



Safer Communities Australia Inc

Annual General Meeting

26 September 2007

President's Annual Report 2007

I am pleased to present the **2007 Annual Report** of the activities of Safer Communities Australia Inc. The past twelve months have included important initiatives in the development of a lively and relevant community based safety and security organisation with growth in each of its three programs. The structure adopted in 2002 aimed to provide “greater diversity, growth and greater effectiveness” and I believe that, after five years, these aims are being delivered.

The Association continues to receive recognition from Government and the community for its effective and efficient activities. Our *Safety Ambassador* program was awarded a **Certificate of Merit in the Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards 2006**. Community confidence in our safety services is an indication that our Mission is being fulfilled.

My 2006 Report included details of our 25th anniversary celebrations of *Safety House* and *Safety Assist*, and the 10th anniversary of the *Safety Ambassador* and the *Children's Safety Celebrations*. The final celebration was a reception held in Old Parliament House and hosted by three Government Ministers, Hon Paul Holloway MLC, Minister for Police, Hon Carmel Zollo MLC, Minister for Emergency Services and Hon Jennifer Rankine MP, Minister for Volunteers. The presence of Ministers and Heads of Agencies and Safety Associates was much appreciated and was an indication of the status that our Association enjoys in the South Australian community.

Two major initiatives have occurred since the last Annual General Meeting. On the foundation of the most successful and well-attended **Community Safety Expo** conducted in connection with the 2006 AGM, a second Expo was conducted in a country centre, Whyalla. Chairman, Mr John Gebbie and his Committee arranged the venue, barbecue and entertainment, and Program Director, Ms Rona Sakko arranged the program. Police, Fire, St John Ambulance and Victim Support Service made presentations about staying safe and there were displays by other safety agencies. In the Presbyterian Hall, it was standing room only. The function was concluded with the AGM of the Whyalla Committee when a very strong

leadership group and members were elected. The wonderful success of the Expo was important in itself but it also showed the desirability of conducting similar functions in other parts of metropolitan and country South Australia.

The second major initiative was a whole day **“Volunteer Program Training Workshop”** held at the Thebarton Police Barracks. Development of a stronger, larger and more active volunteer group is a Board priority assisted by Government through its financial support. The workshop consisted of information about Safer Communities Australia Inc and its programs, descriptions of the style and nature of contributions which volunteers may be expected to provide and a review of responsibilities of volunteers. The value and outcomes of the seminar are yet to be shown but the idea and methodology have been assessed positively.

In keeping with legislative and operational requirements, the Board has adopted policies on Privacy, Risk Management, Occupational Health and Safety, and checking of corporate chain applicants. A Volunteers Manual has also been produced. Procedures related to mandatory reporting are currently being developed.

Financial support provided by the **Government of South Australia** is most gratefully acknowledged. Without that support, the Association would not be able to operate at present levels. The Association has been most successful during the last year with grant applications, nearly \$20,000 having been received for purchase of street signs, bookmarks, a new set of five safety brochures, safety posters and other resources. I commend and thank Board Secretary and Program Director, Ms Rona Sakko, for her diligence and success in seeking grants.

Several days before her retirement, Her Excellency Marjorie Jackson-Nelson, AC, CVO, MBE received Ms Sakko and I at Government House. We wished to thank her for her patronage and for the reception which she gave for the presentation of *Safety Assist* and *Safety Ambassador* awards. On behalf of the Association, we presented Her Excellency with a beautifully shaped and coloured bowl whose stand had been suitably inscribed. Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce AO CSC RANR, Governor of South Australia, will be our new Patron.

The 2006 Children’s Safety Celebration conducted during Children’s Week was held at Bellevue Heights Primary School where *Block Parents* began. The assembly program had some delightful touches, students from other schools attended, Safety Ambassadors were present and there was a huge range of safety displays.

The *Safety Ambassador* program continues to be popular and strong. More than 100 schools and approximately 300 students are involved in the program which takes safety messages to students and school communities. Workshops for Ambassadors have been held in metropolitan and country centres.

Cop This, the annual Police Band performances at the Festival Theatre, had a *Safety Assist* theme. The Police School Beat Band now incorporates *Safety Assist* messages in their programs and Crows Kris Massie, our Sports Ambassador, has attended some concerts to spread the safety message. *Safe T Hound*, our loveable and hard working mascot, has appeared at many functions and localities.

The strength of *Safer Communities* at Whyalla has already been mentioned. Good development and promotions are also occurring in the Riverland, at Murray Bridge, Eudunda and other country areas.

Safety Assist is the core program of the Association and *Safety Assist* locations continue to be important sources of assistance to people in distress. The Board aims to increase the number of locations and is currently examining ways of achieving growth.

During the year, Office Assistant, Mrs Julie Cullen, resigned after 18 years service to the Association. Julie has been a bright, friendly, competent and efficient worker. I am pleased to record our gratitude for her contribution to the Association. Thank you, Julie.

The Board has met regularly and Board members have conducted business in a most efficient manner. During the year, Mrs Jill Talbot resigned and the Victim Support Service replaced Business SA. After a number of years' service and strong support, MFS representative Mr Paul Goreham retired. We welcomed a strategic alliance with the Victim Support Service. I thank Board members for their guidance and support.

On behalf of the Board and members, I express profound thanks to Board Secretary, Program Director and Newsletter editor, Ms Rona Sakko, for her imaginative and conscientious work as the 'engine room' of the Association. Rona gives to us the same totally-committed, successful, hard-working, diligent contribution as she does to her other interests in CSIRO's Double Helix Science Club and National Science Week. Thank you, Rona.

Bryce Saint OAM
President