

BYWONG COMMUNITY INC. PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR 2003/04

During the past year our Association continued to make an active contribution to our community.

The debate about the future local government structure for this region continued during the early part of the year. On 14 January, Guy Cotsell and I represented the Association in making presentations to the NSW Boundaries Commission concerning the published options for changes to shire boundaries.

In February the Minister for Local Government announced the establishment of the Eastern Capital City Regional Shire and formally abolished the Yarrawluma Shire. At the February meeting of our Association, the Administrator of the new Council (Terry Bransdon) spoke about the formation of the Council and answered questions from about 40 residents.

The election for the new Council was held on 26 June. As a service to the community, our Association cooperated with the Wamboin Community Association to hold a "Meet the Candidates" night on Tuesday 8 June, in the Wamboin Community Hall.

Our Association organised a public meeting on 29 January to discuss a proposed mobile phone tower on the Lake George ridge line, and the general issue of mobile phone coverage in the Bywong area. Following this meeting, Telstra withdrew its development application for the tower, after reaching agreement to extend its current arrangement.

As mobile phone coverage remains an issue for many Bywong residents, there is still a challenge for us to identify and lobby for environmentally acceptable options to improve the coverage.

Last year we spent some of our funds to obtain and attach maps of the district to two of the community notice boards. It was disappointing that one of these maps was stolen during the year. The Executive is discussing measures to improve the supply of district maps as a service to visitors to Bywong and Wamboin.

We continued an active program of community events during the past year. On Sunday 28 March we held another very successful Car Boot Sale, and raised over \$2000 for the Community. This year there was a record number of stall holders, the weather was perfect and many hundreds of people attended. I would like to record my gratitude to

Morag Cotsell for organising this 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 held our annual Bush Dance on 21 February. Despite the very hot weather experienced on that day, the Dance was successful in attracting about 25 people of all ages, who had a great time. Thanks to Narelle Regan for organising the evening. In reviewing the Bush Dance, the Executive Committee has decided to move this event permanently to October. This decision was influenced by the weather (it is likely to be milder in late October) and by the need to improve the balance of events between autumn and spring. The next Dance will be held on Saturday 30 October.

On Sunday 7 March we once again supported the annual Clean Up Australia Day. As usual, Rodney Gibb did a great job in coordinating this effort. Thanks to all members of the Bywong Community who participated.

On Saturday 30 July we held our Annual Trivia Challenge.

Neighbouring community associations (including Wamboin, Sutton, Carwoola and Captains Flat) responded positively to our invitation to participate, and several tables were organized by groups of Bywong residents. Around 80 people attended this event, and had a very good time.

During the year we organised and publicised two community bushwalks. Jo Walker led a wildflower walk in the Brooks Hill reserve in November, and Julian Thompson led a Greenways walk in May. My thanks go to both of them.

About 50 people attended our annual Christmas drinks, held in the Community Hall on 8 December. A number of councillors, members of Parliament, and representatives from neighbouring community associations attended. Gidgee Estate once again provided a fine sample of wines to taste.

During the year the Executive Committee discussed measures to increase the formal membership of the Association, in order to diversify our sources of financial support and strengthen our communication links with residents. We have developed a Membership Application Form and will continue to take opportunities to encourage residents to join the Association formally.

The Executive Committee will continue to examine options for closer cooperation with the Wamboin Community Association. Between the two associations there is an active program of events, common interests and a variety of public communication mechanisms (including the Bywong web site and the Wamboin Whisper). We will examine how these assets can be used for the maximum benefit of both communities.

I would like to thank all members of the association, especially the Executive Committee members, for their support and help during the year.

Warwick Cathro
16 August 2004