



VHDPA PRESIDENTS REPORT 2019 -2020

How quickly time flies. The older that we get, the more quickly those sands in our hourglass appear to fall from our future to the past. This has been an extremely challenging year for all of Australia and we are not out of the woods yet. Reflecting on the activities of the Village of Hall and District Progress Association from August 2019 to August 2020 it has been very busy, but I do not intend to mention all of them here. The Village of Hall and District website includes Minutes of the VHDPA General and Committee Meetings at <https://www.hall.act.au/meeting-minutes.html>. The Rural Fringe “Journal of the Hall District” includes articles on Hall District topics and includes a President’s Page which gives considerable detail concerning deliberations on current issues for the Hall community. There is a Facebook group that is run by some Hall residents and includes many people from the Hall community. The “Hall Honeys” also has a strong following in Hall with many dedicated people who recognise the vital role which bees play in the pollination of our crops, forests, gardens, and the overall environment.

The Village of Hall and District Progress Association is the incorporated body that provides the umbrella financial and legal management of many endeavours within the Hall community. The Committee is elected to manage the business of the incorporated body and to further the interests and welfare of the community of the Village of Hall and District and to protect and progress the amenity and character of the Village of Hall.

The VHDPA Special Interest Groups continue to thrive. The Hall Men’s Shed (with Doug Anstess as Foreman) has embarked on a number of community initiatives to brighten Hall including refurbishment of the Headmaster’s Cottage Garden, Floriade: Re-imagined plantings and working with Hall Honeys to develop Hall as Australian’s first bee-friendly village. The Hall and District Collectors Club (with Bob Richardson as Chairperson) now has 75 historic vehicles registered through the concessional registration scheme for veteran, vintage and historic vehicles administered by the Council of ACT Motor Clubs. The Hall School Museum (with Alastair Crombie as Honorary Curator) has continued to foster awareness and understanding of the history of the Hall district and its people, having held 15 exhibitions since 2011. The Museum includes emphasis on developing regular communication with the local Aboriginal elders, together with education of young people to give a better understanding of the significant local Aboriginal cultural heritage. The Museum’s comprehensive Annual Report is most informative and a good read.

The Rotary Club of Hall has been able to maintain the weekly Capital Region Farmers’ Market at EPIC throughout the pandemic period as an essential service to the Canberra community. Although not formally related to the Progress Association, the Rotary Club of Hall has accommodation on the Hall School Site and the Progress Association and Rotary Club of Hall work in close cooperation on projects for the Hall community.

Hall continues to attract numerous visitors to district wineries, restaurants and cafes, unique shops, walking trails both in and from the village, and because of its unique village character, a contrast to the nearby maximum density developed suburbs.

Thankfully, the Centenary Trail extension into Hall, and the bridge on the Creek, were completed in time to allow use by those seeking recreational freedom during times of Covid-19 restrictions. This has been a collaborative endeavour of the VHDPa and the ACT government, and I know Peter Howard worked especially hard on it as a member of the VHDPa Committee. It is now a well-used, safe and low-impact community facility beside the existing road corridor. I've heard many favourable reports of its value to both cyclists and pedestrians. However, success can bring its own challenges, like the 80 or so cars parked along Hoskins and Hall Streets at the start of the Trail many weekends. The VHDPa is looking at options in collaboration with the ACT Government to manage this. The first step has been the improvement in the parking area beside the Hall School Site. If asked, please remember to mention that there is parking around the school site, with very little extra walking effort needed.

As you are no doubt aware, the 40 and 50 kph speed zones in Hall have been established for the safety of pedestrian traffic in Victoria Street and the hundreds of school students at the morning and afternoon bus interchange. Many people have expressed concerns to the VHDPa over speeding in Victoria Street. The VHDPa is in touch with the ACT Government to review options to maintain safety for all.

The first stage of the refurbishment by the ACT Government of buildings at the Hall School Site has been completed at a cost of around \$250,000, and a second stage was approved for a similar amount. The Stage Two upgrade is now under way for buildings not involved in Stage One. After a gutter collapse on one of the buildings, emergency upgrade funding was made available for repairs. It is heartening that the wider ACT community is supportive of the Hall School Site through this type of funding, no doubt a reflection of what Hall contributes back to the ACT community through programs such as the Museum, the Men's Shed, Computing for Seniors and many other activities.

The VHDPa is the body legally responsible for the Commonwealth Communities Environment Program grant for a Bee Friendly Hall Village. I think of this as I look at many beautiful gardens around Hall getting special attention as many of us spend more time at home. Some of the bee-friendly native plants left over from the Rotary donation to "bee hotels" last year have been planted near the Headmaster's Cottage at the Hall School Site (thanks especially Greg Flowers, Dennis Greenwood and Bill Pearson). Bill and Dennis also constructed a marvellous "Viking" style table behind the Headmaster's Cottage, together with some donated sturdy fibreglass planter boxes which now contain herbs and flowers. The Floriade: Re-imagined wine barrels and planter boxes are positioned along Victoria Street and their flowering is certainly adding colour to the main street.

The Men's Shed has undertaken the task of cleaning up the old tennis courts near the Pavilion.

This last year has seen many activities to protect and progress the amenity and character of the Village of Hall. Many of these activities have emerged from residents own efforts, many have been supported by the VHDPa and some undertaken by the VHDPa. All contribute to making Hall the place that we love. In addition to activities that I have already mentioned, efforts are ongoing including volunteers of the Hall Landcare Group establishing some of the elements of the Natural Play Space developed through community consultation last year, the committee for the annual National Sheepdog Trials in Hall, developing designated long-stay

parking for those working in Hall, and the VHDPAs seeking support from ACT MLAs for various priorities in Hall Village.

Please look after your fellow Hall residents and stay COVID 19 safe.

Peter Toet

President