



Willem Vandeveld (rear)	Honda ST1300	Phil Hotschilt	Suzuki GSXR13000
Ben Warden	Honda CBR1000	Tony Stegmar	Suzuki GSXR1000
Misho Zrakic	Honda CBR1000	Chrys Kioseoglou (3 rd ride)	Suzuki TL1000S
Paul Southwell	Honda CBR1000	Cliff Peters	Kawasaki ZX10
Simon Wastney	Honda VFR800	Ian Payne	Kawasaki ZX10
Pina Garasi	Honda CBR600	John Willis	Kawasaki ZX10
Pierre Ong	Aprilia RSV4 1000	Tony Herman (2 nd ride)	Kawasaki ZX10
Michael Srb	BMW S1000RR	Rob Langer (leader)	KTM 990
Dave Chisma	BMW F800ST	Huseyin Ates (1 st ride)	Yamaha R6

I was excited. I hadn't been on a decent bike ride in months. Over the years I have morphed into one of those that I regularly used to make fun of. Yes, I'm a self-confessed fair weather rider. It's just not fun for me when the roads are wet. I looked at my back tyre, looked at my new back tyre on the garage floor, and then the lazy Tony in me assured me that this tyre was good enough for one more ride. Good enough for me; I went to look for that beer that was insistently calling out my name.

Up early on Sunday morning (I even remembered to turn my clock one hour forward), weather was iffy, but I was a brave little fair weather rider and made my way to Yarra Glen.

This is my second ride with MSR, the first being around 18 months ago. As was the case then, the established members made me and Huseyin feel very welcome.

Rob made sure that we understood the corner marking system and then we made our way towards Emerald. There were a few roads that I didn't know, but it doesn't really matter when you have someone showing the way at the junctions.

I slowly found my place in the pack. When I think back on the ride a few things stand out for me. I love it when the faster riders come past and smoothly flow through the corners in front of me. Hopefully this doesn't sound too dramatic, but it's almost visual poetry, where one line flows into the next. Then of course, there's the nasty growl of the Aprilia V4... delicious.

This was the first time that I've been down the Launching Place road in this direction and I have to say that I prefer doing it this way. That doesn't really make sense to me, but there it is!

I was corner marking at the turn on the Paternoster Road. Bladder pressure meant that community service to the drought relief effort was in order and I'm sure that the residents of Cockatoo will thank me in years to come. Hmm? Turned onto Paternoster and just after I passed our rear guard, Willem, I saw the white 4WD, blue lights ablaze, frantically flashing its headlights, accompanied by a frenetic arm waving. Huseyin was in front of me and I unashamedly (okay, there was a little bit of shame) overtook him, using the logic of the two campers running away from a rampant grizzly bear. The two campers, both bare footed were running away from a grizzly bear. One of them stopped to retrieve his runners and struggled to put them on mid-stride. The other one shouted, "Are you crazy? Putting your runners on won't make you outrun the bear!" He said: "Yes, but it will make me outrun you!"

We got to Emerald without incident and settled down for coffee. There was some amusing confusion with an extra coffee and Pina took full advantage of the situation. Erm, I mean, tried her best to find out whose coffee it was.

It was at this stage that my previous day's laziness came back to bite me, when it was pointed out that my back tyre was a bit iffy. I decided to abandon the ride as I was quite close to home anyway.

I am happy to say that the ride was completed with everyone staying upright and I'm sure that all concerned had a great day.

I enjoyed being out with MSR. There is none of the posturing and attitude that you find with many groups. Another great advantage is that I'm not the only grey haired head when the helmets come off. In fact, some have even more greys than me! Bonus!

I hope that from now on I will be out on my bike with MSR every other Sunday, although I still reserve my right to be a fair weather rider.

Tony Herman