



To Queensland Branch Secretaries,

(This eNewsletter has been sent to QLD Branch Secretaries only. Please pass this information on to your Branch Committee and members.)

The National Committee was invited to a meeting with the Hon. Jack Dempsey MP, in Brisbane last Thursday. The NatCom asked a trusted member living in Brisbane to attend on our behalf and this is the report received from him after the meeting.

Any questions should be directed to the National Committee via National Secretary John Evans at secretary@ulysses.org.au

Report from the meeting.

Attendees:

- Qld MP, Honourable Jack Dempsey, Minister for Police and Community Safety (addressed meeting)
- QP Commissioner, Ian Stewart (addressed meeting)
- QP Deputy Commissioner, Brett Pointing, Commander of Operation Resolute (had a couple of comments)
- QP Superintendent, Mick Nyland, In-charge of Taskforce Maxima
- QP Superintendent, Jim Keogh, In-charge of Taskforce Gold Coast Take Back.
- QP Senior Sergeant, Shaun Dillon, Traffic Branch
- QP Detective Inspector, Terry Lawrence, Taskforce Maxima
- 3 or 4 other administrative assistants for politician or police
- Ulysses Club representative
- Motorcycle Riders Association of Queensland President, Chris Mearns
- Australian Motorcycle Council representative, Eva Cripps
- Patriots
- Harley Owners Group
- Gasoline Alley - Harley Davidson shop
- Diggers Military MC Club
- Gold Coast Cruisers
- Brothers in Arms Military Club
- Military Brotherhood
- BMW rider rep
- Others unknown - all up about 20 rider reps.

Purpose of Meeting

Apparent purpose of meeting as expressed by Minister:

1. Open up lines of communication with legitimate riders/groups and he wants "clearer line of communication with recreational riders".
2. Express government position that recreational riders were NOT the target of these laws and their recent activities. That the focus is entirely on criminal groups and their associates.

(Note: The meeting did NOT address the new laws.)

Riders General Comments

Generally rider reps expressed the obvious concerns, with a few very good examples of legitimate riders interactions with Police that showed they were being either poorly treated and caught up in this frenzy of activity by police across the state. There was little focus during the meeting on the new laws, except possible comment by Motorcycle Riders Association of Queensland President Chris Mearns and Australian Motorcycle Council representative, Eva Cripps. The focus of rider questions was on what can riders do to ensure we are left alone to be free to ride without being hassled. What

are our rights when being pulled over? Do we have to allow searches, etc? Concerns were also raised that the public perception of all riders is being destroyed by the lack of differentiation (also by the media) between recreational riders and the OMGs regardless of the Government's \$800K advertising campaign.

I contributed comment on behalf of the Ulysses Club on a few occasions, focussing on:

- We don't support criminal behaviour;
- We all do a lot of charity work and bring in many millions of dollars to the state with our AGM events, giving the recent Maryborough AGM as an example of the numbers;
- That NatCom may consider whether to hold future AGM events in Qld whilst their members are so concerned about these issues.

I asked the Police Commissioner what briefings his officers were getting state-wide on differentiating between OMG members/associates and obvious recreational riders, holding up our logo and pointing out it should be clear to his officers and we should be left alone! I also asked (partly in humour) that the government mount another \$800K advertising campaign supporting recreational riders.

The bottom line was basically that recreational riders are very concerned that they are collateral damage in all this and wanted to know what could be done to avoid these problems.

Police Minister's main comments

In addition to opening remarks on the reason for the meeting, the Minister said he wanted to develop a strategy (develop solutions, set outcomes with dates) to alleviate concerns of recreational legitimate riders, their clubs (motorcycle and social clubs). He even used the words, "establish a partnership with legal riders, the good guys. We want more people buying bikes, more businesses. its a passion." He also commented that the Police Commissioner rides bike.

Police Commissioner Ian Stewarts comments

He explained that over the last 3 to 4 weeks they've had the entire force working on this (unlike under previous government and with Taskforce Hydra). That with this intense level of activity, there was sure to be some events involving recreational riders caught up. He apologised for some of the interactions that had occurred with his officers pulling motorcyclists up. He said the focus was on 1100 members of OMGs, 2500 known associates of the 26 declared gangs, but also their family members or other related businesses people. He said they were like chameleons and had NO respect. There was some suggestion that the obvious initial intense level of activity would apparently drop off as they continued to gather intelligence.

In response to comments from reps about police differentiating between us and OMG members (and specifically to my question on their briefings), Ian Stewart asked us to look around the room at each other and said most of us look like OMG members and so until his officers were "up close and personal", it was difficult to see the difference. He said it was a problem; and later said it was particularly difficult for the younger officers who did not have the experience that older officers had. He said his officers were being trained and directed to be "Safe, Lawful & Professional". "Our people are not going out to harass you. We don't know whose who in the zoo yet. I'm sorry some of your people went through that [those incidents described] but there will be some more inconvenience."

He said officers were now being given iPads to speed up the roadside activity; that when pulled up, riders should produce their ID and we may be photographed (and our licences get photographed) and especially any identifying marks like tattoos. They may be asked to turn out pockets, primarily for concealed weapons. If riders refuse to comply with lawful directions, police can take action, including being arrested there and then.

Following some discussion on how riders might avoid drama on their rides, the Police Commissioner mentioned the idea of something like the current "Party Line". The initial reaction from a few was that this might be good (I cannot recall anyone speaking against the idea). One rider rep then said

they'd made a habit of contacting their local Gold Coast Police about all their rides and never been hassled. It followed that the police would be happy to engage with rider groups on their movements to be forewarned (just like a party organiser pre-warning the QPS in case it gets out of control). The suggestion was that maybe an email address could be set up too.

He said he wanted legitimate rider groups to grow. But he also later provided a caution, that we should be wary of OMG members trying to get into our clubs, to infiltrate them.

Deputy Commissioner Brett Pointing comments

He recognised there'd been a lot of media coverage of late and now waiting outside the meeting, saying he'd speak to how important legitimate motorcycle groups are. Brett said Police want their Officers to focus on the "quality of interactions" with riders. He said "having points of contact with recreational riders would be good" and "It is critical to have us [rec riders] on side".

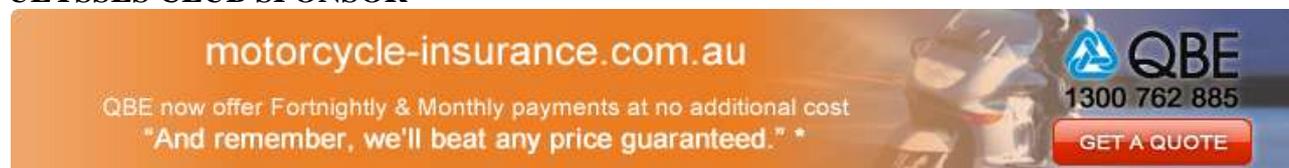
My Summary

In summary, the rider reps made it clear their concerns, and the Minister and senior police responded very well, with suggestions and positive comments and clear explanations. I understand that a hard-line view of the meeting might focus on no change as a result, except that riders may now be expected to keep police up to date with their movements to avoid being hassled.

Thank you,

The National Committee
Ulysses Club Inc.

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