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| VHDPA_Logo |  | Village of Hall and District Progress Association Inc. **PRESIDENT’S REPORT TO THE 2014 AGM**  **20 August 2014** |

The past year has seen the Progress Association continue to advance the interests of community of the Village of Hall and District.

**Future of the Hall Primary School site**

The major focus for the Committee over the year has been re-engaging the community and the ACT Government on the future of the Hall Primary School site. Consultation within the community culminated in a public meeting on 23 March attended by over 70 residents and further written feedback.

Following this we wrote to the Chief Minister confirming the preferences of the community to:

* maintain the facilities for community use, and in particular for ongoing use by the Gold Creek Pre-school, the School Museum and the Men’s shed
* protect the heritage value of the site
* achieve security of tenure for the community
* treat the school site as a whole – for landscaping and heritage purposes, and for balancing the overall costs and revenues from the various activities on the site.

We also indicated the community is open to further exploring the development of a child care centre, but the strong view is that this should not displace the current activities of the Museum in the two permanent buildings on the site. Other major considerations include the area required for a child care centre and parking and traffic issues. We also believe any plans for a child care centre should include a permanent site for the Preschool.

The Museum and its collection have been assessed for national significance under the National Library's Community Heritage program. The report concludes the original school and its unique collection are of national significance. Part of the significance is its location on the present site and its important cultural connection with the village. The assessment also recognises the importance of the two 1960s permanent buildings on the site which show the development of education within the ACT.

The Association and the Rotary Club of Hall have been in discussions on a partnership for the immediate and long-term future of the site. Rotary is interested in increasing its community presence and activity in Hall and is prepared to support the Progress Association in reaching a settlement with the ACT Government.

Rotary is also interested in exploring using a small part of the site (yet to be determined) for temporary accommodation for families participating in their ROMAC program (Rotary Oceania Medical Aid for Children). This caters for children within the Oceania region requiring surgical and other procedures which they are otherwise unable to access. When not being used for ROMAC, this low cost accommodation for people seeking medical attention could be extended to others in need.

We proposed the following indicative timeline to the Chief Minister.

**Short Term: Immediate priorities (2014)**

·         Formalise a licence agreement with the ACT Government

·         Develop and implement management plan for existing asbestos

·         Further community consultation on child care centre and Rotary Club of Hall projects

·         Interim use of facilities agreed

·         Tree survey and any safety work completed

**Medium Term (2015-2016)**

·         Develop plans and budget for Preschool, Heritage Centre, Men’s Shed, Community Hall, Rotary Club facilities and any other facilities such as child care

·         Develop landscape plan and budget for whole site

·         Develop fundraising strategy

·         Secure government funding in 2016-18 budgets

**Longer Term (2017 and beyond)**

·         Phased removal of demountables

·         Implement landscape plan

·         Phased construction of new buildings in areas indicated in Eric Martin’s Hall Primary School Master Plan (Preschool, Heritage Centre, Men’s Shed, Rotary Club facility and Community Hall)

The Chief Minister replied expressing support for the community’s broad objectives and asking us to engage with the Community Services Directorate to take things forward. We have done so, but now been advised (formally confirmed yesterday) that the responsibility for the site has been transferred to the ACT Property Group within the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate. No doubt this will mean further discussions to get a new set of officials ‘up to speed’.

In recent weeks another exciting development has been further contact from the Blue Gum School which has expressed interested in building a ‘greenfields’ pre-school for 25-40 children operating 8am to 6pm five days a week. So, more options for the community to consider. The balance of activities on the site, including the potential operation of two pre-schools will need to be worked through, but it’s great that there is interest and options for occupancy that will bring further life to community.

While we have made significant progress, a long term settling of the use of the site remains elusive and no doubt will continue to be a priority for the Association.

**Other activities and events**

Of course the Association has been engaged in a diverse range of other activities. Many of these occur through the groups operating under our auspices or affiliated with the Association, such as the Friends of the Museum and the Men’s Shed. This is people volunteering and participating in events and activities they enjoy and which further build the special sense of community that we are so lucky to have. The activities of our subgroups and affiliates are detailed in their separate reports.

Examples of significant events and activities for the Association itself (a testament to the commitment and energy of members) included:

* A successful ‘prohibition era’ Hall Ball raising over $7000 for the Hall Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade, the Gold Creek pre-school based in the Hall Primary School, and the Association.
* A program of social activities for the National Sheepdog Trials.
* Liaison with ACT Cemeteries to have new signage at the Hall Cemetery moved and replaced with signage more sympathetic with a small country cemetery.
* Liaison with Roads ACT on improved to traffic management to make the school bus interchange on Gladstone Street safer.
* Resurfacing of the road around the Hall Showgrounds.
* Blackberry spraying in Hall Creek.
* New soft-fall material playground in the Gladstone Street park.
* Tree planting in the Hall Village reserve on National Tree day.

**Administration**

In addition to important events and activities in and with the community, the Association has also continued to work on its own administration. The finances of the Association remain sound (see Treasurer’s report). We have also undertaken a review of the records of membership of the Association, our insurance coverage, and have lodged and operated under the revised Constitution agreed at the General Meeting held concurrently with the 2013 AGM. We’ve made a start on improving links between the website and the Rural Fringe magazine (which continues to go from strength to strength).

David Hazlehurst

President