

## ***Message from the President***

This message discusses a number of events, which are linked with a common thread to the future of our old vehicle scene, movement or whatever you wish to call it. There are no crystal balls but we can often get hints to our future from places with a population larger than ours. I have read for many years of a political push to get old vehicles off the road in the UK. It appears that how they have resisted this is by uniting and constantly making their presence felt in the wider community and therefore also in political circles. Two of their recent actions by the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs (FBHVC) have been to organise a survey of the financial worth of their movement and also a 'drive it day' to make their presence felt in the wider community. This message is about actions happening locally and how you personally can play a part in protecting what we have.

### **National Survey**

At the last national meeting of the Australian Historic Motoring Federation, it was discussed that knowing how much we are worth to the economy, is the most effective tool available to protect our movement. Queensland offered to prepare such a survey. Similarly, our FHMC of SA moved to produce a survey for the same reasons after a copy of the UK survey found its way to one of our meetings. In consultation with other states and the UK, Jim Scott has come up with the attached survey and hope it has struck the right balance of gaining useful information without being too much of a burden on participants. The UK think this is important enough for them to pay AUS\$250,000 for their exercise. Being industrious Australians, it has cost us nothing but volunteer hours. Please do your bit now and volunteer a small amount of your time to respond to the survey and make this exercise count!

Please note, we are only looking for members of Federation member clubs to respond and this really does cover most of the people who spend money on old vehicles. The reason for restricting this is that it will give us the ability to calculate the important statistical figure of response rate accurately. We know how many Federation club members we have but not how many people there are across Australia with an old vehicle. In our final results we will also be able to point out it is an understatement of the economic contribution.

I can't express strongly enough how important it is to get every last respondent that we can. We all know how much we spend and contribute to the economy but we need to be able to prove that to governments and other bodies. The more responses we get, the stronger our data is and unable to be challenged. A weak response rate makes our data and efforts useless and gives the impression that we don't really care about our movement.

Clubs, please distribute this to all your members with your magazines and newsletters. Please push this as hard as you can and with lots of reminders before the 30<sup>th</sup> September deadline. There will be a copy available on our website <http://www.fhmcsa.org.au> If your club has a website, you should be able to download it from our website or I can provide you with an electronic copy.

### **Old Vehicle Day (or can someone suggest a catchier title!)**

As mentioned above, the FBHVC organised for the first time this year 'drive it day' or 'ride it day' as some referred to it. The proposal is that in the UK on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April every year, owners of old vehicles will use them and have them seen wherever they can. If it is a week day, drive it to work, go to the shops, park it in the drive or if you are lucky to be retired organise a car run. On a weekend use it whatever your doing. A very simple concept but

one that gets the wider population and politicians taking notice as to just how many old cars are out there. There is no cost and no organisation apart from publicity.

I can see no reason why the concept would not work well here. For us I think the **1<sup>st</sup> September – First day of Spring** - would be ideal and this was supported by the representatives at the last Federation meeting. This is the start of the season when there are more events on and will help to bring public spectator attention to the next Bay to Birdwood. Most importantly though, if enough people participate, this has the potential to bring an enormous amount of public and political attention to just how many of us there are. We can be noticed in every town and every suburb across the state. My aim will be to publicise this through the media as much as possible just prior to the event and hopefully if we get enough support it will be in all the papers, TV etc. Once again, if we don't support it the message will be that we really don't care or that maybe there is not that many of us after all.

I was also thinking that it may be possible for us to align with a charity. I certainly don't want to complicate the simplicity of this idea but thought at least we could include it in our publicity and help raise awareness. A cause that I know is lagging in support but something that could potentially affect most of us is prostate cancer. September is prostate cancer awareness month and I have contacted the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia, inviting them to suggest how we can help.

Also if you have any ideas for a catchy title, please contact me. Being a motorcyclist and motorist I couldn't support drive it, ride it or use it day. Also I think to the general public, the ones we really want to notice this, there is no reference to vehicles or being old. It could be horses and push bikes!

We still have a few months to go, but please start publicising this through the clubs or by any other means available to you. By the next Federation mail out I will have a flyer for distribution. If you would like to help and especially if you have skills and experience in publicising events, please contact me.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of September I will be in the most obvious, funniest old vehicle I have running and I hope you will too!

### **Bay to Birdwood**

All this talk of making our presence felt but of course we have had one very public event going for the past 25 years. How many times has a stranger seen your vehicle and said "do you take this in the Bay to Birdwood" or for sale ads with "eligible for the Bay to Birdwood". Of try this question on the next stranger or politician you meet – "when you think of old cars and motorbikes what do you think about?"

This is the one day of the year when every news bulletin and paper recognises our vehicles and a large proportion of our population takes notice. SA Tourism have professional 'crowd counters' and consistently come up with spectator numbers of the order of 100,000 people who care enough about these vehicles to come out and have a look. That's 10% of the million or so in the Adelaide region and ask any politician if that is a significant number. Some people have asked me why we spend money on publicity when we all know its on through our clubs. That's the main reason why.

If I want to take my Amilcar on a pleasant drive, the Bay to Birdwood is definitely not it! Particularly in that car, it is a big pain in the you know where! Yes I enjoy the day overall, meeting and talking to people and vehicles I have never seen before, making contacts,

finding out some history, answering questions, waving to the wide eyed kids through to the old grannies, tooting my horn for them, putting someone in touch with a club and maybe, just maybe tilting that scale that sees another enthusiast buy something and join us. But even if there was none of this I would be there every time because this is the one day we are really noticed. Please take the opportunity this year to enter and help us be noticed.

I have only been involved in the organisation of the B2B for the last 18 months or so but the last two budgets have been really hard work. In simple terms, this years event could not happen without significant changes. The first thing you will notice is a cheaper quality entry form. Hopefully you will only notice subtle changes like this and the essence of the day will remain unchanged. We are still hunting for last minute sponsors that will hopefully see us put money into charity, but right now it is very tight. Any extra entries on top of the 'normal' numbers, up to our maximum of 1750, will make a massive difference.

We are concerned about the drop off in the veteran and vintage entries. Yes, total entries are important to the finances of the event. Yes, we would lose much of the character of the event without them. My personal concern is more along the lines of showing our presence. Don't mention this to any politician or government but I understand many years ago arguments were put in UK parliament that these slow, poorly braked vehicles were not safe to be on their roads. I also understand that the backlash from these comments was sufficient enough for them not to go there and this is part of the motivation for the FBHVC continued campaign. On this one day of the year I would rather have the public shocked at just how many of these old vehicles there are than see them as a rarity.

In an effort to understand reasons for the drop off, letters were sent to a number of clubs. Many issues were raised, some we will try and accommodate, and others we can't. The overwhelming response was dislike of the rolling cut off date and a wish to return to the old cut off. The committee have no problem with this but we still have an obligation to be financially responsible and make sure we stay in the black. We can't knowingly go ahead with an event, that based on past data would suggest was going to make a loss that couldn't be paid....or we will end up in jail! So please give us the data this year that says we have sufficient pre 1950 vehicles such that we can change back the cut off date next year.

This year, in an effort to go some way in solving the rolling cut off problems, veterans and vintage will be segregated from the rest, with veterans leaving first, followed by vintage and then the rest. Also at the finish, preferential parking will be given to these categories. We hope this works well and will help in having similar era and speed vehicles travelling together and should look great. Hopefully 2008 will be better again with veteran, vintage and pre 1950. We are still working on some of the suggestions and please be assured that we know that without entrants we have no event and therefore we want to make you happy! Also we can guarantee that the West Terrace problem will not occur – we know that mad you very unhappy!

So please, please get behind this years event. It really is on a cusp of going on as a great event and a day where Adelaide and the rest of the world for that matter sit up and take notice or ending due to lack of interest. Let us use this as a well established way of making our presence felt.

### **Election of Officers**

At last year's AGM, we were in the awkward position of not being able to fill positions on the committee. How does this Federation, representing thousands of people across the state, operate without the committee positions filled? Luckily last year, someone made a

snap decision on the night to save us. This year, it makes sense to me to know what position we are in well before the night. Please think about taking on this 2 year obligation and 'do your bit'. Please don't just think that someone else will do it again. Talk amongst your friends and club members and think seriously about taking on a role. We would like nominations made at the June 17 Federation meeting.

At this stage we do have a nomination for Vice President, but don't let that stop you from also nominating if you really want to have a go at this job. What we do need is a nomination for President. I don't think there is anything particularly tricky about this job and there will be plenty of support from me as immediate past president and from the rest of the committee. There is a time commitment, with general meetings and committee meetings and also Bay to Birdwood meetings. Having said that, I managed to also squeeze in a very full time job, a change in job, birth and raising of our first child, some house and garage renovations, membership of three clubs, including club captain duties of one of these. Suffice to say, I think the vast majority of you would have the time to fulfil this role for a two year term, if you have the drive to see the main representative body of our movement and our historic registration scheme survive. Let this be the year that you stop expecting someone else to do this job and have a go yourself.

While on the subject of doing your bit, as announced at an earlier meeting, the committee stated their intention to call for expressions of interest for the roles in the sub-committees on an annual basis. Our interpretation of the constitution is that this is the responsibility of each new committee to re-appoint the sub-committees and it also seems unfair to expect these people to indefinitely take on these roles. Luckily most of these people have been happy to continue in these roles on behalf of the Federation membership. The exception to this is the LPG and fuels sub-committee which needs new members before this issue can go anywhere. If you have an interest in this, or variations or historic registration, please inform the committee and provide details of your experience. We will then discuss details with the current sub-committee members, to ensure we have continuity of knowledge and experience in these important roles.

Apologies for such a long message and also apologies if I have said anything here to offend. Due to time constraints, I have not run this by the rest of the committee and this is a personal message from me, so any problems should be directed to me. You can always get rid of me at the next meeting but be prepared to put your hand up for new President!

Thank you for your time. Thank you also if you take time to fill out the National Survey, take part in 'Old Vehicle Day' and Bay to Birdwood and thank you enormously if you put your hand up to dedicate time over the next two years as President of the FHMC of SA.

The FBHVC states "We exist to uphold the freedom to use old vehicles" . This is not something I have heard the FHMC of SA state, probably because our freedom has not been under great threat. Let us keep our Federation strong with your interest and participation, which I am sure is our greatest defense to any future threat.

Craig Baulderstone  
President FHMC of SA