

Thursday 27 March 2008

EASTER TRAIL BIKE CRACKDOWN A SUCCESS IN NORTH EAST

A joint Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) and Victoria Police crackdown on trail bike behaviour in the state's parks and forests over the Easter weekend has been described as a success.

Patrols around popular camping areas in north east region saw more than 600 riders observed with half stopped and questioned by officers.

DSE Regional Compliance Officer, Greg Chant, said it was encouraging to see that 90 per cent of riders observed were doing the right thing.

"It shows that riders are getting the message that if they are licensed, registered and stay on the legal road network, they are welcome on public land," he said.

"Unfortunately, there are still those who continue to ignore rules which are in place to ensure the safety of all forest users and the protection of the environment."

About 60 riders were issued with infringement notices during the operation with more than half the infringement notices issued relating to unlicensed riding or unregistered bikes.

Infringement notices and warnings were also issued to riders for off-road riding, failing to wear a helmet, careless driving, and failing to display learner plates. Nine vehicle defect notices were also issued and DSE is investigating a number of incidents relating to unattended campfires.

Patrols in the north east region targeted forest areas around Marysville, Toolangi, Broadford, Eildon, Alexandra, Benalla, Tolmie, Mansfield, Jamieson and Woods Point.

Victoria Police Regional Inspector, Ross Smith, said the operation provided an opportunity for agencies to work together to better educate riders and the public.

Mr Smith said a common issue for officers was the number of children illegally riding mini-bikes in state forests and parks.

"Unfortunately, some parents continue to allow their children to illegally ride trail bikes in state forests and parks which is extremely unsafe," he said.

Riders are only permitted to ride on official roads and tracks on public land if they have a motorcycle licence, their bike is registered and they are wearing an approved helmet. They are also reminded that normal road rules apply in state forests and parks.

Future compliance operations will be conducted throughout the year as part of the State Government's \$5 million Trail Bike Project to improve the management of trail bikes on public land.

For more information on trail bike riding visit: www.dse.vic.gov.au/trailbikes or contact the DSE Customer Service Centre on 136 186.