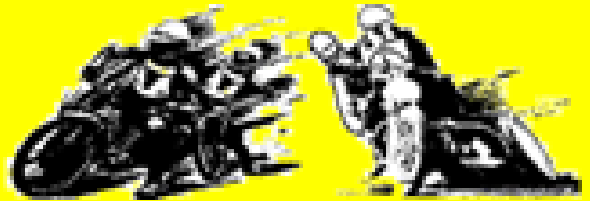


**Canberra Bulls  
Speedway Club Inc**



*Bringing*

***Motorcycle Speedway***

***Back to Canberra***

*Version September 2012*

<http://www.canberrabullsspeedway.org.au/>

**HDL projects ACT**  
Construction Management



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# Ocean Fresh Seafoods

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Ocean Fresh Seafoods is a major supplier of seafood in Canberra. Located in the Fyshwick Fresh Food Markets, Ocean Fresh Seafoods has been supplying Canberra and the surrounding areas with quality seafood for almost 20 years.

With stock delivered daily from national suppliers and hand picked by our own representative, you can be assured that all our seafood is of the highest quality and the freshest possible.

Depending on seasonal availability, Ocean Fresh Seafoods can supply almost any type of seafood product whether fresh, frozen or live including fish, prawns, oysters, lobsters, crabs, mussels, squid, octopus and much more.

Ocean Fresh Seafoods can also provide seafood platters for any occasion whether it be Corporate, Parties, or BBQs. Specific to your function, our platters can be catered to your needs such as cooked seafood for an office party, or fresh and uncooked for a family BBQ. To enquire about us catering your function, you can either contact us or come in and speak to one of our friendly staff. You can also place your order online using our online store. Delivery is also available with online orders.



**Come in and visit our modern and clean shop at the Fyshwick Fresh Food Markets for all your seafood needs**

**Open Thurs - Sun 8am to 5.30pm located in the Fyshwick Fresh Food Markets**

## ***Bulls Roar!***

Motorcycle speedway racing attracts an unusually eclectic mix of spectator types, from the “rev-heads”, who live on the smell of burnt methanol and know every detail of the technology of the sports, to sports tragics who support every team that has the Canberra logo on its uniform, to youngsters who just love the thrills and spills of the racing. In a recent letter of support, Formula One racing driver Mark Webber wrote:

“I have many fond memories of growing up in Queanbeyan and heading to Tralee Stadium during the speedway season, and watching the fantastic racing of the Canberra Bulls. The Bulls certainly were an important part of Canberra's motorsports scene and I believe this has sadly declined since Tralee closed its doors”.

Competitors generally learn to ride speedway bikes, which are highly specialised and have no gears or brakes, in their early teens, so at one extreme, speedway can provide a very useful and educational distraction for teenagers (of both sexes), and at the other end of the scale it can be the beginnings of a very lucrative and exciting career as a professional speedway rider. Mark Webber again:

“Learning motor sports as a kid has afforded me huge opportunities in life and I have been fortunate enough .... to be able to enjoy a successful career within the sport”.

Speedway World Champion, Jason Crump, from Mildura, races in the British, Swedish and Polish Speedway Leagues, and is one of Australia's highest earning sports stars.

In the 1980s, the Canberra Bulls were a feature of ACT Sport, attracting substantial crowds numbering several thousands to Tralee Stadium and receiving considerable coverage in the local media – particularly the Canberra Times and the Queanbeyan Age<sup>1</sup>. The Canberra Bulls Speedway Club was formed during 1980, and was based at Tralee Speedway until 1985, when the track preparation, favouring the then-popular sprintcars, made it too dangerous to race motorcycles. In this period, the club was the driving force behind inter-city teams racing in south eastern Australia, competing regularly against teams from Sydney, Liverpool, Newcastle, Wollongong, Melbourne and Shepparton



*The Sydney and Victorian teams line up with the Bulls, prior to the first meet at Young.*

1. The story of the Bulls is at <http://www.canberrabullsspeedway.org.au/>.



The club was originally formed out of the desperation of young riders from the ACT and surrounding districts, who found it impossible to break into speedway racing in the major metropolitan venues. Initially, we held informal practice sessions at a track near Young, NSW, but eventually found the confidence to challenge the Sydney riders to a 7-a-side teams match. This proposed first meeting became a three-way event when Victorian riders also formed a team and travelled up to Young. It is believed that this was the first time a three-team, seven-a-side match had ever been held anywhere in the world, and it proved to be a great success. The Sydney team won the meeting, but the Bulls beat the Victorian side in an exciting last-heat decider for second place. It was a good start.

Hearing of the success of the meeting, the promoter at Tralee Speedway, on the south side of Canberra, invited the Bulls to race there on a regular basis, and riders such as Jim Burdfield, Steve Baghurst, Steve Kurtz and Kevin King developed rapidly. A highlight of the 1980-81 season was the NSW Junior Solo Championships, hosted by the Bulls at Tralee. Bulls riders Burdfield, King, Baghurst, Kurtz and McLean were joined by the best riders from across NSW. After the full 20 heats, Ray Dole and Tony Abson, both from Sydney, were level with the Bulls' Jim Burdfield, and a three-way race-off had to be run for the Title. There was barely a tyre-tread between the three of them for the whole three laps, with the partisan Canberra crowd going absolutely berserk, but eventually Burdfield found a way to the front on the last bend for a popular victory.



*Placegetters in the 1981 NSW Junior Championships  
Dole (3<sup>rd</sup>), Burdfield (1<sup>st</sup>) and Abson (2<sup>nd</sup>).*

After a great deal of lobbying by the Bulls, the 1981-82 season saw the official introduction of the NSW Speedway League, sponsored by the Canberra Motor Insurance company. Tony Abson's defection from the Sydney scene strengthened the Bulls, and some great racing took place. Another highlight of the season was Burdfield's selection for Australia in a Test Match at Tralee against England. His performance resulted in a contract to race for the Stoke team in the professional British League the following season.



*Two of the many photos that made the Canberra Times Sports pages in the 1980s*

Some of the great names of world speedway came and raced in front of Canberra speedway fans during this period, including Nigel Boocock, Tommy Knudsen, Billy Sanders, Denis Sigalos and Bobby Schwarz, and World Champions Phil Collins, Michael Lee, Ole Olsen and Kenny Carter.

Boocock held a training course for young Canberra hopefuls, which undoubtedly improved their race skills. Canberra Bulls members also achieved success overseas, including Paul Turner (Milton Keynes, Oxford), Jim Burdfield (Stoke, Middlesbrough), Ian Wedgwood and Steve Baghurst (both Middlesbrough). Burdfield became a full-time professional rider and represented Australia in the U.K.



*Barry Boulding and Michelle Buckingham at Tralee in 1981*

While the Club's main focus in the 1980s was on solo speedway, one local sidecar rider – Barry Boulding – also featured on the programmes at Tralee, with female passenger Michelle Buckingham. In those days, females were very rare in speedway.

It is now many years since Canberrans were able to attend motorcycle speedway at a local track. Tralee closed its doors in the late 1980s, and the speedcar track constructed at the eastern end of the Fairbairn motorsports complex, which the Bulls had used as a practice track, fell into disuse during the 1990s. Without a local track, the Canberra Bulls' riders were forced, once again, to look for race opportunities interstate. The only speedway meetings in Canberra in recent years have been held on the 600m trotting track at the Exhibition Centre (EPIC), and while they attracted large crowds of between 8,000 and 15,000, the location of the track close to residential suburbs presented significant noise issues, and it would no longer be possible to hold regular speedway meets at that venue.

It is worth repeating that the 3-times World Individual Speedway Champion – Jason Crump from Mildura – is reputed to be one of Australia's top sporting income earners. Queenslander Darcy Ward has twice won the World Under-21 Solo Speedway Championship, Aussies such as Mick Headland and Paul Waters dominate the Speedway Sidecar World Championships, and Australia regularly finishes on the podium in the annual World Team Cup competition. Canberra currently plays no role in Australian speedway racing, although Todd Kurtz – son of former Canberra Bull, Steve Kurtz – is now one of Australia's brightest under-18 prospects, and Chris Holder—son of former opposition Sydney rider Mick—currently stars in the 2012 Speedway Grands Prix.

## The Current Club

On 3rd January 2009, a Canberra Bulls reunion was held at the Club Macquarie, Boolaroo, Newcastle. We used the occasion of the first round of the 2009 Australian Solo Speedway Championships, being held at the Newcastle Showgrounds. Most of the original core members of the Bulls from the 1980s managed to attend, with others sending their apologies. Apart from some grey or misplaced hair, expanding waistlines and other evidence of good living, it was hard to believe that twenty years had gone by since we were last together as a team. The photo album, scrap-book and battle-scarred race jackets helped to jog the memories. Just like in the good old days, everyone was mercilessly bagging everyone else, but the overwhelming theme of the day was the pride in actually achieving something special, something against the odds, in spite of officialdom, in spite of clay tracks. And, having had a great time doing it!

*The 2009 Reunion Team: -*



*L-R Back row - John Walker, Ian Wedgwood, Tony Abson, Scott McClean, Jim Burdfield;*

*L-R Front row - Mark Maybury, Steve Baghurst, Steve Kurtz.*



*Former Bulls' Captain, Jim Burdfield, with John Walker and the new Club Banner.*

The memories recalled during this reunion prompted an attempt to bring together all those interested in reviving the Bulls, and a renewed search for a track to bring speedway back to Canberra. Through the public notices in the Canberra Times and some concerted networking, a core group of enthusiasts, including several former Bulls riders, assembled on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2009 at the Harmonie Club in Narrabundah. Members of the new club included not only solo speedway enthusiasts, but also former sidecar speedway riders, bringing a whole new dimension to the Club. A Committee was formed, the Club was formally established as an ACT Incorporated Association, and an agenda was set down, including as its primary goal finding a race venue in the Canberra district. Several of our members are already active in the racing calendar, showing the flag for the Bulls.

While we intend to focus on the development of teams racing, we are also keen to establish Canberra as the pre-eminent speedway track in Australia. In recent years, the show-case speedway meetings in Australia have taken place in cities such as Gosford, Mildura, Newcastle and Gillman (South Australia), with spectator numbers in the thousands. A speedway in Canberra, with good spectator facilities, would stand an exceptionally good chance of taking at least one of these Championship meetings, bringing riders of international standards to Canberra, attracting spectators from around Australia, and exposing Canberra to the worldwide audience of speedway followers.





*Dave Clifton shows the Bulls still have what it takes.*

In April 2011, the Club successfully applied for funding from the ACT Government’s Community Motorsports Development Program, with the aim of producing a formal Strategic Plan (downloadable from the web at [www.canberrabullsspeedway.org.au/Strategic Plan.pdf](http://www.canberrabullsspeedway.org.au/Strategic%20Plan.pdf)), based on this document, but with additional supporting data, designed to demonstrate both the capacity of the Club to successfully run speedway meetings in Canberra, and the considerable benefits to Canberrans, including opportunities for young competitors as well as the economic benefits of attracting visitors to the region. For example, the Speedway Grands Prix, as run in Auckland, NZ, in 2012, put that city live on TV screens throughout Europe for the whole three hours of the race meeting—publicity that the ACT could barely dream about through other sporting occasions.

This Plan resulted in another successful application for funding in September 2012, this time to conduct a search for a suitable site in the ACT. Owing to the constraints of noise, we are focusing on blocks of land under the Canberra Airport flight path, where residential development is extremely unlikely at any time in the future.

We know we have considerable support, both from the controlling bodies, including Motorcycling Australia and Motorcycling NSW, and from the local community.

## Potential Options for Bringing Speedway back to Canberra

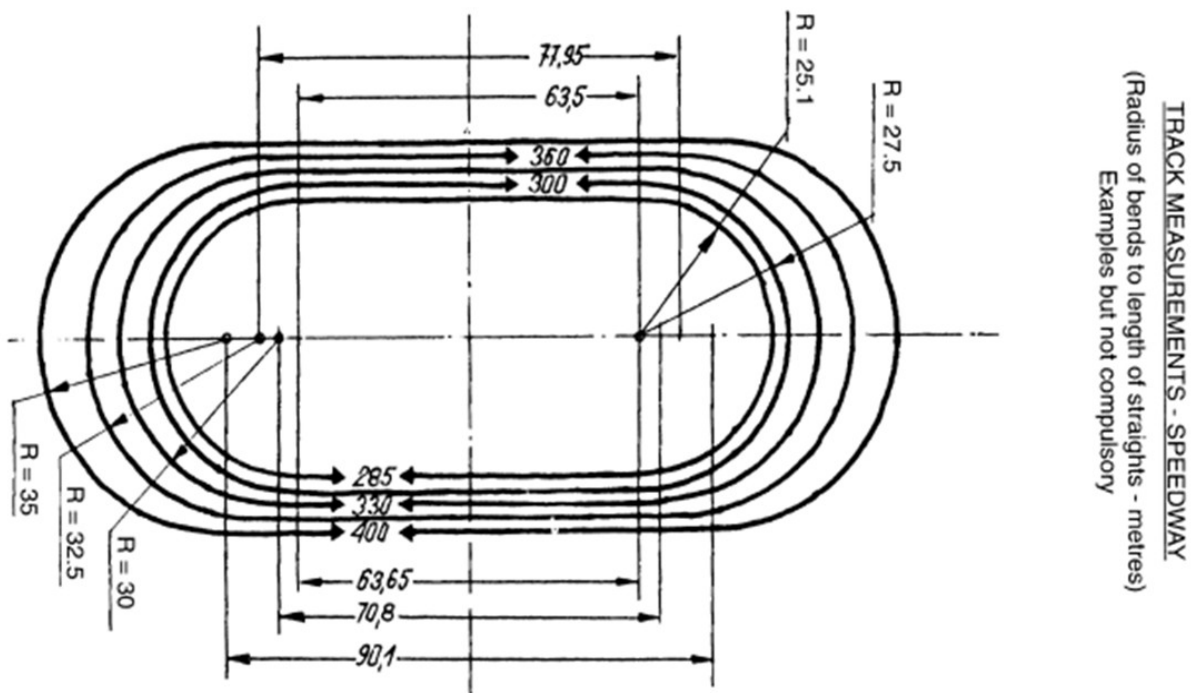
The essential differences between speedway and other forms of motorcycle racing are:

- It is a stadium sport, meaning that spectators can enjoy the comforts associated with a formal venue, and
- The format lends itself to teams racing, which is the predominant form of motorcycle speedway racing around the world, and which is always an attractive form of competition for spectators.

Teams racing is uniquely attractive to spectators, who can support their team, in the same way that football teams attract support. The team can achieve an important place in community life, in the local and national media, becoming an asset as an important element of family entertainment and generator of community income from tourism. And it is so much fun for competitors to be part of a team, representing their community.

In contrast to many other motorcycle sports, the track must be on level ground and of specified dimensions. This clearly limits the range of possible sites, or imposes significant additional costs of ground preparation. The dimensions of a speedway track require a minimum rectangle of around 100m by 200m (see the following extract from the FIM (Federation Internationale de Motorcyclisme) Standards for Track Racing Circuits, 2009), plus additional space around the track for spectator amenities and parking.

*FIM Standards for Speedway Track Racing Circuits, 2009*



Planning considerations, which may be similar in the ACT to those applying in the U.K. where speedway tracks exist in or near many cities, result in a preference for co-location with other forms of stadium entertainment (with the advantages of shared spectator facilities and substantial grandstands that act to keep the noise “in”, etc) or for sites separated from residential areas, to ensure that problems of noise do not arise. The location of speedway tracks in otherwise unusable sites such as disused quarries is very common in the U.K., and the ACT may have such sites available. Co-location with industrial activities is also common, as the speedway brings more activity into the area, results in better land use mixes, and noise is not an issue.

Speedway tracks are compatible with other sports. For example, the infield could be used for junior football, community fairs, perfect for show jumping, etc, and, under some circumstances, the track itself could be used for athletics and other forms of small motor racing vehicles (e.g. go-karts, speedcars). Speedway tracks in the U.K. are very commonly co-located with greyhound racing tracks, with a speedway track of around 325m fitting perfectly inside the standard 500m greyhound circuit.

**Existing Venues**

Staging speedway at one of the existing venues in Canberra, such as Bruce Stadium or the Canberra Greyhound Stadium at Symonston, would provide established facilities for race-meetings, including lighting and P.A. systems, car parking and spectator comforts, but there are always issues in sharing sports complexes with other groups, including difficulties with date clashes and track conditions. These options could, however, be comparatively low cost, since spectator facilities already exist, in varying levels of comfort, in these venues. The costs would mainly involve speedway track construction only.

At Symonston, if the Canberra Greyhound Club were to permit the construction of a speedway track, it could be located inside the existing greyhound racing track. Tarpaulin covers would be placed around the track to ensure the speedway dirt cannot damage the dog track, as has been the custom at co-located speedway/greyhound tracks for many decades in the U.K. Conducting speedway at this stadium would involve only track construction and minor costs related to sharing of the stadium, since the track would remain in place between race days, and only the tarpaulins need be laid down and removed. However, access to the track for other purposes, including practice days and coaching, could be problematic owing to the competing demands for the use of the stadium. Noise from speedway racing, while greatly restricted by the regulations of the sport, compared to years gone by, could be an issue, but the population within earshot is small and the stadium has already successfully promoted Monster Car Racing on numerous occasions. In a 2011 report to the ACT Government, ([www.icrc.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/225346/Report\\_2\\_of\\_2011\\_April\\_2011.pdf](http://www.icrc.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/225346/Report_2_of_2011_April_2011.pdf)), the Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission has recommended the co-location of all three gambling sports—greyhound racing, trotting and thoroughbred racing—at Thoroughbred Park, Flemington, which could leave the Symonston stadium vacant. If suitable arrangements were to be made, this stadium would be an excellent venue for speedway.



*Aerial view of Canberra Greyhound Stadium option, Symonston*



Bruce Stadium has in the past very successfully presented Stadium Motocross, and could clearly accommodate speedway. The disadvantage of this option is that the speedway track could not remain in place during the course of the football seasons which are the principal users of the stadium. Laying and removing the surface and fencing of the speedway track, while common for major international championship meets in Europe, is prohibitively expensive unless spectator numbers regularly in the tens of thousands can be guaranteed. Noise at Bruce Stadium would probably not be an issue since the construction of the stadium itself tends to keep sound inside the complex. Access to the track for other purposes, including practice days and coaching, would be highly unlikely.



*Speedway could be accommodated at Bruce Stadium, providing a magnificent venue for Speedway Grands Prix!*

The Club has considered other pre-existing options, including the Fairbairn motorsports complex, which, for many years, included two speedway tracks. Only the larger of the two now remains, at the western end of the complex, and is used by the National Capital Speedway Club, which promotes 4-wheel racing on a clay circuit. The construction of this track would be considered dangerous for motorcycle speedway, as the track surface, the fencing and the track design do not conform to FIM standards. There may be other areas within the complex that could be suitable for speedway, although little flat land remains unused. Noise at Fairbairn is also an issue, but because of the relatively compact nature of a speedway track, only earth barriers would seem to be necessary to ensure compliance with community standards.

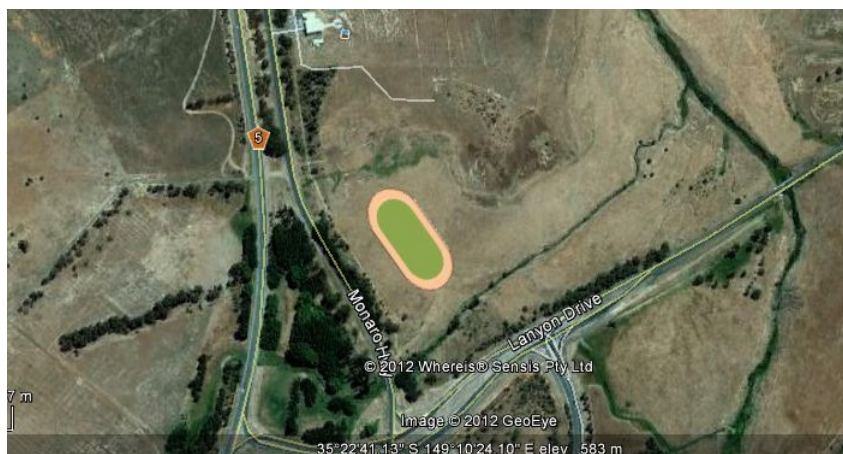
### [Greenfield sites](#)

As mentioned earlier, the location of speedway tracks in otherwise unusable sites such as disused quarries or other industrial activities incompatible with residential purposes is very common in the U.K., and brings more activity into the area, results in better land use mixes, and noise is not an issue. In the ACT, where land use is closely controlled and options are few, some lateral thinking may be necessary to find a suitable site for a speedway stadium, and this will be the focus of the forthcoming feasibility study.

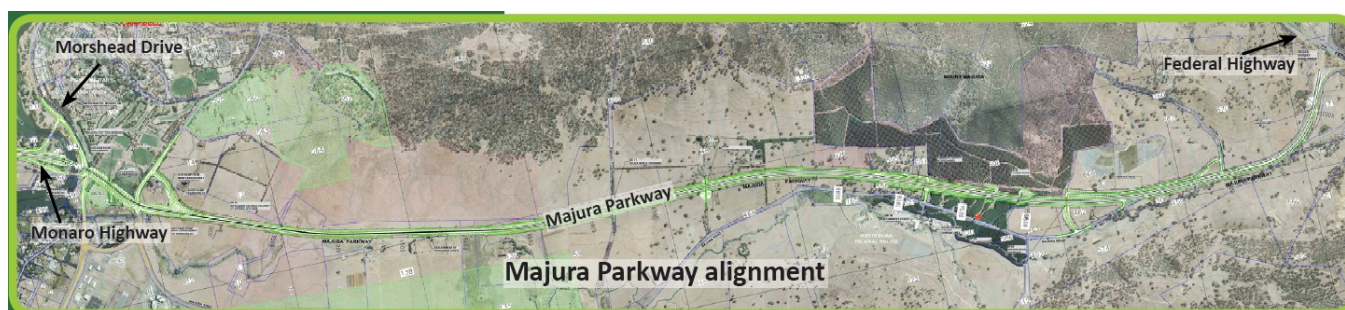
Possible sites exist along the Monaro Highway, south of Canberra, and along the planned route of the Majura Parkway—both under the airport flight paths, located close to the main population centres of the city, but not so close as to create noise or other problems to residents. All require in-depth examination of the issues, as the current usage of these areas of land certainly does not envisage a speedway track. In each



case, there appears to be sufficient flat land, there are natural sound barriers in the contours of the surrounding hills, and, in some cases, there would not appear to be active competing interest in the land. All sites have good motor vehicle access. One of the Monaro Highway options is pictured below in an aerial photograph, in which a speedway track is shown to scale occupying an area approximately 160m by 90m.



*Possible “Greenfield” site at the corner of Tharwa Road and the Monaro Highway, Hume.*



*The planned route of the Majura Parkway linking the airport with the Federal Highway.*

There are some advantages of a greenfield site option from the Club’s point of view, including full control over the design of the site and its activities. While running full-scale race meetings might be feasible at one of the established stadia, full Bulls’ club control of a greenfield venue would permit, for example, the inclusion of a junior track and the conduct of regular practice days and “come and try it” sessions, with many benefits to young people of the ACT that could not be provided if we were constrained by stadium sharing issues. The potential downsides of any greenfield site include the initial lack of basic infrastructures such as electricity and piped water, and in cases other than the ones shown here, the likely remoteness from the city and suburbs. While this would minimise any issues of noise, it would limit access to those with motor vehicles, and therefore reduce the Club’s capacity to cater for those old enough to race but too young to hold a driver’s licence.

The Club is therefore potentially interested in both.

- Identifying a track where practice and coaching can take place, so that the Club can ensure its own future by implementing programmes to introduce new riders to the sport, but also
- a track for race meetings with first class facilities for spectators, so that we can present top class racing for the Canberra enthusiasts.

These two requirements could, ideally, be satisfied at a single venue, but may necessitate access to two different venues.

## [Benefits to the Australian Capital Territory](#)

### [Opportunities for young people in the ACT and surrounding districts](#)

Our ambition is to become the engine room of Australian speedway. To do this, we have to focus on developing young riders, as we did so successfully in the 1980s, when several of the Canberra Bulls reached professional and semi-professional standards. Motorcycle speedway is a surprisingly low-cost form of racing, with competitive entry-level machines costing only in the region of \$5,000. In recent years, Australian speedway has benefited greatly from the introduction of junior-level competition, using machines as small as 80cc. Solo riders as young as ten years old are permitted to ride, under supervision, eventually graduating to 350cc machines and then, when they reach 16 years of age, to the full-sized 500cc bikes. Similar classes are available for young sidecar riders.

We have the capacity to do this:

- Our membership already includes several of Australia's top teenage riders – sons of former Canberra Bulls of the 1980s.
- We have a potential coaching team second to none, with many successful years of racing between them, on both solo and sidecar bikes.
- We have an impressive network of contacts in speedway around Australia and in Europe, ensuring that Canberra's junior riders get the very best chances of emulating former Bulls' captain, Jim Burdfield, and reaching the professional ranks of the sport.
- We have access to the Australian Institute of Sport's Elite Rider Camps, which provide sport science education specifically aimed at elite speedway riders.

With these skills on hand, we would focus on providing opportunities to young people in the ACT and surrounding districts. In its approach to the development of young speedway riders, the Club would include:

- machine preparation and maintenance,
- competition rules and regulations,
- racing techniques and skills, and
- track preparation and maintenance.

The benefits to the ACT therefore include the provision of a wide range of sporting and engineering skills in a nurturing environment to young Canberrans – particularly perhaps those at greatest risk – in their difficult teenage years. Risk-taking amongst juveniles is a very well-known phenomenon<sup>2</sup>, and channelling those behaviours into more constructive forms of risk-taking can be extremely therapeutic. For example, in contrast to many other sports, there is no known performance-enhancing drug or procedure for speedway racing, and there are considerable disincentives for young competitors in speedway to engage in these types of behaviours, including significant loss of performance. Learning how to maintain and race a speedway bike can also lead to a range of rewarding professions, even for those who eventually choose not to aim for the elite end of the sport.

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2. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teenage\\_rebellion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teenage_rebellion)

## Economic impact of visitors and TV coverage

Motorsports in Canberra have had a rather chequered history. Until the late 1980s, speedway was regularly promoted as a spectator sport at Tralee, just off the Monaro Highway south of Canberra. It closed its doors after a succession of poor seasons – arguably the result of poor management and bad luck with the weather. Other speedways have come and gone, including Mount Ginn and Fairbairn, and these have generally been club-level activities aimed at providing fun for club members rather than entertainment for spectators. The Fairbairn Motorsports Complex has hosted a wide range of other motorcycle racing, including motocross, enduro and dirt-track, as well as go-karting and hill-climb. Occasionally, these have included nationally accredited Championship meets, and have attracted large numbers of competitors and spectators from far afield.

The Canberra International Dragway adjacent to Canberra Airport operated between 1980–89, re-opened in 1992 and was closed in 1998. The Australian Rally Championships have included Canberra in its programme intermittently for at least twenty years<sup>3</sup>, with considerable impact on Canberra in terms of visitors, including competitors and their teams, international TV coverage and dust. But Canberra is not on the ARC's calendar every year. An attempt to promote V8 Supercars in Canberra lasted only three years (2000–2002), and foundered on escalating costs and declining attendances. However, these were probably consequences of the location around the Parliamentary triangle, making overtaking almost impossible and racing disappointing to TV audiences or onsite spectators alike. After the first race in 2000, Canberra Tourism and Events Corporation conducted a survey of event spectators and participants to determine the economic impact of the event<sup>4</sup>. Media coverage, noise impact, and environmental management were also reported on. A total of 57,495 tickets to the event were sold, exceeding the expectation of 50,000. According to CTEC, the accommodation sector experienced the highest occupancy rate ever recorded during the month of June, a relatively quiet period for tourism in Canberra. This was recorded over a time when room stocks had increased by 7.4% over the previous year.

Results from CTEC's visitor and participant surveys suggest that interstate visitors spent AU\$4.3 million while in Canberra, and team members spent approximately AU\$834,486. It is also reported that the GMC 400 put over \$4 million into Canberra and regional business through locally let contracts. CTEC also commissioned an independent analysis of media coverage on race days. It is estimated that race day coverage in Australia and New Zealand lasted for approximately 10 hours and reached an audience of 1,633,000. The event featured on 18 news programmes reaching a total audience of 7,630. Crowd numbers, though declining, still hovered around 90,000 in its last year.

Mark Webber observes that “Overseas, speedway racing helps drive significant regional interest and seems to be gaining increasing coverage in the media. I'm sure that top class racing would help bring Canberra to the attention of an international audience. I believe the benefits to the district are quite apparent.”. The 2012 Speedway Grand Prix, in Auckland—the first to be held in New Zealand—attracted a capacity crowd of around 30,000 spectators, from countries all around the world. The entire three-hour

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3. <http://www.roc.com.au/>

4. [http://en.wikipedia.org/Canberra\\_400](http://en.wikipedia.org/Canberra_400)

meeting was also broadcast live in many European countries. While Australia has not hosted a round of the SGP since 2002, the promoters are known to be keen to include Australia in the calendar, and Australia's capital city would be the perfect site.

There is, therefore, ample evidence of the potential for motorsports – if properly promoted – to generate both income and good publicity for the ACT. While the Canberra Bulls do not anticipate regular spectator numbers that were brought to Canberra by the V8s, the size of the Australian and global speedway communities and their enthusiasm for travel to a good speedway meeting suggest that similar – if pro-rata – benefits could accrue from the return of speedway to Canberra. It is difficult to estimate the size of the speedway community in Australia, but there are over 40 tracks in Australia promoting motorcycle speedway<sup>5</sup>, and the most recent speedway meetings in Canberra, promoted by six-times world speedway champion Ivan Mauger, attracted crowds of between 8,000 and 15,000<sup>6</sup> to the Exhibition Park in Canberra (EPIC). Several thousand spectators attended each of the three rounds of the Australian Solo Speedway Championships in January 2010, at Mildura (Vic), Gillman (S.A.) and Newcastle (NSW), and the Newcastle-based arm of Channel Nine (NBNTV) broadcast the entire meeting live over the internet, enabling speedway fans all around the world to see what turned out to be a very exciting meeting.

The events mentioned here, including the V8s, the drag racing, the rally cars and the Mauger-promoted speedway meets, involved bringing the elites in their respective sports to a Canberra audience. They involved very few local Canberrans – either as spectators, officials or those very few competitors who can afford the very expensive machinery. The Canberra Bulls ambitions, in trying to bring speedway back to the National Capital, are two-fold however. Yes, we would like to bring the cream of the world's speedway riders to Canberra. We feel that Canberra could become the focal point of Australian speedway simply because of its status as the National Capital, because we have all the Embassies of all the major speedway countries here. With a decent track and attractive promotion, we believe we could persuade the Polish, Swedish, British, American, Russian or Czech Embassies to sponsor, say, U-21 "development" teams to base themselves here for a few weeks. In fact, the Canberra Bulls have already received two such enquiries about the possibilities of such teams racing here in future years. It is many years since such international teams toured Australia, but with Australian riders now so successful on the world stage, riders in other countries are keen to discover our secrets. We are also well located to attract the best of the Victorian, South Australian and Queensland riders, as well as ACT/NSW stars. We will have no problem attracting top-class speedway to Canberra, and with it all those economic benefits that accrue to the community as a result of increased visitor numbers and tourism visibility.



5. <http://www.ausm.info/>

6. Personal correspondence from Ivan Mauger, OBE, MBE.



## [An Ambitious Plan](#)

The obvious primary requirement for the Canberra Bulls' successful re-introduction of motorcycle speedway in Canberra is a track. As the ability to run practice and coaching sessions is vital to the long-term success of the Club, our first concern is to identify a track where we can conduct these types of activities, regardless of the level of spectator facilities. We could, in principle, run low-key race meetings at a venue without spectator facilities, by hiring equipment such as toilets, generators and P.A. systems.

However, to bring top-class speedway back to a Canberra public, for so long starved of regular motorsports, we also need a spectator-friendly venue. This could either be achieved quickly, through the use of an existing facility, as discussed earlier in this document or over the longer term by starting with a practice track and developing it over time. The "perfect" solution may have to be one whereby we "have our cake and eat it" – i.e. have access to a spectator-friendly venue where we can present top-class speedway, and a second venue where we can focus on practice and coaching activities.

### [Set-up Costs](#)

The aerial photo below shows an "ideal" layout. It shows a full-sized speedway track (Swindon, UK), capable of conducting top-class speedway, with a junior track in the in-field. The main track has a wire-mesh construction safety fence (as per FIM regulations), permitting clear views of the racing for spectators, and it occupies an area of 150m by 75m. The "neutral zone" between the track and the spectator areas is occupied by a greyhound racing track, which shares the track lighting. While the track is not a full-size 400m athletics track, it has been used for athletics training and the infield has been used for show jumping and gymkhana events. The track surface is hard-packed decomposed granite, but other similar materials, including shale and dolomite can be used. Spectator facilities are located in the main grandstands, and the speedway pits are at the lower right hand corner of the photo.



*Typical multi-purpose speedway track (Swindon, U.K.), showing junior track inside senior track, which itself is inside a greyhound track.*

Such a layout permits racing of both solos and sidecars on the main track, and junior speedway bikes on the inner track. A typical day's racing at such a venue might commence with Under-12s BMX speedway on the inner track (Canberra has already produced at least one World BMX Champion—Caroline Buchanan), followed by junior speedway (riders aged 10-16, bikes up to 150cc), and finally Open and Over-35 class racing on the 500cc speedway solos and the 250-1000cc sidecars. Thus all ages are catered for, from under-12s on BMX bikes to the veterans of the sport, who may be racing on vintage bikes dating from the 1950s or earlier.

The costs include not only the provision of a racing surface, track lighting, and a safety fence, but a second safety fence is required by the Speedway controlling body to create a "neutral zone at least 2m wide" between the competitors and the spectators. On a level block of land with good drainage, water and electricity, and the necessary spectator facilities, a basic speedway track conforming to FIM standards can therefore be constructed for around \$120,000, not including labour costs.

#### Basic Budgets

Track surface – 500 cu.mtrs decomposed granite	\$40,000
Track Lighting – 20 x 1500w floodlights	\$20,000
Fencing – Safety Fence - 400m wire mesh to FIM standards	\$20,000
Fencing – Catching Fence - 400m wire mesh to FIM standards	\$20,000
Safety equipment (stop lights, fire extinguishers, flags) etc	\$20,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$120,000</b>

On a greenfield site, speedway meetings could be conducted using hired equipment including generators, a public address system, and toilets. For more permanent operations, the following constructions would be necessary:

An adequate toilet block (estimated minimum)	\$50,000
Spectator banking or seating (estimated minimum)	\$50,000
A separately fenced pits area (estimated minimum)	\$20,000
A functional control tower, including hard-wired control of the starting gate, emergency lights and p.a. systems, and permitting the race officials a clear view of the racing (estimated minimum)	\$20,000
Fencing around the entire complex (estimated minimum)	\$40,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$180,000</b>

These additional costs, still providing only a very basic stadium, would bring total materials costs up to around \$300,000. Costs of labour, earthworks, land rent, and for access to power and water would depend on the site location.

The Club has held discussions with a local Civil Engineering company, which has agreed to provide earthmoving and landfill to the club at no cost. Other club members have skills and qualifications which can be used to benefit the club and reduce costs.

ACT Government financial assistance may also be available under the Community Motorsports Development Programme.

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7. [http://www.holdfast.sa.gov.au/webdata/resources/minutes/Agendas/4444\\_283\\_-\\_Glg\\_Oval\\_Toilets.pdf](http://www.holdfast.sa.gov.au/webdata/resources/minutes/Agendas/4444_283_-_Glg_Oval_Toilets.pdf)

## Coaching School Assets



Junior speedway bikes, like those pictured above, can be purchased new for as little as \$5,000 per unit<sup>8</sup>, and are frequently on the second hand market for less than that. The Club would propose to purchase five solo bikes and two sidecars specifically for “come and try it” and junior coaching sessions.

### Junior bike costs

Solo bikes – 5 * \$5,000	\$25,000
Sidecar bikes – 2 * \$5,000	\$10,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$35,000</b>

### Operating Costs

Financial viability considerations require that the activities of the Club should at least cover their running costs. The existence of numerous clubs that conduct regular speedway around Australia shows that – even at a modest level of operation, with advertising limited to mainly local media, and mainly local competitors – speedway racing can pay for itself. Such clubs focus mainly on providing motorcycling opportunities for their members, and only rarely make an effort to promote their sport to the public at large. Their costs are covered by member fees, sponsorships and fund-raising activities. The Canberra Bulls’ aim is much higher than this, however. In addition to club-level activities, including “come-and-try-it”, coaching and practice racing, the Club intends to conduct regular race meetings, aimed at a spectator audience, during the Australian speedway season, which normally runs between October and April, generating income from spectator ticket sales, sponsorship and advertising deals, as any successful professional sports club must do.

The size of the market for speedway racing in Canberra is difficult to estimate, but as mentioned previously, professionally-promoted speedway meetings with top-class riders have attracted crowds of over ten thousand people in recent years in Canberra. It is unrealistic to expect that crowds of this magnitude could be achieved on a regular basis. These Ivan Mauger promoted meets have taken place on long weekends in fine weather, and have included “big-name” international riders. More realistic expectations could be based on the recent attendances at the Gosford Speedway on the NSW Central Coast. Regular speedway meetings there, with mostly NSW-based riders providing the action, average crowds of around 2,000 per meeting, of which perhaps 25% are non-paying children.

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8. Communication from bike builder, Terry Poole, 3 February, 2010.

Ticket prices of \$20 per adult therefore yield an income per meeting of around \$30,000. Programme sales more or less meet their own costs, and some significant additional income is generated by catering. Corporate sponsorships, supported by advertising during the meet, can also add very significantly to these incomes.

Race-day incomes

Spectator numbers	2000
Non-paying children	25%
Paying spectators	1500
<u>Total turnstile income @ \$20 per person</u>	<u>\$30,000</u>

On the basis of one meeting per month, this would result in seven race days, and an annual income of over \$200,000. Depending on the Canberra public’s appetite for speedway, and the Club’s ability to conduct more regular race meetings, the frequency could be increased to fortnightly – or even weekly – during the season. Occasional off-season meetings could also be considered, as Canberra’s dry winter climate is ideal for daytime racing.

Offset against this income are advertising costs, track hire, licensing and preparation costs, equipment maintenance, insurances (including public liability and bad-weather cancellation), and prize monies. The main estimated operating costs for a standard race meeting include:

Race-day costs

Track hire and utilities	\$3,000
Track licensing and meeting permits (includes public liability etc)	\$1,000
Prize monies	\$3,000
Equipment hire	\$1,000
Track maintenance	\$1,000
Promotional advertising	\$5,000
<u>Total</u>	<u>\$14,000</u>

It can be seen that these costs, compared to estimated incomes per meeting (even when the potentially significant incomes from sponsorships or catering are excluded), result in a reasonably healthy profit margin, ensuring the ongoing viability of the Club. The surpluses can be invested in bringing international teams to Canberra, conducting national coaching courses for promising young riders, and improving spectator facilities.

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*18 years-old Todd Kurtz, son of Steve, among the best junior riders in the world, and already a favourite in British professional speedway.*

## **Summary**

The Canberra public has not seen professionally conducted speedway racing for many years. In the past, it was very well supported, and the sport is currently experiencing growth based on a very high profile in world rankings. The current senior solo Speedway World Champion, Under-21 World Champion and Speedway Sidecar World Champions are all Australians.

Canberra is ideally positioned to become the focal point of speedway in Australia, being central to the main rider and spectator populations. Currently, Australia's major speedway meetings take place in Mildura (Vic), Gillman (S.A.) and Newcastle (NSW), and a purpose built, professionally-run, track in the National Capital would certainly attract at least some of the meetings.

The Canberra Bulls Speedway Club was a successful and innovative Club in the 1980s, and has been revived to pursue objectives such as these. The Club has the capability to run high-quality speedway meetings in Canberra, and to develop young talent from the Canberra district.

Speedway meetings in Canberra should be financially self-sustaining, and – once operational – the Club would be financially secure.

The benefits to Canberra include:

- a significantly enhanced profile amongst the motor-sports communities in Australia and around the world,
- increased tourist income from the competitors and spectators who would come to the city for the race and practice meetings,
- an exciting range of new opportunities for young Canberra district riders to learn and compete in the sport.

## **John Walker Crime Trends Analysis**

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## Recommended Reading/Browsing List

Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme, FIM Standards for Track Racing Circuits (STRC), FIM, Geneva, 2010.

Greyhound Derby, [http://www.greyhoundderby.com/Brief History of British Speedway.htm](http://www.greyhoundderby.com/Brief%20History%20of%20British%20Speedway.htm)

Hoskins, I., History of the Speedway Hoskins, Vintage Speedway, Clipsham, 2000.

Motorcycling Australia, 2012 Manual of Motorcycle Sport, Motorcycling Australia, Melbourne, 2012

Patrick, M., Speedway through the Lens of Mike Patrick, Tempus Publishing, Stroud, 2003.

Shepherd, J., A History of Australian Speedway, Frew Publications, Sydney, 2003.

Speedway Grand Prix, <http://speedwaygp.com/>.

Canberra Bulls Speedway Club, <http://www.canberrabullsspeedway.org.au/>

World Speedway, <http://www.worldspeedway.com/>.



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