

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR 2004-05**

### **Bywong Community Association**

During the past year the Bywong Community Association continued to make an active contribution to our community by engaging with local government and fostering a program of community events.

#### **Local issues**

In June we cooperated with the Wamboin Community Association in promoting a Council sponsored Community Information Day. This event, held in the Wamboin Community Hall on a Saturday morning, allowed local residents to meet Shire Councillors and officers and engage in a two-way discussion about local planning issues and the future character of our Shire.

The need for a better Local Environment Plan was highlighted by local concern about a Development Application for a new subdivision of 41 blocks north of Birchmans Grove and Hogan Drive, and south of Harriott Road and Newington Road. At a Palerang Council meeting in December and a subsequent meeting with several Councillors in February, representatives of the Association expressed concerns about the environmental impact of the proposed development. The proposal was approved by Council in late February in a close vote.

Palerang Mayor Terry Bransdon addressed our June general meeting concerning the Council's proposal to increase shire rates by an average of 28.5%, and answered questions from residents. Although the NSW Local Government Minister subsequently declined to approve the request, a new Waste Management Charge was introduced.

Furthermore, the new general rates combined with the latest unimproved land valuations have resulted in significant variations in impact across the Shire. The result is that Bywong residents are generally paying more than a 50% increase on the rates which they paid in 2004. I have held discussions with the President of the Wamboin Community Association with a view to our joining forces to argue for a fairer rates model for 2006.

Our April General Meeting was addressed by the Shire's General Manager (Peter Bascomb) and Director of Engineering Services (Bill Ellison). The main issue for discussion was the future strategy for waste management in the Shire. The Macs Reef rubbish tip will need to be closed within the next two to three years. Future options include

a waste transfer station at Bungendore, or a roadside rubbish collection. The Shire is facing very substantial "make good" costs on its existing landfill sites, necessitating a substantial and long term waste disposal levy on residents. Other topics covered during the discussion were the future status of Macs Reef Road, and the financial position of the Shire.

At our February General Meeting, Mareeta Grundy, a member of the Community Bank Steering Committee, spoke about the progress of the Bungendore Community Bank Project, and answered questions from residents. Mareeta informed us that pledges of almost \$400,000 had been received from the local community, sufficient to allow a move to the feasibility study stage.

At the same meeting Anthony Goonan, the manager of YLESS4U, described his local company's new wireless broadband service, and answered questions. The Association has long been concerned by the lack of affordable broadband services in Bywong, and we welcome any initiatives that are willing to give priority to the needs of the local community. I was also present as an observer at a meeting of the Wamboin Community Association in February when a representative of Telstra promoted their broadband services.

Nine years ago the Association joined with other groups in opposing the development of a quarry near Sutton. This proposal was reactivated earlier this year. Even though the proposed quarry is now in a different local government area, the Association has decided to closely monitor developments. In July we wrote to the Yass Valley Council, asking to be kept informed about the process, and arguing that the conditional approval for this development granted eight years ago has lapsed.

### **Community events**

More than 40 people - enough to fill the Community Hall - attended our Bush Dance last October. We had great support from the Monaro Folk Group, who provided the music, the dance caller and several of their members to help the locals along.

About 50 people attended our Christmas drinks in early December. This is a valuable annual opportunity to relax and engage with other community associations, Councillors and members of Parliament. Gidgee Estate once again provided a fine sample of wines to taste.

In March we held our tenth annual Car Boot Sale, which attracted about 100 stall holders and about 1200 visitors. We achieved our fundraising target of \$2500. Our thanks go to the whole community for its participation in this event and its generous financial support. I would like to record my gratitude to Morag Cotsell for organising the event, and to all the other members of the Community who supported the cake stall, raffle, community stall and the dozens of necessary tasks behind the scenes. We are also indebted to the Wamboin fire brigade for site management, to the neighbours of the reserve (the Woods and the Boughtons) for allowing visitors to park on their properties, to Peter Garlick for providing and setting up the public address system, and to Theresa Hackett and Trevor Kirk for organising the raffle.

In March the Association once again supported the annual Clean Up Australia Day. One of our members, Rodney Gibb, has managed the local Clean Up Australia Day campaign for a number of years, but is now moving away from the district. The Executive expressed its great appreciation for the longstanding contribution which Rodney has made to this cause.

In July around 90 people attended our Annual Trivia Challenge. Neighbouring community associations (including Wamboin, Carwoola and Captains Flat) and informal groups of residents participated. This was the sixth successive year we have organised a trivia night, and it was one of the most enjoyable. For the third year in a row, victory went to the "XX" team from Bungendore.

We organised two local bushwalks in the past year. In November, about 15 people enjoyed a pleasant walk along the Lake George escarpment. In May, a similar number undertook a walk to the summit of Bywong Hill.

### **Other matters**

In July we moved the Bywong Community web site to a new computer platform, in order to make it easier to maintain. Our thanks are owed to Morag Cotsell for managing this process, and to Diana Dack for setting up and designing the web site on the previous platform.

Thanks are also due to YLESS4U, a local internet service provider, for hosting the new web site at no charge to the Association, allowing us to make future financial savings.

In February we mourned the loss of Julian Thompson, a former member of the Association's Executive Committee. Julian was great friend and tireless servant of our community, and was active in the establishment of the Greenways. He was farewelled at a crowded funeral service at St. Phillip's Anglican Church, Bungendore.

I would like to thank all members of the association, especially the Executive Committee members, for their support and help during the year. I would especially like to thank Sue Gorham, who has served the Association as Treasurer for the past few years and is now retiring from that role. I am most grateful for the willingness of members to accept personal responsibility for organising our events. Without this, our Association would not be able to continue with its many activities.

Warwick Cathro  
15 August 2005