



The NRMA is made up of a number of separate companies (NRMA Financial Services, NRMA Information Services, NRMA Insurance, NRMA Investments, NRMA Life, NRMA Limited, NRMA Open Road, NRMA Sales & Service, NRMA Smash Repairs and NRMA Travel) which all operate together under the NRMA logo. For the purpose of this article, they will be referred to as 'NRMA'.

### THE MARKET

Every minute of every day, motoring organisations throughout the world are helping stranded motorists get their vehicles going again.

Within Australia, road service is provided by a different motoring organisation in each State. Very little competition exists within this market, the motoring "clubs" having a long and respected history as road service providers.

In addition to road service, each of the motoring organisations also provide general insurance products and a range of financial services. The success of the motoring organisations within these highly competitive markets stems from their strong heritage and brand image as well as the sense of belonging fostered through membership and their road service activities.

NRMA currently provides road service to motorists throughout NSW/ACT, and general insurance in NSW/ACT, Victoria and Queensland. Within these markets NRMA has established a growing market presence.

### ACHIEVEMENTS

Road service is undoubtedly the main reason why people choose to become NRMA members. NRMA is the largest of all the Australian motoring organisations, and indeed, one of the largest in the world. With over 1.8 million members, NRMA now has a member in nearly every home in NSW/ACT.

In relation to NRMA's insurance activities, no other motoring organisation in Australia has been as successful as NRMA in terms of its share of the general insurance market in its home state. NRMA is currently Australia's largest car and home insurance provider, with some 4.3 million policyholders throughout NSW/ACT, Victoria and Queensland.

NRMA is widely acknowledged as the company which pioneered simpler insurance policy wording. In 1976 NRMA introduced its first 'Plain English' insurance policy. Consumers welcomed this approach to make insurance contracts easier to understand. Needless to say, other insurance companies were soon to follow suit.

In addition to its road service and insurance activities, NRMA is committed to being an advocate for better roads, safety and consumer protection. NRMA is continually researching these issues. It's standing as a credible and



politically neutral organisation enables it to successfully lobby government and other motoring bodies on behalf of members.

With regards to its involvement in the community, NRMA has achieved wide support and recognition for its assistance in the form of sponsorships and community based initiatives. NRMA's internal and external efforts to improve the environment have also been publicly recognised and awarded. The Organisation has been actively involved in promoting initiatives to improve the environment, particularly where it relates to the use of motor vehicles.

### HISTORY

NRMA (or as it was then known, the National Roads and Motorists Association) was formed in 1920 as a lobby group with a few hundred members to campaign for better roads.

Road Service was introduced in 1924 and it is this breakdown service that remains the best known face of the NRMA today. When first introduced, there were eight guides on motorcycles who

provided a breakdown service to stranded motorists within the Sydney central business district. Today road service is provided by 479 patrol officers in highly equipped vans and motorcycles across NSW.

A decision by the NRMA Council that members should be able to purchase competitively priced car insurance from the association saw the establishment of NRMA Insurance Ltd in 1925. This was one of the most significant landmarks in the Association's history. Additional insurance products, such as compulsory third party, home and term life insurance were introduced over the next few decades. In 1984 NRMA became the first Australian insurance company to reach the 1 million policy mark for car insurance. Research has shown that amongst NSW consumers, most people will think of NRMA when asked to name car and home insurance providers.

Whilst historically NRMA had confined its activities to NSW and the ACT, 1994 saw the start of an expansionary phase for the Organisation. NRMA entered the Victorian insurance market in March 1994, commencing operations in Queensland a year later. To date, NRMA's performance in these States has exceeded all expectations.

In 1996 NRMA celebrated 75 years of continuous service to the community. Given its humble beginnings, NRMA has certainly come a long way.

### THE PRODUCT

To many people within NSW, NRMA's Road Service has come to be regarded as the State's fourth emergency service, and is the most visible and highly recognised of NRMA's services. In addition to road service, membership of the NRMA conveys a number of other benefits, including technical and legal advice, maps and a touring information and booking service. Members can also purchase an upgraded membership package which provides them with more comprehensive benefits.

Consumers can also turn to NRMA for all their general insurance needs. Providing car, compulsory third party, home buildings and contents and personal effects, fleet, motorcycle, caravan and boat insurance products. NRMA's market shares in these portfolios are indicative of the confidence and trust people have in NRMA. As an added service to car and home insurance policyholders, NRMA has established a 24 hour 'Helpline' service for emergency situations.

Within the area of financial services, NRMA Financial Services provides life insurance, personal loans and a range of managed investment products. NRMA is embarking on a program to grow this area of its operations in the near future.



## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

NRMA is continually enhancing its operations in the areas of roadside assistance, insurance and financial services. This may involve new products or technologies or simply improvements to current processes.

In the provision of road service, NRMA's sophisticated computer aided dispatch system links patrols directly to a control centre. The use of this system has enabled NRMA to more effectively manage its fleet of patrols, allowing it to respond to 95% of road service calls within the hour.

In response to a perceived need in the marketplace, NRMA introduced its battery replacement service in 1995. This enables members to quickly replace failed batteries with a fully installed, NRMA battery. In keeping with NRMA's commitment to the environment, replaced batteries are forwarded to a company which specialises in their smelting and subsequent disposal.

Another technological initiative, recently released in NSW is NRMA's Intelligent Tracking System. Using satellite technology NRMA can track and locate stolen vehicles fitted with a tracking device. Engine disablement and the remote control unlocking of vehicles is also possible under this system, with owners providing pin numbers for identification. NRMA is the first Australian insurance company to offer this service.

NRMA has always been highly regarded for its claims service. NRMA was one of the first organisations to introduce workflow technology into its branches, allowing claims to be processed more quickly and efficiently.

A new smash repair system is currently being trialed whereby in the event of a car accident, the entire claims process is simplified to such an extent that the claimant need do nothing more than leave their car at one of NRMA's repair centres.

A number of recent developments have been related to NRMA's involvement in the environment and the community. An NRMA initiative called "Clean Air 2000" aims to increase air quality by the start of the Sydney 2000 Olympics, by reducing pollution and traffic congestion in the Sydney area. A new campaign called "Crimesafe" is another recent initiative which aims to educate the public on ways of reducing the likelihood of home burglary and car theft.

## PROMOTION

NRMA's distinctive logo is highly recognised within the Organisation's home State of NSW. First developed in 1924, the logo incorporates a tyre, symbolising the Organisation's link with motoring and two wings representing speedy service. Whilst a number of changes have been made to NRMA's logo over the years, the



symbolic tyre and wings have always remained. Today the NRMA logo appears on everything from patrol vans, branches, uniforms, stationery and inspected used cars to bus sides, bill boards and advertising media.

The strong positioning of NRMA has been reinforced through the Organisation's advertising activities. A number of creative and fondly remem-



bered NRMA campaigns have been developed, such as "We're on the motorists' side", "Happy Joe Happy and Ostrich Insurance", "It pays to belong" and more recently, "NRMA = HELP"

NRMA's latest television campaign is emotively based. Drawing from the Organisation's heritage and image as a caring, trustworthy and honest organisation, the advertising is designed to strengthen the 'HELP' positioning. The message being conveyed is that NRMA is there for you and can be relied upon to go that little bit further.

In addition to NRMA's corporate campaign, radio advertisements are used extensively to promote the benefits of NRMA's car and home insurance policies. A character called "Wallace Fairweather" is featured, who positions himself as somewhat of an insurance guru and NRMA's

number one fan. In the ads Wallace informs everyone he comes in contact with of the benefits of NRMA insurance. The campaign has been very successful, achieving a high level of brand recognition, to the extent that Wallace has his own fan club. NRMA is currently one of Australia's largest radio advertisers.

Apart from NRMA's advertising activities, the high visibility of NRMA patrols, branches and country service centres also serve as promotional tools for the Organisation, as well as ensuring that NRMA is always accessible. There are now 86 branches (72 in NSW, 8

in VIC and 6 in QLD) and 231 NSW Country Service Centres, as well as 4 NSW and 2 interstate telephone call centres servicing NRMA customers 24 hours a day.

## BRAND VALUES

NRMA has always held a special place in the community, with the strong emotional attachment people have towards the NRMA brand being unique. Over the years, NRMA has come to be regarded as a caring, helpful and trustworthy organisation that can always be relied upon in times of need. These values together with NRMA's strong heritage remain the key components of the NRMA brand today.

## Things you didn't know about the NRMA

- On average, approximately 2.4 million road service calls are received each year.
- A readership of 1.9 million makes NRMA's member journal, *The Open Road*, Australia's biggest circulation magazine.
- NRMA handles approximately 46 million contacts a year.
- NRMA road service patrols often have to deal with more than just breakdowns. In January 1997, a patrol officer was called to a prickly situation. An injured echidna rescued by a motorist had crawled inside the dashboard of his car. After several attempts by other authorities to remove the animal, NRMA was called, and the echidna was eventually recovered.
- NRMA's Helpline service has also provided customers with assistance in some very unusual situations. Whilst on holidays, one unlucky customer had their vehicle stolen along with all their clothing and baggage. What made this case so different was that the customer had been snorkelling at the time. Wearing nothing but a wet suit, flippers and snorkel the customer went into the police station to report the incident, at which time NRMA was contacted to assist him further. As might be expected, organising more suitable attire was top on the customer's list of priorities.

