
Harley Owners Group (HOG) – New South Wales Chapter

HOGS – The Official riding club of Harley-Davidson – Established 1983

HOG Activity – Sunday 14 October, 2018

H.A.R.T. Rider Training (Honda Australia Roadcraft Training)

Always on the annual HOG ride calendar is the option to participate in H.A.R.T. rider training. HART has long been considered a pre-eminent provider of rider training in Australia with branches in every state and territory.

Located at 451 Mona Vale road, St. Ives, HART provide professional and accredited driver / rider / ATV training at all levels from beginner to advanced. Today our HOG group partakes in the Advanced II Rider Training Course.

Other courses offered include Off-Road, Adventure Rider, Advanced I Handling Dynamics, and Advanced III Trackmaster (for high speed track work).

Honda's commitment to increased safety spans 20 countries. HART is the Australian organisation representing Honda's global focus on increasing road user safety. Although HART is supported by Honda, courses are open to all makes and models of vehicle.

HART first opened its doors in Victoria in 1989, then in NSW in 1998 and now, 20 years on has grown into the largest motorcycle rider training provider in Australia. Their mission is to contribute positively to road safety by equipping all those who pass through the facility with roadcraft techniques that will help them contribute to improved road safety within our society.



Image 1 – We need to be at St. Ives by 8.00 am so we all meet at a convenient place, Frasers (our sponsoring dealer) by 7.00 am. It has rained all night and it's still raining but the training day will be on rain, hail or shine. It actually may be advantageous if it's raining all day as this will hone our wet weather skills, an opportunity not often experienced in a drought stricken country.

Here we see all Hoggies appropriately dressed for the wet conditions.



Image 2 – We arrive at the HART facility on Mona Vale Road just before 8 am which is located on 40 acres of natural bushland.

It's my first time here but for some it's a second or third time visit. It's probably a good idea to refresh your training every 2 years or when you get a new bike. Different bikes have different handling characteristics and it's most advisable to test them out on a training day such as this. The scheduled training for today consists of a full day (8am – 4pm) of advanced rider training and techniques to assist in all aspects of riding and getting to know your own bike.

Cost for each rider is \$260 and upon satisfactory completion of this course, each rider will receive a HOG skilled rider patch and pin and will be reimbursed \$50 by the Chapter. This sounds like the perfect Christmas gift to me!



Image 3 – We proceed directly to the car park outside the facility and wait to be admitted. It's still raining, fantastic!



Image 4 – It may be wet but our enthusiasm has not waned. Here we see from left Hazza (Harry), Priest (Frederick), Kristal and Lozza (Lawrence).



Image 5 – HART training is not just for riders but also for pillion passengers. Today Kristal will be honing her skills as a pillion passenger on Lozza's bike. And she is wearing all the right biker gear which always looks fashionable in my opinion! And, pillion passengers attend at no extra charge.



Image 6 – Raring to go first timers are good buddies Jubby (Mike) at left with Mr. Con (Con).

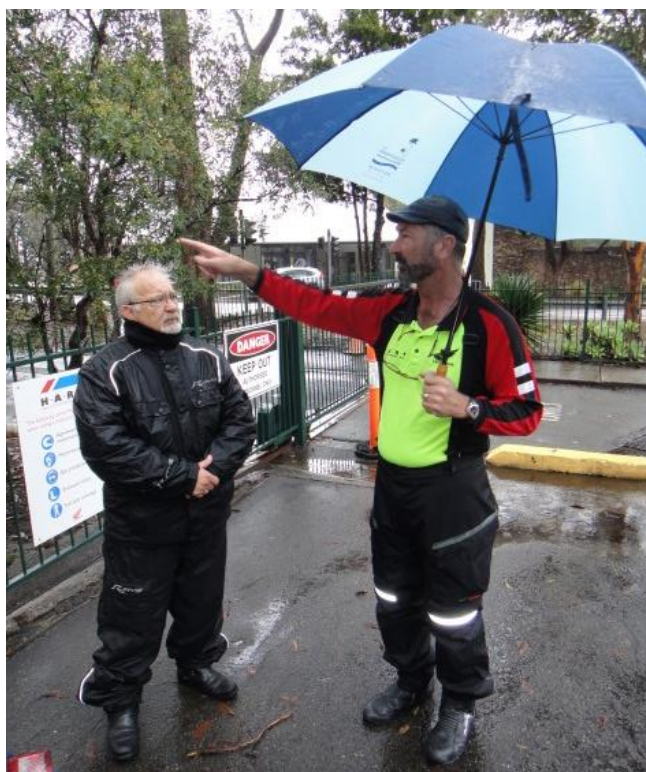


Image 7 – Our senior instructor for today (Ken Whitehouse) greets us in the carpark and directs us into the compound.



Image 8 – We proceed directly to the office area and each of us needs to complete the mandatory “exclusion of liability and indemnity” form. This basically states that you are participating in the training entirely at your own risk, that you understand the potential hazards, that you possess a current and valid licence, that you are not subject to any illness, injury or condition that will affect your ability to operate your vehicle, and that you will follow all directions and instructions as given by HART employees. It is also a requirement to wear appropriate safety clothing (full skin coverage is required) and if providing your own motorcycle, that it is registered and roadworthy. Also, you must not operate a vehicle in a manner that contravenes any law.

Finally, Honda and its directors, officers, employees, agents and contractors are indemnified in respect of any proceedings, claims, losses, damages, injuries (including death), costs, penalties or fines arising in connection with your attendance at, or participation in the training offered whether caused or contributed to, directly or indirectly, by any act or omission (including negligence) on the part of Honda or any of its directors, officers, employees, agents or contractors.



Image 9 – I notice outside the office building an area dedicated to the training of learner riders. HART is a professional driving school that provides training for drivers and riders at all levels. For example, Pre-Learner, Pre-Provisional, Provisional Prep, Basic Road Skills and Private Lessons. They also provide learner-legal Honda motorcycles if required. We will be using the circuit around the site which is separate to where these learners are.



Image 10 – Like most work places today, they are smoke-free zones. A small area is provided away from the office building for smokers. Here, our HOG smokers take a final puff before class begins



Image 11 – At 8.30 am we bring our bikes into the compound and park right next to the office building where we will firstly do classroom stuff before doing the practical sessions. On rainy days I prefer to wear my full-face helmet but it's an unfamiliar feeling wearing wet-weather gear after long drought conditions experienced throughout the State. However, we are not complaining about the rain, it's very much needed, especially in rural areas.

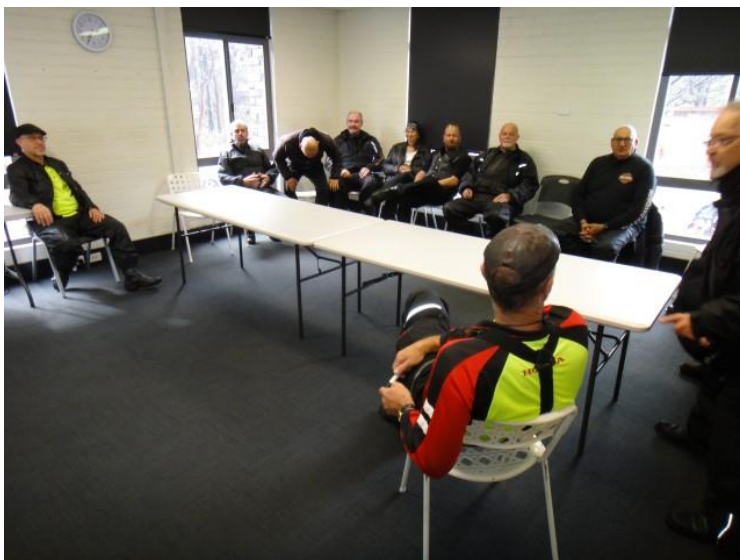


Image 12 – Class begins at 8.40 am with 11 Hoggies present today. That's a nice small group as you don't want too many in a class. Here we see the classroom with our two instructors for today in the foreground, these being Marcello Forestieri (at left) and Ken Whitehouse. HART's instructors are trained to Honda's World Instructor Standard, and are passionate about training and safety.



Image 13 – Class begins to an attentive audience. Unlike our schooldays, none of this is boring! From left we see Mouse (Emanuel), Priest (Frederick), Jubby (Mike), Kristal and Lozza (Lawrence).



Image 14 – Ken puts up a list of our names and alongside it he writes what each of us is hoping to achieve from our training today. Most of us have different goals.



Image 15 – A presentation is also made including aspects about HART training.

Today we will cover quite a range of topics including posture, quick stops, cornering, counter steering, corner braking, low speed manoeuvring, and throttle control. Good stuff!



Image 16 – We are out of the classroom by 9.30 am and its time to get on our bikes! In the classroom presentation, mention was made regarding the importance of correct tyre pressures so we all check our tyres before heading out. There were a few tyres well under optimum which were topped up using a long hose extended from that garage seen in the background.



Image 17 – One of our instructors is Marcello seen here with his very own Harley, one of 5 motorcycles that he presently owns. He purchased this Road King brand new over 20 years ago. He has owned 15 different motorcycles over the years and has been riding his whole adult life.

That garage behind him is full of Honda learner bikes.



Image 18 – Ken hops on a learner bike whilst giving us instruction regarding our first riding exercises. He will however be joining us on his very own Harley during the practical sessions.



Image 19 – That's Ken on his own Harley leading the way out to the circuit. Ken presently owns 3 motorcycles and has owned 40 different bikes over the years. He also has been riding his whole adult life and has been a riding instructor for many years.



Image 20 – At 10 am we head out to the circuit and the rain has stopped right on cue.



Image 21 - We firstly do a few familiarization laps of the circuit before doing specific exercises. Here we are positioned at the start of the straight before heading off in one group. We firstly go in an anti-clockwise direction, then in a clockwise direction around the whole circuit.

This is a purpose built driver training facility and includes a 2 km dual lane private road circuit with many technical aspects to it. It's an ideal environment for learning.



Image 22 – We stop at the end of the straight for some discussion and further instruction.



Image 23 – Ken imparting some of his considerable knowledge to the group. Low speed tight cornering principles were also mentioned with the key points being keep the engine speeds above idle to take advantage of gyroscopic forces whilst controlling the speed by feathering the back brake. Also keep the clutch at friction-point to keep forward drive and stability. It worked brilliantly!



Image 24 – Well the rain has stopped but the streams of water continue to drain the catchment area. It's actually quite nice in mild spring weather conditions and most of the circuit is now dry.



Image 25 – Phil on his Sportster model is really enjoying the experience.



Image 26 – After each exercise we pull off the straightaway into this siding for further discussion.



Image 27 – Frederick is also most pleased with his participation today.



Image 28 – And Mr. Con (Con) is having a whale of a time on his big Ultra model.



Image 29 – It's now 11 am and we regroup in the complex carpark for further instruction. Things like posture and counter steering were discussed. Although most of us are experienced riders, we all walked away with enhanced motorcycling concepts.



Image 30 – Well I think I've already got my money's worth and it's not even lunch time.



Image 31 – Quite a broad range of topics were covered today, some of which I never put much thought to. For example, steering the bike with your legs! Just by moving your weight from one leg to the other continuously it is possible to get the bike to slalom. This technique can be used in conjunction with other techniques to improve cornering abilities.



Image 32 – Now 12 noon and we get a demonstration of emergency braking done by a professional rider (Marcello). Where we are standing (near the end of the straightaway) is where Marcello applied the brakes whilst travelling at 80 km/hr. The bike down the road is where he finally stopped. The stopping distance was longer than we all had predicted meaning we really need to allow more space than what we think is adequate when on the road.



Image33 – Now it's our turn at the emergency braking. We queue at the start of the straightaway where one rider is signalled away at a time and then begins braking at a set point near the end of the straight. Whilst emergency braking, we are supposed to deploy both front and rear brakes whilst going down through the gears finishing up at a stop in first gear with only the rear brake still on. That takes a little practice to perfect. It was suggested that we should always practice an emergency stop on every trip that we take and obviously only at a place and time that it is safe to do so.



Image 34 – Now 12.45 pm and here we park our motorcycles just before a sharp left curve where we discuss emergency corner braking. The correct procedure is to quick-steer the motorcycle to an upright position, set-up front, then rear brakes, squeeze brakes, whilst simultaneously clutch & gear down to first. Never try this whilst the bike is leaning. Easier said than done!

I just took this photo because I like the look of a row of Harleys. Cooooo!



Image 35 – Its 1 pm and time for a well-earned lunch break. Lunch is provided consisting of bread rolls crammed with various ingredients plus we have plenty of bottled water. It was delicious and plentiful.



Image 36 – It's now 2 pm and we are back on the circuit doing cornering principles, a really important riding skill. Basically, its plan your corner early, get the speed and gear right before the corner, enter the corner wide for best vision, at mid corner you should be in about the middle of the lane, then exit the corner tight. It helps in stability to be applying a slight amount of throttle coming in and then increase throttle on exit to straighten out. Add to this your body position on the bike which also significantly affects the bikes handling characteristics.

In this image, Ken (at left) walks out the preferred line of travel and you can see he has come in wide and is now heading towards the middle of the lane at the mid corner position.



Image 37 – Ken has marked an arrow on the pavement at mid corner showing the preferred line of travel. This is about the middle of the lane. Coming in too tight here (towards the left hand edge of roadway) will adversely affect the exit position. We got to do many laps in an attempt to perfect this with our instructors following each rider individually to assess them.

We complete all instruction by 3 pm and then have free reign on the circuit doing a few laps to hone in our newly refined skills. Absolutely everyone thoroughly enjoyed their day out and thought it was well worth the cost. Further, both instructors were well up to the task and imparted their knowledge freely and competently.

In a few words the day was safe, informative and fun and you can take your riding skills up to the next level.



Image 38 – In the office complex there are new Honda motorcycles and mowers just for display purposes.

HART's long standing reputation has led it to be the rider training provider of choice for several government agencies and corporate bodies.



Image 39 – On completion of the day's activities we went back into the classrooms to collect our individual certificates of accomplishment. Apparently some insurance companies may reduce your comprehensive motorcycle insurance premiums on presentation of such certificates.