

Presidents Report 2025-2026

The best summary of the years 2025 to 2026 for the Classic Riders Club would be one of renewal.

Renewal of purpose

Renewal of approach

Renewal of events

Renewal of membership.

In essence our focus has been to make the club new again! This is not a reflection where the club was before the 25-26 year but an acknowledgement of the fact that all organisations must adapt and grow to ensure their long term viability.

Long term success is achieved by looking forward rather than rearwards, clearly we cannot change the past but we can take lessons from it that help us navigate the future, additionally we must continue to plan and apply great effort on all future activities.

Our executive team are well aware that will will make mistakes, sometimes things we try may not work, sometimes we need to change approach, but we don't see this as failure, we see it as part of the journey and the past year has been one helluva journey.

Without doubt the club has been incredibly busy with many new projects undertaken and for the most part we've been able to complete these as planned.

The most recent project was to complete our constitution rewrite, which is now gone off to the Department of Fair Trading to be accepted and we should soon be able to put this into practice.

The constitution rewrite involved several meetings over around six month period with a dedicated team looking at all of the finer points that required examination and change, the committee believe the new document will serve the club well for the next 5 years, at which point we will go the process once more

The past 6 weeks or so have been relatively quite and provided an opportunity for the team to catch breath and relax little in preparation for the post AGM period, additionally the cold mid-winter weather is not exactly conducive to all things motorcycling, though it must be said some of us have tried to put some Ks under the wheels and provide ourselves with chills rather than thrills.

During the past year we've had several new events and maintained our previous events and in the case of the Christmas in July re-affirmed a past event.

The new events have included the Tiddler Tour, LAMs ride, Black and Dirty and the biggest one of all, The Distinguished Gentleman's Ride, of course we continue with our Annual Ride, Tiddler Tour and the Great Southern Swap Meet.

Our overall belief is that the club needs to offer a vast array of options to appeal to the needs of a diverse group of motorcyclists so we can remain vibrant and significant within the local motorcycle community.

Of course none of this growth could've been achieved without the incredible efforts of the entire team which have all remained dedicated to the task of renewal and have without exception pulled beyond their weight and helped wherever possible, additionally the general club membership have provided tremendous support for all events and activities.

The past year has seen a significant increase in new members replacing those who have left over the past 18 months and we're confident the growth will continue, in particular we have been promoting our club to potential younger members, knowing that the future of clubs such as ours hinge on finding more youthful members who will eventually take on roles in executive and other coordination areas, such as for example event or swap meet coordinator.

The club also feels we need to encourage women to join the fun, as riders, restorers, pillioners and more, there's no doubt our current female members have added much to the club and incredibly important, providing cool heads, fabulous skills and balance.

A significant number of the "soon to be retired" are joining us, again vital to our long term prospects, this group in particular are often leaving their working life with incredible skills and plenty of energy still in the tank, many after just a short time in membership to acclimatise could fill committee and coordination roles.

Looking beyond our membership the club has continued to fulfill a valuable role within the community via events, donations and involvement in events conducted by other organisations. The Swap Meet and Distinguished Gentleman's Ride are particularly good examples of this approach.

The year of course has not been without its challenges for example our 2026 Swap Meet coincided with the beginning of the fuel crisis, this impacted site bookings being some being late cancelled and a reduction in people coming to visit from outside of Goulburn. Despite the issues the event ran very smoothly, was financial success and displayed very high levels of satisfaction by the exhibitors when officially surveyed.

Hopefully for 2027, we will not have a repeat of the same problem, but it emphasises that our club needs to be agile and prepared to adjust events to the changed needs as they come along. Likewise the Black and Dirty was afflicted by extremely poor weather causing around 30% to pull out late, again beyond club control but to counteract this we'll be running the event at an earlier point for 2027. Needless to say the event was still tremendous success, albeit somewhat damp and cold on the day.

Probably our greatest success for the past year has was the Distinguished Gentleman's Ride and it's worth pointing out a few facts.

This was the first time that we had run the event yet we had an extraordinarily high number of participants, around 120, meaning we were on almost level pegging with cities vastly larger than ours, in fact we had the greatest number of participants for any regional centre within New South Wales or indeed the country other than Townsville!

Importantly we raised approximately \$17,000 for men's mental health and cancer research and along the way achieved incredible support from the local community.

Most significantly for our club the positive exposure raised our community profile enormously, the 272,000 views on Facebook in the 28 days surrounding the event is an obvious testimony to that.

It helped of course the day provided perfect weather for once.

We are going to attempt to do an even bigger and better job for 2027 and in fact, we already have plans in place and have already booked the site in Montague St.

I'd like to take moment to thank those incredible folk who have made the successes of 2025-26 possible.

First of all to Cherrie Thrower, our fabulous Club Secretary, her work and support for the club are exemplary, whilst on the ladies of the club, Julie Kneebone for her attention to detail and assistance with the constitution and of course for organising of the fabulous Worn Out Wander.

My wife, the lovely miss Wendy who put in the hard yards to build our fabulous new web presence, and I must mention Bronwyn Temple who has proven herself quite the media star when promoting our club, I suspect she is a frustrated actress.

Chris Thrower who has thrown himself in the deep end as the events coordinator and expanded the clubs offerings, Howard Kneebone, always there to make contacts, organize activities and look after the Memorial event. Our club Vice President Colin Jewell and his better half Lois who have organised the Christmas in July, researched numerous matters on behalf of the club and much more.

And who could forget Don Baxter, a man of several words, a wealth of information and most importantly a great Treasurer and then there is Peter Grady who has brought great passion to the role of Club Captain.

There are wealth of non-executive folk who have kept the wheels turning, John Zyla who has kept an eye on the Memorial Site and Soi who made Spring Rolls and other items for our Christmas Party that have since gone into club lore.

A special mention to Laurie Jones who stepped aside temporarily from the Regalia Officer job to support his lovely wife in her time of need, we are so pleased that that chapter for you and Debbie is behind you and you can move forward with confidence.

We must also thank Ross Gilchrist who is stepping down from his role as public officer, you have for many years taken significant roles in the operation of the club and been a member who has often provided balance and rationality when difficult situations have arisen, we thank you.

I'd also like to thank Charles Hillier who despite no longer being the club treasurer made several trips to Goulburn to assist in the Constitution rewrite and I feel provided incredible value in the process and shared his depth of knowledge at every meeting, speaking of which I must mention Bill Irvine who carried out much of the leg work in the process and provided valuable advice.

I thank our Machine examiners, the unsung heroes of the club who have kept our machines on the road and are in the process of meeting the changes to processes to keep us up to date and compliant.

To all of the general members who have kept on top of all those small items that needed attending to, turned up to set up displays, assisted with events and more, you are the lifeblood of the club.

Finally on the thank you front, I pay homage to Richard Corbett, one of our club founders who crossed the 80yr barrier (along with Mick Jackson) a little earlier this year, Richard remains active within the club and is a great ambassador, you are a gentleman, an incredible voice for the club and most importantly an inspiration to us all.

Whilst I am at it we all want to know how come Mick Jackson can look so young and vital at 80, many of us feel we need some of "whatever elixir" that is.

What are our plans for the future you may ask?

We want to encourage members to visit other clubs events, locally and regionally so as to build important bridges and networks.

On the technology front, we will continue to develop and expand our new club website, provide training options for the members to help get their tech skills up to speed. We will also be getting the Instagram site up and filled and work towards establishing a Youtube site with reviews, events summaries, interviews and how to's.

On the events front, we have a great array of offerings and will refine them and heavily promote them to the wider motorcycling community. We will also be including rider training options for specific riding situations, with low speed bike handling being first to be conducted.

As for meetings, we are planning to streamline processes and importantly value add to the monthly meetings with, restoration tutorials, safety workshops, videos, first aid and more.

Our future is bright, it will require skills, dedications, passion and great organization but most importantly the input and efforts a significant number of members, but it will not be onerous if we all pull together.

We have great confidence that the members will indeed work in unison for the betterment of the club. Why? Because that's exactly what has happened over the past 12 months and we know we can capitalise on the excitement.

As is often said, many hands make for light work and the Classic Riders Club has been over the past 12 months the distilled embodiment of exactly that, I as president take my hat off to all those who have gone above and beyond, those who have taken care of the little things, the important things, the frustrating things and all these items that required shoulders to the grindstone to get done.

You, my friends, are an inspiration to me and each other, I thank you for your dedication, strength of character, passion and most of all your desire to serve the needs of this great club.