



## Safer Communities Australia Inc

### Annual General Meeting

27 September 2006

## President's Annual Report

I am pleased to present the 2006 Annual Report of the activities of Safer Communities Australia. The major reconstruction of the Safety House Association of South Australia into an organisation reflecting its true activities whilst retaining and enhancing the *Safety House* purpose is now well behind us. The new structure with its three programs is working extremely well and has clarified our purposes and directions as a voluntary community safety and security organisation. The recognition given by awards noted later affirms our programs' relevance, effectiveness and status.

We have had good reason to celebrate in 2006. 25 years ago, Mr Keith Lomax introduced Block Parents at the Bellevue Heights Primary School after the model he had observed in Canada. A plaque sent to us by Block Parents Canada to mark this anniversary indicates a wonderful relationship which we have retained with that organisation. We have also celebrated 20 years of incorporation, 10 years of the most successful *Safety Ambassador* scheme in primary schools and 10 years of conducting the *Children's Safety Celebration* during Children's Week. These are notable milestones for Safer Communities Australia and its antecedent organisations, milestones which prove government and community confidence in the safety service which is our mission.

Following several awards for programs in previous years, we were delighted to receive a Highly Commended Award in the biennial **2005 National Child Protection Awards** for the *Safety Ambassador* program. Secretary Ms Rona Sakko and Past President Chief Inspector Bill Prior received the prestigious award on behalf of the Association at a function in Canberra. Our members and supporters should be gratified that this voluntary, community organisation should be so acknowledged.

Association awards including Ambassador awards were presented by our Patron, Her Excellency Marjorie Jackson-Nelson, AC, CVO, MBE, Governor of South Australia, at a reception held at Government House in November. Awards were

presented to Sara Kitto, Wayne and Melissa Castle and the Department of Education and Children's Services. A similar reception will be held in 2006.

The Association is most grateful for the financial support of Government whose grant allows for operational costs and some new projects including, in the current year, the development of a volunteers-in-the-field program. Board Secretary Ms Rona Sakko has been most successful in seeking grants for a range of activities such as street signs, lap top and data projector, safety posters and brochures. Grants totalling almost \$27,000 are acknowledged in the financial report.

Local Government Authorities have assisted in the financing and erection of street signs. This has been an enormous undertaking but excellent progress is being made.

Communication with the education sector and kindred agencies has been a priority. Information packs have been sent to all pre-schools, schools, school organisations and many other groups. Resource kits have been distributed to all SAPOL Community Programs Units at each Local Service Area.

With six elected member representatives and six corporate members, the Board of Directors of Safer Communities Australia has met monthly except in January. Its agenda is conducted efficiently with much of the business being recommended from sub-committees. Meetings are designed to be concluded in one hour and fifteen minutes.

Each of the Association's three programs is gaining strength and status.

*Safety Assist* is the core program. National Australia Bank, Australia Post, SA Electorate Offices, Metropolitan Fire Stations and increasingly schools are significant 'chains' which are adding to community coverage of *Safety Assist*. Recently, the Commissioner of Police launched Transit Watch on all metropolitan transport systems and confirmed that *Safety Assist* would be a part of the scheme.

In addition, community committees are being rejuvenated and country areas such as Mount Gambier, Kangaroo Island, Bordertown, Eyre Peninsula, Moonta, Mount Compass, Peterborough and Victor Harbor are keen to develop *Safety Assist*. The decline in numbers of *Safety Assist* locations has been reversed. More intensive monitoring has occurred to ensure reliability and quality of services.

*Stay Safe* is our educational program. More than 300 *Safety Ambassadors* in more than 100 Primary Schools now promote safety messages to school communities. Workshops in metropolitan and country areas and regular newsletters assist Ambassadors in their roles. As reported above, the program has been recognised by a National Child Protection Highly Commended Award. All schools which have participated in the scheme received commemorative coasters to mark 10 years of operation. The annual *Children's Safety Celebration* held on Safety Day

in Children's Week was most successfully conducted at Settlers Farm School in 2005. The event is so popular that schools seek to conduct it. In 2006, it will be held at Bellevue Heights Primary School – where Block Parents began 25 years ago.

Safety brochures and our website are other *Stay Safe* activities. Apart from information about *Safer Communities Australia* and safety messages, all our publications – Network News, Updates and Safety Ambassador newsletters – now go on the web. The Board is grateful to our webmaster, Mr David Sakko, for his expertise and imagination.

The *Safety Associate* program continues as an informal but crucial relationship with other safety organisations and agencies. This year, we have invited several sports clubs to support our programs. Kris Massie, 3 of the Crows Adelaide Football Club, has been the first to join us as a Sports Ambassador. We anticipate that others will join in the near future. Sports Ambassadors will help promote activities.

On behalf of the Board and our members, I express profound gratitude to secretary and program manager, Ms Rona Sakko, for her enormous and valued contribution and energy. Thank you also to office assistant, Mrs Julie Cullen, for her continuing efficient work.

Safer Communities Australia is an outstanding voluntary community organisation. I am pleased to have been associated with its diversification, growth and reputation.

Bryce Saint OAM  
President