



2012/2013 year in review

The 2012/2013 year has been a busy one for the Association with multiple matters demanding input, some of which are still ongoing and will be for some time.

The main focus of the Association is to lobby for improvements on matters that directly affect motorcyclists. These matters are continually being presented to us or are brought about by Government actions.

As the main representative body for motorcyclists we encourage all to contact the Association if there is a matter that needs attention on behalf of riders.

The following is a summary of what has been happening that could and does affect Queensland riders.

Motorcycle licensing review

In June 2012 the Government reacted to a private petition from a Sunshine Coast mother whose son had died in a single vehicle motorcycle accident and was calling for a review of the motorcycle licensing system because she believed that her son should not have been awarded his license and it had failed to adequately equip him and that this was the reason for his death.

She had been successful in garnishing the support of her local parliamentary member who supported her petition and introduced it in Parliament and saw it through to action.

Although the death was tragic the reasoning for the petition and resultant review was later found, at the coronial enquiry into the son's death, to be less justifiable than on first impression because it exposed that the son was actually attempting to evade police apprehension at the time of his death and had more than 6 months post license experience.

The review, never the less, went ahead and focussed on the two different ways that a license can be obtained in Queensland being namely by private provider competency based training and certification (QRide) or by straight QTMR test after a minimum learner license period (QSafe).

The MRAQ submitted to the review both written and verbal testify as did QTMR, CARRSQ, numerous QRide providers, Motorcycling Australia, Ulysses and some private individuals and groups. These various submissions and face to face evidence sessions ran through July and August. The overwhelming thrust was that Qride offered the best system for training and gauging competency other than it could probably do with some fine tuning.

Attention was additionally directed to pre-learning training and whether QSafe could or does offer satisfactory evidence of a rider's competency. The MRAQ focus its submissions on these aspects with evidence supplied being used in the text of the final report.

The review report was finalised in September and handed to Parliament in October with its main recommendation being that QRide have more on road time included and that the competency level included in the system outline be reviewed for accuracy plus that a pre-learner system be implemented and that QSafe be limited to only areas of the state that do not have access to QRide providers.

The focus for this action is the QTMR however to date no action has been implemented from the review recommendations.

<http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Documents/TableOffice/TabledPapers/2012/5412T1232.pdf>

Helmets

The laws, both federal and state, applying to motorcycle helmets for quite some time have been in disarray and in need of revision or correction and have been the focus of the national body the Australian Motorcycle Council(AMC).

Chris Mearns (MRAQ President) was requested to participate on the AMC helmet committee and accepted.

During the period from September 2012 to date submission by letter, phone, email and face to face have been made to the Queensland Main Roads Minister, The Queensland Attorney General, the ACCC and various state departmental personnel.

These representations have resulted in admissions from the various parties that there is a problem with the current laws and that Queensland bodies will be participating in forthcoming Federal and States reviews of the laws and standards applying to helmets Australia wide.

Further, the ACM helmets committee chairman Guy Stanford has, after initial contact from CM, been able liaise directly with the Qld. Main Roads staff member preparing the Qld. report and we hope has been able to provide relevant information that will be included in the resultant submission and has assisted in providing a better understanding of the conflicting documents and interests on the issue.

We await the official announcement of the actual review and have been assured that we will be invited to participate.

Late breaking – ACCC annoyances helmet standard review.

<http://www.productsafety.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/1002090/fromItemId/974854>

ADR/Road Rules conflicts

Over the past 12 months substantial conflicts in the various pieces of legislation governing vehicle configuration and use have been presented and we are now becoming increasingly concerned with misuse or misunderstanding of the various rules.

Various notifications of unsustainable bookings in relation to these rules conflicts have been supplied and from further investigation guidance on the appropriate course of action by the recipients have been suggested with most being actioned and having the booking withdrawn.

Going forward it is our intention to make a list of these conflicting rules and present them to the appropriate authorities with a view to having all conflicts removed from the system.

As we now know from the fight over helmets, getting a government department to action these justifiable requests can be a source of considerable frustration and needs multiple followed ups to achieve the required outcome.

The National Transport Commission (NTC) has released a review of the national road rules and the MRAQ will be making a submission.

<http://www.ntc.gov.au/viewpage.aspx?documentid=2029>

Motorcycle Safety

The Association made contact during the year with the Minister for Transport and Main Roads to suggest a no cost safety initiative. This was to use the large sign units situated on the various highways and tollways to better use than present.

Currently these signs, particularly on the tollways, are predominantly displaying messages about payment of tolls and are not being used to the best effect that they could have in relation to making safety issues more visible.

The suggestion was made to use the signs to greater effect to display safety message with motorcycle awareness as one that could and should be displayed.

The response received was that this would be implemented but unfortunately the action to date does not seem to have been achieved.

Further follow up will be ongoing to attempt to get this sensible action underway.

Ride event

The MRAQ was directly involved with one main ride event in October. The event was called the Freedom Ride and saw a day ride with route through the Sunshine Coast hinterland. Participation was excellent with approximately 150 riders involved.

The resultant proceeds from the minimal ride participation donation shored up the financial position of the Association and allowed for the continued operation.

The ride gave us the opportunity to spread the word of what was happening within the Association and what issues were currently being worked on what had happened in the recent past.

This ride is being planned again for this year on the 23rd. November and is proposed as an ongoing annual event. Your support is encouraged.

<http://www.mraqld.org/index.php/events-2.html>

Going forward

As previously stated we have been presented with and found by investigation that there are a significant number of road rules and laws applying to motorcycles and riders that have conflicting requirements in various documents. These conflicts are impacting on riders.

Our current focus is now to find and document all of these conflicts then fight to have them correct or removed.

As has been found with the helmet issue this will not be a simple case of showing a problem and having it fixed without a large amount of pressure being exerted.

It is disappointing to find and highlight these situations to the authorities and then not be able to get speedy action to correct them; however without any action the problem just gets increasing worse and more complicated to correct.

The MRAQ encourages anyone that may find an issue that affects riders to make contact so that we can investigate a correction for the situation.

The Committee looks forward to another productive year ahead and would like to see you involved with any and all issues that may present.

Get involved and support the organisation that supports you as a motorcyclist.

*The Motorcycle Rider's Association of Queensland is the representative body for
Motorcycle & Scooter riders in Queensland*
MRAQ - UNITING RIDERS