



Hundreds of bikers thrill city crowds

THEY promised thunder and thunder's exactly what they delivered.

Rockhampton shook to the deafening rasp of thousands of horsepower over the weekend as 740 Harley-Davidson motorcycles roared through the city on the Thunder Ride.

HOG rally organiser Mark Verheyden was euphoric yesterday at the way his home city had welcomed so many immaculate machines and their leather-clad owners.

“Riders from all over Australia have been telling me it was one of the best thunder runs ever.

CONTINUED, P9



HEADED OUT: A huge string of motorcycles and riders heads out on the highway for the Thunder Ride.

PHOTO: ALLAN REINIKKA ART1/0409/6

Thundering big-bore machines thrill crowd



PROUD OWNER: Rockhampton HOG member Mick Thompson astride his Harley at the Show and Shine at the Showgrounds yesterday.

PHOTO: MEGAN LEWIS ML12/0409/7

FROM PAGE 1



WARMED UP: HOG members prepare for the Thunder Ride.

PHOTO: ALLAN REINIKKA AR11/0409/14

"We've waited 11 years to get the state rally to the city and it's been absolute perfection," he said.

He said the reaction from Harley owners to Rockhampton was so positive he thought it would only be a matter of time before the city was chosen for the national rally, which could bring up to 10,000 riders.

"We've had a great time and that's because of the way we have been policed, the incredible venue at Rockhampton Showgrounds, the support of the public and council and the great location," he said.

It was the largest gathering ever in Queensland and around 600 bikes thundered from Rockhampton to Yeppoon on Saturday in a blur of gleaming chrome and black leather.

North Rocky biker Mick Thompson proudly displayed his 1803cc Softtail Springer at the Show and Shine on Sunday and said the rally had brought a much-needed boost for the city when it was needed most.

MORNING *The* Bulletin

OPINION

Riding fraternity model visitors

THERE'S no delicate way to say this: some people are terrified of bikies, and, as recent events in Sydney have proved, with good reason.

But there are bikies and there are bikies. And the 740 or so who roared through Rockhampton and the surrounding region at the weekend were not the scary gangland variety.

They were loud, they were hairy (well some of them were) but they were unerringly friendly.

In fact, they could hardly have been better behaved if they had been Benedictine monks on a day out from the monastery.

The Harley Owners' Group state rally at Rockhampton Showgrounds was an entirely positive event for the city.

Proud bike owners from all over Australia - and a few from New Zealand - rode into town with one intention: to have a good time showing off their gleaming machines.

They filled the hotels and motels and restaurants and cafes and I dare say the odd drink was taken.

But the police reported not a single incident involving a HOG, either on the road or off.

And according to rally organiser Mark Verhagen, the visiting hordes were so impressed with Rockhampton they could be back in even greater numbers before too long.

If that's true, the city and its hospitality industry will surely welcome them back with open arms.

Praise too for the police for the escort duties that earned such respect from the riders.



Adrian Taylor
reporter

Other Clips from "The Morning Bulletin"

STREET VOICES

Q: What is one thing you want to do before you die?

Todd Titmus, Rockhampton:
DRINK a pub dry. Any pub anywhere will do. I think I could do it.

Nathan Young, Yeppoon:
I WOULD like to go bungy jumping in Sweden. I've been sky diving a couple of times but I think launching yourself off a cliff and surviving would be great.



Todd Titmus



Nathan Young

TEXT THE EDITOR

■ **AH, BERSERKER.** Can readers help me? I am an aged pensioner and for many years have been subjected to late night excessive horn-blowing outside my house by a woman leaving her mother's house around midnight some nights. Is this a police matter? Or do I seek justice via civil action in the courts? Help urgently needed.