



## The Veteran Car Club of Australia (Queensland) Inc

Club Patron: His Excellency the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC Governor of Queensland

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### Submission to the Inquiry into Motor Recreational Activities.

The Veteran Car Club of Australia (Queensland) Inc. (VCCA(Q)) was established in May of 1956 as the Veteran Car Club of Queensland. After affiliating with the national body, the Veteran Car Club of Australia, in 1962 it changed to its present name. Through this National Association we have worldwide affiliation as a result of membership of FIVA (*the Federation Internationale des Vehicules Anciens*) based in Europe. It is through our FIVA affiliation that we derive our definition of a Veteran Vehicle as well as the protocols for collection, storage, restoration and presentation of our vehicles.

The Veteran Car Club caters for any self-propelled road vehicle manufactured up to and including 31<sup>st</sup> December 1918. This class of vehicle is known as Veteran with Vintage following from January 1919 up to and including 31<sup>st</sup> December 1930. The veteran period includes vehicles manufactured from the dawn of motoring through to the end of the First World War which is significant in terms of the development of the automobile.

With the invention of the motor car in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, most of those early vehicles were single cylinder, with two-cylinder models making an appearance early in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. By the early nineteen hundreds, four-cylinder vehicles were starting to take over and by 1912, 1 and 2 cylinder cars were almost non-existent. As is still the case today, most developments were driven by the need for speed in competitive events, mostly intercity races in Britain and Europe.

The outbreak of war in 1914 put an end to the production of recreational vehicles in Britain and Europe as all production was directed towards the war effort. The developments which were made in manufacturing technique and design during this period were instantly

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transferred to vehicle production once manufacturing restarted after the war. The vehicles manufactured in the Vintage period very quickly developed away from those we saw in the pre-war period, the Veteran era.

### **Economic Impact**

As all of our vehicles are now more than 100 years old, very few parts are available on the shelf of automotive stockists or dealers. If a part is missing or damaged through use, in most cases it will have to be remanufactured according to original specification.

In some cases the owner will have the necessary skills to perform the task but in most cases we rely on businesses to do the work. Some of the skills needed will be regarded as lost trades, for example wheelwrights, coach builders, metal spinning, magneto winding etc. Other trades such as casting, machining and upholstery, with skills sympathetic to our needs, are usually available. There are also a number of businesses entirely devoted to restoration of historic vehicles.

Restoration work can cost many thousands of dollars often totalling to more than the finished vehicle is worth and that is not counting the value of the time the owner contributes.

Once the vehicle is restored and registered for use, the work continues with regular maintenance and sometimes repair. These vehicles have a need for daily attention to things like lubricants, coolants etc. most of which are specially formulated for them. Modern additives are often not compatible with these ancient vehicles.

It is difficult to estimate the contribution that this work makes to the Queensland economy as no survey has been taken to determine how many vehicles are currently being actively restored and what proportion of the restoration work is being outsourced.

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### **Contribution to Queensland tourism**

Because of the nature of our vehicles, Veteran owners prefer not to interact with modern traffic on heavily used roads. We therefore tend to trailer our vehicles to rural and regional centres where we stay for a few days and enjoy what that area has to offer. For example, in 2019 club events were held in Biggenden 4 days, Howard 4 days and Glass House 3 days. In 2020 events are planned for Crows Nest 4 days, Ayr 5 days and Roma 3 days.

Each of these events will attract between 12 and 20 vehicles with 35 to 45 participants spending on accommodation, meals, fuel and tourist activities. Members will often extend their stay by one or two days either side of the event to take advantage of other attractions that the area has to offer.

This year the Veteran Car Club hosted an 8 day National Veteran Rally in Bargara. Over 150 vehicles from all states of Australia, as well as USA and NZ attended, with 350 participants. The Mayor of Bundaberg Regional Council, Jack Dempsey, in his final address, estimated that in excess of \$600,000 was spent by participants in Bundaberg alone, without counting the spending in the surrounding towns visited.

Next year the Veteran Car Club will host the National Veteran One and Two Cylinder Rally in Charleville over 6 days. As the name suggests, this is restricted to the older single and twin cylinder cars and motorcycles. With four months to the start, nearly 70 entries have been received and it looks like being a fully subscribed event. We have to limit entries to 80 vehicles as the attractions being visited can't handle greater numbers.

With all of our events we support and rely on local businesses to supply the majority of our needs. Where possible we use local not for profit organisations to supply meals and local businesses for printing and stationery, promotional activities and anything else we need. In Bundaberg this year, the local Meals on Wheels provided morning teas and

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some lunches receiving over \$14,000 in payment. The Elliott Heads Bowls Club provided lunch on the first day and said the injection of funds was very welcome to their struggling club.

It would be difficult to calculate a figure for this club's annual contribution to tourism, but we believe it would be considerable.

### **Community Engagement**

Members of the Veteran Car Club are very conscious of the historical significance of the vehicles they currently hold as custodians of this piece of moving heritage. While some vehicles are held in museum collections where people can go and see them and learn about the vehicles and their history, we view our events as taking the history to the people.

When we rally in these regional centres, we try to visit schools and retirement villages to show, educate and in some cases reminisce about the days when these vehicles were young. We also work with local community organisations to utilize our presence to help raise the precious funds needed by these groups. They are able to take advantage of our vehicles while on display, where they can charge the general public a small admission or through food stalls, raffles and competitions etc.

What the Mayor of Bundaberg didn't include in his estimate of contribution, was the thousands of dollars raised by community groups at the four public displays. Everybody benefits from these events.

### **Impact on road safety outcomes**

The mix of relatively slow moving one hundred plus year old vehicles and modern traffic has the potential for adverse situations. When planning club events, the safety of our

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drivers and vehicles as well as that of the general public is paramount. We use signage to alert other drivers of our presence and we seek to keep our participants on the planned course.

As covered above, in most cases our vehicles are not on the road while travelling to and from our events, so we only need to control them on the route. The four cornerstones of a safe event are.

- Good instructions
- Good directional signage on the route
- Good marshalling when entering and leaving venues, and
- Quick rescue of a stricken vehicle.

A lost driver can be a danger to themselves and other road users, so these 4 elements are critical to safe execution of an event.

We insist on good rally instructions to direct entrants around the route. Funds are available to cover the cost of printing and in larger events independent scrutineers travel the route to test the accuracy and clarity of the instructions.

Nationally we have a kit of signs which travel to each event to ensure consistency. These signs are placed on critical intersections around the route each day to supplement the instructions.

Particularly on larger events, local car club volunteers or organisations like SES are enlisted to control traffic and marshal at venues where the vehicles accumulate such as attractions and meal breaks. There is usually a donation made to the organizations assisting, which helps their fundraising.

We discourage entrants providing their own back up as this only results in more slow moving vehicles with trailers on the course. Instead we provide back up in the form of

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either tilt tray or trailer or both. These vehicles carry signage warning other motorists of our presence on the road and provide a swift pick up in the event of a break down.

Our drivers are very conscious of road safety as they don't want to put them or their vehicle in jeopardy and in most cases are courteous to other road users. The success of our safety programme is evident by the fact that there have been no major traffic incidents on any of our National or Club events.

### **The legislative, regulatory and policy framework**

When it comes to the regulations under which we use our veteran vehicles, we are bundled together with all historic vehicles on a rolling 30-year eligibility, as Special Interest Vehicles. As outlined above, we believe that veteran vehicles are a very different group to the rest of the historic fleet.

Our vehicles have minimum impact on the road surface as veterans are light vehicles, the heaviest would be no more than 1,500 Kg with most under a 1000Kg and our speeds range from 40 to 80 KPH. The daily distances covered in a typical tour are 60 to 120 kilometres, mainly on quiet country roads.

As a class of historic vehicle, the Veterans, by their very nature, are different to most other classes, (vintage and post vintage, etc.). Veterans were all manufactured prior to the first world war and had not benefited from the technical developments learned during the war effort. Many are open cars with no windscreen or roof and lack most of the creature comforts of the later vehicles.

For these reasons almost all of our members choose to own car trailers to transport their vehicles to participate in events even when these are within the greater city area. When we travel to events, we are not using our veterans on the road, we are travelling in our

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modern vehicle, usually a 4WD, which is fully registered for road use and a trailer which is also fully registered.

Our veterans would in most years cover less than 1000 kilometres on the road and for that we pay a registration fee, including the Special Interest Vehicle concession, of \$92.60. Even at this much reduced rate it is still an excessive fee when compared to the rest of the private fleet in Queensland. If you compare that with the 4WD tow vehicle which is covering on average, \$15,000 kilometres a year and paying \$508.85 in registration fees, it is only being charged \$33.92 per 1000 Kilometres. Compared that to the veteran at \$92.60 per 1,000 kilometres, the registration for our veteran vehicles is nearly three times more expensive on a per 1,000 kilometre basis.

We are not suggesting that these figures are typical for the Historic Fleet, but they are for the Veteran class of vehicle.

We are also suggesting that for the Veteran fleet, the Traffic Improvement fee should be waived because of our low impact and limited use. Again, we pay the Traffic Improvement fee through our tow vehicle registration.

We would suggest that a study be taken of how Britain and some European countries regard their history where Veteran vehicles are concerned. Veteran vehicles are given free registration in Britain and some European countries, not only because of the issues discussed above but also because they value their heritage.

## **Conclusion**

We in the Veteran movement believe that not only can we enjoy a harmonious relationship with the road travelling public, but we have a very real contribution to make to them and the wider community generally.

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When you tell people we are bringing a number of 100 year old cars to their locality we are usually met with some excitement but it is not until we arrive that they fully appreciate the spectacle that a group of these ancient vehicles can create.

The financial and educational aspect of our visit is gratifying enough but the real bonus for us is the joy we can bring which is evident when we talk to folk who come out to see our vehicles and the total joy from the children when we are allowed to take them for a ride.

While we would argue that the above commentary is evidence enough to warrant Veteran Vehicles the free use of the road network in Queensland, we would at least like the opportunity to discuss the possibility of working towards that outcome.

Thank you for taking our submission which is delivered in good faith



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This submission was approved at the General Meeting of the VCCA(Q) Inc. on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2019.