

## **Rack & Pinion Safety Issue**

Like a lot of other side screen owners, I have fitted the Terry Goodall, Ford Escort rack and pinion conversion and find it quiet satisfactory. A routine inspection prior to the trip from Sydney to Adelaide for our national meet, I discovered a disturbing situation.

In the conversion, you use a mid 80's Holden Commodore down shaft to connect the Triumph steering shaft to the Escort rack and this is the component that is a concern. This shaft has a universal at both ends. The upper end is fitted with a rubber bush that isolates the steering wheel from shocks transmitted from the rack.

To ensure that the two components of the isolator do not slip there is a safety measure by way of two tangs on the inner element that fit inside two matching slots in the outer element. The only thing that drives the rack is the friction between the two elements and the rubber bush.

My inspection found that the outer element, the one connected to the steering wheel, had moved up the rubber bush and the safety tangs were clear of the slots. There is nothing to stop this as the steering wheel simply moves up. This meant no safety. This was a concern but as there was no signs of slippage, I elected to go as is and try and source another unit in Adelaide. I could not find one in Sydney in the time available.

I visited a specialist Holden wrecker in Adelaide and was told the following. The component I was after is hard to find as it is no longer available new and are popular in kit cars and hot rods. He had one but I had to wait while it was removed. He also told me that he has seen them fail resulting in no steering. This is especially so when the car has been involved in an accident.

On return home, I fitted a safety stop that would prevent the tangs from coming out of the slots of the replacement unit.. The easiest way to do this would be to tack two stops on the outer element that would stop the tangs from moving out of the slots.

If you use this component, then I strongly recommend that you inspect it,