

# BISA's History



## 1973 – 2010

The history of this organisation could be traced back to an advertisement in Planning S.A. Number 33 May/June 1973, the journal of the Town & Country Planning Assoc. (S.A.) Inc. This advertisement called all cyclists to “Bike In For a Better City” on 22nd Sept. 1973 at 10.00 a.m. Flowing from this event as a result of the energies of the committed individuals have been numerous activities that have helped create the world of cycling in Adelaide, South Australia and Australia, as we know it today. In the pursuit of our cyclist ideals the individual passions have on occasion shone through, punctuating the steadfast pursuit of our ongoing objectives.

## Why was a cycling organisation needed?

An article in Messenger West (p 21, May 7, 2008) recording the 50th Anniversary celebrations of Henley Beach High School quoted Brian May. Brian an inaugural year 8 class member in 1958 and later a Prefect remembered “most students rode bicycles to school, riding 4 and 5 abreast on Henley Beach Road because there were few cars”. Twenty years later the 12th edition of our organisations magazine reported an average of 12 cyclists being killed on South Australian Roads in the previous 9 years. It is likely to be people with memories similar to Brian May who formed BISA. Faced with the evidence of increased danger on our roads while firm in their belief of cycling as a viable means of transportation. They could see that something had to be done.

## The early years 1974 – 1980

Meetings were held in January and November 1974 that led to the creation of the Cyclists Protection Committee- significantly through the energy and enthusiasm of Hans Penning.

This unincorporated body became the Cyclists Protection Association (CPA) Inc in June 1976 with an annual fee of \$2.

Cycling rallies were held in the autumn of 1975, 1976 and 1977- the first attracting 800 cyclists.

The organisation had representation on Government committees such as the Bicycle Planning, Bicycle Track and State Bicycle Committees. However there was a sense of frustration as there was no overall plan in this period.

The CPA took interest in city planning matters as they related to cycling interests including 40 kph urban speed limits, the Glenelg/Adelaide Cycle way, the Linear Park and O’Bahn, the Tea Tree Gully Bikeway System, the Emerson Crossing, Adelaide Parklands and Bicycle Parking facilities. These issues remain integral to the objectives of BISA today.

It is of interest that while in the early years the completion of the first Adelaide Bike plan was welcomed members were quick to find faults and seek improvements. Today nearly every council has its own bike plan and in many cases these have been reviewed at least once. Lower speed limits of the order of 40kph or less are often referred to in BISA

publications and meeting minutes with European countries and America reported to favour lower speed limits.

With only a few council areas with 40kph limits and a national suburban default limit of 50 kph it is clear this objective has not been met. In respect of cycleways, BISA continues to lobby for these with the recent emphasis on “Greenlinks” and support for the national “Heat” fund.

Eric Clothier came to the organisation in 1978 with enthusiasm for investment in cycling infrastructure, particularly in the Mitcham council area.

The initiative of then CPA president, Darrell Penhale resulted in the launch of the Bicycle Federation of Australia (BFA) in June 1979

The organisation was involved in the planning of the West Side Bikeway to Glenelg – utilizing the skills and experience of Eric Clothier. Unfortunately tensions arose as a result of this involvement and eventually Eric was no longer elected to the committee and his involvement ceased.

BISA recognised existing organisations as agents to convey the message of cycling to a broader public. Various ride clubs were identified and were included on mailing lists and invited to contribute via participation in demonstration rides.

## **CPA Activities Gain Traction 1981-1990**

The organisation gained support from the Government in 1981 to prepare a Metropolitan Bike Plan at a cost of \$200,000.

In 1982 the CPA was also active behind the scenes in the creation of the SA Touring Cyclists Assoc. (later to become Bike SA)- to focus on the interests of touring cyclists. CPA considered its core business was utilitarian cycling- ride to work, to school, to shop, to football practice, to doctor etc.- and recognised that separate bodies could better represent recreational and sporting interests.

Our inaugural president resigns in protest at the adoption of compulsory helmet wearing as CPA policy. The support of compulsory helmet wearing had been contentious as members were divided between the desire for freedom from control and authority on the one hand and the growing body of evidence that demonstrated the seriousness of head injuries and the likely reduction in these injuries if helmet wearing increased. Similar debates have surrounded seatbelt wearing in cars and several countries continue to pursue purely educative measures rather than legal measures to gain increased helmet and seatbelt wearing. Pedal number 73, April 1989 advertises a panel discussion convened by the CPA to discuss the benefits and disadvantages of compulsory helmet wearing with speakers including Mr. Michael Rann MP, Hon Ian Gillfillan MLC and Dr Ron Sommers head of the Injury Surveillance and Control Unit of the SA Health Commission.

In 1985 Graham and Margaret Day joined the organisation and brought renewed vigour to organisational activities.

Hans Penning rejoins CPA, recognizing that while compulsory helmet wearing was a low point in cycling there were significant objectives to be won.

In September 1987 Hans attended the 3rd International Velo City devoted to planning for the Urban Cyclist in Gronigen, Netherlands. Hans reported back on the development of cycling in Europe generally and was excited by the host city which at the time had cycling making up 50% of daily trips by the citizens of that city. Hans also attended a meeting of the European cycling Federation with 13 countries represented.

In January 1988 then acting chairperson, Hero Weston wrote to the Minister for Transport, The Hon G F Keneally regarding several cycling issues including box turns, dual use of footpaths and 40kph speed limits on residential streets. It is interesting to note that 20 years later small progress has been made on these issues. There has been little or no change in terms of assistance for cyclists at intersections, children only use footpaths in SA(all cyclists can cycle on footpaths in Qld. And while 50kph limits now apply on residential streets there has been on limited extension of 40KPH suburban limits)

In 1990 the organisation changed name to **The Bicycle Institute of South Australia (BISA)** to move away from a perceived focus on negative aspects of cycling in the name Protection Association and in line with other state bodies. However other bodies were tending to move to simplified names such as Bike Vic and this nomenclature was adopted by the SA Touring Cyclists Assoc. which became **Bicycle SA**.

## **New Name but Same Objectives 1991-2000**

Bicycle parking in the city was a focus as cyclists were being fined for securing their cycles to trees and posts in the mall. Eventually parking facilities were provided and there has been an increase in cyclists visiting the shopping area for work or to shop.

In June 1991 Pedal Update 83 reported that a Cycle Commute Day would be held in August. This heralded the first Ride to Work event. Sponsors were being sought to assist with a breakfast and it was hoped that the minister for Transport, Frank Blevins would speak on his vision for cycling in the 90's. These events continued through to 2003. BISA, with support from "Life Be In It", ran ride to work events with breakfasts organised in Victoria Square. Our past secretary Peter Sampson remembers these events well. The rides appear to have lapsed after that time and have now been picked up by Bike SA as a co-sponsor of the National Ride to Work Day, an extension of a Bike Vic programme. Another example of a BISA innovation that has been taken up by other organisations and continues to have national impact.

Twelve new members joined in May 1991 and eight in June demonstrating the vibrancy and relevance of BISA at that time. However only 15 members attended the 1991 AGM half the attendance in 2008.

At this time Burnside Council was of the opinion that bikes were best kept off main arterial roads. This view would be unlikely to be reflected in Local Area Bike Plans of councils today.

June 1992 support was provided by Hans Penning to "A Review of Bicycle Policy and Planning Developments in Western Europe and North America" This 117 page literature search was designed to inform the Office of Transport Policy and Planning on the potential of cycling for Adelaide and what investments were desirable. It would be recommended bedside reading for government ministers today.

Hans Penning had devoted a day per week over 5 years between 1992 and 1997 to map the bicycle network which became Bike Direct.

This initiative gained Government support in 1996 when Dianna Laidlaw as minister for transport funded the professional production and printing of 280 thousand initial bike direct maps which are now available on line.

Detailed accident reports appeared in Pedal Update at this time providing insight into accident causation including inappropriate cyclist practices as well as road design and driver errors. These reports indicated that at the time BISA may have benefited from "inside" information. Of the many cycling accidents of recent times very little if any information on causation has been made available to the cycling public.

In 1993 there was a call for a Police Cycle Patrol with then BISA president Sergeant Peter Walter-Smith calling for member support. This received further mention by Peter Walter-Smith in Jun/Jul PU, 1994. This effort was eventually successful and by 1995 a bicycle group was established in SAPOL. It is pleasing to note that they continue to this day and a recent conversation with a serving officer indicated he found the work very satisfying and was confident he was effective in his role.

Global warming and reducing oils supplies are issues receiving increasing comment in PU at this time as well as commentary on health benefits of cycling. The ability of increased cycling to help address these problems is noted. Fifteen years later the same comments are being made as whilst cycling has increased it remains a minority activity comparative to for example Denmark or the Netherlands.

A decision is taken in recognition of cycling body nomenclature in other states and a recognition in SA that Cyclist Protection was focused on negatives, to change our name to BISA.

In 1993 PU and Australian Cyclist deliveries were delegated to a group of volunteer deliverers as a way of saving postage and involving members in the organisation. This system is still in operation today some 15 years later, managed throughout by Clove Palfrey and with many of the original delivers still on the roster. This is a commendable feat by all involved.

At that time the Liberal Party (SA Division) stated in its Cycling Policy that: "Liberals guarantee that cycling will no longer remain a poor relation in transport planning terms. Bicycle access and safety programmes will be given a high priority – and they will be integrated into the mainstream of urban and transport planning to ensure cyclists are provided with continuous safe corridors." It can be recorded as a significant achievement from 15 years dedicated work by BISA.

Health Minister Arbitrage launched a LIFE CYCLE health campaign in September 1994.

An advisory group within Transport SA considered speed limits and indicated in a report in April that a 40kph speed limit on suburban streets was favoured. The long held policy of BISA for reduced speed limits was further supported from the city of York in the UK where significant investment in traffic calming initiatives was reported in PU April/May 1995 to have produced a 43% drop in accidents.

At this time there is first mention of a proposal to amalgamate BISA and Bike SA. BISA expressed reservations at the time but was willing to consider ways of co-operating. One co-operative effort was the Bicycle Friendly Awards made to businesses and councils that supported cycling reported in April/May PU in 1995.

Changes to BISA's constitution were adopted at the AGM in April 1995

BISA members were represented in 1996 at VeloAustralis, the first Australian International Cycling Conference, held in Fremantle, organised by BikeWest and the Bicycle Federation of Australia. It was the first time any Minister for Transport from this country attended and participated. SA's the Hon Diana Laidlaw and BISA member was a plenary speaker and chaired the Women and Cycling sessions. Another BISA member, Professor Harry Owen, also addressed the opening session talking about Cycling and Health, warning about sedentary lifestyles costing \$65 million daily, with increasing obesity, heart disease and diabetes.

After VeloAustralis, the BFA soon elected Dr Owen as President. He spoke and wrote about health issues, focusing on cycling as an aid to physical activity, transport and the environment, maintaining that riding needed to be regular, habitual, moderate and non-

seasonal. Within 12 months, at the European Cycling Conference, all countries represented, including BFA, signed the proposal in support of the Kyoto Agreement.

This period appears to have been one when BISA had considerable support and the level of participation by keen activists was at a peak- no doubt a testament to the hard work by the founders and members over the previous 20 years. BISA boasted some 600 Adult and 50 Corporate members at the time.

June/July 1995 PU reported on a feasibility study for a coastal Bikeway from Marino to Outer Harbour.

At this time conflicts were reported on shared use paths and a Code of Conduct was proposed to deal with this conflict. This conflict remains a matter of concern in 2008 and was reported on when cyclists were invited by BISA to have input into the safety report on the Linear Park commissioned by the LGA.

At the 1996 AGM 75 people attended including 39 members.

In 1997 BISA joined the world wide web with a website first mentioned. Advertising by SENET is prominent in PU in this and subsequent years.

In 1999 BISA celebrated 25 years of advocacy. BISA's President was Traffic Sergeant Peter Walter-Smith. He and his committee were largely responsible for getting Sth. Aust uniformed police on bicycle patrols.

Amid criticism, the Unley City Council's 5 year trial period of 40kms/h in residential streets was completed, reducing crashes and injuries. That reduced speed continues to the present while a limited number of other councils have adopted these limits which remain an objective of BISA

At this time there was continuous lobbying from BISA for the development of the Coastal Bikeway. Effort which is nearer to full realisation some 10 years later.

Bicycle lockers were built at a number of rail stations and free transport of bicycles on trains in off-peak times was established. The space for bicycles on trains was being considered in 1988 and remains a matter of concern today. Carriage refurbishment has been accompanied by added access for bicycles but there remains much work to be done and BISA continues to discuss this issue with TransAdelaide.

## **Survival in a Period When Volunteerism is Out of Fashion – 2001 and Beyond**

In 2001 discussion concerning a proposed amalgamation with Bike SA led to a referendum, which was ultimately unsuccessful. The then President of BISA, Terry Leach who had worked hard to achieve this amalgamation expressed his disappointment in that more than half BISA's membership had not expressed a view and that while a majority of those who had voted for amalgamation the required 75% support was not achieved. At the time there appeared to be a sense that rather than an amalgamation it was a takeover. A desire to retain independence and pure voluntary status won on the day. Concerns had been expressed at the time regarding the viability of having two "peak bodies" and the sense of fragmentation of the cycling advocacy. As advocates it was considered that BIKE SA had the structure to manage membership and the few active members could concentrate on the most important advocacy aspects. Others would point to the existence of numerous cycling organisations and that rather than two there are many voices in cycling with some common interests and other specific interests such as mountain biking, pedal pax, road and track racing etc. The recent decision of the large cycling bodies BIKE VIC, NSW, QLD and SA to

form the “Bicycle Coalition” and to break away from the BFA(Bicycle Federation of Australia) is simply the latest chapter in what is sure to be an ongoing story of co-operation vs competition of and between cycling organisations.

BISA is represented on the Black Spot funding committee which allocates funding to address identified cycle accident problems in city and country areas.

High profile events in late 1990's and early 2,000's in which cyclists were killed in circumstances where no blame could be attributed to the cyclist and the drivers left the accidents prompted renewed calls for greater justice for cyclists. BISA lent support to the Wheels of Justice Organisation and members joined a crowd of possibly more than a 1,000 cyclists that traveled to the steps of Parliament House and organisation leaders including BISA's Sam Powrie called for improved safety for cyclists. A royal commission was called into the latter of these events involving an ex policeman and lawyer. It is not clear that any real benefits have been derived by cyclists from the Commission or the associated publicity.

Publications such as Pedal Update are now held on the web site. Also details of current campaigns and links to a host of Australian and overseas cycling sites can be accessed from the web.

In May June of 2004 the new President advised he was the chairperson, not chairman thus avoiding the concerns of earlier years when gender specific references were removed. The BISA constitution provides for a chairperson and vice chairperson rather than a president as had been the habit of the previous twenty years.

The finances of the organisation came into focus in 2004/2005 as insurance costs increased dramatically. Eventually a decision was made to drop insurance as a membership service as it was considered that many would be covered by their own personal insurance and that it was possible to secure insurance elsewhere. This decision came into effect in mid 2006. Members continue to be concerned regarding insurance and options for obtaining insurance through associations with other bodies continue to this day. Recent events involving collisions between cyclists where neither party were comprehensively insured have renewed focus on this issue.

In 2005 a **Ride to Work** campaign was commenced via a Ride Friday campaign with workplace activists encouraging their colleagues to ride to work on the last Friday of the month. This was seen as a way of developing momentum in advance of the National Ride to Work Day that has been developed by Bicycle Victoria.

In 2007 BISA co-coordinated the first Adelaide leg of the **World Ride of Silence** bike ride – rides in 270+ cities commemorating cyclists who have died as a result of traffic accidents by celebrating the freedom of cycling.

In 2008 members are working actively in areas as diverse as **Ride To Work**, Adelaide Greenlinks (an arterial cycling network to cross the city providing high speed off main road cycling for longer distance recreational riders and commuters), Improved Public transport integration with cycling (Bikes on Trains and Bike Parking at Transport Hubs)

Then as today BISA sought inspiration from other states and overseas. The design of cycle facilities in Holland and the City of Geelong in Victoria provided inspiration and impetus for lobbying of Local and State Government authorities. We now look to London (Congestion Tax), Paris (20,000 free cycles for city transportation), Portland Oregon, Brisbane, Melbourne and Perth (Significantly more developed cycling infrastructure than Adelaide) among many others as examples to inspire us to achieve more for cycling in South Australia.

BISA has a library of some 200 cycling related publications- titles can be provided on request.

The BISA web site is undergoing further redevelopment in 2008, possibly the third or fourth change since the first site was developed. The objective is to make the site a functional tool for members and executive members to manage records and mailing lists and to improve contact with members and associates and friends.

## **Progress Made and the Challenge Ahead**

Looking back over the 30 plus years of our organisation and considering the world today with cycling then it is clear much progress has been made;

Today no transport infrastructure would be considered within the city without adequate cycling infrastructure being included – see Bakewell Bridge, Anzac Highway Underpass and the new Port River overpass. However redevelopments of Anzac Hwy and Cross Road completed in the not so distant past made less than generous consideration for cyclists and the New Northern Expressway is considered to be outside of the region where cyclists should be considered.

The introduction of 50kph residential speed limits while falling short of our desired 40kph or lower preference is at least an indicator of progress. Achieving 50kph on arterial roads and reducing residential limits to 40kph or lower are ongoing challenges for BISA and other state and national cycling organisations.

Cycle lanes and cycle paths are continuing to expand and some are even being rebuilt to higher standards (Linear Park within the Charles Sturt Council area). State and local Government now make annual commitments to the building of this infrastructure. The lack of progress to this point of the rail corridor Green Links, on BISA's agenda for decades, is one piece of unfinished business.

BISA as an organisation and through our active members has had influence at state, national and International levels. The formation of BicycleSA and the Bicycle Federation of Australia have been in no small part a result of BISA encouragement. It has not been uncommon for us to be attending national and international conferences or participating in local, regional, national and international rides. It is however at the state and local level we maintain our interest and focus our activities.

Most suburban councils have a cycling plan and many have revised these plans. These were virtually unknown when BISA began its activities. The enthusiasm of councils such as Marion and Charles Sturt for implementation of the plans heralds a golden future for cycling.

BISA has lobbied for car free days in city and suburbs, recognizing the impact these events have had in many European cities. To this point State and Local authorities have been unable to agree to hold such events.

Parking facilities for bicycles have been considered over many years. Recent conversion of space in city car parks for bike parking is encouraging.

Higher levels of legal protection for cyclists and pedestrians as are common in European cities have not been achieved in Australia. A collision with a cyclist is viewed as invariably the motorized vehicles responsibility in Europe no matter what the circumstances, vehicle drivers therefore are required to accept a duty of care for pedestrians and cyclists. In Australia slower moving cyclists are still viewed by drivers as having no right to occupy the road. Clearer legal protection may address this issue and remains an area of unfinished business for BISA

The cover of the first BPA membership brochure advised that "A strong CPA will be more effective in applying pressure to all organs of Government for:

Protected “bike ways” and other traffic control measures to make roads safe for cycling commuters and school children,

Planning for and installation of cycle parking and other facilities,

A long and short range plan (with periodic reviews) to establish the bicycle as an integrated part of transport Policy in South Australia.”

These objectives can be seen both to have been achieved in part and to remain the core reason for our existence today.

## **An Honour Roll for The People of BISA**

BISA has been successful because of the people who have volunteered there time, in some cases over several decades. Their energy and enthusiasm has made BISA what it is today. Their contribution can be found dotted through the pages of PU and in the minutes of meetings.

Hans Penning

Dr. Harry Owen

Margaret Day

Graham Day

Jonivar Skullerud

Clive Palfrey

Ian Fisk

David Higbed

Peter Walter-Smith

Peter Sampson

Peter Good

Olly Powell

David Wilson

Rose Laura Adele

John McKinnon

Stephanie Denton

Paul McRoberts

Gerry Velaitis

Bruce Lee

Scott Hamon

Rose Boyd

Terry Leach

Bill Gehling

Bob Daniels

Rod Munro

Peter Carter  
Leith Davidson  
Peter Lumb  
Ian Graham  
Peter Sampson  
Dr. Michael Kokkim  
Sam Powrie  
Eric Clothier  
Roger Pirola  
Richard Bentley  
Kath Cooper  
Bruce Lee  
Geoff Findley  
Chris Reynolds  
Ros Davidson  
Carl Jeffreson  
Darren Jones  
John Sibly  
Iris Iwanicki  
Hero Weston  
Tony Monkerud  
Jeremy Miller  
Jemery Day  
David Trebilcock  
John Mellor  
John Arnold  
Judith Hennig  
Malcolm Healey  
Dr Mike Brisco  
Dianne Laidlaw  
Darryl Pennhale  
Stephen Janes  
Peter Mack  
Alan Marriage  
Philip Henske  
Michael Sando

Ian Roberts

Sue Carson

## **Chairman/President. 1974-2008**

H Penning 1974 – 1976

John Sibly 1976 – 1979

Darryl Penhale / Eric Clothier 1979 – 1980

John Arnold 1980 – 1985

David Trebilcock 1985 – 1986

Jemery Day 1986 – 1988

Hero Weston 1988 – 1989

Roger Pirola 1989 – 1991

Peter Good 1991 – 1992

Jeremy Miller 1992 – 1993

Peter Walter-Smith 1993 – 1996

Peter Lumb 1996 – 1999

Terry Leach 1999 – 2001

Michael Kokkim 2001 – 2003

Sam Powrie 2003 – 2008

Jeremy Miller 2008 – 2013

Ian Radbone 2014 – 2016