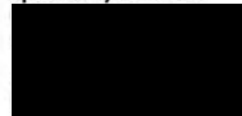




13 December 2019

Transport and Public Works Committee  
Queensland Parliamentary Service  
Parliament House  
Cnr George and Alice Streets  
**BRISBANE QLD 4000**

Speedway Australia



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ABN 11 373 518 738

Dear Committee Members,

### **INQUIRY INTO MOTOR RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Speedway Australia is the peak body for the sport of speedway, providing support, guidance and the operating framework for over 14,000 licence holders at 91 venues in every state and territory, who provide entertainment for hundreds of thousands of spectators every year.

Queensland is host to 16 Speedway Australia venues, with the Brisbane track at Archerfield having the largest competitor base in the country. Queensland tracks (Toowoomba, Maryborough, Kingaroy and Ayr) have won the "Most Improved Track of the Year" award for each of the last four years at the Australian Speedway Awards, which we host in Queensland every second year. And as of today we have 1,865 competitors residing in Queensland and 698 crew and officials.

For these reasons we are pleased to be able to make a submission to the Transport and Public Works Committee as you undertake your inquiry. We have addressed each of your points for consideration on a separate page, which follows.

If you require any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to get in contact with us, and we wish you all the best with your deliberations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Savell".

**Tim Savell**  
General Manager  
**SPEEDWAY AUSTRALIA**



[speedwayaustralia.org](http://speedwayaustralia.org)





# MRA INQUIRY

## ECONOMIC IMPACT OF SPEEDWAY

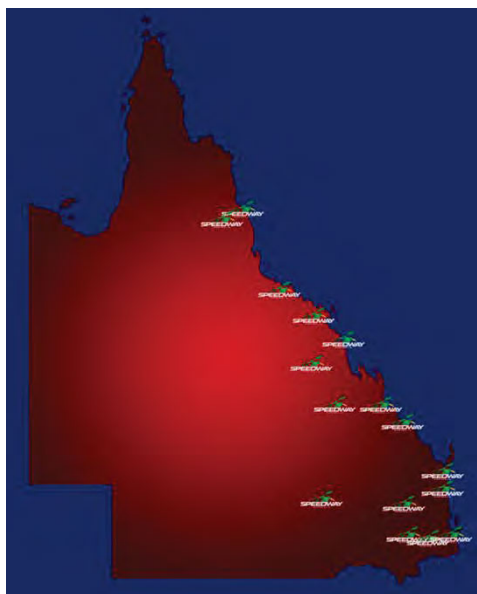
**Question; What are the economic impacts of the motor recreation industry to Queensland, including opportunities to grow the industry to create jobs for Queenslanders?**

There is no doubt that the motor recreation industry in Queensland is large and has opportunities for growth, based on our experience with our area of expertise - Speedway Car Racing.

Speedway is a recreational motorsport conducted at 16 locations in the state, with 1865 participants and 698 officials residing in Queensland as of today. None of these competitors are full-time professionals. Hundreds of thousands of spectators also enjoy watching them race, all year round.

Some highlights: -

- Brisbane has the largest competitor base in the country (406), and the largest number of junior competitors (73). Gympie, Toowoomba and Rockhampton are also in the top 15 nationally.
- Kingaroy is the current Speedway Australia Track of the Year, and Ayr is the reigning Most Improved Track of the Year.
- Planning is underway for new venues in Gladstone and Townsville, which would be the first new speedway tracks in the country since 2005.



Last month we conducted an economic impact survey that can be extrapolated to assist with the size of the speedway industry in Queensland. Valvoline Raceway in Sydney have 300 competitors based in the city and are limited to 40 race nights per year at their facility. There is a total economic impact of \$250 million per year in Greater Sydney alone, with the city also a hub for the other speedways in the state. This economic impact includes \$15 million in direct tourism spend within the Parramatta City Council area alone, and 600 full-time jobs within Greater Sydney. We are happy to provide full copies of this survey data if required.

Brisbane is home to over 400 competitors (a third more than Sydney) and the venue also runs 40 times a year. It would not be a stretch to state that speedway has an economic impact of \$300 million in the city alone and is a half a billion-dollar industry in Queensland each year.

With the average competitor spending \$16,000 on their vehicle and equipment, growth in motorsport participation leads to massive economic benefits for the community when compared to other sports that do not require such investment.

Our experience shows that the best opportunity for growth is to have well-run venues where people feel welcomed, and competitors all believe they have an equal opportunity to win races. This means that providing standardised systems and processes (many that are common to all sports) is one way the government can invest in successful outcomes.

**Summary: There is huge opportunity for the government to invest in recreational motorsport and achieve economic benefits for the state that far outweigh the initial investment.**



# MRA INQUIRY

## CONTRIBUTION TO TOURISM BY SPEEDWAY

***Question; What is the contribution of the industry to Queensland's tourism sector and what opportunities are there to grow Queensland's share of the motor recreation tourism market?***

There is no doubt that the motor recreation industry in Queensland attracts tourists to the state, and also from within the state. There are also opportunities for growth, based on our experience with our area of expertise - speedway car racing.

Some current examples of speedway tourism benefits: -

- Parramatta City Council have calculated the direct tourism benefit of Sydney Speedway at \$15 million per year for their catchment area.
- Warrnambool (Victoria) is the home of the biggest annual speedway event in the country, the Grand Annual Sprintcar Classic. Their City Council have estimated the economic impact at \$3.8 million for the weekend.
- In our survey of 1075 speedway participants in November 2019, respondents attended an average of 12 speedway events per year. Across the country, venues run an average of 9 meetings per year which indicates mobility by participants between tracks,
- In the same survey, 73% of respondents travelled out of their home state to attend speedway events within the last year.
- Speedway Australia hosts its national forum and awards in Queensland every second year, due to the better weather in June. We did this at the request of the sport, as there is already a perception that QLD is the place to be for speedway at that time of year.
- Speedway is traditionally a summer sport, but four North Queensland tracks run during the winter months/dry season. They are far more likely to attract speedway tourists during the colder months in southern states and from New Zealand, so this is a definite opportunity.



We are happy to provide references and data to validate the above assertions, if required.

**Summary: It is no stretch to estimate that speedway alone provides hundreds of millions of tourism dollars every year.**

**Growth in the motor recreation industry means more participation by competitors, officials and fans. Based on our data, tourism growth follows as a natural component of this.**



**Question; What are the legislative, regulatory and policy frameworks in which the industry operates in all levels of government, and what options are there for reform?**

In comparison with most other states and territories, Queensland is on a par when it comes to regulating recreational motorsports – in that there is no legislation other than the relevant Health and Safety standards, building codes etc. And at a federal level, only CAMS and Motorcycling Australia are recognised by Sport Australia.



The effect of this in Queensland is that a high proportion of recreational motorsport is being undertaken in an unregulated fashion that also fails to recognise the contribution to society that these forms of motorsport provide.

The sole example where there is a specific legislative framework is New South Wales. Their legislation evolved out of the need to ensure spectator safety was paramount and is currently under review. It is

perceived as being cumbersome and difficult to enforce, mainly due to under resourcing of the relevant government agencies. For example, speedway track inspections in NSW are required to be undertaken by both Speedway Australia and the local Police traffic inspector.

**In the current Queensland situation, it is the ability to obtain cost-effective public liability insurance that acts as incentive for motorsport to operate in a manner that is acceptable to the community. Government legislation plays no part in achieving good outcomes.**

By way of example, in the 1990's speedway insurance costs spiralled out of control nationally as competitors were killed and spectators injured. 1997 saw a total of 65 personal accident and public liability claims, and insurance costs rising to over \$3000 per race meeting. The sport was perceived as an unacceptable risk, and the cost of insurance led to track closures and an inability for other venues to invest in facilities. Speedway Australia was setup in the aftermath of this and now operates as a not-for-profit organisation. In 2019 is able to celebrate a number of milestones that indicate the success of the unified approach: -

- A total of 13 personal accident and public liability claims in 2018/19 (down from 65 in 1996/97)
- 11 years without a competitor fatality in Australia
- Competitor injury rate at all-time low in 2018/19, with no youth injuries since January 2014
- 33% reduction in public liability insurance costs for tracks since 2017
- Competitor licence fees frozen since 2014.
- 28 safety-related rule changes in 2018 alone.

These improvements been achieved by the stakeholders of the sport who have realised the need for reform. There has been no oversight from the community/government into this process at all, and it is obvious that this would be beneficial to society if for example, none of these changes had been enacted by the sport. We know there are motorsports being conducted in Queensland that are not as structured (Lawnmower racing by way of example), and they are of concern.

**Summary: From Speedway Australia's perspective, we would welcome any legislation or policy that:-**

- a) enhances the ability of the sport to operate within minimum safety standards that are acceptable to the community.
- b) Recognises the contribution of speedway to the economic and social wellbeing of Queensland
- c) Enables speedway to access government stakeholders and work together for the benefit of the sport and the Queensland community



# MRA INQUIRY

## SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS IN SPEEDWAY

### *Question; What options are there to improve the safety of all industry participants?*

As mentioned in the previous point, motorsport is self-regulating in Queensland. The positive news is that injury rates are at an all-time low due to the changes that have been made in recent decades. There is still room to improve with the assistance of the Queensland Government.

#### **Speedway Participant Safety**

Competitor safety has improved as new technologies within the motorsport and transport industries have been adopted.

Australia's speedway injury statistics are the best in the world, with a halving of injuries in the past decade from an average of 28 in 2008 to 14 in 2018. The speedway injury rate of 0.3% per annum is approximately 10 times better than in New Zealand, mainly due to the types of vehicle that are raced in Australia. Comparing with other sports, equestrian has a 27% injury rate per year and football 9%. One netball study (2016 British Super league) indicated an injury rate of 57% per year.

There have been no junior speedway injuries anywhere in Australia since January 2014.

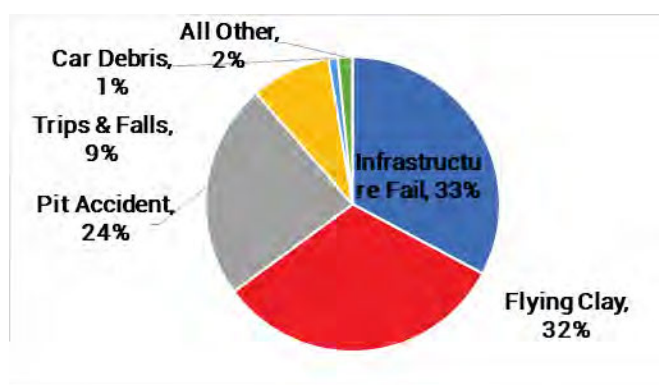
There have been no competitor fatalities anywhere in Australia since November 2008.

#### **Speedway Spectator Safety**

This is where there is room for improvement. Building and maintaining a speedway is expensive, and 13 of the 16 tracks in Queensland are operated by sporting clubs. None of the facilities in Queensland are government owned or maintained, and the sport has to self-fund any upgrades.

There is recent case history (Mackay Speedway in 2016), where the collapse of an abandoned grandstand during a race meeting led to a \$60,000 fine due to a breach of the Work Health and Safety Act 2011.

Speedway Australia inspects Queensland tracks every two years, to ensure our own minimum standards are met. This includes a number of spectator safety provisions such as the size of wire ropes to keep cars from exiting the track, and a maximum size of wire mesh to minimise the risk of flying debris.



We are pleased to advise that Brisbane has the highest safety fence in the country, with 9m of spectator safety mesh in some parts of the track.

We operate our own track safety grant program, distributing \$70,000 per annum to assist with improving spectator safety. This is just a small fraction of what could be spent, if funds were available. Tracks are also beginning to become active in seeking grant

funding when it becomes available, generally after prompting from Speedway Australia.

**Summary: While participant injuries are at an all-time low, we would welcome any government assistance to enhance spectator safety in Queensland.**

IMAGE - Reasons for claim. All Public liability claims 2003-2019

*Question; The impact on youth training and community engagement from motor recreational activities, including mental health outcomes.*



There is no doubt that the Motor Recreation Industry in Queensland forms an important basis for community engagement, with local Speedway's forming an important social catalyst – particularly in regional areas which utilise these venues to facilitate their own major sporting events.

An important part of this community engagement involves providing platforms for youth training – be that through educating junior competitors, or through automotive mechanical training facilitated by schools or colleges.

There are in excess of 180 juniors competing in Speedway across Queensland at present, ages between 5 and 16 of which 29% are female, competing head to head with their male counterparts. Speedway Australia's competitor data shows us that around 60% of all Junior competitors will carry over into senior competition. Through coaching these juniors to improve their skills and stay safe, they will further enjoy their racing and thus stay in the sport in later years. This was the main driving factor driving the creation of 'Kids to Grids' – our collaborative National Training programme for all youth Speedway competitors. Having delivered an AIS 'Rising Stars' program for Youth Competitors for many years, Kids to Grids is a world-first Youth Development Program for Speedway Juniors. The programme is a united, national approach to Junior Training, delivered locally by combining an online training platform with at-track experiences through Junior Coaches. Kids to Grids will encompass all levels of Junior Training, from the very beginner, right through to the elite level, covering all aspects Speedway from the basic rules & regulations, through to safety, health and nutrition, self-promotion and advanced driving skills.

Concurrently, many communities have utilised Speedway racing to facilitate school programs, with students taking part in mechanical and engineering exercises such as building vehicles for competition, as schools strive to engage problematic students to prevent the high rate of 'dropouts'

Motorsport provides a number of protective factors for mental health of our youth, in particular females, owing to the non-divisive nature of the sport. Women in motorsport compete on equal terms with men, with mandatory safety equipment (fire-proof suit, helmets, etc) negating any 'body shaming' issues which plague many sporting codes, whilst still maintaining a competitor's individuality.

For communities, a vast majority of Speedway venues across Queensland are operated by non-for-profit clubs, providing stakeholders with invaluable community engagement through fundraising for, planning and taking part in Speedway events.

**Summary; The nature of Speedway racing, allowing for participants of all ages, genders as well as social & economic backgrounds means the tangible benefits for community interaction and mental wellbeing of both youth and adult participants are immeasurable.**



*Question; What is the impact of the industry on road safety outcomes?*

In response to a growing number of community complaints and the potential for serious injury, Queensland legislation has cracked down significantly in recent times on the ever-increasing popularity of 'hooning' – reckless driving often associated with illegal street racing or burnouts on public roads.



There are considerable potential risks to the hooning driver, passengers, bystanders, and property depending on the context and location together with the nature of this behaviour – be that street racing or burnouts, as these offences involve a vehicle that has lost traction with the road surface and is essentially out of the driver's control. Young people aged under 25 years are statistically most likely to "hoon" and are also identified as the most 'at-risk' group on the roads in Australia. Many factors are identified to contribute to this 'at risk'

age group's over-representation in vehicle crashes, such as inexperience or lack of perception.

Speedway venues provide a safe, controlled environment for many of these activities to take place, including both car racing as well as burnouts. This structured environment provides a preventative measure to ensure the safety for competitors, together with the general public. All the while unnecessary noise or smoke which might otherwise be considered a public amenity issue are contained within the confines of the venue.

Through proactively engaging with youth through driver training programs such as 'Kids to Grids', Speedway is able to educate competitors as to the risks associated with recreational motor vehicle when conducted in an unsafe manner. Such programs are combined with driver training exercises focusing on control of a vehicle in situations which might otherwise lead to an accident. Furthermore, through targeting competitors ranging from age 5-16, we are addressing the aforementioned contributors to vehicle crashes (inexperience, lack of perception, etc) well before they are of legal driving age.

**Summary – Taking a proactive approach through Government support of Motorsport venues will encourage young drivers to perform otherwise dangerous and anti-social activities in a safe and controlled environment. Activities within these venues reduce the risks to drivers, passengers, bystanders, and public property, whilst educating these potentially 'at-risk' drivers**



# MRA INQUIRY

## GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR THE INDUSTRY

*Question; What challenges face the industry and is the role of government in supporting the industry to continue creating jobs for Queenslanders?*

From the perspective of the sport of speedway we perceive that there are two main issues that government could assist us with

- *Lack of government recognition – Federal and State*
- *Venues requiring investment*

Speedway is currently recognised by the following state and territory governments

NSW – legislation and financial assistance

NT – financial assistance

WA – financial assistance

TAS – financial assistance

Speedway has no formal recognition by the Federal government, mainly because as a sport we are not active in 40 countries. Of all the national motorsport bodies only CAMS and Motorcycling Australia meet that criteria, meaning that other legitimate forms of motorsport (Drag Racing, Karting, Jetsprints, Off-roading, Speedway etc) are left out in the cold.

This has an impact in Queensland, where with 16 venues speedway is one of the largest forms of motorsport in the state.

**Summary: Without government recognition, speedway has willingly done its own thing in terms of funding venues and promoting the sport. But it is obvious from our submission that it is in the best interests of the Queensland community for the government to recognise and assist the sport of speedway in the state.**

Speedway is a sport that requires expensive infrastructure at permanent venues, including a safety fence for the benefit of competitors and spectators.

Venues require constant upgrading, mainly from a spectator amenity perspective but also to meet latest safety trends and requirements. Speedway is also run at night so the lighting must be adequate and there are always opportunities to integrate solar and wastewater initiatives from an environmental perspective.

Speedway has never had access to government funding to provide upgrades, which means as a sport we place more time on these issues than other activities that are undertaken at government facilities such as cricket, football, netball etc. It also means that as a sport our admission prices are more expensive when compared to others, as we are not subsidised by government.

**Summary: We would welcome the opportunity to be treated on a level playing field with other sports, not necessarily in terms of funding but certainly in terms of recognition by the Queensland government.**