

Being Australian

By Dave Munro

I like to walk; you know, leave the bike at home and use my legs to propel myself forward. I must look a sight to some of the Lycra clad crowd that sweat their way around the nation's capital, the fat bald bloke covered in tatts and in need of a shave. This morning I was walking alongside Lake Burley Griffin on the edge of the Parliamentary Zone where they have the plaques honoring the recipients of the Australian of the Year award. Walking the other way two blokes were also having a look and one turned to the other and said, "most of them have done bugger all".

My first thought was I hear ya...then I had a few more thoughts. It is a very Australian thing to go about your business, fly under the radar and do your best not seeking attention and adoration. There is no doubt that the Aussie of the year awards are awash with sports stars and some politically correct recipients but step back and dig a bit deeper into some of the lesser knowns and see what you find.

The first recipient in 1960 was virologist, Sir Macfarlane Burnett who won the Nobel Prize for medicine. In 1963 it was Sir John Eccles also a Nobel winner for medicine. Former prisoner of war and military surgeon, LtCol Sir Edward "Weary" Dunlop was a much deserved winner in 1976 and my personal favourite, ophthalmologist Fred Hollows was 1990 Australian of the Year. Some pretty fine company there.

Right now, out there in our community there are tens of thousands of people doing their bit for their community. They are not seeking recognition and they are not seeking rewards, they just think it is the right thing to do. Times are pretty tough around the country, utility prices keep rising, rents keep rising, banks keep screwing us and pollies keep lying to us. Yet there are decent folk around who, with not much more than those they are helping keep going about the business of volunteering. Meals on Wheels, The Smith Family, Community Food Co-ops, The Salvation Army, St Lukes, Surf Lifesaving Australia...the list goes on.

In the motorcycle community it is no different, just hairier and uglier. The toy runs around the country get plenty of publicity as does anything that can

attract a dollar producing headline for the media. There is however, far more to bikers than that. The various United Motorcycle Councils are fighting for our rights, not just those of bikers, but of all Australians. There is no money in this, just cost and the chance of fighting for freedoms that are slowly being eroded in this country. Bikers are becoming more politically aware, purely out of need. Freedom, Rights, Educate, Environment (FREE) Australia Party was started by some concerned bikers and friends in South Australia as a reaction to the State Labor Government and their draconian legislation, the Serious and Organised Crime Control Act. FREE ran six candidates at the 2010 South Australian state election, two in the Senate and four in the House of Representatives and another in the recent by election for the seat vacated by ousted Premier Mike Rann. FREE is looking to go national in the near future.

Look around the biking community and you will see so much more. B.A.C.A., Ride for Connor, Pink Ribbon Ride, Perth Bikers Charity Ride, The Snowy Ride, Animal and the Kings Cross Bikers. Aussie bikers putting in their time and effort to help others, raise funds and do something instead of hitting the keyboard and bitching about life from the anonymity of cyber space.

You have to go a long way to find a more maligned group of people who actually do so much good in the greater community.

A quote comes to mind that fits well here, on the walls of the Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C. it reads:

Thou shall not be a perpetrator, thou shall not be a victim, and thou shall never, but never, be a bystander....Yehuda Bauer.

Ride Safe...Mork.

The logo features the word "THE" in a small, bold, black font stacked vertically on the left. To its right, the word "ISSUE" is written in a large, bold, black font with a metallic, 3D effect. A blue wavy line passes behind the letters of "ISSUE". To the right of "ISSUE", the text ".com.au" is written in a smaller, bold, black font.