website.

Memberships are on the rise due to some of our corporate partners joining their whole teams. This demonstrates faith in the MRA product.

Further to this we have a great rapport with all the current motorcycling magazines and their teams, which has helped draw interest to our web sites from all states of Australia.

The current board has shown to be keen and has performed well. I can only see the MRA moving forward in this latter half of 2006.

*Dale Maggs*

*President, MRAA.*

## **Government's Transport Planners have lost the plot**

The President of the Motorcycle Riders Association of Australia, Mr Dale Maggs, has expressed disappointment at the Victorian Government's recently released transport and road safety plans.

Mr Maggs stated that the government had lost the plot and passed up the opportunity to promote a real alternative to cars. He stated that, as usual, the most efficient and effective form of road transport has been totally ignored.

Studies have shown that the only commuters really satisfied with their form of commuting are motorcycle and scooter riders. While bicycles are being promoted as an alternative, they are simply not and cannot provide the mobility for commuting quickly over longer distances.

More and more Victorians are turning to scooters and motorcycles as their primary commuting transport. The handling and braking of modern scooters in particular is very good and the carrying capacity makes them suitable for most shopping trips.

The Government needs to look closely at these vehicles as car replacements. During the recent congestion nightmare on the Monash Freeway, the only vehicles that could move freely were motorcycles and scooters. The MRAA again calls on the Government to do the following:

- *Immediately introduce a Learner Approved Motorcycle Scheme along the lines of NSW, the ACT and SA;*
- *Review the ludicrously high licensing age for riders (currently the highest in Australia and one of the highest in the world);*
- *Investigate permitting use of scooters up to 50cc on existing full drivers licences;*
- *Explicitly permit filtering through stationary or slow moving traffic;*
- *Permit shared use of on-road bicycle lanes by motorcycles and scooters (with certain limitations); and*
- *In consultation with riders, develop a sound and sensible motorcycle strategy.*

The safety strategy again shows up the total unfairness of motorcyclists being the only road users to pay an additional levy. If \$72 million can be found for bicycle paths, then surely the few millions raised by the levy could be funded by Government rather than being stolen from motorcyclists. The MRAA again calls on the Government to withdraw this levy and to treat powered two wheelers fairly and reasonably.

### **VMAC Forums**

In May I attended the regional VMAC Forum in Traralgon. It was a productive session, with around 50 local riders and other interested parties attending. However, one issue which was raised was the standard of safety apparel. Some suggested that it be made compulsory. What do you think? Send us your thoughts on this issue.

# Inquiry Into Managing Transport Congestion in Victoria

## MRA Submission

Tony Ellis

December 2005

### Executive Summary:

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 motorcycles<sup>1</sup> 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.

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.

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 become more aware of the presence of motorcycles.

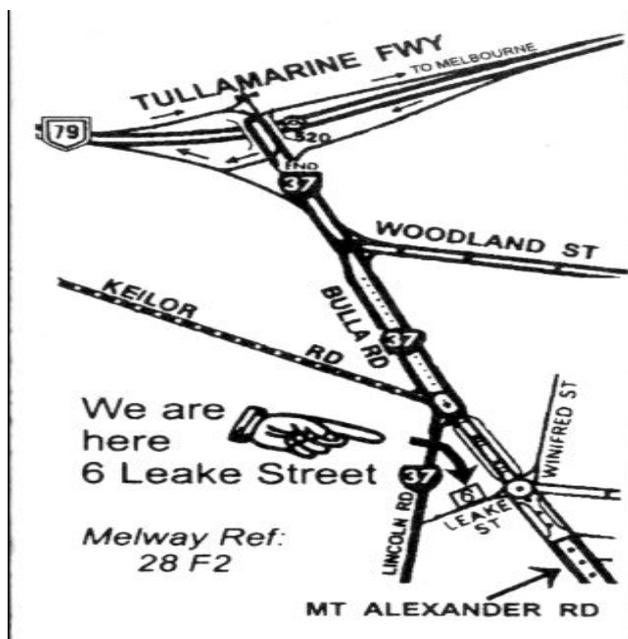
### Traffic Filtering.

Among the many advantages that motorcycles have is their ability to filter through gaps in traffic. When coupled with their ability to accelerate away quickly (even the smallest powered two wheeled vehicles generally have excellent acceleration up to 50kph) this enables them to achieve travel times in city traffic of as low as 50% of that of cars.

Figures quoted in the Oxford Systematics report<sup>2</sup> show that of all modes of transport (including bicycles) motorcycles were the only ones which claimed to experience no perceived delays in their journeys.

Contrary to the perception in some quarters that this practice is unsafe, The Oxford Systematics report finds that “no examples have yet been located where such filtering has yet been the cause of an accident”.

The Hurt Report<sup>3</sup> found that there was an improved margin of safety for motorcycles when filtering. The ability to filter between lines of traffic effectively prevents motorcyclists being “rear



ended” - a major cause of accidents in traffic. For example, rear end collisions represented 23% of all Queensland crashes in 2002, according to the ‘Queensland Transport Annual Road Traffic Crash Report: 2002’.

Some of the dislike of motorcyclists lane filtering appears to stem from an attitude that motorcyclists should “wait their turn”. Most motorcyclists report occasional drivers deliberately narrowing the gap between traffic in order to prevent this practice. Generally though, these are outnumbered by those that move aside to allow a motorcycle through.

Explicit legalising of this practice coupled with an active “Share the Lane” campaign would probably alleviate most problems with car drivers by spreading awareness that the practice allows traffic to flow more freely and alleviates congestion. Other jurisdictions such as Austria and California have managed to successfully implement these proposals.

Safety practices such as encouraging motorcyclists to have their headlights on while filtering to enhance visibility could be encouraged as well as disseminating knowledge of safe filtering practices to the motorcycle community.

The use of roadspace by vehicles is expressed in “passenger car equivalents” (PCUs) a standard passenger car has a value of 1PCU. Motorcycles have generally been assigned a value of 0.6 PCUs based on their physical road allocation.

This figure however fails to take into account the dynamics of the motorcycle and its inherent abilities. Studies have found that in real traffic situations where motorcycles are permitted to filter through traffic - and particularly when coupled with advanced stop lines – the PCU of a motorcycle approaches 0.0. Bicycles appear to maintain a consistent value of 0.6. These figures have been confirmed by studies carried out by the UK Department for Transport<sup>4</sup>

To quote from the Oxford Systematics report “*Clearly any switch from car to motorcycle – or indeed from bicycle to motorcycle – will have a real and positive effect on scarce road and intersection capacity, and a very significant one in congestion conditions.*”

#### **Netherlands experience**

Lane splitting has been legal in the Netherlands since 1991, but only a few years ago a guideline was set up to reach for a better understanding between car drivers and motorcyclists. This is an official guideline in the Netherlands now, also adopted by insurance-companies in case of accidents.

The guideline, in short, is as follows;  
for riders:

- ✓ only split if general traffic speed is not exceeding 40 km/h
- ✓ speed difference between bike and traffic should not be more than 10 km/h
- ✓ in case of 3 lanes, go between the left and middle lane. All bikes to use the same lane. (and keep a safe distance)
- ✓ constantly monitor the other traffic, expect traffic to change lanes without warning.
- ✓ if other traffic moves over to make more space for you, say thanks, ‘e.g. thumbs up’ .

for other drivers:

- ✓ expect motorbikes to overtake in between lanes.

- ✓ Keep to the centre of your lane, this should give enough space. If not, move over a bit.
- ✓ check your mirrors regularly.
- ✓ be careful when changing lanes.

#### **British Guidelines**

The British publication “Motorcycle Roadcraft”<sup>5</sup> ( The Police Riders Handbook to Better Motorcycling), notes the following under the topic of “overtaking”:-

When traffic is stationary or moving slowly in queues, motorcyclists can use their manoeuvrability and limited space requirements to make progress. The advantages of filtering along or between stopped or slow moving traffic have to be weighed against the increased vulnerability while filtering.

If you decide to filter:

- Take extreme care
- Keep your speed low- you need to be able to stop suddenly if circumstances change
- Always identify a place where you can rejoin the traffic flow before you move out
- Make yourself visible – consider using dipped headlight
- Be ready to brake and/or use the horn
- Use the opportunity to make progress but be courteous and avoid conflict with other road users

Watch out for and anticipate:

- Pedestrians crossing between vehicles
- Vehicles emerging from junctions
- Vehicles changing lanes or U-turning without warning
- Doors opening
- Reflective paint and studs which could throw the bike off line
- Traffic islands
- Other bikes also filtering

Allied with the lane filtering/splitting issue is that of overtaking on the left. Provided it is done in a safe and careful manner then there appears to be no logical reason why this should not be a permitted practice for motorcyclists as well as cyclists. Certainly it is no less safe. Motorcyclists wear significantly more protective gear than cyclists and – especially when riding with headlights on – are many times more visible.

#### **Recommendations:**

Lane filtering/splitting should be explicitly legalised and accompanied by an intensive “Share the Lane” campaign designed with two purposes in mind:

1. To educate car drivers that this is an acceptable practice and should be encouraged in order to help alleviate congestion; and
2. To educate motorcyclists on appropriate lane splitting techniques.

Motorcyclists should be permitted to overtake stationary or slow moving traffic on the left hand side – in a similar manner to cyclists.

Further study should be carried out to determine the best manner to enable this to be effectively implemented and what specific conditions (e.g. headlights on) should be imposed upon the practice.

## **Bus lanes, Bicycle Lanes, Transit lanes and other lane types**

Motorcycles are currently permitted to use both T2 and T3 type transit lanes. Examples of this are the T2 lanes on the Eastern Freeway and in Hoddle Street. However while the leftmost “emergency” lane is permitted for use by both buses and taxis in peak hours, motorcycles are barred from the use of this lane. It would appear to be remarkably inconsistent that this be the case.

### ***Bus Only Lanes***

The use of bus only lanes by motorcycles should also be approved. Unlike bicycles, motorcycles travel at normal traffic speeds and are unlikely to hold up buses. If necessary to allow a bus to have priority they have the ability to filter back into adjacent lanes without seriously inconveniencing or slowing the general flow of traffic. The use of bus lanes by motorcycles has been extensively trialled in the UK and has had positive outcomes.

### ***Commonwealth Games Lane Closures***

There will be lane closures during the Commonwealth Games with lanes reserved for “Games only” vehicles. Motorcycles should be permitted to use these lanes for the reasons given above. They do not impede traffic and their use will give motorcycles a safer travelling situation by being separated from the bulk of traffic.

### ***Freeway “Dead Space”***

Further use could be made of the “wasted space” on the right hand side of many freeways. The gaps of up to a metre wide along most of the Monash Freeway could well be utilised by motorcycles during congested periods. A limit of 70 to 80 kph would appear to be reasonable in this case and would allow the safe transit of motorcycles during peak congestion periods. A proposal to this effect was made to VicRoads by the City of Casey and supported by the Motorcycle Riders Association. However it was rejected for reasons which still remain unclear.

### ***Bicycle lanes***

While bicycle lanes have improved the safety and transit times for cyclists, they have led to a reduction in lane width and a concomitant problem with lane filtering for motorcycles. Indeed, in some cases (Church Street in Richmond is a prime example) they have led to a positively hazardous situation for motorcyclists as they are now forced to ride along the tram tracks for considerable distances.

Given the similar footprint of most motorcycles and bicycles there would appear to be no reason why, with proper regulatory management – motorcycles and bicycles could not share these on-road lanes. A speed limit of 30 to 40 kph would again appear to be a reasonable speed and relatively easily enforced if necessary. This would legalise the defacto situation where many motorcyclists already utilise these lanes in peak periods. There have been no reports of accidents caused by this practice and very very few reports of animosity by cyclists towards this practice. While technically illegal it is rare to hear of any enforcement.

## **Recommendations:**

Motorcycles should be permitted to use Bus lanes and other such special vehicle lanes (e.g. Commonwealth Games reserved vehicle lanes).

Where the left-most (emergency) lane of a free way is permitted to be used by buses and taxis, this permission should also be extended to motorcycles.

Motorcycles should be permitted to use on-road cycle lanes (with conditions)

Where there is appropriate space to the right of a freeway (e.g. as on the Monash Freeway) it should be available for motorcycle use during periods of traffic congestion.

## **Parking**

Victoria is fortunate in that current regulations permit motorcycles to be parked on the footpath in most areas. Motorcyclists are generally appreciative of this and it is rare to find this right abused. However there still remain many areas where there is a need for specialist motorcycle parking. These include many suburban shopping strips where footpath parking is difficult and congested footpaths are common.

Given that from four to six motorcycles can fit into a standard car parking space it would make sense for councils to be encouraged to give up a single car parking space in most shopping areas. Having convenient parking would be a major factor in encouraging use of motorcycles for shopping trips. The carrying capacity of most modern scooters is surprisingly high – particularly with the fitting of a top box or set of panniers – and they often provide a reasonable alternative to using a car for shopping trips.

For outer suburban areas, powered two wheeled vehicles can be combined with public transport. Currently many commuters travel by car to outer suburban stations park and travel by train into the city. Encouraging motorcycle use here would assist in easing parking issues as well as creating less congestion in these local areas. A drawback is that riders need to store protective clothing as most riding gear is bulky and awkward to carry once off the vehicle. Lockers should be made available for storage of riding equipment at a small charge to encourage this mixed mode commuting.

## **Recommendations**

Motorcycle specific parking should be available in suburban shopping areas and at stations.

Storage spaces for riding gear should be made available at stations to encourage use of motorcycle or scooters in outer suburban areas.

## **References:**

- Coyne, P. *Motorcycle Roadcraft*, The Police Foundation, Sixth impression 2001, The Stationery Office, UK ISBN 0 11 341143
- Department for Transport, *Motorcycles and Congestion: The Effect of Modal Split*; London UK, 2004 Available at: [www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft\\_localtrans/documents/page/dft\\_localtrans\\_032488.pdf](http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_localtrans/documents/page/dft_localtrans_032488.pdf)
- Hurt, Oullet and Thom, (1981a), *Motorcycle Accident Cause Factors and Identification of Counter Measures (Volume 1)*, (DOT-HS-805-863), Washington DC: UCS, University of Southern California Traffic Safety Centre for NHTSA

Littman, T, *London Congestion Pricing, Implications for Other Cities*, Victoria Transport Policy Institute, Victoria Canada, 2000.

Available at: [www.vtppi.org/london.pdf](http://www.vtppi.org/london.pdf)

*The Government's Motorcycling Strategy*, Department for Transport, London UK, 2000

Available at: [www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft\\_roads/documents/page/dft\\_roads\\_035439.pdf](http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_roads/documents/page/dft_roads_035439.pdf)

*Oxford Systematics, Motorcycle Transport – powered two wheelers in Victoria, VicRoads, 2000*, Available at: [www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/vrpdf/trum/oxford2000vol1\\_1f.pdf](http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/vrpdf/trum/oxford2000vol1_1f.pdf)

### (Footnotes)

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise stated, motorcycle means motorcycles and scooters throughout this document

<sup>2</sup> Oxford Systematics, *Motorcycle Transport – powered two wheelers in Victoria*, 2000, VicRoads, p24

<sup>3</sup> Hurt, Oullet and Thom, (1981a), *Motorcycle Accident Cause Factors and Identification of Counter Measures (Volume 1)*, (DOT-HS-805-863), Washington DC: UCS, University of Southern California Traffic Safety Centre for NHTSA

<sup>4</sup> Department for Transport, *Motorcycles and Congestion: The Effect of Modal Split*; London UK, 2004 <sup>5</sup> Coyne, P. *Motorcycle Roadcraft, The Police Foundation, Sixth impression 2001, The Stationery Office, UK ISBN 0 11 341143*

## Round the Bay in a Day Motorcycle Marshalls required.

Bicycle Victoria (BV) has asked me to again form a team of motorcycle first aid marshalls for this year's Around the Bay ride on October 15.

BV has created an additional 250km course, as well as the 42km, 100km and 210km distances. BV expects potential rider numbers to be 10,000 - 13,000.

My aim is to recruit a minimum of 15 marshalls, preferably 20; to ensure good coverage and to keep the workload at an acceptable level.

Conditions would be the same as last year -

Fuel card provided for the day.

Lunch and snacks provided.

Expenses re-imbursed for dinks etc purchased on the day.

First Aid pack and two way radio provided.

Safety vest provided.

Promotional gear provided (free goodies)

Could you please let me know if you would be available to help out.

My contact details are -

Home - (03) 9722-2227

Email - [billbriggs@coolcats.net.au](mailto:billbriggs@coolcats.net.au)

Bill Briggs

MICA Paramedic

(Ulysess Melbourne)

## MRA 2006 Calendar

### 2006 Quarterly General Meetings

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.

## Revving up for the MRA Cranbourne GP Run



Riders head off at the start of the MRA GP Run in Cranbourne.

Start the 2006 GMC Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix weekend by joining thousands of motorcyclists in Cranbourne for the MRA Cranbourne GP Run on Saturday 16 September 2006.

The excitement begins at 8am in High Street, Cranbourne with entertainment, food stalls, displays, activities for the kids, and a community geared up to cheer the riders on. To allow for the influx of motorcycles, part of the southbound carriageway of the South Gippsland Highway will be closed to other traffic for this annual event.

The MRA Cranbourne GP Run is hosted by the City of Casey and organised in partnership with the Motorcycle Riders Association, Australian Grand Prix Corporation, Cranbourne Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Victoria Police.

The action heats up at 10am when a surprise celebrity will wave the bikes off on their journey to Phillip Island. Past celebrities have included Adam Fergusson, Wayne Gardner, Mick Doohan, Sara Jane, Russell Ingall, Greg Murphy and last year Fred Gassit from Australian Motorcycle News and the MRA's own Dale Maggs were delighted to signal the bikes to begin their ride.



To ensure a safe and enjoyable ride for all, the MRA will be providing marshals along the route and the ride will also be lead by the Victoria Police. So for a spectacular start to the biggest motorcycling weekend in Australia, head down to Cranbourne and join in the fun.

Christine Loulier, Events Officer, City of Casey  
Tel: 03 9705 5200  
Fax: 03 9705 5447  
Email: [cloulier@casey.vic.gov.au](mailto:cloulier@casey.vic.gov.au)

## Motorcycle and Scooter Riders call for a fair share of the road



Do you want to share this lane with this fellow? Would he mind?

President of the Motorcycle Riders Association, Mr Dale Maggs today called for a review of lane usage and a fair share of the road for motorcycle and scooter riders. It has come to the attention of the Motorcycle Riders Association that there has recently been a move by police to deter motorcyclists from using bicycle lanes. Mr Maggs stated that although this usage is technically illegal it has generally been tolerated in the past. However there has been an upsurge in the pointless policing of this practice.

What makes this approach truly ridiculous is that there are no real safety issues here for cyclists and even fewer for motorcycles. The actual footprints of bicycles and most motorcycles are similar and motorcycle riders are both more visible and better protected than cyclists. Shared lane usage has been recommended on several occasions but these recommendations have been totally ignored.

Certainly the MRAA does not support motorcycles travelling at excessive speed in these lanes, but in virtually all cases the motorcycle has been travelling past congested traffic at no more than a bicycle speed of up to 30kph. We again urge government to explicitly legalise the sharing of these lanes with a maximum speed limit of 30k being placed on motorcycles and scooters.

Since their omission from any mention in the recent transport plan, motorcycle and scooter riders have been well aware that they are neglected. This type of petty and pointless police enforcement, coupled with the continuing annual "safety" levy, makes it apparent that riders are regarded as a soft touch and an easy source of revenue for the government. The MRAA would like to point out that motorcycle and scooter usage is increasing at over twice the rate of bicycle usage and that a recent survey conducted by the MRAA showed that the ratio of motorcycles to bicycles street parked in the CBD during the day was nearly 2:1. Percentage growth in the use of powered two wheeled vehicles (especially scooters) has far outstripped the growth of usage of any other transport type and can only continue to increase given increasing congestion and fuel prices. Surely governments cannot continue to discriminate against this type of transport.

John Karmouche

## Motorcycles Outnumber Bicycles in Melbourne CBD?

Mr Dale Maggs, President of the MRAA today announced the results of a study carried out in the Melbourne CBD last week. The study counted the number of motorcycles and the number of bicycles parked in the Melbourne CBD, essentially the area bounded by Spring, Spencer and Flinders Streets and Victoria Parade. The final count was 1037 motorcycles and 620 bicycles.

Mr Maggs stated that this result, of course, does not show the true numbers of bicycles as many push bike riders are fortunate enough to have off-road storage for their transport. What it does show is that motorcycles have a far more significant role in providing commuter transport than the government appears to believe.

Mr Maggs said that these numbers show that the government's failure to include powered two wheeled vehicles in a comprehensive road transport strategy is even more incomprehensible. While Mr Bracks claims a 5% increase in bicycle commuting, sales of scooters are up by 34% so far this year and motorcycle sales overall by over 20%. People are moving to motorcycles and scooters at an ever increasing rate and the increase in fuel prices can only accelerate this movement.

The Motorcycle Riders Association emphatically does not wish to reduce the money spent on the bicycle strategy. Separating vulnerable road users from cars is important and we welcome the introduction of more bicycle paths. What motorcycle and scooter riders are asking for is equitable treatment and removal of discriminatory policies. As a group which has a significant contribution to make to improving mobility we are asking that the government look beyond its currently blinkered view and acknowledge that contribution instead of actively working against us by continuing the iniquitous "safety levy". If \$72 million is available for bicycles, then surely enough can be found to continue the worthwhile work funded by the annual levy on motorcycle registrations.

The MRAA study counted only visible and parked bicycles, scooters and motorcycles. The motorcycle count may also be underestimated as part of the Elizabeth Street motorcycle precinct were excluded due to the difficulty in determining which machines were associated with motorcycle dealerships. Machines parked off road in carparks and private spaces were not counted. Where possible, couriers were also excluded.

*John Karmouche*

## "Lane Splitting" Amendments Withdrawn

The proposed Australian Road Rule 151(a) concerning motorcycle "lane splitting" has been withdrawn. It has been referred back to the Australian Road Rules Maintenance Group to address the issues raised during public consultation.

The MRAA's co-ordinator for this campaign, Mr John Karmouche stated that he wished to congratulate all the motorcyclists and organisations who worked to overcome this poorly thought-out proposal. He cautioned though, that it was a temporary victory and is but the 1st step of the regulatory process..

The number of submissions received was a record for any proposed Australian Road Rule change. The submissions from numerous individuals and organisations including the MRAA, the VACC, RACV and NRMA clearly demonstrated the lack of evidence based thinking behind the proposals and the lack of scientific method throughout.

It is to be hoped that following a full evaluation of all the issues around this subject, which must include not only the safety aspects but mobility and congestion issues as well, that any future resubmission by the NTC will recognise the value and seek to have filtering through slow-moving or stationary traffic not only tolerated but explicitly approved.

*John Karmouche*

## Around the States

### South Australia

Recently, the SA government jacked up the costs for learner riders to progress to the licence stage from \$107 to over \$300. Naturally, the MRA(SA) is upset by this unwarranted price increase (the government cites "increased demand" to try and justify the ripoff). Therefore, they've organised a protest ride. At the time of editing the protest ride would have been run on Saturday, August 5<sup>th</sup>, to ride to Parliament House.

It's obvious what's happening. The government sees the rising popularity of motorcycling. Some party hack has thought, "stuff that, we don't want any more bikes on the road". They've seen it as a way to discourage young learners and lower paid people from going for their bike licences. And if they still wish to persist, then they'll gouge them for what they can to help cover their financial incompetence. Good luck guys, with this one.

### Tasmania

The Tasmanian government, annoyed because democracy thwarted its plans to further rip off motorcyclists when that state's Upper House blocked a \$15 a year "safety" levy for motorcyclists, has managed to push it through, anyway, by simply increasing their 3rd party insurance premiums by \$15.

Also, I hear that Tassie's LAMS scheme is such a bureaucratic ballsup, it typifies the Yes Minister culture that seems to abide in a lot of public service organisations and governments. Apparently they have a LAMS, but it's not open slather. It appears that you have to register the type of approved bike that you wish to ride. If you don't know which bike that you'll be getting, then you can apply for a "test ride approval" exemption. All of which costs you money. In other states, LAMS simply means a list of bikes that learners can ride. Too simple, perhaps?

## Wire Rope “Un-safety” Barrier

Wire Rope “Un-safety” Barrier (WRUB) illustrates much of what is wrong with our roadsides. Roadside hazards are involved in ~40% of all accidents (with all vehicles). Up to 30% of all motorcycle fatalities involve a post, pole or tree. Around 2.4-2.6% of Australian motorcycle fatalities involve a barrier (up to 16% overseas). This figure increases further for casualties. In such accidents, the exposed posts constitute most of the hazard. Exposed posts concentrate impact forces and lead to increased soft tissue injuries, fractures, amputations and deaths. WRUB has the greatest number of exposed posts of any barrier. Ergo WRUB has the greatest potential to kill riders.

### WRUB (U for UnSafe?)

There are many examples of reduced surface area and sharp edges causing injuries and fatalities. Telephone poles, signs and trees all figure prominently in injuries and fatalities. German research on the consequences of impacts with posts is available at [www.zip.com.au/~cs/moto/wire-rope/guillotines.html](http://www.zip.com.au/~cs/moto/wire-rope/guillotines.html). In this research cadavers were propelled into metal posts resulting in amputations and fractures. Researchers provided measurements of the impact forces generated (making comparison easier). An impact with a series of WRUB posts would generate similar forces and similar injuries. It would be more than sufficient to kill someone. Even a slow impact with a post is enough to kill a rider!

Recent MUARC (Monash University Accident Research Centre) testing compared WRUB to obsolete Jersey concrete barrier. Vic Roads says it has not used Jersey for 20 years because it rolls cars. Injuries are much more serious when a car rolls. WRUB rolled cars during testing too! F-profile concrete barrier is currently used and has about half the rollover rate of Jersey. Is F-profile safer than WRUB? Newer concrete barrier types have an even lower rollover rate than F-profile. Why weren't they tested?

These same reports also failed to identify the higher rate of barrier fatalities overseas. Overseas figures demonstrate that as exposure increases fatality rates will too.

### WRUB (U for Unnecessary?)

Cross-over accidents (into on-coming traffic) are of greatest concern. Almost any barrier in the median would prevent most crossover accidents. WRUB does not stop as many cross overs as claimed: Hitting WRUB posts often catapults a rider over the barrier into on-coming traffic. Nb. 37% of riders go over the top of barriers! This catapult action does not happen with a smooth faced barrier.

### Comparable hazards

Impacts with trees and other objects are common roadside accident scenarios. Motorcyclists have been requesting the removal of trees and other objects from medians for years (RIP Helen Hawthorn)! This simple and cheap intervention would save many lives. Barriers with exposed posts contribute to the problem.

### Rollovers

Roadside accidents commonly include rollovers. Rollovers significantly increase the risk of injury or death. Installing WRUB required a fair bit of landscaping so that cars did not roll before they hit the barriers! The landscaping alone may

have been sufficient in many cases. Nb. 85% of all vehicles travelling at 100Km/hr recover in a 9m clear zone (no barriers required).

### WRUB (U for Unaffordable?)

Typical installation and repair costs for simple installations:

	Installation Cost/metre	Typical Repair Costs/metre
Concrete	\$150+	Negligible (80yr lifespan)
Steel W-beam	\$120+	\$80 to \$150
Wire ropes	\$130+	\$25

These are Vic Roads figures. Nb. Independent contractors quoted an even lower \$150/m for a complex concrete barrier installation with footings and drainage. Less if you wanted lots of it.

Thus, installation costs for all barrier types are similar. However after one or two impacts, maintenance costs make WRUB more expensive than concrete. Over the years, WRUB will be many times more expensive than other alternatives because it requires more maintenance (placed closer to the road, larger sections damaged when hit and thus damaged more frequently). This is at odds with claims that WRUB is cheap (MUARC & ATSB WRUB reports).

### Accident facts

1. Motorcyclists tend to hit barriers like concrete at shallow angles because they leave the road at shallow angles.
2. Concrete has no projections so motorcyclists slide along the barrier.
3. 85% of vehicles recover within 9m of a 100km zone (no barriers required)..
4. 37% of riders go over the top of barriers. Exposed posts and items behind the barrier kill riders!

### WRUB:

- Is easily damaged
- Is less effective/ineffective until repaired
- Is often extensively damaged (large sections unserviceable)
- Can create a hazard until repaired
- Can spend long periods of time between repairs (7-30+ days)
- Has very high maintenance costs (whole of life cost effectiveness is very poor)
- Can fling a rider over the barrier... and into oncoming traffic or some other hazard (37%+ of accidents)
- Is safer for motorcyclists the further it is placed from the road
- Becomes more expensive to maintain the closer you place it to the road
- Is sometimes duplicated on both sides of a median (doubling the cost)
- Acts like a solid barrier to riders (because riders are much lighter than cars)
- Stops riders suddenly when they hit the posts (rapid deceleration)
- The exposed posts are the major hazard to riders

- The cabling has never been tested with riders so it is unclear how safe it is

#### Concrete barriers:

- Have no maintenance costs
- Are functional effectively 100% of the time
- Have similar installation costs to WRUB
- Are the most forgiving barrier for motorcyclists (of the 3 listed)
- Reduce light glare at night
- Prevent more cross-over accidents than WRUB
- Are safer at shallow impact angles (<30 degrees)

#### Alternative Solutions

Cover the posts and barriers become much safer

1. Expanded foam impact attenuators placed around posts reduce impact forces by 50%
2. Mototub is a compressible rubber tube placed along the bottom of WRUB, Armco and other barriers to prevent riders from sliding into posts. The Brifen (manufacturers of WRUB) web site now features Mototub <http://www.brifen.co.uk/testing/moto.html>
3. Armco is a safe alternative if the posts are covered (top & bottom) e.g. In countries like Portugal they use tyres to protect the posts.

Use barriers without exposed posts or other projections:

1. Concrete has a smooth snag free surface
2. Tire barriers on racetracks are very successful at preventing injury.

#### Decelerate vehicles gradually:

1. Gravel, sand and other materials (such as shredded rubber) on racetracks/roads stop motorcycles, cars and trucks safely at very high speeds.
2. Water filled collapsible barriers are extremely effective at dissipating extreme impact forces with minimal injury even for large vehicles.

#### Remove hazards to make barriers unnecessary!

This last alternative is grossly under-utilised. Usually it is the cheapest of all the alternatives. Once implemented it fixes the problem for good and requires little or no ongoing expenditure.

Why is safe design a smart move?

1. At least 30% of all road fatalities could be avoided by better design
2. Motorcyclists are amongst those most prone to injury and death due to bad design
3. Good design is much cheaper than bad design
4. Good design for motorcyclists is generally good for other road users
5. Vic Roads is under funded by around \$1Billion/yr. It can not afford expensive solutions if cheap ones exist.

Michael Czajka

If you'd like more information on this or other road safety issues you can check out the Motorcycle Research file area at [go.to/mc-research](http://go.to/mc-research), the MRAA website at [www.mraa.org.au](http://www.mraa.org.au) or e-mail Michael at [MC1@pobox.com](mailto:MC1@pobox.com).

Michael is the MRAA's Road Safety & Research Officer

He is the MRAA rep to the ATSB's (Australian Transport Safety Bureau) motorcycle safety advisory council [www.atsb.gov.au](http://www.atsb.gov.au)

He is also a member of the AMC (Australian Motorcycle Council), which is the peak rider group for Australia [au.groups.yahoo.com/group/AMCF](http://au.groups.yahoo.com/group/AMCF)

## VACC Disappointed – Motorcycles Omitted from Government's Transport Plan

The Bracks Government has failed to recognise the growing importance of powered two-wheelers (PTWs) in its Transport Plan, released in early May.

Victorian Automotive Chamber of Commerce Senior Manager of Government and Public Affairs David Russell said there had been no mention of the presence of motorcycles or scooters on Victorian roads in the Transport Plan, let alone any other form of PTW.

Powered two-wheelers such as electric bicycles and mopeds, as well as the more conventional scooters and motorcycles, hold one part of the solution to congested roads and high fuel prices.

"Commuters are turning to them in droves and it's time the Victorian Government recognised their presence on the roads and acted to make their use safer," Mr Russell said

"Scooter and motorcycle sales are up 40% in the past three years. They are now permanent features of city and suburban roads. It is intolerable that there are no new road-sharing initiatives in the Transport Plan to cater for this growing transport alternative."

Mr Russell said a motorcycle forum held in March resulted in the identification of a number of needs for motorcycles and scooters on the roads.

These included:

- the need to adopt a new licensing system to allow learners to ride at an earlier age with research undertaken to determine the appropriate age
- PTWs be considered during road and infrastructure design processes Improved rider incentives using low-cost or subsidised skill-based training
- The removal of the motorcycle levy, or a non-discriminatory, transparent and accountable levy for all PTWs to ensure registration fees were dedicated to maintaining and improving road conditions and safety training for all riders The implementation of PTW safety boxes at traffic lights and intersections and the Great Ocean Road initiative to be used as a model for reporting dangers and hazards for implementing road improvements.

"This is an area which is not going to go away. The Government must start addressing the needs of users of all powered two wheelers to ensure Victoria's roads and infrastructure cater for the growth in use of this economical style of transport," Mr Russell said.

DJ McCarthy

## Two-wheelers steal the show

The car market may be responding to a touch on the brakes by buyers but the automotive industry still offers success stories, and right now motorcycle sales are taking off across Australia.

Statistics released by the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries show that all forms of two-wheelers had record sales in the first quarter of 2006 - on top of a record result for the whole of 2005.

CEO Peter Sturrock says a new-found enthusiasm for motorcycles has been evident in the past few years, largely due to middle-aged drivers returning to the "freedom" of two wheels. A record 25,512 units were sold in the first three months of this year - 19.6% more than for the same period last year.

Most of the sales were of road machines. Mr Sturrock says 11,165 were sold in the first quarter - up more than 28% on last year. In addition to the baby boomer phenomenon, the market has benefited from the rise in popularity of motor scooters.

This category was up 30% for the past full year. For the first quarter of this year the gain was 47.3%, a total of 2319 units.

Mr Sturrock says the Australian scooter scene is building real momentum as city dwellers seek transport options that are simple, cheap and free of parking hassles.

"The more that people see scooters on our roads the more they are likely to enquire about buying one," he said.

Cruisers are also a popular part of the road-bike segment. These low-slung machines (Harley-Davidson being the most well-known brand) are chosen by many cashed-up baby boomers. They are as much about recreation as transport, Mr Sturrock says. Cruiser sales rose 19.4% to 8835 in the first three months.

The top brands in the record first quarter were Honda (6024 sales), Yamaha (5532) and Suzuki (2938).

*DJ McCarthy*

## BMW Icicle Ride

Well, Adam, Alan, Paul, G and myself met up at the BP where Alan regaled us of his petrol sniffing illusions at the Shell servo

About 180 bikes turned out on a balmy night for a great adventure.

We left the BP at midnight. Alan and Paul went their own way for Berwick and Pakenham and ending up at Rokeby for a soup stop.

Adam, G and I had a wonderful time following BMWs that had no idea where we were supposed to be going. Luckily someone had a brain wave and led us back to civilisation at Rokeby for some lovely warm soup.

After being told the difference between left and right, we headed off on the second leg. To Darnum/Cloverlea, Yarragon, Thorpdale and Mirboo North and ending at BP Korumburra. This time we were in the first 10 to arrive. But we apparently missed a wooden bridge somewhere. Alan's navigation seems to wander, sometimes. The Trumpy handled the twisties in the dark pretty well, though.

After a coffee and Adam's tales of wildlife we headed off on the third leg, where the roads were a little damp now. However, we missed the rain itself.

Then it was off to breakfast in Frankston with Alan leading. Somehow I found myself alone in the twisties. Paul and Alan had taken off chasing Beemers. G and Adam were nowhere to be seen behind me. Not quite sure where I was going I followed two tail lights on a left turn and after a few kilometres realised this was not a road made for a road bike, and decided to head back to the intersection.

Here I got held up waiting (luckily) for the large group to pass. I tucked in behind them quietly for the last section, down towards Koo Wee Rup, some place called Bayles, over a wooden bridge under repair, up to Cranbourne then down the Cranbourne - Frankston road to breakfast at the Frankston Yacht Club where I finally rejoined my companions. A hearty breakfast was had, then 5 mins up the road to home.

It was a great night. But we need another 20 or so of us for next year, so we can win the trophy.

Ps. One member rode for another club and cheated, by taking the highway form Korumburra to Frankston. You know who you are

Thanks Guys for a great night, and kudos to the BMW club for a great event. We had no serious problems all night other than a couple of punctures and bruised egos for their lack of navigation skills

*Gavin Stilgoe*



Motorcycles Touring Victoria is a website that has been set up for , and dedicated to, motorcyclists who wish to explore some of the best motorcycle touring country in this state.

Based in East Gippsland, it has links to the roads, downloads, maps, advice on fatigue, sleep debt, and road safety initiatives.

Russ Wade, and avid motorcycling enthusiast is the website's developer.

You can find it on the web at [www.motorcyclesaust.com](http://www.motorcyclesaust.com)



# NEW IDEAS NEEDED FOR TWO WHEELED TRANSPORT

**What is the greatest risk faced by the growing army of young men and women who now ride scooters to and from work?**

This is the question that VACC believes the Victorian Government, and its responsible regulator, must now ask itself.

There is no sign of the boom in scooter and motorcycle sales abating. For this, industry analysts point to three factors: traffic congestion, rising petrol prices and new urban lifestyle choices.

**The greatest risk**

"The Transport Minister must now recognise the changing environment and take initiatives to make the roads safer for scooter and motorcycle riders, as has been initiated for bicycle riders," VACC Executive Director David Purchase said. "Neither regulation, nor training, nor traffic management and infrastructure-use has kept pace with the boom in sales of two wheeled transport.

"Clearly, cars and poor road-sharing practices pose the greatest risk to scooter riders. It is time for Government, industry and motorcycling groups to put forward new ideas and new road safety initiatives to make it safer for scooters and motorcycle riders to share the roads.

**Booming sales**

"Motorcycles and scooters are here to stay. Last year, sales topped 100,000. That means

that one in eleven vehicles sold was a motorcycle, scooter or ATV. It is past time for action," Mr Purchase said.

"The initiatives identified in the 'Motorcycle Forum' communiqué, agreed by representative rider groups, by industry, by representatives of advisory bodies, is a good place to start."

**Traffic management**

To move discussion forward, VACC proposes the following traffic management initiatives:

- That filtering be permitted to the left and right of stationary or slow moving vehicles. That, on busy intersections, filtering lanes be identified as a signal to road users that the practice is permitted.
- That motorcycle safety boxes be placed at the head of busy intersections (the safest place for motorcycle or scooter riders is at the head of stopped traffic).

- That scooters (and mopeds) be permitted to share bicycle lanes. That scooters and mopeds using these lanes be limited to 35kph speed limit.

- That 'boxed turns' be encouraged on busy intersections, and marked and signed. (This simple initiative would avoid leaving scooter riders hanging out in the middle of intersections amid fast moving traffic.)

- That scooters and motorcycles be permitted to use bus lanes and taxi lanes.

- That a system of 'Safe Routes' be identified, signed and promoted across the city for users of two-wheeled transport. That these routes have clearly designated lanes, with traffic management features designed to encourage their use. (This would encourage car drivers using these routes to become more alert to bicycle and scooter riders and to thus adopt better road sharing practices.)

- That Victoria adopt LAMS (Learner Approved Motorcycle Schemes), as has been adopted by NSW and SA.



Filtering lanes identified on high traffic flow intersections. (this will point to the white lanes with arrow heads)

Boxed turns encouraged on high traffic flow intersections. (this will point to the arrow that curves across the intersection)

An interconnecting system of Safe Routes traversing city and suburbs. (this will point to the SAFE ROUTE sign)

## The MRA board is finally planning to purchase our own Offices.

No Doubt, there will be some questions re this decision. We will attempt to answer some of the obvious ones.

Firstly, why? This decision was made by the board for a number of reasons.

- The primary reason is because for us, rent money truly is dead money. The only time this is not true, is if you can use it as a tax deduction. As a non-profit organization we can't do that, so renting provides absolutely no benefits for us whatsoever.
- Had we done this 20 years ago, we would now own it and all your membership fees would be able to go to fighting for motorcycling rights. Lets not make the same mistake for our future membership.
- There is not going to be a better opportunity for us in the near future to do this. Real estate prices keep going up. The premises we are looking at are in Quist crt, next door to where we are now and are very reasonably priced at \$200,000.
- It will give us a permanent base. It will permit us to set it up the way we want it. We can put in entertainment facilities such as a pool table, a bar and a jukebox. This will permit us to use it for functions and as a drop in spot.
- We can not get kicked out and we will not be subject to unreasonable rental increases
- The increasing value of the premises will go to us in the form of collateral and not to the landlord.

What are the potential disadvantages to doing this?

The only potential problem that we can foresee would be increasing interest rates. This will need to be and will be assessed regularly. It is worth realizing though, that during times of rate increases, rents tend to do the same. Rents will then stay at that level, whereas rates come down. So to rent for this reason is in fact false economy.

Will we incur more charges, such as rates, water rates, building repairs etc.? No, as a commercial client we are already liable for these, so we may as well pay it on our own premises.

Will there be an increase in what we pay out for offices as a result of buying. Yes there will be in the short term. Currently we are paying \$800 per month rent and the repayments on \$180,000 will be approximately \$1300. Rents tend to lag 5 years behind mortgage repayments, so the increase is time limited. It is also worth remembering that this is still less than what we were paying in South Melbourne, so we can afford this.

What if we fail in our bid to buy this property? In that event, the funds will stay in the building fund for 12 months, or until we find another property. If we are unable to buy a property in that time, the funds will be returned.

What if the MRA folds? Although we hope that this will never happen, if it did, the building would be sold, debts paid off and the remains would be split evenly amongst all the members.

Why are we buying in Dandenong? These premises are priced at \$200,000 and we can't really afford anything more expensive. Unfortunately there is not a lot available at that price and certainly not closer into town. We need to remember that this is a long term plan and this is only the first step. Say in 5 years after we have paid of a fair bit of this, we can use the collateral in this property to upgrade to a better premises.

Who will own the building? The building will be owned by the MRA, or in other words: you the members.

How far are we from reaching our goal? We have already raised \$2000, so at the time of print, we are \$18,000 short. There is only a 1 month window of opportunity here, so we need to move fast.

How are we planning to raise \$18,000? We are planning to do this in 2 ways.

1 - Sell advertising space on the building to those businesses that have provided us with support in the past.

2 - You the members are going to have the opportunity to support this as well. You will be able to buy your own brick of the building at either \$25 or \$50 per brick and write your name or slogan on it. This will remain there for as long as we will be there, to record your support for the MRA and the premises.

Can we raise more? Absolutely. We are aiming to raise between \$30,000 to \$45,000, which will go towards reducing the repayments.

How can I buy a brick? There is a notice in this issue of the magazine with the all the details. Anyone can buy a brick and if you the members get behind this, then you can help make this a reality. When you buy a brick, you need to make sure that you put your details and / or membership number with it, as this will be used to allocate your brick to write on.

Lastly, this building will belong to you the members, so anything you put into it will ultimately be yours to benefit from. So buy your brick and make it happen.

The MRA Board.



*Will this be our new home? With your support, it can be. Check the next page to see how you can help make this happen.*

# **The MRA is finally going to buy its own premises!**

This is your opportunity to be a part of one of the most exciting growth phases of the MRA.

ALL ITS MEMBERS WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO  
**“BUY A BRICK”**  
TO HELP IT RAISE FUNDS.

Buying a brick will give you the rights to write your name on a brick in the building, together with any message you wish to put on it.

This will stay on the brick for the life of the building.

**700 bricks have been allocated**  
**250 bricks @ \$50 each on rows 6 to 10**  
**450 bricks @ \$25 ea on rows 6 and below**

Bricks can be purchased by making cheques/money orders out to:

The MRA Building fund

Please send to our office c/o the Treasurer

Or you can purchase a brick from our online shop at:

[www.mraa.org.au/shop](http://www.mraa.org.au/shop)

Be sure to add your details and membership number, or you will not get the credit

We only have a month to pull this off, so get in as soon as you get it and help the MRA gain a permanent home for us all.

## MP's Statement is "Totally Irresponsible"

The President of the Motorcycle Riders Association of Australia, Mr Dale Maggs, today attacked as "totally irresponsible" recent statements made by the Member for Morwell (MLA), Mr Brendan Jenkins MP.



*Brendan Jenkins, MLA for Morwell (ALP)*

Mr Jenkins (above) has stated in an interview with WIN TV that Wire Rope Barriers had saved motorcyclists lives said Mr Maggs. This is an irresponsible and erroneous statement and the MRAA trusts that Mr Jenkins will apologise to the families of the motorcyclists killed and injured by these barriers.

To quote from the Monash University Accident Research Centre report - Motorcyclist Injury Risk With Flexible Wire Rope Barriers And Potential Mitigating Measures produced for VicRoads in September 2004:

While the absolute number of motorcyclist crashes into barriers represents a small proportion of all motorcycle crashes, crashes involving barriers represent a disproportionate (although still small) number of motorcycle fatalities. In the United Kingdom, Department of Transport data indicate that while only 137 (0.3%) of the 41,451 motorcyclist crashes reported in 1991 involved crash barriers, these crashes accounted for 14 (2.1%) of all motorcyclist fatalities (BMF, 1998). Between the years 1995 to 1998, a total of 23 fatalities resulted from barrier collisions in the Netherlands, while in Austria (1990-1996), 11.7% of barrier crashes were fatal compared with 5.2% for all crash types. In France, collisions involving (metal) barriers on country roads represented 30% of motorcyclist fatalities involving roadside hazards (Brailly, 1998). Similarly in Denmark between the years 1993 and 1997, 20% of motorcyclists who hit a barrier died, while 60% were seriously injured (FEMA, 2000).

In other words, the chances for death or injury for a motorcyclist hitting a barrier are up to 7 times higher than if they don't hit a barrier. Up until recently the injuries caused by hitting barriers have been infrequent – however with the added proliferation of these barriers along Australian highways, the number of casualty crashes involving will inevitably increase.

Given that this government has already shown a lamentable lack of interest in motorcyclists by their exclusion from the recent sorry excuse for a transport strategy, it is not surprising that an MP could display such a remarkable insensitivity. The Motorcycle Riders Association calls for Mr Jenkins to publicly apologise and to retract these statements and wishes to point out that despite several requests, Mr Jenkins has thus far failed to answer requests to discuss this matter with the MRAA.

## New Dispute Rules for TAC Claims

There is good news for injured MRA members having trouble with the TAC. A new scheme has been set up which means that disputes can be settled without going to court.

Sometimes there can be problems with the TAC providing help to recovering riders.

The problems can range from major help being refused to smaller issues such as physiotherapy treatment being stopped. A number of years ago, a three day hearing took place at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal over an ankle brace. The Judge at VCAT commented that the costs of the TAC in the appeal would have been enough to have paid for the ankle brace for the next 20 years!

Now all that has to be done to dispute a TAC decision is to fill in a form and send it to TAC. The Commission must then give to the person's solicitor all the information it used to make the decision. The lawyer can then reply, pointing out where the TAC got it wrong.

The protocols require a meeting to be held shortly after this exchange. The person from the TAC, the lawyer and claimant are required to discuss the issue and attempt to solve it. If necessary a mediator can also attend the meeting and the TAC will pay the mediator's fee. If the TAC agree to change the decision they will pay most of the lawyers costs depending upon the issues in dispute. This could mean that the injured person may not be out of pocket.

This new system will help the person who has had taken away a vital but relatively inexpensive treatment. These treatments may be essential in rehabilitation but not worth the financial risk of fighting against the TAC in a Tribunal. Now a much cheaper and less risky option is available.

If the new process does not solve the problem, the right to go to VCAT is still there. It is important to remember that the application to VCAT must be made within 12 months of you becoming aware of the decision. The new dispute application protocol with TAC does not extend this time limit.

Even in the days of "no win – no fee" litigation, the worry for individuals is that if they go to VCAT or court and lose, they could be ordered to pay TAC's costs. If the new protocols work properly, it could work out to be "no win – no cost" or better still "win-win".

*Michael Lombard  
Holding Redlich*

*Michael Lombard is the partner in charge of the Transport Accident Division of Holding Redlich, 350 William Street, Melbourne.*

# Motorcycle Rider's Association Membership Form



ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE      \$45.00

-OR-    \$37.00  If this is an additional membership from same address as a current member (member no: \_\_\_\_\_) who has paid the full fee.  
(NB: Newsletters & other mail outs not included.)

MEMBER NO: \_\_\_\_\_ (IF RENEWAL)

**PAYMENT METHOD:**

Cheque       Money Order

VISA       MasterCard

Please make cheques and money orders payable to: **MRA Australia**

Name on Credit card: *[in capital letters please]*

<b>Full Name:</b>	
<b>Address:</b> [Number & Street]	
[Suburb]	
[State, Postcode]	
<b>AH Phone:</b>	
<b>BH Phone:</b>	
<b>Mobile:</b>	
<b>Email:</b>	
<b>D.O.B:</b> [dd/mm/yyyy]	
<b>Occupation:</b>	
<b>Bike/s Make:</b>	
<b>Bike/s Model:</b>	

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

-      -      -

Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Signature:

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

***Do you have access to the Internet?***

Yes       No

***What's your internet connection speed?***

Dialup       Broadband

***Would you prefer to receive your member newsletter by e-mail instead of post?***

Yes       No

***Thank you for your support!***

# How often do you ride your bike?

**Yearly... Monthly...  
Weekly... Daily...**

---

At Western QBE, we understand that real enthusiasts need to be able to ride their bike whenever they want.

You can tailor a policy to suit your lifestyle, no matter how often you ride your bike.

Call us for a Quote today...  
and don't forget we'll beat any price – Guaranteed!

---

**1800 24 34 64**

---



**WESTERN  
QBE  
INSURANCE**

**Your Motorcycle Insurance Specialists**

QBEA WQBE 140 111 301 2

Offer valid for new business policies and on existing Western QBE motorcycle insurance policies that are on renewal. Price guarantees based on price of our standard policy compared to competitors. Offer valid for the first 12 months of insurance, after this the premium will be charged at the competitive Western QBE standard rate. Applies to APRA authorised insurers only who hold an AFSL issued by ASIC. Does not apply to any free offers of insurance. Normal underwriting terms, conditions & acceptance criteria apply. Insurance is issued by QBE Insurance (Australia) Limited ABN 78 003 191 035 trading as Western QBE Insurance. To decide if a policy is right for you please carefully read the Product Disclosure Statement which is available at [www.westernqbe.com.au](http://www.westernqbe.com.au) or by phoning us on 1800 24 34 64.