



Motor Cycle Riders Association of South Australia Inc.

<http://www.mrasa.asn.au>

GPO Box 1895

Adelaide

SA 5001

19/03/2009

MEDIA RELEASE

Harassment, Abuse of Power or Simply Bullying?

“I am appalled”, said Phil McClelland, President of the Motorcycle Riders’ Association of South Australia yesterday, “at the behaviour of the police last weekend relating to the ‘Freedom of association Ride’. It was the kind of behaviour that one would expect from a police state. Most of the people on the ride were not criminal or associates of criminals, but were treated as if they were.

This was a peaceful protest against the recent Serious and Organised Crime laws brought in by the Rann Government and the behaviour of the police was a clear indication of how desperate the government is to demonise all motorcyclists who might be caught up in the net of the new laws and how alarmed it is that people might have the temerity to speak up against what they believe is unnecessary and unfair legislation.”

“I have been told by riders of the intimidation which they experienced on the Freedom of Association ride on 14th March 2009. Riders were pulled over as they approached the starting point, and then pulled over 30 metres later, *and then pulled over again 30 metres later.*

“Police Officers have an obligation to enforce the law. The law allows for random checks on the rider and the motor vehicle. The SA Police were not conducting random checks. They targeted riders on bikes they believed to be attending the ride. They passed the riders to the next officer in line and harassed the riders. They handed out infringement notices that are questionable. The riders will have to book the bike “in”, take time off work and part with \$138 at the Regency Motor Registry and many will be found to be legal.”

“When a rider is pulled over for:

- A prescribed amount of alcohol or drugs test,
- Licence check,
- Registration check

He or she should be able to expect a consistent, courteous and honest Police Officer.

An increasing number of riders report an experience that reflects poorly on the South Australian Police Force.”

“There is growing anecdotal evidence that a rider’s experience with the Police will depend on;

- What sort of bike he or she rides,
- What section of our society they are believed to be from,
- Which Officer they are confronted by,
- Who they ride with.”
-

“This is the old attitude test taken to a new extreme. There should be no difference to their experience with an officer if they ride a 50cc scooter with stiletto’s or a Harley and a patch.”

“The message from the police and the government is clear.

- Change the bike you ride,
- Change the leathers you wear for upmarket street clothes,
- Change the people you ride with,

And you can ride without harassment again.”

The message is wrong.

The law has to be *fairly* applied without Harassment, Abuse of Power or simply Bullying. The current attitude and behaviour of the police in the carrying out of their “duties” reflects badly on them and is not what any citizen expects from our police.

Phil McClelland
President MRA SA Inc
philipmcc@hotmail.com.au
0408 60 77 88