

1 April 2009

## **POLICE TO JOIN IN RIDING FOR THE HILLS**

Victoria Police Assistant Commissioner (Traffic and Transit Safety) Ken Lay hasn't ridden on a motorcycle for some time but that certainly won't stop him this weekend when he dons the leathers for a good cause.

Mr Lay will travel as a passenger on the back of Motorcycle Riders Association Victoria president John Karmouche's 1600cc Harley Davidson Heritage Softail as part of the Ride for the Hills charity ride this Sunday to raise funds for the Red Cross Bushfire Appeal.

As many as 5000 motorcyclists are expected to take part in the ride which will start at St Kilda Pier at 11am and finish at Whittlesea Showgrounds later in the afternoon.

Mr Lay said the ride provided a fantastic opportunity to recognise the impact the fires have had on motorcyclists while also highlighting road safety issues.

"Some of the areas worst affected by February's bushfires were the state's most popular motorcycle routes including Marysville, Kinglake, St Andrews, Narbethong and the Black Spur," he said.

"While riders may not have lived in these areas themselves, there's no doubt they felt the devastation personally and it great that an event like this can be organised to help the recovery effort.

"Speaking with a number of motorcycle riders they say that these towns and roads had special meaning for them and they are committed to returning to ride in those locations.

"Motorcycle safety has been a priority for Victoria Police this year with the launch of the Community Policing and Education Project in January, which will see an increased focus on rider and driver education and enforcement.

"Unfortunately so far this year we have seen 10 motorcyclists killed on our roads and we are continuing to work hard to keep that figure low and reduce the number of collisions involving motorcyclists.

"This is six under the number the number we had at the same time last year so we are starting to see the benefits of these efforts.

"I'm looking forward to riding with John to help raise money for the Red Cross Bushfire Appeal and also talk to some of the motorcyclists about road safety issues."

A number of other Victoria Police members including some from the Special Solo Unit will also be joining in the ride to assist with traffic management and show their support for the cause.

The organisation of the ride began less than 24 hours after what has become known as Black Saturday with a coalition of independent riders and associations coming together in support of the affected communities.

# MEDIA ALERT

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A number of organisations also donated a significant amount of memorabilia and prizes to be auctioned off and used in raffles and as prizes on the day.

MRAV president John Karmouche said the response to the ride has been “phenomenal” and it was shaping up to be one of the biggest charity rides Victoria has ever seen.

“It has been incredible how many people have thrown their support behind this ride and help give something back to the fire-affected areas that have meant so much to motorcyclists over the years,” he said.

“We also know that many locals from those areas are riders themselves and got great pleasure out of riding through areas such as Kinglake and the Black Spur.

“We are encouraging as many riders as possible to join with us in an official capacity by registering for the event early and spreading the word to others to come along.

“If you can’t make it along on the day then you can still show your support by registering with your fee counting as a donation to the Red Cross Bushfire Appeal and you will also be eligible for the online registration prizes.”

Registering for Ride for the Hills costs just \$20 and can be done through the official website at [www.rideforthehills.org.au](http://www.rideforthehills.org.au)

Detailed information, a route map and further updates about the event are also available on the site.

**ENDS**

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## MEDIA OPPORTUNITY

**WHAT:** Assistant Commissioner (Traffic and Transit Safety) Ken Lay to join with Motorcycle Riders Association Victoria President John Karmouche to promote Riding for the Hills charity ride

**WHEN:** Thursday, April 2 at 11am

**WHERE:** St Kilda Pier, Pier Road, St Kilda

**For media enquiries please contact:**

Natalie Webster  
Media Officer  
Victoria Police  
03 9247 5204  
[nat.webster@police.vic.gov.au](mailto:nat.webster@police.vic.gov.au)

Press Releases / 2009 / April / Victoria Police support Ride for the Hills – Media Alert