

CASTLEMAINE HOT ROD CENTRE

induction

The Voice of the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre

The Story So Far

Three and a half years ago an idea was hatched that was to become the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre. Prior to that, individual local hot rodders had spent the best part of 25 years building up the hot rodding industry in the local area to the point where it had become an important part of the local economy and as such a provider of a significant number of jobs in the region.

Having grown the industry to that point it was becoming evident that some of it would be at risk if those businesses were sold and moved elsewhere. The need to add something to the mix to ensure that hot rodding continued to grow and prosper was seen as an emerging problem that needed to be addressed.

This became a topic of discussion at Castlemaine Rod Club meetings where the decision was made to do something about the situation in a positive way. That decision involved a series of meetings to investigate the feasibility of developing a complete resource centre for hot rodding that would reinforce the district's reputation in the field and hot rodding in general. The first major outcome was that the resource centre project should be an entirely stand alone exercise, divorced from the rod club itself so that it didn't spoil the social nature of the

club or attach any risk to members who might not want to be involved.

The local shire was approached for guidance and support which has been forthcoming from the mayor down. In fact the mayor of the day, Cr Jim Norris, considered it such a good idea that he called an official meeting to brainstorm the concept and set the process under way. That meeting was held in 2004 and resulted in a steering committee being formed to advance the concept. A group of almost 30 local rodders put their hands up to be involved and the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre project became a reality.

But that was just the beginning. Since then there have been three and a half years of constant meetings and planning to get the idea into a more concrete form and to establish an overall management company. Approaches were made to many local and Melbourne based businesses who could help us to fine tune the concept and set it into motion in such a way that nothing was overlooked in establishing the centre. At the same time the steering committee set about looking for a suitable site where the Hot Rod Centre could be physically located.

1000 to Get Gold!

At the first Board Meeting of the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre it was decided that the first 1000 members of the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre would be given Gold Card member status in recognition of their support for this exciting project. Once the Hot Rod Centre is established we will instigate special privileges for these Gold Card carrying members. They are sure to become a highly sought after item and a real status symbol for those who are quick to take advantage of the opportunity to show their support for the greatest hot rodding project in Australia's history. Members can be a combined unit, husband and wife, individual business, club, etc. There will be a special draw from our members list before the next issue of Induction is produced and some lucky member will win a weekend for two in Castlemaine. Winners notified via the next issue of Induction.



Behind The Scenes

Once the steering committee was formed there was a need to investigate what form the official structure of the organisation should take. Local solicitor Ron Waters of LMSW was approached to become our adviser on legal matters and to act on our behalf in negotiations with land owners etc. Chris Harrington of Strategem in Bendigo was similarly asked to be our adviser on business management and structure issues and he in turn provided us with access to Hall & Wilcox specialist corporate lawyers in Melbourne, who were able to give us valuable information with regard to the final legal structure of the Centre's management body. All of these professionals offered their services free of charge as a contribution to the community based project.

An early approach to government resulted in an introduction to the State Government body known as the Central Victorian Area Consultative Committee who are responsible for assessing local community projects for prospective Government funding and involvement. In conjunction with the Regional Development Victoria they were able to advise how to go about seeking government support for the project. Such funding is often readily available, but there are processes to go through and accountability reporting to be undertaken before you can tap into such funding. The Central Victorian Area Consultative Committee were so impressed with our project that they jokingly offered to write us a cheque on the spot, claiming it was the best idea they had seen in years.

As a result of the input from these bodies and the support of the Mt Alexander Shire Council we made application to government for funding to establish our business plan for the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre. That business plan was to include a study of what the legal structure of the body should be, a direct result of our meetings with Hall & Wilcox corporate lawyers. Funding was forthcoming to the tune of some \$19,000.00 which had to be met dollar for dollar at the local level. The Mt Alexander Shire had already allocated \$2000.00 in their budget for this purpose so the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre Working group had to come up with the balance, a process that we are still working through, but making good headway. We were caught in something of a bind in this regard as we needed the business plan to be completed before we could establish our legal entity, but we couldn't seek funds or operate a bank account without our legal entity finalised and in place. Early promises from our group of supporters indicated that we could rely on them to

personally raise a considerable amount of the funding needed, so the government funding was pursued and the project was under way in earnest.

Our Business Plan was completed by Street Ryan and Associates at the end of March 2007 and ran to 82 pages of A4 paper. It is very comprehensive and outlines the project in a structured manner that will allow us to approach potential partners with confidence that we have done our side of the planning properly. As a result of the business plan the decision was made to register the managing body of the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre as a not for profit company. Application was made to the ACCC to register the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre Limited and this was accepted.

Adopting this type of company structure will ensure that the management of the project will always remain as a community based not for profit operation and it will exist basically to hold overall control of the centre. Underneath that structure there will be several opportunities for investment in the project by individuals, corporations and government departments in one or more of the different divisions that will form the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre. For example, we envision that the retirement village aspect of the Centre will be developed in partnership with specialist developers of such facilities. It is at that level that there will be opportunities for profit making investment companies to be involved, yet overall management will remain with the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre Limited.

The first general meeting of the incorporated company was held on July 20, 2007. Vicki Farrell, Rod Hadfield and Larry O'Toole were installed as directors of the company when it was registered and elections at this first general meeting saw them joined by Kym DeBrenni, Con Soldatos and Leigh Charter as fellow board members. The following week the Board held its first official meeting where Larry O'Toole was elected Chairman, Vicki Farrell Secretary/Treasurer and Rod Hadfield as Vice Chairman.



Breaking News.....

The VHRA have shown their support for the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre by providing time and space during the upcoming Victorian Hot Rod Show to allow the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre Limited to provide two information sessions for interested hot rodders and supporters.

The information sessions will be held in the upstairs room

where trophy presentations are staged and will be held at noon on Sunday January 27 and 2pm on Monday January 28. Both sessions will be the same in content giving rodders the opportunity to attend the session that best suits their timetable. Check Australian Street Rodding Magazine for more information closer to the date.



The Site

Initial investigations of potential sites for the Hot Rod Centre led us to a property right on the western edge of the township area of Castlemaine. The owners of the property were supportive of our concept and indicated they would work with us in a co-operative way with a view to drawing up an agreement that would see us given first option on the property, which was already subject to a subdivision plan. Part of our business plan finance allowed for the drawing up of a concept plan for the centre so we were directed to Bird delaCoeur architects in Melbourne who jumped at the opportunity to provide the concept plan. Such was the excitement in their office that they had staff members competing to see who could get to work on this interesting project.

Within a few days Neil delaCoeur was in Castlemaine doing initial site assessment and working through the background of the plan with us. Just a few days later we had the first draft plan in our hands and things started to get very exciting. Bird delaCoeur had very quickly grasped the concept of the centre and turned it into a site plan that was very close to what we had envisioned ourselves. A few adjustments were made to the concept plan to include aspects that we required and just a few more days later we had the final version in our hands. We have nothing but praise for the way Bird delaCoeur handled this aspect of the Hot Rod Centre, they were fast, efficient and quickly grasped the concept and turned it into a superb and well researched plan.

All this occurred while the business plan was still being pulled together and it gave us something concrete to show prospective project partners and interested parties within the

Please Note

This plan is based on a site no longer available for this project and is used with the permission of the land owner for illustration purposes only



Master Plan- Stages

local area. However, just as we were finalising the business plan we were informed by the owners of the prospective site for the centre that they no longer wanted to proceed with negotiations. It was a shock and a minor setback, but by no means the end of our dream. Despite having our concept plan based on this property it can be redrawn to suit any site and so the search for another site began.

One of the first things the new board did as a group after being elected was to inspect and have discussions with the owners of three other quite suitable sites and more are to be undertaken as this newsletter goes into print. The board will continue to investigate potential sites for some time yet to ensure our final decision is the right one for the future of the Centre.

An Exciting Proposal

While brainstorming the possible partners for the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre we decided as a group that we would make an initial approach to the Bendigo Bank to fill the financial needs for the project. After initial contact with the General Manager of the bank we were encouraged to make our official approach through the local branch and suitable staff would be directed to work with us on financial opportunities. Not knowing what to expect we put some “pie in the sky” type proposals to bank officials to see if there was any way we could gain generous financial terms to enable us to purchase land and establish the centre.



Bendigo Bank

Not unexpectedly our basic ideas weren't feasible in practise, but the bank's regional manager was able to indicate their interest in forming a partnership arrangement that would produce an ongoing income stream for the company as we go forward. Their proposal, known as the Bendigo Bank Community Enterprise Scheme immediately struck a chord with us and plans were made to have the scheme explained in full to the members of the company at the next general meeting. The members

wholeheartedly supported the scheme as well and the process of establishing it is now under way.

The basic foundation of the scheme involves supporters of the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre becoming, in essence, marketing promoters for the Bendigo Bank. Every account switched to, or established with the Bendigo Bank and given a special “code” will result in a percentage of the fees attached to that account being redirected to the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre. Even existing accounts with the Bendigo Bank can be given the code and there are no new or increased charges to the customer as a result. In effect the Centre is given a small share of the bank's fees as a “reward” for introducing, or encouraging an account to remain committed to the Bendigo Bank.

This type of enterprise is already operating in other areas where the Bendigo Bank is established and is proving a marvellous boon to those community projects with which it is associated. Even more encouraging for us is the fact that the Bank only supports one such project in each community where they are involved so the effectiveness is not diluted. The Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre is to be that Community Enterprise Project that will benefit all hot rodders.

The CHRC Logo

Typical of the support we have received so far in establishing the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre is our adopted logo. This was organised by Martin Kyle and was one of several proposed. We selected the one now being used as it was deemed most suitable to be easily adapted for all types of uses (i.e. promotional material, signs, cards, advertising, internet website, etc.) and it was seen as a design that wouldn't date over a long period of time.

**CASTLEMAINE
HOT ROD
CENTRE**

Foundation Members

The Foundation Members of the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre Limited are:

Larry O'Toole, Rod Hadfield, Vicki Farrell, Corey Swift, Les Palfreyman, Dave Petrusma, Con Soldatos, Leigh Charter, Lisa Kennedy, Adrian Smith, Peter Swift, Bubby Swift, Carol Hadfield, Garry Page, John Lynch, Robert Tonkin, Tony Tognolini, Bill Mussett, Mary O'Toole, Rob Carol, Kym de Brenni, Glenn Rewell, Le Roy Smith, Patricia Taylor, Norm Hardinge, Lonnie Swift, Toby Swift, Peter Swift, Chris Soldatos, Mark Hadfield.

These Foundation Members of the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre Limited are the hot rodders who put up their hand at the early meetings of the group to commit themselves to launching this project. They contributed their time and finances to ensure that the project became reality. They are recognised in the constitution of the company as the founders

of the Castlemaine Hot Rod Centre Limited and they have demonstrated their commitment to the project by providing the finance to establish the company.

Now we need the commitment of supporters everywhere by signing up as ordinary members to give the company the impetus to grow and go forward with our ambitious plans. You, as a member of the Company, can help us in this process by encouraging all of your friends to become members as well. We need a groundswell of support and commitment from as many members as possible.

The board is still working on ways members can benefit directly from their membership. One of these ways is to keep you informed of progress with the project and this newsletter is a concrete way to to achieve that end. “Induction” will be produced at least quarterly in the initial stages and posted directly to members.

