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Deadline: Bandidos' thoroughly modern trip to Ballarat

Ballarat locals had no need to fret when the Bandidos roared into town, with the thoroughly modern trip kicking off with a Welcome to Country ceremony.

[Mark Buttler](#) and [Andrew Rule](#)

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The Bandidos roar through Ballarat. Picture: Sam Ruttyn

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Born to be mild

Ballarat locals who shuttered the windows and locked up their daughters last weekend need not have bothered.

There's traditionally been trepidation among some in the community when a bikie club comes to town, but it was unwarranted in the case of the thoroughly modern Bandidos' [trip to Victoria's gold capital](#).

The 400 who hit the road from around Australia had converged for what they called an annual general meeting, rather than the more common description of a "run".

"I think the only drama was one of the boys dropped his toothbrush in the toilet," club liaison officer Grey Norman said.

Things opened on Saturday with a Welcome to Country ceremony performed by Barry Gilson from the local Waddawurrung tribe.



National Presidente Big Tony and Wadawurrung Tribe Representative Barry Gilson.

A traditional Maori welcome — in traditional Ballarat weather — followed before members headed to the local cemetery to pay their respects to fallen comrades.

Something called a “police processing exercise” in which the riders — under the leadership of national presidente Big Tony — were checked was then held at the car park of the city’s greyhound track.

So what happens at an outlaw motorcycle gang AGM?

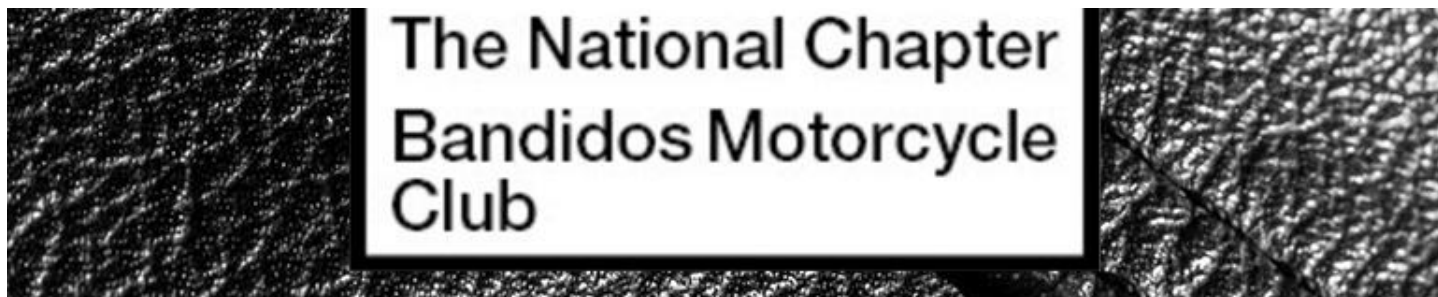
Well, Mr Norman said the first point to make was that the Bandidos are not an OMCG, something police appear to not always agree with.



The Bandidos Motorcycle Club of Australia

We wish to thank the People of Victoria and in particular those from Ballarat for their warm hospitality during our recent stay. We would also like to apologise for any inconvenience our motorcade may have caused. We look forward to our next visit.

With kind regards



The Bandidos ad to the Ballarat community. Picture: Supplied

“We’re a proprietary limited company registered with ASIC and we have been for 25 years. They can call us what they like,” he said.

“To be deemed a criminal organisation is a formal process. That has never occurred.”

Even the customary bikie night-life appears to have altered significantly.

Mr Norman said you’d be far more likely to have a night of excessive boozing and “dancing girls” at an end-of-season footy trip.

The Bandido crew enjoyed dinner at a Lazy Moe’s before taking in some live acoustic songs from the 1970s and 80s.

“There’s nothing worse than some loud headbanger music where you can’t hear the fella next to you,” Mr Norman said.

Police confirmed they had no beef with the Bandido visit and the club has even placed a local newspaper ad thanking locals for their hospitality and apologising for any inconvenience out on the roads.