



# Safer Communities Australia Inc

## Annual General Meeting

23 September 2009

## President's Annual Report 2009

I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the activities of Safer Communities Australia Inc over the past 12 months.

Our organisation has enjoyed another year of growth and development but a number of challenges lay ahead, including:

- **Office accommodation:** Our organisation has outgrown its current office accommodation and we are currently in discussions with the City of Unley to negotiate more suitable premises for our expanding organisation. Our inadequate office space and uncertainty about an ongoing lease are major concerns for our Board of Management, and have recently been identified as significant risks to our organisation's future. In addition to regularly meeting with Unley Council staff, we have recently corresponded with all Councillors, had two Councillors attend our September Board meeting, and met separately with the Mayor. Rona and I will be attending a Council meeting in either October or November to again put our case for an increase in accommodation.
- **Staffing:** Our total weekly staffing hours are significantly below the ideal and are at their lowest level in almost 20 years, even though we have expanded many of our existing programs and initiated new ones. Work is underway to identify what human resources we actually require now, and into the future, particularly if we continue to 'grow' our organisation.
- **Funding:** A significantly greater income is needed to support our organisation, particularly for office premises, wages and resources. Some of the work the Board is currently undertaking, and to which I am about to refer, will support any future bid for increased funding and/or sponsorship.

The SCA Board is currently undertaking a major review and strategic planning process to not only ensure that the programs and services we currently provide are relevant, but to also plan for an expansion of those programs and services over the next few years.

The first stage of this process has recently been completed with a substantial update of SCA Policies and Procedures, and the development of a **Quality Documentation Manual**. The new policies and procedures framework will support the Board operating at a more strategic level, leaving day-to-day operations to office staff Rona and Julie.

Following an initial strategic planning session, our next step in the process will be to conduct a survey of members and other key stakeholders to ascertain their perception of and vision for Safer Communities Australia. *We encourage you to participate in this survey.* Our Board will then embark on a series of planning sessions with SACOSS (South Australian Council of Social Service) to establish key issues and directions for the next 5 years. It is our intention to demonstrate clear linkages between our plan, programs and activities, and the SAPOL and State Strategic Plans. The Board believes this will put us in a more favourable position to obtain additional funding in the future. We anticipate the launch of our new **Strategic Plan** by around May 2010.

Our organisation is also looking to assume a greater advocacy role in the future in such areas as crime prevention initiatives and community safety.

#### **Some highlights of the past year include:**

- Our delightful mascot, **Safe T Hound**, this year celebrates his tenth birthday and continues to enthral young people with school and community visits.
- Long-serving members of our local **Noarlunga Committee** retired after 20 years service and we thank John Liersch, Kay Langton and their team for their outstanding efforts. A new committee has started up in Aldinga and we have already seen progress with the extension of our Safety Assist network in that area.
- Our organisation – which had its beginnings at the Bellevue Heights Primary School in December 1980 – was originally based on the Canadian **Block Parent** model. We were pleased to send them a plaque to commemorate their 30-year anniversary and our two organisations will continue to maintain contact and share ideas.
- Our annual **Children's Safety Celebration** was conducted last October at Mitcham Schools, with almost 1,000 participating students from various schools and kindergartens. Thank you to the Children's Week Association of South Australia for their grant which helped us pay for this event.
- Our innovative and multi-award winning student **Safety Ambassador** program continues to provide a valuable avenue for increasing safety awareness in school communities. For example, our Safety Ambassadors at Coorara Primary School were featured in a DVD, *Little Heroes*, produced by the City of Onkaparinga as part of the Communities for Children Initiative. This DVD aims to raise the profile of child-friendly communities.

SCA is represented on two safety committees: **Adelaide Safe Community** and **Noarlunga Towards a Safer Community**. The latter assisted us recently with a mail-out to businesses in southern areas which resulted in an increase in applications for Safety Assist membership.

We gained valuable new resources, including:

- A canvas shelter (with a grant from the **Volunteer Support Fund**)
- A story book for young people, *The Race* (through a grant from **Community Benefit SA**)
- Safety Activity Booklets (in production) through a grant from **Bendigo Bank's Community Enterprise Foundation**
- New Safety Assist street signs for **Naracoorte Lucindale, Marion, Mitcham, Victor Harbor** and **Burnside Council** areas

Our organisation is most grateful to the above for the provision of grants to fund these projects. We also extend thanks to **Australian Central** which conducts an annual **Community Lottery** in which we participate and which is our major fundraiser each year.

Last November we had the privilege of again having our **annual awards** presented by our Patron, **His Excellency Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce AC CSC RANR**, Governor of South Australia, at a special ceremony at Government House. We appreciate His Excellency's on-going support. Awards were presented to outstanding community members, organisations and Safety Ambassadors. We also introduced our inaugural **Safety Ambassador Teacher's Award** to acknowledge the vital work that teachers undertake in supporting the Safety Ambassadors in their schools.

Our annual funding comes via the **Minister for Police** and **SAPOL** and we are most grateful for this ongoing support which is so vital to our organisation.

It has been an honour to have taken on the Presidency of Safer Communities Australia at such an exciting time of new directions and growth. Members of the Board of Management have much work ahead, but be assured that our organisation has a motivated Board with much expertise to offer and I am most grateful for the support that they have given both to me personally and to Safer Communities Australia.

**Brenton Keen**  
President