

Tony Stegmar	Honda CBR1000	Marc Marais (leader)	Kawasaki ZX10R
Misho Zrakic	Honda CBR1000	Mark Copeland	Kawasaki ZX10R
Paul Southwell	Honda CBR1000	Michael Zrb	Kawasaki ZX10R
Ian Payne	Honda CBR1000	John Willis	Kawasaki Z1000
John Rousseaux/Kate Stewart	Honda CBR1000	Paul Cail (1 <sup>st</sup> ride)	Yamaha R1
Nigel Oman (2 <sup>nd</sup> ride)	Honda CBR1000	Phill Hotschilt	Suzuki GSXR1300
Damir Djikic	Honda CBR1000	Chris Pointon	Suzuki GSXR1000
Ron Johnston	Honda CBF1000	Mark Rigsby	Suzuki GSXR1000
Pina Garasi (rear)	Honda CBR600	Steve Mudford	Suzuki GSXR750
Kurn Bridgeman	Honda CBR600	Peter Fisher (rear)	MV Augusta 1090
Matt Considine (2 <sup>nd</sup> ride)	Honda CBR600	Rob Langer	KTM 990

The itinerary for this ride changed almost every week before it actually happened. It was going to be an easy loop up to Rawson and back down through Gippsland, Arawata/Korumburra etc.

I scouted out the ride early on the previous Sunday morning in the pouring rain. I skipped the Childers section, not keen on riding in mud, so didn't get to familiarise myself with the route. Unfortunately, this omission caused a problem, but I'll get to that later.

On the return trip I was booked half way between Longwarry and Bunyip. An eager policeman in a highway patrol car decided to follow my bright green ZX-10 to see if I would make a contribution to the state's coffers. Riding over the limit while overtaking saw the patrol car right up my clacker and three points for the offence of 'rounding up a car'. Whatever that means...

With the world a much safer place with the Traffic Infringement Notice (TIN) issued, I crawled home at the 'speed limit' which everyone knows is the safest way to travel. I decided to change the route to exclude Gippsland as follows:

- Leg 1: Berwick, Gembrook, Noojee. 100km.
- Leg 2: Noojee, Icy Creek, Tanjil South, Erica, Rawson. Fuel. 80km
- Leg 3: Rawson, Tyers, Moe 55km. Lunch.
- Leg 4: Moe, Old Sale Road, Neerim Junction, Powelltown. 94km.

Sunday arrived and we headed north from Berwick through Harkaway to Boundary Road where we turned off into the twisties. On to Gembrook and Launching Place before picking up the Powelltown Road to Noojee for morning tea. So far so good except Steve had problems with fuel starvation on his bike and ended up removing the tank. Tools were scattered around while he tried in vain to solve the problem.

After a slightly longer break than normal we headed off to tackle the Icy Creek road, challenging at the best of times due to potholes, debris and its narrow width. But still enjoyable, as all twisty roads are.

We ran into some unwelcome company on the Willow Grove Tanjil South road which saw one of our riders pulled over. (Maybe the State's coffers were in need of topping up, even after my contribution the previous Sunday).

We regrouped at Moe for lunch where I decided that the loop up to Rawson would probably be unsuitable giving the nature of the roads – wide open sweepers more suited for quieter days. Instead I decided to do what I'd originally planned to do – Gippsland. Having scouted the roads with the exception of around Childers, I was confident as I headed left off the highway at Trafalgar. As it turns out, the Childers' road isn't a single road as per Google Maps but has a Y-intersection with a dirt track heading right which I incorrectly assumed was the dirt section that ended in Childers. After a while, with no end to the dirt in sight, I stopped to check my map. After working out where we were, I decided to continue on to Yarragon South where the road met with the bitumen again.

The map showed a nice twisty road from Yarragon South back towards Childers. Excellent! Oh, what's this? A detour? No problem – I'm sure this will meet up with the main road again – wrong.

More dirt. At this point, I aborted and headed back to the Princes Highway and back tracked through Trafalgar and Thorpdale to Mirboo North for lunch. This road is always good.

The rest of the ride continued without issues finishing at Longwarry North.

Many thanks to all for their patience. It is hard to make decisions on the spur of the moment with little information to go on. For the record, the road from Yarragon South to Childers should be fantastic once that bloody detour is removed – definitely worth a visit. (*It is also dirt ... Ed.*)

**Marc Marais**