



July 2014

Year in review 2013/2014

Major events/actions for the period

- New laws and their effect
- Changes to existing road use laws
- Ongoing requests for change/correction

New laws and their effect

It would be difficult to believe that anyone with any interest in motorcycling or political events would not be aware of the events in Queensland from October 2013 to date relating to a raft on new and revised laws that were introduced in the wake an incident on the Gold Coast in late September 2013.

The resulting legislation that was introduced with the interesting acronym of the VLAD suite of laws and legislation changes had immediate adverse effect on all motorcyclists and the MRAQ has had to spend a substantial part of its attention since the introduction on attending to the consequences of these laws.

The MRAQ has been involved in the ramification and discussion on these events from the first day of their proposed introduction with the media immediately contacting the organisation for a response. *See attached media reports from the early proceedings with MRAQ direct input.*

The most alarming result of the poorly drafted and directed laws was that any motorcyclist and more particularly any that could be even cursorily viewed as a member of back patched clubs was subjected to completely unwarranted attention from law enforcement. This was exactly our greatest fear.

Since the introduction of these laws the Queensland government has been waging a rear guard action to attempt to justify the offensive particulars and results with extremely limited effect. The outcomes of the first month or so of their implementation was the complete vindication for the stance that the MRAQ has held since day one.

Multiple attempts have been and are still being made by the government to justify their offensive legislation by media statements and meeting with concerned groups which have included both the MRAQ and AMC, however almost immediately following these, evidence of the problems have reappeared. With no action to date having been taken to rectify any of the problematic sections of the legislation the MRAQ still holds its original position as being valid and will be working at any opportunity to state this.

The MRAQ holds that these laws must be overturned because no law should identify any group or individual for attention or penalty that is different to that which all people are subject and that the reversal of the assumption of innocence must not be tolerated.

The introduction of these laws has had an extraordinary effect on the Queensland motorcycling public and has taken an enormous amount of time of our organisation to deal with. Thus far there has been little or no results for the government that could not have been achieved by simply providing additional resources to the enforcement of the laws that existed before their introduction.

It is difficult not to believe that the whole motivation for the introduction was political grandstanding and for not rescinding is to avoid gross embarrassment.

Changes to existing road use laws

The MRAQ has been in contact with the Department of Main Roads and Transport on multiple occasions to express our concern over poorly drafted or easily misused legislation. Not least of these has been our concern over lane filtering, helmet standards and rider control.

It was gratifying to get a response from the minister in June to indicate that he was interested in reviewing these particular problematic

legislative instruments with the view to correcting them in such a fashion as we have been requesting. *See attached discussion paper*

Response was sort via a web survey to seek the opinion of the Queensland public on the issues with a large input being received and the overwhelming majority reportedly being in favour of the changes. The MRAQ also took the opportunity to provide additional written input to the discussion.

On completion of the survey the Minister reported the positive response to the suggestions and that he would be making recommendations in the near future.

We await his full response.

Ongoing requests for changes/corrections

Additional to those mentioned above the MRAQ has been lobbying the government to alter or correct a number of other anomalies contained in legislation.

The most prominent of these are concerned with mismatching or incorrect legislation associated with vehicle standards.

The Queensland legislation on vehicle standards was recently updated to include and reflect the National Vehicle Standard and Code of Practice for Modification. Unfortunately, as seems to be the occurrence far too often, not sufficient attention was paid to the complete homogeneity of all the various documents with the resultant effect that there are numerous conflicting requirements.

The main thrust of attention is on the inconsistencies with mirrors, indicators and exhausts.

To date the response on these has been left to representatives of the department and their input to correcting the situations has been underwhelming.

The MRAQ will be continuing to seek rectification.

Chris Mearns
President