



Still having a go!

With Greg Hirst

RIDING AS ONE

The motorcycling world is changing in Australia in a way that very few could ever have expected. It's been tumultuous to say the least. Yet amidst all this change something positive has been developing around the country amongst the Christian Motorcycle Clubs and Associations. Historically these clubs made up of very independent and free thinking motorcyclists (much like most bikers I reckon) but since 1997 there has been a growing movement to encourage unity and fellowship amongst Christian motorcycle organisations. Meeting annually since then this growing band of NSW riders has been able to encourage a similar approach at a national level.

In 2006 the first Australian Christian Motorcycle Clubs Conference occurred in Sydney at the Brotherhood CMC clubhouse and focused on how important being OK with God is, how helpful having Jesus Christ as a mate has been in our lives and focused on what we have in common spiritually rather than our different opinions about motorcycling things.

It seemed to work well with riders from a number of states keen to see it repeated. In 2009 it was, this time hosted in South Australia by Longriders CMC. Again it was a time to reflect on the 'God Stuff' that we have in common, go for a ride together and generally have some biker fun. It was also a time to hear a report from Mac and Shaun from Longriders CMC describing their club's views about the recent South Australian laws aimed at closing down sections of the motorcycle community in that state.

After much spirited discussion it was agreed to put out a Conference Statement summarising the Conference concerns about these laws, send it to Premier Rann and then to the motorcycle press.

Statement from the Australian Christian Motorcycle Clubs and Associations conference, 20-22 March 2009, regarding the South Australian (SA) Serious Organised Crimes Control Act (SOCCA) "Bikie bill"

*To the Honourable Premier of South Australia,
Michael Rann.*

At the recent gathering of Christian Motorcycle Clubs and Associations at Wellington in South Australia, the current SOCCA Act was discussed at length and we agreed to express our concerns directly to you.

We support the principle that law should apply to all Australians equally. However, in relation to this Act, we believe it gives unnecessarily broad discretionary powers to the authorities. This allows them to focus on marginalised groups in our society in an unfair manner.

At court, this Act removes the right to examine evidence and to cross-examine witnesses, which inevitably removes the right to natural justice.

We also express concern for the potential misuse of these powers by any authority in the future.

We affirm the need for appropriate criminal law in this country, encourage all citizens to abide by it, and believe it should be applied without discrimination.

The participants of this conference strongly believe that the SA SOCCA laws are unjust, infringe on basic human rights, and criminalise people who are not proven to be criminals.

This Act reverses the fundamental principle of law of "innocent until proven guilty".

We respectfully call for this law to be repealed.

Regards,

Edward (Mac) Hayes,

*Longriders Christian Motorcycle Club (Murray Bridge)
on behalf of the following:*

Ambassadors Christian Motorcycle Club (NSW) Inc

Balaam's Ass Motorcycle Chaplaincy (WA)

Balaam's Ass Motorcycle Chaplaincy (NSW)

Brotherhood Christian Motorcycle Club (NSW)

Christian Motorcyclists Association of Australia, SA Inc,

Christian Motorcyclists Association of Australia, NSW Inc

Christian Motorcyclists Association of Australia, Vic Inc

Longriders Christian Motorcycle Club (Adelaide) Inc.

Longriders Christian Motorcycle Club (Murray Bridge) Inc.

Longriders Christian Motorcycle Club (NSW) Inc.

Longriders Christian Motorcycle Club (Vic) Inc.

Righteous Christian Motorcycle Club

The Disciples Christian Motorcycle Club

Warriors of Zion Christian Motorcycle Club (NZ).

As you can see these Christian clubs in no way support criminal activity but those attending the Conference clearly agreed with the local Law Society and MRA South Australia that the current SOCCA Bill is not an appropriate way to address such issues. 

