

**BYWONG COMMUNITY INCORPORATED
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 4 SEPTEMBER 2006
PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR 2005/06**

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

Engaging with local government

Palerang Shire's rates and their impact on Bywong residents continued to be a focus of community concern in 2005/06.

As our members know, in 2005 average rates per property in Bywong rose by 22%. When you take the new waste levy into account, the increase in local rates and charges amounted to 43%. At the same time, rates in the eastern part of Palerang Shire fell. These changes were a result of amalgamating the Yarrowlumla and Tallaganda shires and placing them into a common rating framework.

On behalf of our Association, I participated in the Rates Reference Group which was established by Palerang Council in late 2005 to provide community input on the future rates model. I conveyed the view of our community that that the introduction of these changes was badly handled, and that at the very least they should have been phased in over several years.

The options before the Rates Reference Group were discussed at the February 2006 meeting of our Association, prior to the finalisation of the Group's position. While the Group did not reach a clear consensus many of its members, myself included, came to accept a model based on a single residential category with a uniform rating level, but with a fairly high "base rate" which would reduce the differences in rates between properties of high and low values. A model along these lines was in fact adopted by Council in July 2006.

In March 2006 I represented our community at a Resource Recovery Planning Workshop, whose aim was to recommend a waste management strategy to Council which would be environment-ally responsible and would contain further increases in waste management levies on residents. The Workshop favoured a robust recycling strategy, with a coordinator to drive this strategy and to encourage the formation of local resource recovery businesses. Since 50% of our

domestic waste is organic, a trial of a bioconversion facility was also supported. Without such a recycling strategy, our waste management levies will probably rise from \$140 to \$210 per year over time. (An increase in the levy to \$180 was later included in the Council budget for 2006/07).

Other government matters

In February 2006 the Bywong Community and the Wamboin Community Association jointly held a public meeting in the Wamboin Community Hall with State MP Steve Whan. Mr Whan gave his views (and received those of local residents) on the State Government's handling of the amalgamation which resulted in the formation of Palerang Shire, and on the Shire's present economic difficulties.

In July 2006 our Association wrote to the Redistribution Committee for placeStateNew South Wales, objecting to the revised electoral boundaries proposed for the Federal Seat of Eden Monaro, on the grounds that the proposed redistribution would result in the Bywong area being included in the Hume Electorate with which we have little community of interest.

Many Bywong residents have been affected by a recent amendment to the legislation under which the Rural Lands Protection Boards operate. Previously only properties of 10 hectares or more were required to pay Protection Board rates, but the threshold has now been lowered to 4 hectares, resulting in rates of \$65 per year for many residents. Most Bywong residents receive no service from the Braidwood Rural Lands Protection Board, because they are not running any livestock, and in many cases their land is not suitable for livestock. Your Executive has made clear its opposition to the changes.

Coalition of Palerang Residents Associations

In late 2005 the community and residents associations in Palerang agreed to associate to form the Coalition of Palerang Residents Associations (COPRA). I represented Bywong on this Group. The Group is focused on ensuring that our community associations, as far as possible, convey a consistent message to Council about local planning issues. The Group has monitored the Visioning Workshops and the progress of the Local Environment Plan. It has discussed the possibility of encouraging more community representatives to contest the 2008 Council elections. The Group is also sharing information

about each association's public liability insurance arrangements. The possibility of a joint approach to this insurance is being explored.

Grants to local community groups

In May 2006 your Executive decided on a number of grants to local community groups, totaling over \$1400. Some of these grants depended on the funds raised at this year's Car Boot Sale and Trivia Night, and some were sourced from the Sugar Gliders Fund. Groups which benefited included:

- .Wamboin Fire Brigade
- .Greenways Committee
- .Wildcare
- .Guides/Brownies
- .Bungendore Tennis Club.

In addition, Bywong Community assisted the Greenways Committee to obtain a grant of \$5000 from the State Government. The grant will assist in the environmental renovation and maintenance of the Greenways in Bywong and Wamboin.

Program of community and social events

We held our annual Car Boot Sale on dateYear2006Day26Month326 March 2006. Thanks to a strong response from the community this event made a profit of over \$2300, sufficient to both pay our public liability insurance premium and allow us to make a substantial contribution to local organisations. We featured more entertainers this year - Irish dancers, guitarists from Sutton school, the music of Andy and Til, Pony Club displays, flyball dog displays and fire fighting displays. I wish to acknowledge the great efforts of Morag Cotsell in once again organising this event and to thank the many other members who helped behind the scenes.

In March 2006 our Association once again supported Clean Up Australia Day. A total of 45 local volunteers cleaned up 45km of roadside throughout Bywong, collecting about 8 ute loads, 2 trailer loads and 107 bags of roadside litter. The rubbish was the usual range of fast food wrappers, drink bottles and cans, car parts and tyres. We could not have achieved this result without the organising efforts of Warwick and Jenny Johnston.

We held our annual Trivia Night in July 2006. Nine tables competed for the Bywong Trivia Shield, which was won by a team composed

mostly of Canberrans, calling itself "Keith Urban's Wedding Night Nerves". Lamberts Vineyards donated bottles of estate wine for the winning team, and also donated a dinner for two which we raffled on the night. This event made a profit of more than \$730 for the Association, compared to a profit of about \$550 in 2005. The increased profit was due to the purchase (jointly with the Les Reardon Hall Committee) of tables for the Hall, which has removed the need to hire tables for this event.

In June 2006 a group of 17 local residents undertook a very pleasant walk to the Big Hole south of Braidwood in the Deua National Park.

Farewell

It has been my privilege to have served for three years as President of Bywong Community. As you know, Diana and I moved our residence back to Canberra in July. We will miss the locality but are hoping to come back to visit as often as we can.

I would like to thank all members of the Association for their support and help during the past three years. I would like to express my particular gratitude to the Executive Committee for their hard work and wise advice.

Warwick Cathro
4 September 2006