***TASMANIAN MOTORCYCLE COUNCIL Inc.***

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Meeting with Minister Rene Hidding and the Tasmanian Motorcycle Council

23 October 2014

On Thursday, 23 October 2014, representatives of the Tasmanian Motorcycle Council, Simon Hrycyszyn, Paul Bullock and Eva Cripps met with the Minister for Police and Emergency Management and Minister for Infrastructure, Rene Hidding MP.

The representatives raised a number of matters with the Minister that are of interest to motorcyclists.

**Road Rule 271**

In June 2014, the TMC wrote to Minister Hidding requesting that he review road rule 271, which is an enforceable provision requiring motorcyclists to have both feet on the footrests while moving, sit astride the seat facing forwards at all times, and to have a minimum of one hand on the handlebars, even when stationary. The TMC submitted that the rule was absurd, unsafe and unable to be complied with.

The Minister was extremely receptive to TMC’s arguments and agreed that it was not a sensible rule. The TMC will follow up with the Minister with further information on suggested wording which it referred to in its original submission.

This represents a positive step in having road rule 271 amended to reflect safe riding practices.

**Double-demerits**
Following an article in The Examiner newspaper on 2 October 2014, the TMC issued a media release and wrote to Minister Hidding stating its belief that introducing double-demerits would result in an increase in unlicenced motorists, already over-represented in serious crashes and fatalities.

The Minister agreed with TMC’s points on the impacts of double-demerits. The Minister stated that he believed road users needed to have confidence in the credibility of the system, and the introduction of double-demerits would potentially undermine this. The Minister stated that he would only consider introducing double-demerits if there was good evidence to do so, and at the moment he did not believe it was warranted. The TMC reiterated its stance that having visible police is the best way to positively influence driver behaviour; Minister Hidding agreed with this.

**Filtering**
The TMC provided the Minister with a brief update on filtering, a practice where motorcycles move between stationary and slow-moving traffic, which was legalised in NSW in July this year. Reports from NSW are extremely positive, with motorists accepting the practice and there being no issues at all post-legalisation. The Minister noted that congestion was not an issue in Tasmania and so the Minister was only willing to consider legalising filtering if there were safety benefits in doing so. The TMC advised that all the research and findings from NSW point to there being a greater risk of motorcyclists being rear-ended in traffic, than being injured while filtering, and there were more risks for motorcyclists repeatedly stopping and starting in slow-moving traffic. The TMC will provide the commonsense safeguards found in the NSW legislation to the Minister in its follow-up.

**MAIB increase**
In regards to the MAIB increase for motorcyclists, the Minister advised that the unusually high fatality rate for motorcyclists last year means MAIB won't consider re-adjusting relativities. The Minister was extremely sympathetic to TMC’s point of view, and is willing to continue dialogue with TMC on this.

**Infrastructure**
The representatives spoke with the Minister generally about infrastructure concerns on the Midland Highway and TMC's preference for 4 lane highways, rather than 3 lanes separated by wire rope barriers. The TMC reiterated to the Minister that while concrete barriers are the safest for motorcyclists, it would prefer to see W-beam barriers with rub-rail rather than wire rope where possible. TMC acknowledges the reasons why the Government are forging ahead with the separation of lanes, but felt it important to reiterate its viewpoint on this.

The Minister also suggested that TMC meet with road contractors to discuss using left-over bitumen on corner areas to reduce gravel spitting onto the road, something which some councils are already doing. The Minister requested that TMC provide photographs of inappropriately based barriers of any kind, for example on the outside edges of roads where they are not necessary and where they would potentially cause a greater hazard to motorists.

**Bikies**
The Minister raised the latest news on 'bikies' and 'ice' and TMC affirmed its stance that where people are behaving in criminal activity, that is a matter for the police, however not all clubs are involved in criminal activity. The TMC agreed with Minister Hidding's view, and was pleased to note that he will not endorse laws that generally target motorcyclists, and that existing laws are sufficient to deal with criminal activity. TMC will reiterate its stance that people should be targeted because of what they do, rather than who they are, in its written follow-up to the Minister.

The Minister is keen to continue working in consultation with the TMC on motorcycle issues. The TMC appreciates the interest shown by the Minister and looks forward to working with him in the future.