

## **SUBMISSION TO Q'LD., PARLIAMENT.**

### **RE: INQUIRY INTO MOTOR RECRETATION ACTIVITES.**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Dear Committee Secretary.

Firstly I would like to thank the Committee for allowing us the opportunity to make a submission to the Inquiry.

My name is Ian Milton and I am the Vice President and a Life member of Queensland Early Motorcycle Sports Club Incorporated, (QEMSC, Inc.).

I have interests in both motorcycle racing and motor car racing and compete in both disciplines of the sport.

#### **HISTORY.**

QEMSC is an amateur club primarily involved in the promotion and racing of historic motorcycles and sidecar outfits.

The club has been in existence for over forty years.

QEMSC is affiliated with the governing body for motorcycle racing in Australia, known as Motorcycling Australia (MA), the Queensland branch (MQ) and the world governing body, The Federation of International Motor Sport, (FIM).

#### **CURRENT SITUATION.**

Currently our membership stands at about 150 and our members compete mostly at Carnell Park in Stanthorpe.

The issue for us conducting race meetings at Stanthorpe is that for Brisbane based competitors, it requires a three hour drive.

Whilst we would like to hold our race meetings at closer tracks, Morgan Park in Warwick, Queensland Raceway at Ipswich and

Lakeside Motor Park at Dakabin, the cost to hire those venues makes it financially unviable for an amateur club to do so.

Furthermore, those tracks mostly enjoy full utilization and it is therefore very difficult to obtain dates for us to hold events at those locations.

Having said that, we have raced at those venues occasionally when track time was available and funds permitted.

### **CAPABILITY.**

QEMSC is very experienced in promoting and conducting successful race meetings and indeed hosted the Australian Historic Road Racing Championships at Lakeside in 2014.

The proof of the success of that meeting, was that the largest spectator crowd ever was recorded, for any motor racing event held at Lakeside, including racing cars and modern motorcycles.

### **ECONOMIC IMPACT.**

A study undertaken in 2011 found that motorsport is one of the largest sports in Australia, with spectator numbers exceeding all forms of football.

The consequence of this is that many sectors of the economy benefit from the sport, including accommodation, tourism, restaurants, hotels, spare parts sales, fuel and oil sales, supermarkets, exhaust shops, automotive engine builders, motorcycle workshops, tyre sales, motor car and motorcycle dealer-ships., etc.

A very good example of the benefit to towns where motor racing is conducted in Queensland, for example Warwick and Stanthorpe, is that all motels are fully booked on race weekends.

In addition, competitors, pit crews, officials, and spectators spend many thousands of dollars in those towns, on each occasion.

**This of course is multiplied exponentially on the Gold Coast and at Townsville when the annual V8 Supercar events are held.**

The consequence of the huge injection of funds into towns hosting motor racing events, is the large number of jobs created to support the industry, both permanent and casual.

In short, motor racing injects tens of millions into the Queensland economy every year and provides hundreds of jobs.

### **IRONY**

The irony of this is, that despite the revenue produced each year, neither the Gold Coast nor Townsville, currently have a permanent, motor racing facility.

**The expenditure on temporary infrastructure from just one of these annual events, could easily fund permanent and at the very least, club level, racing venues.**

It is refreshing and welcome news that finally a track is currently being constructed near Woodstock, via Townsville.

My understanding is that funds have been granted from both state and federal government for the building of the facility but that further funding is required for completion.

It is hoped that the venue will be open and operating in late 2020.

It is important to realize, that the inconvenience to residents, traffic and local business from the utilization of the street circuit in Townsville, will be eliminated, once permanent facilities are available.

No doubt the same would apply to the Gold Coast if a suitable permanent venue was constructed in that region.

It is doubtful that any detrimental effect to the economy would occur.

Rather, it is suggested that it would increase attendance and consequently spending, due to accessibility.

If world class facilities did exist in Queensland, then major motor racing events for example, Formula One and Moto GP might be attracted here.

The resultant increase in tourism would be enormous and that alone, would justify their construction.

**Interestingly most sports are catered for in most towns and cities in Queensland. However motor sport, despite its huge following, is largely ignored.**

#### **EXISTING FACILITIES.**

It's interesting to note that of the five existing motor racing venues in Queensland, including Carnell Park at Stanthorpe, Morgan Park at Warwick and the Whitsunday Motor Sport Club at Proserpine, these three are all owned by clubs.

Furthermore, all have been privately funded and built by clubs, enthusiasts and volunteers.

The exceptions are Queensland Raceway at Ipswich which is owned by Queensland Government and Lakeside Motor Park, owned by Moreton Regional Council.

I note that Lakeside was originally built by a club also and it was constructed on private land and operated privately.

**Both Queensland Raceway and Lakeside Park are now leased to the one operator, creating something of a monopoly.**

#### **OPPORTUNITY**

There is an existing, very large, (745 hectares), "off road" facility, Q'ld., Moto Park, relatively close to Brisbane near Boonah, which is used for motocross, trials and trail bike riding.

This park is leased from state government and operated by Motor Cycling Queensland.

Substantial infrastructure is in place and importantly, due to size and location, there is little likelihood of complaints regarding noise.

Q'ld., Moto Park, presents an opportunity for a road race circuit to be constructed there, relatively inexpensively and quickly and therefore should be considered as the first new venue.

## **RETURNS**

Unfortunately, even if state or local government were to fund the construction of modern, world class motor sport venues, a return on the capital invested would likely be sought and therefore the cost of hiring the tracks by amateur clubs would be prohibitive.

There have been a number of attempts by private individuals and consortiums to build new race tracks in Queensland in the last ten years.

None of which were successful due to a variety of reasons including, availability of suitable land, environmental concerns regarding noise and pollution, frustrating local council requirements and restrictions and simply, lack of funds.

However, the **will and need exists**, all that is required is funding and support from State Government.

## **VIABILITY**

Proof of the viability of motorsport venues exist with both private club level tracks, for example Morgan Park and commercial enterprises at Ipswich and Lakeside all financially successful.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

Therefore, to cater for the amateur motor racer, it is suggested that consideration be given to the funding by government of the construction of a number of smaller, low cost venues.

Alternatively, either low cost loans by government to private operators or clubs and /or joint ventures should be considered.

At least one track should be located close to Brisbane, possibly at the Boonah facility or the North Coast or South Coast and one in Central Queensland.

It is also suggested that a regulatory body or department be established to oversee the construction, maintenance, operation and supervision of government owned motor racing facilities in Queensland.

Of course in order that government receive a return on any proposed investment, the facilities could be leased to private operators.

Whilst it has been suggested that government fund the construction of the required new facilities, there are options.

For example, joint ventures between government and entrepreneurs or as suggested previously, low cost loans be provided to assist private operators.

## **SAFETY AND TRAINING**

Motor racing today is far safer than at any time previously.

Stringent machinery safety rules are enforced for both cars and motorcycles, along with the wearing of safety apparel by riders and drivers.

Tracks now have vast “run off” areas and air fences are deployed at motorcycle race tracks to ensure competitor and spectator safety.

All events have ambulance in attendance with some also having doctors available.

The result is that relatively few serious injuries occur and fatalities are rare.

Adherence to work place health and safety is considered paramount and all officials undergo intensive training.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Noise regulations exist at all tracks now and are enforced. Machinery found not to comply are excluded.

Vehicles emitting any fluids, i.e, oil, coolant or fuel are not permitted to compete.

Should an unfortunate spill occur, it is immediately attended to in order that no run off leaches into the surrounds or remains on the race track, so as not to create a hazard to drivers or riders.

## **SOCIAL BENEFITS**

The potential benefits to Queenslanders from the construction of the suggested facilities, goes well beyond providing venues for motorsport.

For example, each venue could incorporate playing ovals to be used to host a variety of sports, including all forms of football, cricket, tennis, net ball, basketball etc.

In other words, the venues would provide multi-use facilities to the various communities.

However the greatest additional benefit of all would be the utilization of the facility for driver training.

Driver training is the one subject that every high school student should be taught to prepare them for life, and it is not on the curriculum.

Virtually every student will graduate to driving a car or motorcycle and yet no training is provided, other than the minimum whilst preparing for their driver's licence.

I would suggest however that this training teaches them to pass the driving test, it does not equip them adequately with the skills that may save their lives and the lives of others.

Having motor racing facilities located strategically throughout the state would present the opportunity for teenagers to become proficient in a safe driving environment and in turn, reduce the road toll considerably.

An additional benefit of racing circuits is that they afford the availability for driver training for police and emergency services.

## **EMPLOYMENT**

Along with the hundreds of jobs that exist as a direct consequence of motor racing, large numbers of jobs would be created during the construction of new motor racing circuits.

Furthermore, very lucrative careers could become available such as professional racing car and racing motorcycle competitors, engineers, mechanics, and team managers.

## **CONCLUSION**

There is a very real need for the construction of a number of new motor racing venues in Queensland, to cater for the thousands of competitors and spectators.

The economic benefits to Queensland from the construction of such venues, and especially the creation of jobs, would be substantial.



Tourism opportunities will increase enormously and immediately upon the construction of race tracks across Queensland.

Along with permanent, international class venues in Townsville and the Gold Coast, a number of smaller facilities should be constructed and made affordable for the amateur competitor.

The saving of lives as a consequence of high school students being taught real life driving skills is paramount and can be achieved if venues were available.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Transport and Public Works Committee proceed as soon as possible to convene a meeting with stake holders.

The intent is to involve them now and in the future in an advisory capacity and to assist in the process of formally making recommendations to Parliament.

I am prepared to assist in any way possible and look forward to being advised of future developments.

Best Regards.

Ian Milton.

Vice President.

QEMSC Inc.

