

Wagstaffe to Killcare Community Association Inc.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2016-17

I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Land on which we meet and pay my respects to the Elders past and present.

After all these years, I have little more to say. And I say the same thing each year. Thank you to all our great community members who labour on long and hard behind the scenes, and those too, who take more centre stage at our various events and activities. We owe a debt of gratitude to you all. But this too is what makes a good community: sharing, helping, treating all who come here with tolerance, asking not for any rewards, looking after our environment and each other, and trying to create something for the future. And in working together we make a stronger society, better able to pull together when it's needed and able to withstand the few who might do the 'wrong thing', not the right thing, at times. We need to maintain and enhance our environment, look after its health, encourage discussion and debate, but also protect the special characteristics of this peninsula which are a joy to all when we share collaboratively. But we need strength too, to stand up for what is right and to sometimes call for limits of unacceptable behaviour and actions.

And this year we have had some challenges. There was the finalisation of the long running saga of the new Hall licence, which originally contained quite onerous and unfair conditions but with Alan Bennett's help was favourably resolved. We are truly grateful for his assistance in this. Then there was the Council amalgamation saga, so that we now reside in the second largest Council area of the State. We are forging relationships with new staff who are working out of the Wyong offices, but have had some unexpected benefits from the new approaches (as well as some remaining concerns about development standards to be applied and protection of the environment). We had the challenge too, of damage at the tennis courts, with damage to the fence, gate, and the shade cloth. And subsequently we had the mysterious case of the disappearing green cloth, which had been installed on the fence adjacent to the road to allow tennis players to see better against the glare of the sun. So all of this caused a lot of heartache, extra work, and disappointment for the volunteers who maintain the court. Some of the relatives of those involved were spoken with, which led to a better understanding of the impact of their actions, and a change in behaviour. But this was a costly exercise for us all, and emotionally draining after all the hard work to improve the courts for the benefit of all.

Our discussions with the new (to us) Council staff from Wyong led to some pleasing changes, some of which we hope to see in the coming year. After efforts over many years to obtain one, a recycled soccer goal was erected parallel to the tennis court fence in Turo Park, only to disappear again with the promise that it would be replaced when another area in turn receives its new soccer goal. In the short period in which it was erected, it was popular with students from Pretty Beach School. We had provided other support to the School. In the hope that the previous bush classroom could be reactivated, we provided funding to the P&C so that an arborist could check the trees in the area and remove any threatening branches. This was done, but subsequently in 2017 following the falling of a branch in the School area itself, the P&C and the School decided that for the time being, it would be inappropriate to reactivate the bush classroom. However, other options will be explored.

The Council has promised also to provide fill in the areas that currently have water pooling at times, in the Turo Park extension, and also in the low lying area adjacent to the tennis court. More planting has taken place in the Turo Park extension, and noxious weeds removed, but more is yet to be done in the cooler months and more sandstone is yet to be installed, and the concrete bridge, and the new footbridge across Turo Creek still await development.

With ongoing poor mobile reception on the peninsula, a detailed mapping exercise was undertaken around every street in the locality, and papers indicating five specific problem locations were submitted to authorities in the hope that five small towers will be erected to solve the problems. We have been advised that carriers have been invited to quote under round three of the program and await developments.

Our traditional activities continued. A well-received art show was held in the October long weekend, and the Australia Day celebration was a resounding success. Bushcare continued, and seats dedicated to the memory of Gwen Perrie and Richard Harper were installed along the dog track, while another one is in preparation at the Hall, as is a superb new carved table and benches under the watchful eye of Terry Baker. There has been much development around the Wagstaffe Hall - new bollards, new garden beds with planting, and new bike racks – while the Hall itself now has an improved speaker system, new stage down lights, the microwave has been replaced, and funding has been allocated for new blinds in the Hall entry and for a new piano cover.

As in past years, can I name some of those special people who help us with so much. First, all of you who help us at Trash and Treasure, and on Australia Day, including the days of preparation beforehand. At the tennis courts, Bob Eddington and his team of helpers and Graeme Anderson with his eagle engineer's eyes, and Graeme helps also with Hall matters and practicalities, as does Roger Hayward and Ian Bull (and the people who stand in for Helen Ferguson when she is away). Jeanette Martin carried off the Australia Day coordination with aplomb despite the complications with uncertainties with the newly amalgamated Council, assisted as usual by Fay Gunther who again oversaw the successful Trash and Treasure. We appreciate too the support we get from Michael Brown and Jan Whiteley for their work on the Hall gardens and its cleaning needs respectively, and we are grateful for the help from Keron and the others at the Wagstaffe Stall for handling keys and questions about rentals of the Hall and the tennis courts. The Killcare RFS continues to provide sterling service with the heavy lifting and BBQ services it provides on Australia Day while many of you rally around to sort and bring, to deliver Talking Turkey, to sweep and clean, and to point out our failings when we try to sleep, while Bill Gregor has continued his efforts with our website, Robyn Warburton has overseen bush care, Helen Ferguson has had the dual load of Talking Turkey and the Hall, and Bruce Fraser has overseen the membership list.

Our projects take years to bring to fruition, and some of us fear that we grow too old during the time it takes! But we look forward to finally completing the fitness project in the coming year, while we will continue to work with National Parks and Wildlife Service on the Half Tide Rocks project, and will continue discussions and negotiations with other community groups, members and the authorities on steps to better share our environment and respect the peace and serenity of where we live. And we hope too that when extra soil, planting and bridgework has been completed in the Turo Park extension, we can move on to developing some sculptures in the Park.

And once again, I thank the Committee for all their seen and unseen work, and much more besides: Alex Sharpe, Ian Bull, Brent Walker, Fay Gunther, Helen Ferguson, and Robyn Warburton.

And as I have said before, 'We are grateful to everyone who helps us in the Association work, who give so cheerfully and freely of their time, who keep our key events going, and who work to make this a better place in which to live.' Long may this continue, and we should remember that we are privileged to live here, lucky to live free from warfare, and that we should welcome and support those who flee from violence. Thank you all.

Peta Colebatch, President, 8 May 2017