



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

2 December 2017

Dear Member

I'm delighted to provide the tenth but my first annual President's Report, outlining the activities and achievements of your Association over the past 12 months.

The RTRA has seen some major wins year but also some major loses. It has been a roller coaster of ups and downs. The past year has also seen some major changes, RTRA founder and first President, Steve Pretzel, has "signed off" as President of the RTRA.

ADVOCACY

In December we met with the Minister for Local Government, Tony Simpson to discuss our frustrations with the lack of progress with trail bike initiatives. Despite repeated assurances by the Minister and several more interactions throughout the year, we were unable to achieve any significant breakthroughs in this regard.

The Confiscation of Vehicles Bill 2016 passed in Parliament, which means that if Rangers and land managers want to mount a 'blitz' involving police popular forest riding areas the potential is there for anyone riding an unregistered bike to lose it with no possibility of getting it back.

We had a very productive meeting with the Minister for Sport and Recreation, Water and Forestry, Mia Davies. Minister Davies empathised with our frustration over the lack of progress with the State Trail Bike Strategy and offered her assistance. She also had some encouraging things to say about the future management of water catchment.

January and February before a State Election is always a busy time of year for advocacy. RTRA met with numerous MPs from all parties and was contacted for meetings and information from various candidates. We tried to set the groundwork with both major parties and obtain an understanding of how they would address the needs of riders, particularly the continuing need for more legal areas for kids to ride. The State Election results look promising for riders, with the Member for Darling Range, Tony Simpson, taking on the Local Government portfolio formerly occupied by John Castrilli. The Hon Tony Simpson was previously Chair of the State Trail Bike Strategy Joint Agency Implementation Committee and is well across the issues and an advocate for the Strategy. Minister Terry Waldron retained the Sport and Recreation portfolio. Waldron is sympathetic to our cause and this avoids the time, energy and risk associated with having to get a new Minister up to speed on the issue.

March the citizens of WA elected a new government, the RTRA sent Post-election letters to the new Ministers in relevant portfolios eg Sport & Recreation, Local Government and Environment. Follow up meetings held with all. The new Government as implemented some large changes with amalgamations and new departments being formed. DSR merged with Dept Local Government and already this is showing improvements with a key meeting facilitated for RTRA with WALGA, DSR, DBCA and DLG.

The Shire of York was a win when they invited local riders to submit suggestions for improvements to the York Off-Road Vehicle Area. The RTRA was represented at two community meetings where ideas to improve drainage, the flow of the circuit and the durability of the trail surface was



discussed.

The Off Road Advisory Committee is, in our view, not properly constituted according to the Act and does not have an appropriate level of representation of off-road vehicles. We met with the Opposition Spokesperson for Local Government, David Templeman MLC to brief him on the issue. He was sympathetic to our frustrations about the Off-Road Vehicle Advisory Committee when we met with him in December and pledged to consider this. However, the RTRA has recently received a response from the Minister for Local Government saying he will not be overturning the Off Road Advisory Committee approved by his predecessor, Tony Simpson MLA.

The new McGowan Ministry brings some good news for riders, with the Sport & Recreation Minister, Hon Mick Murray, a strong supporter of the State Trail Bike Strategy. At the Trails Industry forum in May, Minister Murray launched the WA Strategic Trails Blueprint, which will guide the next five years of trails development. Trail bikes are included for the first time. This is a major gain in our ability to leverage grants and moving to towards being an excepted recreational sport.

The RTRA was well represented at the forum, with four Committee members making a strong presence among the WA trails community. The Blueprint is an overarching guide for consistent and coordinated planning, development and management of quality trails and trail experiences across Western Australia. Importantly trail bikes are included as one of nine trail types which provides a basis for us to progress our claims for a better legal framework for trail bikes, more trails and more designated areas. Minister Murray spoke at the RTRA's Off-Road Motorcycle Industry Forum and is on record calling for the previous Liberal government to implement the strategy.

Later that month we received the disappointing news that the T&E Club's popular adventure rally was cancelled this year. The event has been running for 33 years, but due to requirements for a forest hygiene survey, the area that DBCA (near DPAW) approved for use was simply too small and remote to justify holding the event. The cancellation is another reminder that authorised riding areas for events are getting harder to find, and even areas with a long tradition of riding can be lost. As the voice of recreational trail riders, the RTRA is committed to trying to keep as many opportunities to ride as possible. The RTRA's relationship with DBCA has been maintained specifically for managing and maintaining Pinjar and progressing Gngangara and Metro Road,

The year's highlight was when Manjimup Trail Bike Hub made it through the first and second gates, the Shire of Manjimup has unanimously voted to adopt the Trail Bike Trail Hub feasibility report. The RTRA worked with the Shire regarding their budget process, and they approved a budget that included seed funding for the next phase of planning for the Manjimup Trail Bike Trail Hub. The RTRA will need to work with the community to fund the shortfall funding and more details will be released soon. The Feasibility Report recommended that the RTRA be the vehicle to progress this and we will need all hands-on-deck if we move to the next stage.

TRAILS AND RIDING AREAS

Moving on to riding areas, there has been some recent disappointing movement as and some wins but due to the election everything government related was slow to move:

Metro Road



Delays caused by resourcing constraints within Parks and Wildlife have held up the master planning process for Metro Road. The consultants have now received the feedback on the Metro Road Concept Plan, but no further movement has been made. Over two years ago the RTRA provided DBCA with a plan to bypass some of the worst sections. but the plans were put on hold at DBCA's request in order to develop an overall plan for the area. However with the stalling of the concept plan, and lack of budget there has been no maintenance performed on the Pilot Trail. The trail is majorly "whooped out", and many of the directional signs have been destroyed by the recent DBCA controlled burn. The RTRA can no longer recommend riding the 16km Pilot Trail at Metro Road. Metro Road is fast becoming another Gnangara. The most serious issue for trail bike riders is the increasing number of high powered side-by-sides now using this area. The consequences of a trail bike and a side by side colliding head-on on one of the fast open trails doesn't bear thinking about.

We will continue to advocate for the proper development of Metro Road as a regional trail bike riding facility and will keep members up to date with our progress. If you're as disappointed as we are, feel free to write to your local Member of Parliament.

Pinjar

The Pinjar Motorcycle Area is amazing, The car park, is usually full on weekends, and the Track Counter's annualised estimates over 127,000 km and 5,000 hours of riding provided by this venue. That's arguably 127,000 kilometres of illegal riding or riding in more sensitive environments avoided. Probably the most important aspect is that the comments from riders and parents are still extremely positive.

The PeeWee trail is extremely popular, and once again the RTRA would like to thank everyone who supervises this area, ensuring that the track doesn't get damaged by inappropriate bikes using it. The PeeWee trail is there to encourage and teach the next generation. To encourage the next generation we are working towards a kid's ride day at Pinjar in Autumn 2018.

DBCA have built the signage shelters but have yet to fill them in so we hope that soon these will have more information for people new to the area. The long-awaited Pinjar toilet contract has been signed and it is just a matter of time (we hope), toilets are more of a necessity than a luxury. DBCA has confirmed that construction should commence soon but it will take several weeks to complete, so take care while construction is in progress. We've been waiting a long time for this much-needed facility, so please respect them and notify the RTRA or Parks and Wildlife if you see any damage.

Our Pinjar Maintenance Mornings were generally successful this year, although we are seeing a decrease in the numbers of people willing to help and protect this area. We are working on a formalised a Friends of Pinjar Group so that we can put together a roster of volunteers. DBCA are still very keen for the 'trail ambassadors' to be on duty to provide advice and assistance, and we are getting closer to seeing this happen. If you have an interest in Pinjar and would be willing to play a role let us know.

The RTRA's big win this year is when we obtained approval from DBCA to allow sponsorships of the Pinjar Motorcycle Area to relevant businesses. The Recreation Trailbike Riders' Association of WA can now offer the opportunity for businesses and organisations to have their name and brand associated with some of the popular trails within the Pinjar. Revenues raised from this project will go towards supporting the RTRA and to maintaining these trails and ensuring safety for all trail biking enthusiasts.



Pinjar is proof that a free permanently open, public ride area works well. This is because of the people who use the area responsibly and especially those who take an active role in caring for the area. The RTRA would like to recognise the ongoing commitment from DBCA, without this great partnership we would not have such a great place to ride. The more successful Pinjar is the easier to get more open, public ride areas.

Gnangara

Very little has happened on the Gnangara front many of the trees have been felled but no expansion has yet to occur. While we welcome improvements to Gnangara we would not want to see the budget for Pinjar curtailed. There is much more that can be achieved at Pinjar and we would rather see one excellent area than two mediocre ones so close together.

Kwinana

The continuing lack of interest shown by the Town of Kwinana has resulted in no improvements to this area over the past twelve months. Investigations into a replacement site south of the river are continuing.

COMMERCIAL RIDE PARKS

While our focus has been on creating more free, public areas in or close to the metropolitan area, the RTRA also acknowledges and supports the efforts of Western Australia's commercial ride park operators: West MotoPark, West Coast Trail Bike Park, the Duck's Nuts and Dirt Riders' Heaven. These operators provide facilities such as camping and a level of track maintenance that could never be possible on public land. They do this with private funding and an enormous amount of personal effort. The RTRA encourages members to support these facilities.

PUBLIC TRAILS

Western Australia has hundreds of kilometres of public trails and gravel roads that are open to registered bikes and licensed riders. The RTRA is committed to preserving access to these trails will fight any attempts to exclude motorised access. This is accomplished by educating riders on minimal impact techniques to protect the trails and the surrounding environment. The finalised MIRP project will go a long way towards these ends. The new laws, however, mean that unregistered bikes are at greater risk when riding outside OVA, on private property or ride parks.

MEMBERSHIP

For several years now the RTRA has been working on behalf of many times the number riders than the number members we have. We currently only have 157 fully paid and 1,345 non-financial member families. I would encourage all members to spread the word and encourage your riding mates to join up. The membership revenue is important, but the number of members is critical. When we are asked by a minister about our membership numbers they are actually asking "How many voters am I going to win or piss off". Without a large percentage of the estimated 50,000 trail and quad bikes in Western Australia being members we will lose our voice.

Trail Riders need the RTRA but our ability to affect change only comes with your backing, please help Our retailer support program has stalled due to lack of resources and the focus on advocacy and area projects this year. Getting some momentum in the southern suburbs should help boost membership numbers.



MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS

The RTRA Web Site and eNewsletter continue to keep riders up to date with the activities of the Association, and with useful information and news of other influences that affect trail bike riding in WA. Our eNewsletter recipients 964 (families) and we estimate at least 1.5 riders per family on average so just under 1500 riders

Our Facebook page at www.rtra.asn.au/facebook now has over 5040 'Likes' (up 10% on last year), with just over 4,990 followers. We will continue to develop this page, but will always give advanced notice to financial RTRA members to events and other important news! The dedicated Pinjar Motorcycle Area Facebook page has over 3,626 'Likes', with 3,601 people followers.

EDUCATION, AWARENESS AND ATTITUDE SHIFT

a responsible attitude to the environment and other trails users is paramount in creating a sustainable future for trail bike riding. We also need to help non-riders understand what it is that we do and why we are so passionate about it.

Last month saw the successful running of the 'Fast Aid' course for RTRA members. 15 riders congregated at Overlander Adventure Equipment to broaden their knowledge of first aid specifically in relation to motorcycle injuries. The course was attended by several father and son combinations, family groups and ride buddies who learned about the vital first steps to take in the event of injuries in remote locations.

MIRP or Minimal Riding Impact Program was conceived and started in 2010. I am very happy to announce that it is finally ready for release. We have continued the marketing of our 'So Where Can I Ride' booklet to local councils. The booklets have been very well received, and however many councils are claiming poverty and not reordering them. With the new confiscation laws, the Rangers and Police should be caring these to help educate the public. So please do us a favour call your local council and ask for a copy. Let them know that you want them. We would also like to see some placed at Department of Transport Licensing Centres, so please call and ask them as well.

THE COMMITTEE

This year the long-standing President Steve Pretzel decided to step down after 12 years. I would like to thank Steve for the decade of hard and amazing work that he has done for the RTRA and keeping our trails open. Under Steve, RTRA has been successful in gaining recognition of the legitimacy of recreational trail bike riding and its value as a healthy outdoor activity and by successfully challenging the closure of existing off-road vehicle areas.

I am not alone, along with the change in Presidency the governance structure has also grown; with committee members stepping up to take on portfolio changes and some amazing challenges. The RTRA would not be able to operate without the input and enthusiasm of the Committee. We are so fortunate that Paul Neve has remained on as our Deputy Chair and Steve Pretzel remained on the committee in the role of Treasurer and the Governance Portfolio officer. Valerie Pretzel also has continued her roles as Secretary and Government liaison officer and Marketing & Communications officer. Brett Grandin is one of our Trails and Areas Portfolio Coordinator for Metro Road, and our Event Portfolio Coordinator. Don Martin has is our Revenue Portfolio Coordinator. Unfortunately, Collin Jennings, Keith Farnham, Peter Otley, Angel Uruchima, and Henry van Es have all had to had to resign. and we thank them all for their contribution to the Committee.



Murray McKeller has joined the RTRA as a Trails and Areas Portfolio Coordinator for Pinjar and as the Volunteer Coordinator. Mat Ackley has also nominated and will take on Industry liaison. However, we still have a vacancy on the Committee. We are looking for a passionate, extremely well organised and good with people for the role of Membership Portfolio Coordinator. If you think you have what it takes to handle this challenge or wants more information drop me a line.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

As always there are lots of challenges ahead. These are our goals for the next 12 months:

- Provide rides and events for the members of the RTRA
- Secure the remaining seed funding for the Manjimup Trails Hub project
- Get Pinjar toilets completed.
- Reinvigorate the Master Planning for the Metro Road Regional Trail bike precinct
- Secure a commitment to develop a Pinjar style family-friendly facility south of the river
- Implement the Minimal Impact / Ride Leaders Program
- Engage productively with the new Minister for Local Government
- Continue to attract new members and increase our proportion of renewals.
- Get a precedent project with access to funding from both Lottery West trails grants and the Off-Road Vehicles Account.

I would like to close by thanking all those members who have supported the Association by contributing time to our initiatives and generally spreading the word to other riders about the work of the Association.

Thank you all.

Your association is recognised and highly regarded for the work that we do on behalf of recreational trail and quad bike riders. We are continuing to open new doors and we look forward to another productive year in 2018.