

TAKING THE GAMBLE

Cops and cards are never a good mix!

FEATURE BY HIRSTY

WHEN I went over to the United Motorcycle Council's Poker Run in South Australia last May, I was caught by surprise. Firstly, the meeting point was an Anglican Church near the centre of town, which may seem unusual, but considering the event was hosted by Longriders CMC, it was evident that people from different parts of South Australian society were now joining with bikers in a common purpose to oppose the SA laws.

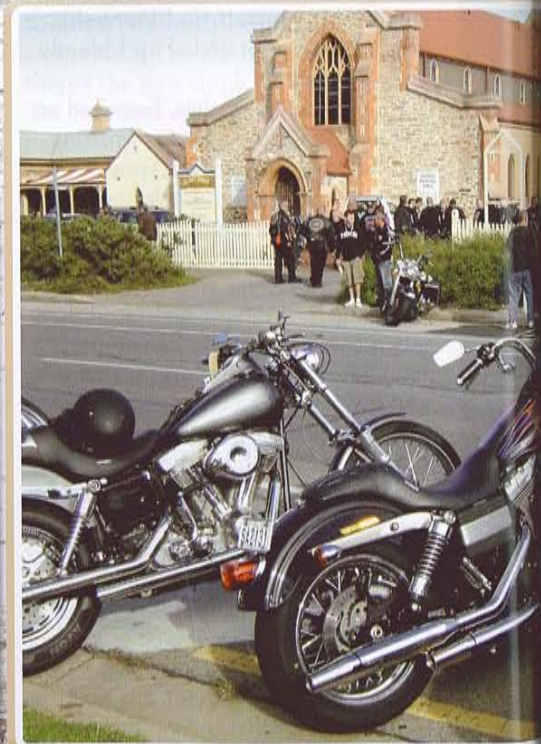
Another pleasing aspect was the large club turnout amongst the hundreds on their bikes. Patched clubs of all sorts attended from 1%, Christian and social clubs as well as groups of mainstream riders and interstate guests all gathered happily in the church grounds and outside

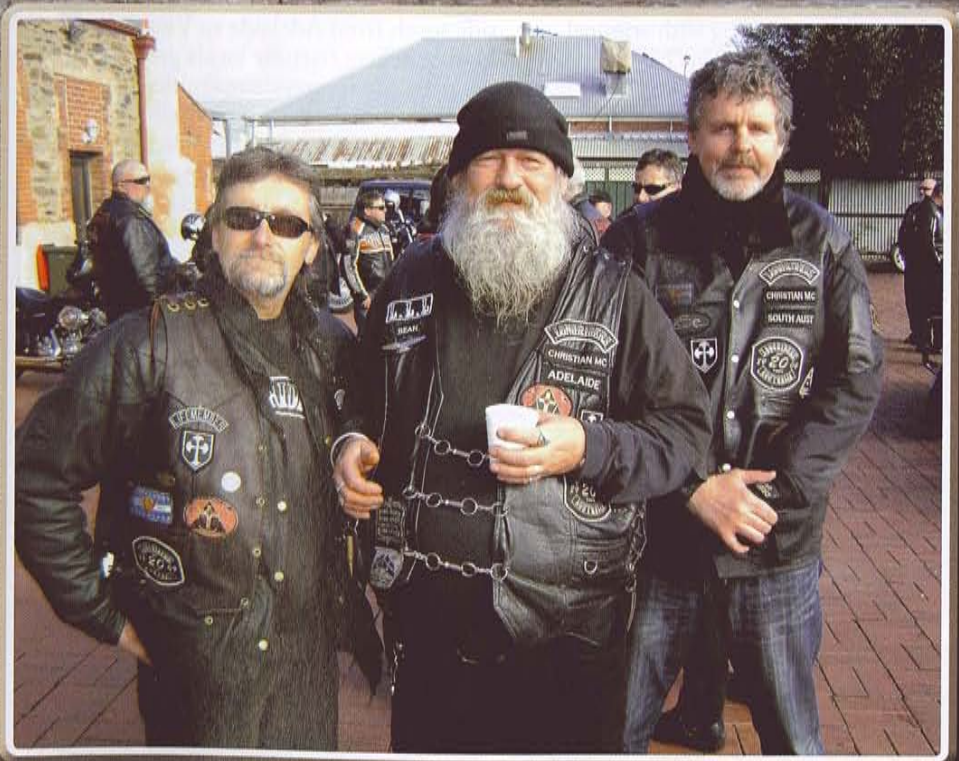
in the adjacent park while the UMC organisers got everything to do with the poker run sorted.

A large media presence that moved freely amongst the hundreds of bikers seemed interested in what the bikers had to say. Tom, the UMC spokesman, passionately spoke to them about the dangers of the anti-association legislation. Paul Kuhn from Free Australia did likewise and so did the Shadow Attorney General Stephen Wade, who made a surprise appearance at St. Lukes in order to criticize the Rann Government over its handling of the legislation.

In a later interview on 2CCR FM's Ride program, he explained himself:

"For many years, Australian law has acted against those who associate for criminal activities. The Liberal Party supports such laws. However, the Liberal Party is not convinced that







the current SOCCA legislation will be effective at dealing with criminal organisations on the one hand and we are concerned, on the other, that it is too broadly written such it may affect law-abiding citizens.

The Liberal Party is of the view that Labor has mishandled the SOCCA-legislation. As soon as the Supreme Court ruled the law invalid we called on Labor to get the legislation back into the Parliament to fix it. If Labor had done this, it would have saved hundreds of thousands of dollars on a High Court frolic and we could have better laws in place today!"

These statements made the Poker Run quite an historic event. In the state where the anti-association-laws were born, a politician from a major political party had finally come out and publicly bagged the legislation along with the SA government. In case you're wondering, he didn't come on a bike, which is a shame

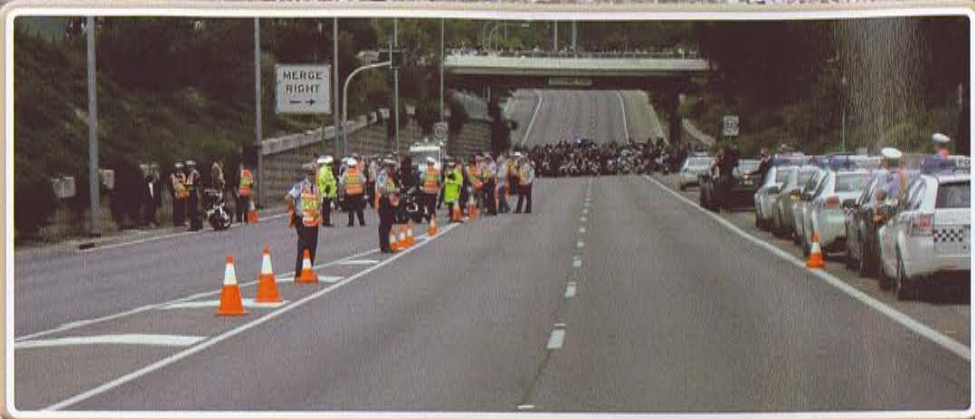
because he missed a picturesque ride south from Adelaide to Victor Harbor, where friendly locals greeted the mass of motorcycle magnificence.

The police did their bit as well, coordinating the traffic lights, blocking side streets and leading the run so that all of us could have an uninterrupted ride from and back to Adelaide, with only the occasional mass road block for license and rego checks as well as drug and alcohol testing.

It was a shame that the Shadow Attorney General wasn't on a bike when the run was stopped on the southern freeway with police lined up along the side of the road and their vehicles lined up for hundreds of metres ahead, forcing riders to wait for nearly an hour as they did their stuff. Or on the road to Victor Harbor, where the police had a major breath testing operation in place.

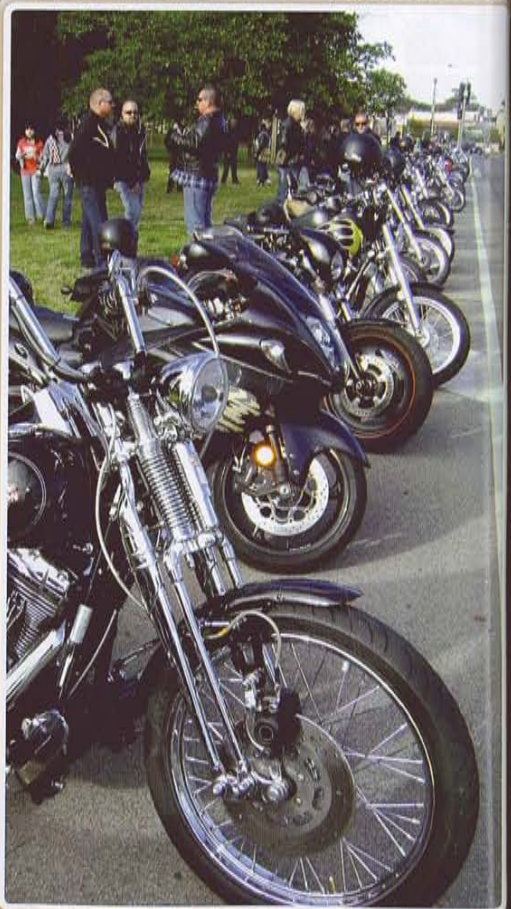
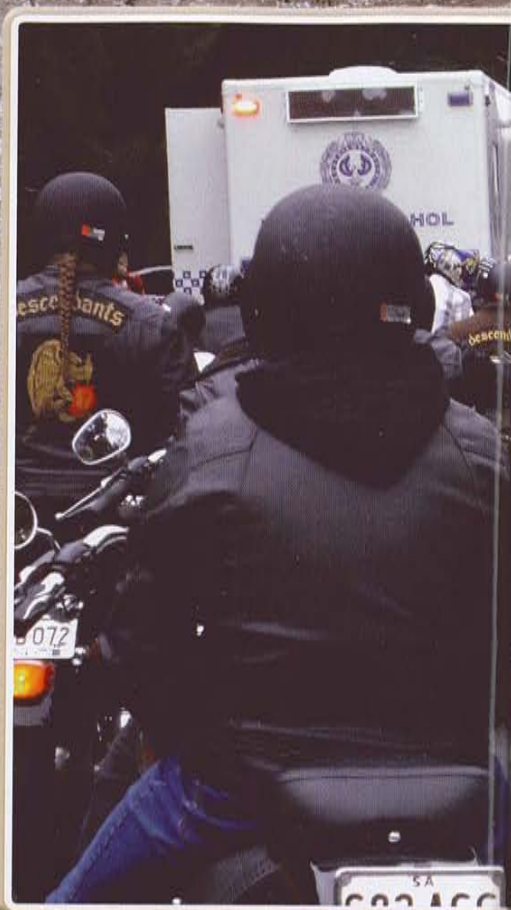
If he had come he would have experienced the long delays that all of this caused and the may have also





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heard a lone policeman apologising to a member of the Longriders CMC for having to test him. Not that it bothered the locals. They're used to this sort of treatment in South Australia and include it in their planning for these sorts of events. In fact, so often does it occur that the police don't even bother keeping it a secret, telling the organisers their plans as well as the cooperation they were offering.

This was probably the most surprising aspect of the whole day; a friendly officer in charge who was

happy to assist the event and reveal his plans to stop the run to the UMC. He didn't even flinch when I told him that I'd be taking photos of his officers' behaviour for LTR. (I did this in case I needed to defend myself in court later).

A quite remarkable poker run I reckon. Plenty of bikes, plenty of media, plenty of police, a great riding day, picturesque scenery, a well organised event, friendly locals and a politician speaking out just like the motorcycle advocates do.

What more could you want? 🐾

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