



Village of Hall and District Progress Association Inc

Annual Report 2011-2012

INTRODUCTION

The Association has completed another busy and successful year. We are also becoming something of an 'umbrella' organisation. In addition to the various local organisations that choose to become affiliated, there are now four 'special interest groups' under the Association's auspices – the **Wallaroo and Spring Range Residents Group (WSRRG)**, the **Hall and District Collectors Club**, the **Hall and District Men's Shed**, and the **Friends of the Hall School Museum**.

It is intended that such groups will be 'loosely coupled' to the Association, gaining the advantages of being within an incorporated body with substantial public liability insurance, while being free to manage their own affairs, so long as these are consistent with the Association's broad remit.

While the record of activity and achievement of all four groups is impressive, the way in which the Mens Shed has been able and willing to help the 'Friends' with a range of practical tasks and projects associated with the School Museum has been particularly gratifying. The 'Wallaroo' group represents the distinctive needs and interests of our NSW members, and is recognised by the Yass Valley Council as the conduit for informing and listening to ratepayers in this part of the Shire. The Collectors Club was formed to actively promote and encourage the restoration, preservation and display of early machinery, equipment and collectables.

Reports on the activities of each of these special interest groups can be found below.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

The Association has again been involved in a range of planning and development issues. As some of them are contentious matters directly involving individuals and organisations within the community, the Association has been duly circumspect about public canvassing of details. This may explain in part why the role played by the Association sometimes appears to be misunderstood.

The Association can and does write in support of Development Applications (DA), and did so most recently in relation to the DA for 'Equestrian Park'. The original proposal for 'Victoria Square' was supported (with a caveat in relation to parking issues), as was the redevelopment in Victoria Street that became the offices of Barnett Lilley. In each case the proponents met with the Association to discuss their plans, although there was no requirement for this.

On the other hand, there have been at least four cases in recent years of 'stop work' orders being issued, in relation to some quite significant developments. This always results in unwanted costs, delays, and aggravation. This situation has arisen either because work which required a DA has started without one being submitted, or – as in the case of Victoria Square – the development undertaken has departed substantially from that which was approved.

When this happens, affected or concerned residents invariably contact the Association, seeking information, or intervention. It is very common to find that those taking this action have had their

own experiences of trying to get approval for redevelopments or renovations – a new pergola or garage, a driveway change, additional rooms, etc. They find that to get plans approved they have to conform to the Territory Plan, relevant lease conditions, zoning requirements, and so forth. Unsurprisingly, they believe the same rules should apply to all.

In taking action on planning and development matters the touchstone for the Association has been consistent application of the rules and regulations of the planning and development process. If any developer – householder or business – can gain approval for a Development Application through the proper processes, then they are entitled to that development – as approved. The Association is neither ‘pro’ or ‘anti’ development as such. Rather, it has stood for compliance with planning rules and regulations as they affect the village, and consistent application of ‘due process’.

The Association has commented in one way or another on five DA’s during the year. A series of issues relating to land use and traffic on the former ‘Campbell Street’ seem to be largely resolved. There seems to be recognition now that the present Gladstone Street site is inadequate for the school bus interchange, and we are working with ACT Roads to explore the option of moving the interchange to Victoria Street, in front of the school. Our concerns with the Clarrie Hermes intersection in relation to safety for cyclists and for users of the Bicentennial National Trail were addressed in the final design, while the lack of a bike path along Kuringa Drive remains an issue for us. Growing concerns about dumping of fill and construction of ‘non-rural’ structures reflect increasing pressure on land over the border in NSW.

Finally, we enabled a major renovation to the roof of the BBQ Shed on the Showground. Thanks are due to Peter Howard who secured the help of local builder Mick Colquhoun, and saw the project through. The Association secured the cooperation of Sport and Recreation Services to assist with costs.

REPRESENTATION

The Association has kept the ACT Government, and particularly the five Ginninderra MLA’s, advised of issues of interest and concern to the Hall and district community. It was gratifying that **four** of them were able to attend the opening of the ‘Bush Schools’ exhibition – including Chris Bourke, who spoke at the opening in his capacity as Minister for Education and Training.

We invited Chris Bourke to visit Hall (12 August 2011) shortly after he replaced former Chief Minister Jon Stanhope, and took that opportunity to brief him of the future of the Preschool, and other issues associated with the School site. On 15 September we met at the school with Minister for Community Services, Joy Burch, on future uses of the site, and securing the future of the Preschool. Alistair Coe continued to take a close interest in the village and district, and also visited for a briefing meeting (24 November).

If, as seems to be the case, the Association is recognised and taken seriously by our representatives this is in good part because we are seen to be the voice of the community, and do not contact them only when we have a problem!

Our efforts to help get the Preschool relocated into a suitably refurbished section of the Primary School have not met with any success so far however. The Association remains strongly supportive of the Preschool Parents Association in seeking to secure the future of the Preschool.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The Association manages the tennis court, the Cottage, the Mens Shed and the Hall School Museum on the school site, and the Pavilion at the Showground. We remain in active engagement with government over long term future uses of the school site.

The Cottage is home for the Broadband for Seniors project, and for the Farmers Market manager, and is used regularly by St Michaels and All Angels, the Rotary Club of Hall, the Men’s Shed and

the Progress Association. It is still available free to local groups and organisations, but some modest cost recovery measure will be required soon.

A great deal of attention has been given to management of the Pavilion after a wild, drunken party there on 11th March had to be attended by ACT Police. Committee member Paul Porteus convened meetings with concerned local residents and the Association has made a number of changes to booking procedures as a result of recommendations arising from these consultations. We have also taken the opportunity to streamline pavilion hiring by commissioning a new 'pavilion hire' page for the website and purchase a mobile phone to dedicate to this function.

ORGANISING AND SUPPORTING HALL EVENTS

Hall hosts a remarkable number and range of events. In the past year this included the National Sheepdog Trials, Polocrosse Carnivals, the Hall Markets, Hall Village Brass Band Concert, the Canberra Medieval Tournament & Fair, the Hall Ute Competition and Family Day, Hall Bushrangers and Hall Hornets rugby matches, a Hall community Christmas Party, the 'Stations of the Cross' and Remembrance Day ceremonies, the Hall Ball, a 'Bush School Exhibition', St Michaels church Fete, and other church activities.

While most of these events have their own organisers, the Association has given assistance when ever possible. The Association was the organiser of the **Annual Twilight Concert** with the Hall Village Brass Band (25th March) and, through the 'Friends of the Hall School Museum', the very popular exhibition on '**Bush Schools of the Hall District**' (see below).

The annual **Twilight Concert**, again generously sponsored by Barnett Lilley, raised over \$1,200 for the Band and the School Museum. A select dozen for the raffle was made available on very generous terms by Rob Howell of Jeir Creek Wines. Under the inspiring baton of Band Master Viv Martin, the Band gave the audience a bit of everything - including previews of works that they were polishing for the national Band championships over Easter.

The Band was once more ornamented with the fine solo performances of Bronwyn Douglass, and this year for the first time we also heard the 'band of the future' - 'Victoria Street Brass'. The Preschool Parents had a busy, and we hope profitable afternoon running their BBQ and drinks trailer. Hugh Watson again lent his amplification gear and did all the set-up, while a number of Mens Shed members were on hand to help before and after.

VHDPA Secretary Judy Roberts laid a wreath on behalf of the Association at the very well attended Hall **Remembrance Day** ceremony (11th November), organized once more by the Rotary Club of Hall.

BROADBAND FOR SENIORS (BFS) KIOSK

Our Broadband for Seniors project at the Hall Cottage has just completed its second year of operation. Broadband for Seniors is a Federal government program which aims to:

- provide older Australians with access to computers and the Internet via free Internet kiosks,
- support seniors to gain confidence and build skills in using new technology,
- address the issue of older Australians feeling isolated and 'left behind' in a technological age, and
- build community participation and social inclusion amongst older Australians.

During the past year there has been three tutors - Lee Corrigan, Rod Roberts and Bill Pearson. Most of the tutoring takes place at the Cottage but occasionally we do it offsite. Former tutor Allyson Gell has volunteered to look after any seniors that are using iPads. This is not part of the initial BFS brief but we have to go with the times with so many people now using portable devices such as iPads and iPhones.

Bill Pearson, Coordinator

[The Association expresses thanks to the Rotary Club of Hall for continuing to meet telephone charges associated with this project, and to Bill Pearson who continues as Coordinator].

HALL COMMUNITY WEBSITE

Our community website has continued to carry district news items and a calendar of events, as well as being home of the local 'business directory' and 'classifieds'. The website also houses the Association's membership database and related email messaging functions.

During the year the special 'Centenary' pages created for the Hall School Centenary in 2011 were transformed into '**Museum**' pages, where there is now a growing body of news and information about the Hall School Museum and the 'Friends' thereof.

At year's end a new '**Pavilion Hire**' page was commissioned, enabling us to manage more of the hire administration electronically. The booking diary that used to be well looked after for us by 'Hall Rural' is now a 'Google calendar' in cyberspace

The business directory is the most visited area of the site, but locals who have not already done so might like to visit the photo galleries, where you can find a large number of historical images of Hall and district, or make use of the local 'classifieds'.

THE 'RURAL FRINGE'

The Rural Fringe is our local community newspaper, published every second month with 600 copies distributed free to mailboxes in the 2618 postcode, and also available online at <http://www.hall.act.au/documents.html>. I'm pleased to report all issues were high quality and out on time this year. It is entirely funded by advertisers and in this way supports local businesses. Many thanks to the small group of volunteers who run the Fringe – this year Bob Richardson, Gail Condy, Andrew Purdam and Lee Corrigan who was editor for the first half of the year. The Fringe is looking for help, especially with the layout and reporting on local events. It is always happy to receive contributions from individuals or from the affiliate organisations to the Association.

Looking back at this year's issues I am surprised and impressed by the variety of content, reflecting just how much goes on in Hall and the district. From coverage of events like the Hall School Centenary, Christmas celebrations, Sheepdog Trials, the Hall Bush Schools Exhibition, and the Hall Winter Ball, to regular articles about gardening or looking after pets, to karate club news, visits by local MLAs, designing windbreaks, putting up solar panels, poems from Bette as well as numerous historical stories about the churches in Hall, the old picture theatre, the history of local churches and the Hall School Museum.

The Fringe also features regular reporting on the Rugby Club, Rotary Club, Hall Collectors, Men's Shed, Hall Preschool, Community Fire Unit, Wallaroo Bushfire Brigade, and our local churches, and personal profiles of local people as well as the sad loss of our neighbours, family members and friends Rosa Pirotta and Roma Starr. A special edition in June trialed a colour annual report from Rotary Club as a wraparound cover (fully funded by Rotary). Feedback, contributions and letters to the editor should be sent to ruralfringe@hotmail.com or to PO Box 43, Hall ACT 2618.

Jo Hall, Editor

HALL SCHOOL MUSEUM

The Association 'adopted' the Hall School Museum after the school was closed in 2006. During the past year two important organizational steps were taken. In August 2011 **Phil Robson** was appointed Honorary Curator, and on 21st September an inaugural meeting was held to establish the '**Friends of the Hall School Museum**'. Dr. Malcolm Beazley, Curator of the Australian National Museum of Education, gave an address, and the meeting adopted resolutions regarding purposes and fees, and established a steering group.

The Museum has been open on the first Sunday of each month to coincide with the Hall Markets, and on numerous other occasions by arrangement (including visits from early education professionals, schools, men's shed groups, walking groups, politicians, tourism bodies). All openings have been staffed by volunteer guides from the 'Friends of the Museum'.

We again won an ACT Heritage Grant (\$7,845) to be used for professional conservation services, to provide further volunteer training, purchase display cases, create Museum web pages, promote the Museum and support an exhibition on 'Bush Schools of the Hall District'. The new Museum webpages can be found at <http://museum.hall.act.au/>

The 'Bush Schools' exhibition was a highlight for the year. The exhibition, telling the stories of eighteen one-teacher bush schools, was launched by local historian **Jill Waterhouse** on 14 April at a ceremony which was also addressed by **Chris Bourke MLA, Minister for Education and Training**. Some five hundred people attended the exhibition, and many contacts were made with people whose families have had involvements with these old schools.

Conservation and collection management work continued throughout the year, including progressive digitization of early photos and documents. The Men's Shed gave invaluable help in some important restoration and building work. A group of CIT 'Museum Practices' students selected the Museum for their practical project, mounting a special exhibition on 'Discipline at school', and a student from University of Canberra prepared a report on the condition of textiles in the collection.

The Friends are planning two exhibitions for 2013 – one on 'Hall and District in 1913' for the Heritage Festival in April, and a special Centenary exhibition on 'Canberra's early schools' in October

Phil Robson (Honorary Curator Hall School Museum)

WALLAROO AND SPRING RANGE RESIDENTS GROUP (WSRRG)

After a number of issues relevant to residents of NSW were raised at the 2011 AGM, a meeting of Wallaroo and Spring Range residents was held on 4th October. A letter outlining the major concerns of the local community was then sent to Yass Valley Council. These included:

- Lack of transparency with regard to Development Applications
- Apparent lack of consequences when conditions of DA's seem to be ignored
- General condition of the roads
- Dumping of fill from building sites in the ACT and the impact this vehicle traffic is having on the roads
- Uncertainty whether permission has been obtained for this dumping to occur
- Concern about contaminated or unsuitable fill being dumped
- Generally poor communication from the shire

A community meeting was subsequently held with the General Manager, David Rowe and other council representatives on 20th February 2012.

In February we responded to a DA for the erection of an Optus tower on Gooromon Ponds Road primarily to provide service to the Canberra suburb of Dunlop. After seeking additional information, protest letters were sent by some of the local residents, and letters of concern were sent from the Progress Association to Yass Valley Council, Councilor David Needham, and the developers. Optus now report they are not planning the development on that site in the foreseeable future.

Later that month, inaugural Cross-Border Commissioner for NSW, Steve Toms, was appointed by the NSW Government to provide advocacy for businesses, organisations and residents in border

communities. Some members of the local community attended a meeting in Queanbeyan with Mr Toms and raised a number of NSW / ACT cross-border issues in the Hall district.

In March, a joint operation by the NSW and ACT Environment Protection Authorities and NSW Police set up a checkpoint just over the border and inspected twenty-two trucks. Fines for illegal dumping can range from \$1500 if a truck does not have approval to dispose of its load to \$5500 if the load contains toxic materials. In spite of this crack down residents continue to report large number of heavy vehicles in the district.

Due to bad weather 'Clean up Australia' in the Wallaroo area was postponed from 4th March to Sunday 29th April, when a small but enthusiastic group of locals participated in this joint initiative between the Residents' Group, Yass Valley Council and the Wallaroo Rural Fire Brigade.

A small email survey of local NSW residents was conducted in early June. Only one resident opted to be removed from the mailing list and the overall response was positive about the function of the Group and the dissemination of information to residents.

Judy Roberts, WSRRG Coordinator

HALL AND DISTRICT COLLECTORS CLUB (HDCC)

The HDCC was formed as a sub-committee of the VHDPa on the 24th February 2011, and currently has a membership of twenty- two. The Club was formed to actively promote and encourage the restoration, preservation and display of early machinery, equipment and collectables.

In the past year we have had five successful events at various member's places. These consist of a 'show and tell', a BBQ and a meeting. All HDCC activities are family events with spouses and children attending.

Our major achievement this year was to become a member of the Council of ACT Motor Clubs. This has allowed us to apply for Concessional registration on any vehicles over 30 years old. We have six vehicles at present on club Concessional registration.

Bill Pearson, Secretary HDCC

MENS SHED

The year has been one of growth, and a search for direction. Our membership is now around twenty. Our finances have grown considerably. This time last year we possessed a few hand tools, we now we have an impressive range of equipment. Our shed has gone from a garage full of discarded bits and pieces with a flimsy carport attached, to a dedicated work area with excellent electrical infrastructure and a separate timber storage facility. The acquisition of the equipment is particularly noteworthy. It has come via generous donations from another Shed, members of the public and from our own members.

Late in 2011 the Shed joined the **Australian Men's Shed Association**, which opens up a range of opportunities. We will be eligible for grants in the future should we wish to apply, and we have already received donations of stain from Cabots, and of specialised sanding equipment.

Our founding document stressed that we would focus mainly on community based projects, and we have done so. The number of community undertakings by a small organisation in its first year of operation is exceptional.

The shed has enjoyed close collaboration with the Friends of Hall School Museum, which generated some early projects. Our 'to do' list includes more jobs for the Museum and we look forward to a continuing association with the 'Friends'.

There was quite a bit of interaction with other Sheds. The Majura Shed was a source of good advice to the management team as we tried to understand the complexities of setting up and developing a shed. Majura generously gave us our first substantial piece of equipment. Informal talks were held with Melba and Gungahlin Sheds to explore cooperation. Melba offered us the opportunity to participate in their many activities and their newsletter has been used to promote some of our functions and other Hall activities. Murrumbateman Shed has recently hosted a talk on men's health and invited our members on an excursion they organised to the National Museum of Australia Annexe. Stronger linkages between Sheds are to the benefit of all Shed members and I look forward to a continuation in the coming year.

Our healthy financial situation is due mostly to the Poachers Pantry, who as a result of the efforts of Shed member Bob Richardson, selected the Shed as beneficiary of their 'Summer Ball' (February 11th). The Shed benefitted by \$4,000

It was my sad duty to represent members at the funeral of Michael Brown who passed away on 20th June. Michael was a founding member of the Shed and helped to get the Shed going as a member of the initial steering group.

Mike Fitzpatrick, Foreman, Men's Shed

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere thanks to all my committee colleagues for their contributions during the year, and to all those within our community whose voluntary efforts and care have helped to make this a special place to live, work and play.

Alastair Crombie, President
July 2012

VHDPAC Committee 2011 – 2012 Meetings
--

10 August	AGM and General Meeting
31 August	
12 October	
30 November	Open meeting
1 February	
14 March	Open meeting
2 May	
6 June	Open meeting
18 July	
15 August	AGM and General Meeting

VHDPAC Committee Members 2011 - 2012

Alastair Crombie	President
Tony Morris	Vice President
John Starr	Treasurer
Judy Roberts	Secretary
Phil Robson	(Honorary Curator Hall School Museum; Heritage Officer)
Bob Richardson	
Pierre Dragh	
Paul Porteus	
Greg Palethorpe	
	Public Officer
	Brian Banyard