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AMC Chairman's report 2021

Not the way I expected or hoped to be delivering my report for 2021, but here we are.

Starting with the bigger picture, 2021 has continued as a year dominated by COVID in much of the country. This is the second year our annual meeting has been held online. We had planned to meet in Sydney last year, and having put that off, the idea of a face-to-face gathering for 2021 was much-anticipated up until just a few months ago.

Still, we have adapted, and the continued use of Zoom and other digital technology has allowed us to be better connected and more proactive than we have ever been. This includes through meetings of the executive every month, with these meetings open to all Delegates every second month.

In the coming year, the executive is looking at introducing guest speakers to Delegate meetings, to in some way make up for what we have missed these past two years.

In driving this, I cannot thank enough our secretary John Eacott for the tremendous amount of work he does in making sure everything runs smoothly. The bringing together of all the information for today's online gathering is only one example. There have been some challenges in adapting to this new world, but John's patience and diligence sets a great example to us all in what can be achieved.

COVID restrictions have meant that the way we do our external business has changed markedly, too.

The AMC has had considerable engagement with the federal government over the past year, leading into the forthcoming National Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030.

Our advocacy has been at both the political and departmental levels. We have participated in a number of online meetings hosted by the Assistant Minister for Road Safety Scott Buccholz. In May, I attended one of the few in-person events of the year, the launch of National Road Safety Week in Adelaide, where Minister Buccholz was amongst the speakers. This initial face-to-face meeting provided a more informal opportunity to pursue some of our key areas of concern.

The Australian Government is committed to the primary goal of the Second UN Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030, reducing road deaths by 50% by 2030.

As motorcycle and scooter use continues to become more popular in Australia, the role of a strong national voice has never been as important as it will be in the coming years. In context of the Decade of Action aim, it's important to look at some figures.

We enter this next decade with a lot of positive stories to tell about motorcycling. As at the end of 2020, there were 881,000 registered powered two wheelers in the country. That's a 33% increase on the 661,000 at the end of 2010.

Over that time, the total number of motorcycle deaths has remained much the same – at an average of 208 a year. Over the past decade, the fatality rate has dropped from 3.39 per 10,000 registrations, to 2.16. That's a 36% decrease in the fatality rate at the same time as registrations have increased by 33%.

As this rate has decreased steadily over the past five years, I've observed and remarked publicly that there has never been a safer time to ride a motorcycle in Australia. The challenge for us all lies ahead in how this can be improved further.

It can't go left unsaid that the first six months of 2021 has seen a slight change in this, but in our representations we should continue to focus on trends over a number of years.

Another key activity this year has been the International Transport Forum's Motorcycle Safety Workshop – something else planned to be held as an in-person conference that ended up as a series of online workshops. The report from this event is due to be finalised before the end of 2021.

Social media continues as our main outlet for conveying messages, and we're also underway with building new content into our updated website. We thank Jen Woods for taking on the role of webmaster to assist and drive this.

We've also been rebuilding connections and relationships with the motorcycle media.

It's been encouraging and indeed a relief to hear in recent months of the establishment of the Queensland Motorcycle Council. We've taken the opportunity to provide an introduction to the workings of the AMC – and to discuss some of the key current issues – at a couple of meetings with members of their executive.

I'm also very pleased to welcome representatives of the QMC to our annual meeting today as guests.

In closing, I'd like to extend my sincere thanks to all members of the executive for your work with the AMC over the past year. I mentioned John Eacott earlier, but I am also extremely grateful for the support and efforts of vice-chairman Peter Baulch, Brian Wood – our treasurer and also our representative on a number of external forums, plus Jason Antony, Graeme Rawlins and Dave Wright.

Please keep yourself safe in these challenging times, support each other and share information, and continue your great work as advocates for motorcycling across the country.

Shaun

Shaun Lennard
Chairman, Australian Motorcycle Council