



THE NEWSLETTER
OF THE NZ
FEDERATION OF
MOTORING CLUBS

WHEEL TORQUE

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Classic car rallies, parades and club runs under threat!

The Government is considering proposals which could outlaw car club runs, rallies, Anzac Day parades and the like. The plans, as part of the much-publicised crack-down on 'boy racers', include banning "cruising", and have been reviewed by a select committee before being presented to Parliament for debate.

While many people have been negatively affected by illegal street racing and late-night cruising, and there is much public support for the Government's stance, the proposals in the draft Land Transport Enforcement Powers Bill could also have the unintended consequence of prohibiting ordinary car club events.

The Bill accompanies the Vehicle Confiscation and Seizure Bill, which combined strengthen the existing boy racer legislation. While the latter enhances the ability of police and courts to impound – and even crush – cars driven by repeat offenders, and thus are unlikely to affect responsible motorists, the former Bill on the other hand may impinge on the rights of genuine law-abiding enthusiasts.

A key proposal in the Enforcement Powers Bill sees road controlling authorities (local councils) given the power to create bylaws banning "cruising". Cruising, is defined in the draft Bill as:

*"driving repeatedly over the same section of a road in a motor vehicle in a manner that:
(a) draws attention to the power or sound of the engine of the motor vehicle being driven; or
(b) creates a convoy that...impedes traffic flow."*

The FOMC is concerned that such a bylaw could prohibit a wide range of public events organised by legitimate clubs, which, while not intending to breach the bylaw or cause offence, depending on interpretation could be deemed to do so.



Could events like the annual Beach Hop in Whangamata be a thing of the past?



PHOTOS: thehop.co.nz

In the FOMC's submission to the Transport and Industrial Relations Select Committee on the proposals, we said common unofficial club runs on public roads, like those organised every other weekend throughout the country, could end up being outlawed. In addition, official events such as military parades, car or motorbike shows, local anniversaries or charity events like Beach Hop and the Variety Bash were also under threat.

Many of these events may involve a convoy, and according to the definition of cruising in the Bill, could unintentionally impede traffic flow or draw attention to vehicle noise. While not all councils would pass such a bylaw, we considered such club events should be accommodated in the legislation.

We argued that "the ownership and legal use of enthusiast and heritage vehicles is a legitimate

past-time, and people's ability to enjoy their hobby on public

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Vintage car rallies, parades and club runs under threat...cont'd

roads with like-minded enthusiasts will be compromised by the passage of this Bill in its current form. Many events often have a charitable motive and are an important part of local communities, and it would be most unfortunate if such events were curtailed under this Bill."

Our submission observed that the intent of the Bill was to combat illegal street racing and associated vehicle noise, which predominately occurs at night when noise disturbance is more noticeable.

Consequently, we proposed amending the Bill to permit local authorities to pass bylaws prohibiting "cruising" during a night-time curfew, thus exempting legitimate or club events which typically occur during the day. We also suggested that the term "cruising" be more clearly defined to encompass the targeted behaviour such as illegal street racing and sustained loss of traction (burn outs).

Subsequently, the Select Committee has reported back its recommendations for the final wording of the Bills, to be debated in Parliament. Overall, they suggest few changes, and note the Crown Law Office has concluded that the proposals do not contravene the Bill of Rights Act (e.g. the freedom of movement or association). However, they have taken on board our comments about a curfew by recommending a change to the bylaw definition to specify the time of the day it may be in force (e.g. late night). Councils can also specify dates when the bylaw is suspended – say for certain events like approved races – or nominate streets where the bylaw does not apply.

At the time of writing the Bills are yet to be passed although this is expected to occur before the end of the year. As the bylaw is wholly dependant on police enforcement, we do not expect it to be widely adopted except in troublesome areas like Christchurch and some other main centres. If it is, hopefully they will include a daytime/early evening exemption to allow the harmless events member clubs undertake. In the meantime we suggest clubs make contact with their local councils to ensure you are notified of any impending bylaw and given the opportunity to comment.

- Copies of our submissions are available on our website: www.fomc.co.nz/current.html

Daytime lights mandatory for motorbikes

As many people will have heard, from November 1 it will be against the road rules for drivers to text or talk on a handheld cell phone while driving. The change is part of the Road User Amendment Rule, and will see drivers using handheld mobile phones receive an \$80 fine and 20 demerit points. Drivers will still be able to use hands-free devices and there will be an exemption for 111 calls made for genuine emergencies.

Another key change in the Road User Rule which will affect some member clubs is a requirement for motorcyclists and moped riders to operate headlights during daylight hours. The fine for non-compliance is \$100.

However, motorbikes built before January 1980 are exempt from the Rule. This is in direct response to lobbying from the Federation of Motoring Clubs and motorcycle groups who argued older 'bikes should be excluded because their design meant they could not readily comply.

For the majority of post-1979 'bikes on NZ roads, the requirement will help to ensure that motorcyclists are visible to other road users. According to Ministry of Transport figures, motorcycle crashes have increased rapidly in recent years as motorcycle usage has grown in popularity. The number of motorcyclists killed or injured rose 48 percent in two years, from 896 in 2005 to 1328 in 2007.



We expect the Rule will be enforced by police checking the age on the registration sticker. This may cause some inconvenience to some riders who will be unnecessarily pulled over, however over time we expect police to focus on modern-style 'bikes rather than classic models. Nevertheless, the age exemption is better than the alternative, which could have meant all old 'bikes had to be retro-fitted with modern lighting equipment.

- more info on www.nzta.govt.nz

Executive Committee report – 15 August 2009

Matters arising at the last committee meeting included progress on re-registration issues and developing a brochure to attract new members. The brochure, which member clubs may also be able to use to boost their own membership, is due to be finalised by the November meeting and available for use in the new year.

The FOMC continues to liaise with the NZTA on its VIC card proposal, and we are awaiting feedback on our revised submission seeking approval to implement the scheme. In the meantime, to support our proposal the committee are seeking examples from clubs of members who've had vehicles rejected for WoFs because their design doesn't meet the modern compliance standards.

It was noted that about 30 clubs were still unfinancial and they will be receiving a reminder letter shortly. If you have received this newsletter it is because you are deemed to be a member, so please check if you have paid your 2009-10 subscription (due March 2009), and if not make arrangements to do so – details are on www.fomc.org.nz

The committee also approved the co-option of Frank Willett as technical advisor to the executive. Frank is General Manager of Vehicle Inspection NZ, a nationwide WoF agency, whose knowledge of vehicle compliance rules will prove invaluable in the FOMC's endeavours.

EDITORIAL

FOMC lobbying pays off

The announcement that motorbikes manufactured before 1980 will be exempt from the new mandatory daytime headlight law is a win for the Federation. When this proposal was first mooted over a year ago, the FOMC spoke to its motorcycle member clubs who warned that such a rule was impractical for older bikes without headlamps, or with carbide lamps or dyno-operated lights that are unlit when stationary or at low speeds (*Wheel Torque* issue # 2).

We raised this with the-then Transport Safety Minister Harry Duynhoven, who agreed to support a submission from the FOMC to exempt older 'bikes. Although our submission suggested a 40 year-old age cut-off, 1980 is equally practical and should capture any newer road-legal bikes or mopeds that weren't fitted with decent lights.

Although some other groups put in similar submissions on the draft Rule during the public consultation phase, the Federation can take much credit for this pragmatic solution. And classic motorcycle enthusiasts – whether they are represented by the Federation or not – have us to thank for a law that doesn't unduly discriminate against them just because they ride a 'bike that can't easily comply with the Rule.

While some riders suggested the Rule should be opposed, the Federation supported it as a sensible safety initiative. We noted that motorcyclists have an above-average accident rate, and while not always their fault, a common reason is that other road users claim they "didn't see" the motorbike they drove into, often with devastating consequences. Using headlights during the daytime will make them more visible, and in countries where daytime headlamps are mandatory, accident rates have fallen as a result. The majority of 'bikes are fitted with lights so could easily comply with such a rule, and many riders already do so voluntarily. In fact, many new 'bikes now have automatic lights for this very reason.

Therefore, the Federation's submission supported the proposal, with the proviso that older 'bikes be exempted. It didn't make sense to oppose it for the majority when only a minority couldn't comply, if they could be exempted instead. While there is a risk that some riders will be pulled over by over-zealous cops – who will check the rego sticker to verify the age – over time we expect the police will recognise a classic 'bike, and leave them alone. The Federation aims to contact the Road Policing unit before November, when the rule comes into effect, to discuss their enforcement instructions to staff.

This is an example of the Federation at work on behalf of member clubs. While the work we do is often invisible, if a national organisation representing enthusiast vehicle owners did not exist to make strong submissions on an issue like this, hundreds if not thousands of classic or vintage 'bike owners would now be unable to ride their pride and joy free of the risk of being walloped with a \$100 fine every time they took it out.

Lets hope we have similar success with the looming boy racer legislation, which has the potential to affect every vehicle club in NZ, not just motorcycles. To our knowledge, the Federation was one of only two motoring groups who submitted on the Bills. Many of the submitters, such as city councils and moteliers, were in favour of the proposals. If the Federation didn't caution the select committee to redraft the 'anti-cruise' bylaw to exclude daytime events, every enthusiast vehicle owner in NZ could find themselves ticketed the next time they go on a Sunday club run.

Mark Stockdale, Editor & Secretary

OBITUARY

Phil Andrews

The FOMC is saddened to report the passing of one of its founding committee members, Phil Andrews (83).

Phil was involved with vintage cars most of his life, and in 1946 became a founder member of the Manawatu Car Club, thus commencing his passion for founding motoring clubs. In 1966 he moved to Taupo and in short order helped establish the Taupo branch of the Vintage Car Club, becoming club captain in 1967.

After moving to Te Puke in the late 1980s, he formed the Bay of Plenty Branch of the Wolseley Club, and was a founder member of the British Cars BoP.

Phil was a prime mover for the establishment of the NZ Federation of Motoring Clubs in 1995. Little did he realise at that time that his foresightedness would see this organisation grow to 120+ clubs, representing 20,000 members owning in excess of 30,000 vehicles as it does today. Phil saw a need for an organisation that could represent the 'one make clubs' and the Federation was to achieve this goal.

Phil served on the FOMC committee for its first few years to see it up and running, and we are indebted to his vision and ability to promote, foster and influence the motoring pleasure of thousands of heritage vehicle enthusiasts in New Zealand.

– thanks to Graham Mock,
Taupo Vintage Car Club



NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Car scrapping subsidies introduced in Europe

As a response to the economic crisis and its impact on the car industry, 11 European Union member states have introduced financial incentives to encourage consumers to scrap old cars in favour of newer models, worth up to £2000 in the case of the British scheme. Besides boosting sales of new cars and supporting the new car industry, governments say the schemes will also improve the environment by removing older, more polluting cars, from circulation. Classic car enthusiasts and representative groups like the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs are however concerned that the large subsidies could lead to the destruction of restorable classic cars or parts donors.



No such subsidies are planned for NZ, primarily because we do not have a car assembly industry to support. Although there have recently been short-term scrapping schemes run in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch where owners were encouraged to scrap cars in return for public transport vouchers or to go into a draw to win a new car. In each case the car had to have a current WoF or one which expired in the last 3 months so would most likely capture old Japanese-imports that weren't worth maintaining rather than a roadworthy classic. Interestingly, the most common reason people gave for choosing to dispose of the car was that the tyres needed replacing; at about \$100 a wheel the owner considered the cost outweighed the value of the car.

Help us keep your members informed

This newsletter is produced to keep clubs informed on issues that affect your members. So please help us to disseminate this information to the 20,000 heritage and enthusiast vehicle owners we represent. You can do that by circulating this newsletter to your committee for their review, and publishing relevant articles in your own club bulletin.

PDF copies of *Wheel Torque*, and FOMC committee minutes, are also available on our website: www.fomc.co.nz

If you'd like text copies of certain articles to reproduce, or want to update your postal and email contact details, email secretary@fomc.co.nz

And don't forget, the FOMC welcomes copies of your club newsletters so we can keep abreast of what's happening in your club – post them to PO Box 24-225, Wellington 6142.

Brits warned over using French biofuels

British tourists holidaying in France have been warned a new "environmentally friendly" fuel on sale in French petrol stations could damage their cars and even cause breakdowns.

The petrol called '95-E10' is a mixture of regular unleaded fuel and 10% ethanol, like the 98-octane grade sold in NZ by Gull (photo, below) and some Mobil service stations in the lower North Island (bottom photo). The French E10 is suitable for new cars but can damage vehicles registered before the year 2000, motoring bodies have warned.

A spokeswoman for the Royal Automobile Club said: "There is some concern that some, particularly older vehicles, might have problems – particularly materials compatibility i.e. flexible hoses leaking."



Ethanol is highly corrosive and wears away the metal fuel tanks common in cars registered before 2000, leading to leaks. Most new cars have plastic tanks and are therefore not be affected by corrosion.

The E10, which has been gradually distributed across stations in France since April, and which the French government has admitted is incompatible with 40 percent of vehicles on the road, can damage engines of cars registered before the year 2000, according to Holland's national automobile association, the ANWB.

– www.telegraph.co.uk, 10 July 2009

