



# PLEASE LOOK TWICE

“What do we have to do to get noticed?” The tall, well built motorcyclist mumbled angrily while fumbling at his jacket zipper. He pulled down on the zip and removed the leather jacket, one arm at a time. Then, swiftly lifting the t-shirt overhead, he reached for his belt buckle...

It was the tenth anniversary of the Motor Cycle Awareness Week in Australia, run by the Motorcycle Council of New South Wales, based in Sydney (MCC of NSW). They were discussing motorcycle safety statistics and government funding and were frustrated by the fact that motorcyclists were being ignored politically as well as in car mirrors.

Almost half of all accidents involving motorcycles in the state of New South Wales are caused by at-fault cars hitting them and mostly at intersections\*. But car drivers aren't the only ones not seeing us—the number of these accidents drop in precise propor-

tion to the amount of funding the Australian government pumps into awareness campaigns and over the past five years this figure has been less than two percent\* of that spent on bicycle safety in NSW alone! What gets me straight away is the fact that we (motorcyclists in Australia) pay registration, insurance and road taxes—bicycles don't. You would think there was a wee stash of cash stored away somewhere—wouldn't you?

Well, this fact alone was enough to cause one frustrated council member to strip, but it was no flippant display of debauchery, it was simply pure genius. Motorcyclists with NOTHING on, they really would get noticed! The idea was put to the PR company who were preparing the advertisements for Motorcycle

Awareness Week. It resulted in an advertising campaign that has been seen world wide through television, the internet, and reported in magazines from countries all over the world. If you haven't seen it yet, get on the website: [www.pleaselooktwice.com](http://www.pleaselooktwice.com)

Guy Stanford, the Chairman of the MCC, is infectiously devoted to the cause of creating a better environment for motorcyclists. I asked him if the riders in the ad were actors. With a resounding Aussie response, he said





story: kendrearhodes

photos:

Courtesy MCC of NSW

their clothes back on! Guy said they were quite relaxed and aimlessly wandered about, giving passers-by a surprise, to say the least. Part of the filming was done right in the heart of Sydney and it was probably then that they realized how big this really was going to be. They DID get noticed by the general public and newspapers, who all looked more than twice (well after all, that was the point).

He says this ad was fun, but there's a serious message wrapped in the silliness and humor. Each year, the MCC brainstorms the best way to get their goal of "promoting the rights and interests of motorcyclists" across to the masses. Guy says they go out of their way to improve the motorcycling image in the public's eyes. The MCC are fighting to change the perspective, to make the government less indifferent and the press more positive. It wasn't that long ago that the gutter press would report on a common stereotype of the criminal or gang element of motorcyclists. This typecast of a minority cast a shadow on the majority which represents a broad range of riders. The idea to remove clothing in the ad was to show the vulnerability of motorcyclists and that they are indeed human. In fact, ordinary people from all different walks of life.

In June 2002, the MCC published a Motorcycle Safety Strategic Plan called "Positioned for Safety." This was used as encouragement for the government to spend a little money on motorcycle safety: "Until this time, there was virtually NO spending on motorcycle safety at all in NSW and riders were doing it alone, while other forms of non-car transport were being well catered on." Guy told me.

He went on to say that "since 2002, the motorcycling fraternity did receive some government funding and the results were almost instantaneous: Car into motorcycle crashes decreased by 11 percent and stayed

**\*SOURCE:**

MCC website [www.mccofnsw.org.au](http://www.mccofnsw.org.au)  
 MCC NSW Election 2007 document  
[www.roadsafety.mccofnsw.org.au](http://www.roadsafety.mccofnsw.org.au)  
[https://crc.army.mil/drivingpov/mcycle\\_guide.doc](https://crc.army.mil/drivingpov/mcycle_guide.doc)  
 Positioned for Safety 2002-2005 document.  
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down. And there has been no net growth in these types of crashes, even though the fleet of motorcyclists has increased by over 50 percent in the past five years!"

The MCC's website is packed full of information, the majority is fact, but some opinion and reasonable rebel rousing is evident. It gets many hits and links from knowledgeable authorities, such as the US Military, Combat Readiness Centre who quote them as a reference for "Personal Protective Equipment" (motorcycle clothing).

The MCC are a-political and all for the motorcyclist. I love how they urge us (the motorcycling public) to ask our politicians exactly what have they done to address motorcycling issues such as crash barriers, toll booths, parking, road safety and awareness. These passive revolutionists are about people power and if we're not too busy in our day to day life, we can join in, make a noise and help to change the status quo.

After viewing the ad yet again, only one question remains in my mind, where does he put that road-toll pass card? 🚗



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