

Queensland Moto Park Response to the Queensland Inquiry into Motor Recreational Activities

Introduction

Off Road Motorcycling in all its forms is a very popular outdoor physical activity that is largely overlooked by government bodies, including local authorities, even though this popular recreation provides enormous economic and social benefits to both the community in general and to local and state Governments. The Federal Government also benefits through the taxes collected from the industry. The Australian Motorcycle Dealer network alone is estimated to turn over \$5B per annum.

The *SEQ Outdoor Recreation Demand Study 2007* (Study) indicated that 16% of the SEQ adult population participated in off road motorcycling (230,000 people). This provides an interesting comparison to 1% of the QLD adult population who play Rugby League and 1.8% who play cricket.

At the time the study was undertaken, there were several motocross tracks in the south east corner of Queensland. Since 2008, many of these tracks have disappeared and those remaining are under pressure from local authorities to relocate or close. This pressure is often the result of encroaching urban development. Queensland Moto Park was established in direct response to an outcome of the study together with a recommendation from findings of a CMC study.

Funding avenues and opportunities to undertake upgrades of the remaining facilities appear to be non-existent. Amenities at these existing venues therefore remain in sub-standard condition and aging infrastructure is unable to be adequately maintained by the volunteer organisations who manage these facilities on behalf of their local communities.

The economic impact of the motor recreation industry to Queensland, including opportunities to grow the industry to create jobs for Queenslanders;

The Industry behind Off Road Motorcycling is enormous, generating around \$400M per annum in Queensland from the dealer network that employs upward of 1000 people in mostly high-tech jobs. Wholesale companies, specialist engine and suspension businesses and aftermarket accessories outlets are numerous and also employ significant numbers of staff in their operations.

Queensland Moto Park (QMP) only had approx. \$2.3M of Government funding (\$1.8M absorbed by its access road alone), to build what is considered by international visitors to be a world-class facility. QMP is open 5 days a week and 7 days a week during school holidays. The only days that the facility is closed are Christmas and Boxing Day, New Year's Day and Anzac Day and during wet weather events.

The park hosts 20,000 to 30,000 riders and their families per year and riders pay around \$50 each to participate.

Queensland Moto Park (QMP) Fast Facts.

1. Queensland Moto Park (QMP) set up in 2011 with an investment of \$2.3M from QLD Government and 8 SEQ Councils
2. QMP attracts on average 25,000 riders per year and is open and used 290 day of the year.
3. QMP employs 4 permanent staff and 10 casual staff.
4. QMP injects over \$300k into the local economy annually. (Goods and Services)
5. QMP visitors inject \$1M plus into economy on fuel and food. (MQ Rider Survey results)

The contribution of the industry to Queensland's tourism sector and opportunities to grow Queensland's share of the motor recreation tourism market;

QMP attracts international riders and visitors who visit Australia to compete in National motocross and Enduro events, Riders practice on the variety of tracks and terrain provided at QMP.

QMP also hosts the "Red Bull Day in The Dirt" annually that attracts over 600 riders and their friends and family from around Australia and overseas.

The legislative, regulatory and policy framework in which the industry operates in all levels of government, and options for reform;

A barrier to acceptance of the importance of motorsport regarding community health and well-being, seemingly centres on the lack of suitable recognition within local authority Bylaws. The following statement was contained in a reply to the Mt Isa Motorcycle Club.

"Planning Scheme Definition"

"Under the City of Mount Isa Planning 2006 (as amended 2015), the proposed use of Dirt Bike Facility is unable to be defined as a 'Sports, recreation and entertainment'

use due to the inclusion of motor vehicles, **therefore a Dirt Bike Facility is a use undefined** (in the planning scheme)".

Bylaws and regulations are constant barriers to organisations and private individuals looking to set up Motorsport facilities.

Liability and Insurance are often raised as concerns yet skateparks continue to be built that have high risks involved - and are mainly unsupervised!

"Monash University's Injury Research Institute analysed Victorian hospital data and found admissions for skateboard-related injuries had jumped 180 per cent between 2006-07 and 2011-12, from 148 to 298. Scooter-related hospitalisations leapt 270 per cent, from 86 to 248.

The true number of injuries is not recorded because the data did not include patients who were treated in emergency departments and then discharged." – **Sydney Morning Herald**

Private land is subject to Development Assessment by Councils if Land owners, private individuals, promoters or clubs are considering using land for permanent or temporary events. Environmental constraints, associated fees and objections from non-interested parties often deter people interested in providing these facilities or events from getting them off the ground.

Freely available professional advice is required on development approval processes, risk management and liability insurance in order to help private landholders consider allowing outdoor recreation on their land.

Options to improve the safety of all industry participants;

QMP operates under Motorcycling Australia Guidelines.

1. QMP requires all participants to wear minimum standard of PPE
2. QMP injury rates between 0.2 to 0.3% on a yearly basis
3. QMP has monthly coaching programmes and is used on a regular basis by MA accredited coaches for private coaching sessions.
4. QMP also hosts SXS and Adventure Bike training.

The impact on youth training and community engagement from motor recreational activities, including health and well-being outcomes;

QMP have previously with Greening Australia to carry out tree planting and beautification projects. QMP has also worked with Yourtown to provide a venue for youth training in a variety fields from irrigation and fencing to landscaping.

Other Issues

QUT/QMP study proposal for 2020 / “Determining the social, health and economic benefits of Off-Road Motorcycling in Australia.”

The action sport industry is a high growth sector that presents opportunities for governments, local councils, communities and industry stakeholders.

Although there is a growing body of literature that examines the characteristics and traits of consumers of action sports, little is known about the community/social, mental and economic benefits of off-road motorcycling in Australia.

The aim of this research will be to:

- * determine the demography for off road motorcycling riders
- * identify the physical, social and mental health outcomes of off-road motorcycle riders
- * quantify the economic impact of off-road motorcycling to the community, industry and local councils.

Benefits will exist for governments, local councils, communities, industry stakeholders and riders in areas including;

- Women in sport
- Road safety
- Mental health
- Physical health
- Social aspects
- Dispelling the myth of riders
- Opportunities for local councils
- Healthy aging

The impact of the industry on road safety outcomes;

This will be a focus of the QUT/QMP research.

A well-known fact amongst the off-road motorcycle community is that children who start out riding motorcycles gain a lot more skills and awareness that carry over into motor vehicles. Mechanical and maintenance skills are also learnt at an early age as a necessity to enjoy a day out riding without breakdowns.

Kind Regards,
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Park Manager



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