

MX-5 CLUB OF NSW - HUNTER VALLEY RUN



PROMOTING PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS

By 6.45 am on Sunday November the 15th more than forty cars and some sixty participants members of the Mazda MX-5 Club had arrived at the truck stop at the old Berowra toll gates for the “Walnut” run. After an outline from the Club President on his personal experience with this disease and the need for males - and particularly wives – to focus their attention on the prevalence of prostate cancer, the run organizer Pam Estreich launched the briefing on



the routes by which the cars would travel to arrive at the Potter’s Brewery in the Hunter Valley for breakfast.

It wasn’t a race, more a case of you take the high road and I’ll take the low – and it didn’t matter whether one lot got there afore the other so, with the smoke from the starter’s gun hanging listlessly in the early morning air, the *Walnut* run got under way. Half the contingent of participants followed Michael Soulos’ lead to travel via the Old Pacific Highway to Calga, Mangrove Mountain, Wollombi and on to Cessnock. The were soon snaking out of sight with high revs and burbling exhaust notes.

The more genteel types joined the freeway for a high speed run, but on less interesting roads. Accolades are due to Pam Estreich who not only organized the event but led this group – driving solo because Ray was laid up at home recovering from a medical procedure.

Which brings me to the point of this event. Ray is no stranger to prostate surgery and neither am I, the Club President. Learn from our experience. 3,000 Australian men die each year as a direct result of prostate cancer. But check this out! Every man who dies, other than by accidental cause, will have developed prostate cancer by the time of his death – even if a heart or other condition is the actual cause. The reason that this occurs is not yet known.

What is known is this. Early detection and medical intervention give you the best chance of survival. I had no symptoms whatever of this cancer but, when it was diagnosed, it was classed as very aggressive. I only became aware of it because I had annual prostate checks. The previous year I was fine, the next year changed my life. Early detection and medical intervention saved it.

12 years on I am a prostate cancer survivor, so take my advice, *get annual checks*. Okay, you guys don’t like the idea of a digital rectal examination – then at least get the PSA blood test. Let me assure you, the way you feel about a digital examination is nothing compared to the way you will feel when the doctor says, “Sorry mate, but you have cancer!” Get the idea?

In the time you spent reading this last segment the *Walnut* run Freeway group turned off onto Freeman’s Drive to meet up with a large representation from the Hunter Chapter. The

expanded caravan of MX-5s headed for Cessnock in gorgeous early morning Spring weather and through spectacular countryside, arriving right on time for brekkie. The cars were lined up on the grass alongside the hotel for compulsory camera shots, waiting for the Old Pacific Highway cars to arrive. No, it was *not* a race, but there was no competition as to which group had the most enjoyable run either!



We virtually took over the hotel dining room, testing the resources of the kitchen staff to the limit, but everyone managed to satisfy their inner needs, and breakfast went down with doses of good humour, supplemented by the distribution of pertinent literature on the dangers of prostate cancer and handy reminder tokens.

There was a raffle to raise money for the Prostate Foundation - the prize being a weekend at the Potter's Resort. It was drawn by the Manager to ensure there was no undue influence in the selection, and congratulations go to the winner, Lesa Bunn.

Breakfast over, the Hunter Chapter left on a return drive through the valleys, by-passing old and new mining areas, to run down the west side of Lake Macquarie before stopping for lunch.

Another group took the Brewery tour and will never look at a glass of beer the same way again. Did you know that beer should not necessarily be drunk ice cold? Well, you have got a lot to learn about beer. Next time, take this very informative tour. You will even get to sample the product – free!

Not to be outdone, the remainder took to the road again, travelling via Wollombi, Calga and the old Pacific Highway to stop at Pie and the Sky for refreshments and more discussion. This was a very pleasant drive with no incidents, unlike the motor cyclist travelling in the opposite direction who didn't quite make the bend, skated along the safety barrier and speared over it,

down the steep embankment and into the bush. A very unfortunate end to a Sunday bike ride.

On that note, drive safely, arrive safely and live longer by getting your annual prostate cancer check. That – and MX-5s – is what life is all about.