



## **Village of Hall and District Progress Association Inc.**

### **Annual Report 2008 – 2009**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

It has been a busy but productive year for the Association. We have continued to fight the good fight to re-open the school, we have built a membership base in the 'district', we have secured government support for improved community facilities, continued to build our web presence and capabilities, and given our support to a range of community events.

#### **HALL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Although it was closed at the end of 2006, the future of the school and the site it occupies have continued to preoccupy the affairs of the Association. Consistent with an election undertaking, in February 2009 the Greens initiated an Assembly Committee inquiry into 'school closures and reform of the ACT education system'. At the time this inquiry was announced, the Association was already responding to requests from the ACT Government to consult with them on the refurbishment of former school buildings and provision of new 'community facilities' on former school sites.

#### **Assembly inquiry**

Before writing a submission to the Assembly inquiry the Association convened a public meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> March to inform and consult with the community. The meeting was addressed by Greens leader Meredith Hunter, and by David Collett from the Department of Disability Housing and Community Services (DHCS), the agency with responsibility for the 'community facilities' project. The meeting affirmed that we should continue to press for re-opening of the school.

The Association widely promoted the Assembly inquiry and encouraged others to make submissions. It is noteworthy that of the total of seventy five submissions received, twenty four supported the re-opening of Hall Primary.

As well as preparing a substantial submission, Association representatives Alastair Crombie and Jo Hall appeared before the Committee on 1<sup>st</sup> May. The Committee is expected to report some time in August, after which the government has three months in which to respond to its recommendations.

[Download the Association's submission at <http://www.hall.act.au/documents.html>.]

### **‘Community facilities’ project**

Meanwhile DHCS, recognizing that the future of the school could not be finally resolved until the Government has dealt with the recommendations of the Assembly inquiry, agreed to our ‘Stage 1’ proposals for community facilities at the school. This entails refurbishment of the multi-purpose sports court, the Principals Cottage and associated garage, and the school Museum. We also argued successfully for refurbishment of the Pavilion in lieu of provision of a ‘Neighbourhood Hall’ on the school site, and are delighted that this much needed ‘facelift’ will be going ahead.

Committee member Brian Banyard has lead a small steering group which drew up our ‘user specifications’ for these works, and continues to interact regularly with DHCS representatives and Hindmarsh, the contractor. We are hopeful that work will be completed by the end of 2009.

### **The School Museum (Laurie Copping Heritage Centre)**

The school site refurbishments that have been agreed to include any work necessary to put the school museum into a sound structural condition. The Association has persisted in the ambition to have the Museum put under the direction of a community Board of Trustees, and conserved and developed as a valued part of the village’s heritage, and a visitor attraction.

After the disappointment of missing out last year, the Association has again applied for a Heritage Grant – this time to fund the preparation of a Conservation Management Plan and preparation of training materials for volunteer guides. The Association will contribute \$2,000 if the application is successful.

Our proposal has the support of the National Trust of Australia (ACT), the Southwell Family Society Australia, and the Donald Horne Institute for Cultural Heritage (University of Canberra), MLAs for Ginninderra, Alistair Coe, Mary Porter and Meredith Hunter, and the Australian National Museum of Education (ANME). Members of this latter organization are currently completing an inventory of the collection.

In their letter of support for our Heritage Grant application the ANME say: "Given the great historical significance of such a collection, reflecting changes and developments in the history of schooling in the ACT over the last century, it is vitally important that this collection be adequately accommodated and conserved within its original building, as part of the historic village of Hall".

With the invaluable contribution of Elizabeth Burness – free lance story teller, writer, local historian – the Museum has been opened for visiting groups by arrangement, as well as having an Open Day as part of the Canberra Region Heritage Festival for 2009 on 11 April. It was also the venue for a well attended National trust book launch on October 12<sup>th</sup>. We now plan when possible to have the Museum open on Hall Market days.

Community members might like to note that the centenary of Hall Primary School will occur in 2011. The Association is already considering how best to mark this very important occasion.

### **Hall Preschool and Nature Playgroup**

The Association strongly supports continuation of the Preschool, and has made representations to the effect on many occasion. We have also strongly welcomed the establishment of the Hall Nature Playgroup as another important element of early childhood learning now available in our community.

## COMMUNITY WEBSITE

The community website was established in November 2007, so we report now on the first full year of operation. The site carried sixty local news stories, nearly all with an accompanying photograph, and listed five or six events per month in the 'Calendar'. Official documents of the Association, such as submissions and grant applications can be downloaded, there is a large set of useful inks to other sites, and a substantial Business Directory.

Each month more than a hundred people land on the Business Directory page through search engines. Ninety five businesses are listed in the business directory – a free service. The Business Directory page was viewed a total of 281 times in June. The website itself receives an average of a hundred visitors a day viewing 200-300 pages in total. As well as a free listing, local businesses can buy their own fully editable web page on the site, and this provides some income for further site development. The Association is strongly committed to supporting local businesses and the economic development of Hall and district.

The main features of the site are:

- A calendar of events (with archive)
- Hall and district news (with archive)
- Community classifieds
- Progress Association News
- Photo Galleries
- Hall and district business directory
- Community groups directory
- Useful links
- Frequently Asked Questions
- 'Contact Us' function

Volunteer contributors to the website are always welcome.

## THE 'RURAL FRINGE'

Thanks and congratulations are due to Allyson Wedrat on her first year as Editor of the 'Fringe', and to Gail Condy for her continued work on layout and design. The challenge of managing the advertising accounts was taken on by Jo Hall.

The 'Rural Fringe' is the bi-monthly journal of the Hall District, supported by local advertisers, now complemented by the Hall and district community website in keeping people informed on news and views on Hall and the district.

Besides the regular contributions from community members on topics ranging from wildlife, dog training and gardening to Bette's sage words, Allyson has introduced a lot of fascinating information on the history of the area through this year's editions, with the promise of more to come.

## REPRESENTATION

The Association interacts with government and its agencies on a regular basis in promoting the needs and interests of Hall and district residents. In particular, we seek to ensure over time that the five Ginninderra MLA's are kept briefed on matters of importance to Hall.

On January 20<sup>th</sup> we met with Greens Parliamentary Convenor **Meredith Hunter**, and her colleague **Amanda Bresnan** (who is Chair of the inquiry into school closures), and Ms Hunter later attended and addressed our public meeting on the future of the school on March 5th.

On March 19th we had an extensive meeting with Chief Minister **Jon Stanhope**, who is also MLA for Ginninderra. Among the matters discussed were Victoria Square, Clarrie Hermes Drive, the future of the school, refurbishment of the pavilion, development of the school Museum, and the Hall-Tharwa Walking trail proposal.

We invited new Liberal MLA **Alistair Coe** to meet with a group of us in the village on April 8<sup>th</sup> and were able to give him a very detailed briefing on local issues and concerns, including a site visit to the school. Alistair later visited the School Museum.

Labor MLA **Mary Porter** has given help and advice to the Association over a number of years and has been careful and diligent in following through on matters that we have raised with her.

We noted that the Association received favourable mention from all points of the political compass in the course of a 'Matter of Public Importance' debate in the Assembly on April 2<sup>nd</sup> on the 'The importance of the viability of villages in the ACT'. Speeches were made by all five Ginninderra MLA's and Hall received a lot of mentions.

## **PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

The Association continues to represent the community to government in relation to 'planning and development' matters, large and small, recognizing that within the community views may differ. Some of the matters we have engaged with during the year are:

- The Clarrie Hermes Drive extension / Barton Highway intersection
- Overnight staying in the village
- A Hall-Tharwa walking trail
- Development Application notifications to Wallaroo and Spring Range Road residents
- Naming of Hall's lanes
- The Victoria Square development
- 'Community facility' works at the school and pavilion
- Re-planting of Hall Reserve

The Victoria Square development is the most vexed of these, the development remaining unfinished for another year, although a number of the commercial units are now tenanted. Since the AAT ruling in 2006, requiring substantial modifications, the Association's only role has been regular urgings for the work to be completed. In March 2009 we took this urging to the Chief Minister. We have since been advised that the developer is considering applying for another amendment to the approved plans.

We were assured by the Chief Minister that we will be consulted in relation to the Clarrie Hermes Drive / Barton Highway intersection, particularly in relation to potential impacts on connections from Hall to the highway.

At the initiative of resident Shaun O'Connor, the Association has convened a small group to explore the naming of Hall's lanes. Anyone with suggestions should contact Shaun, Bob Richardson, Julie Welch, or Margaret Morris.

## **BOOTSTRAP BRIGADE**

With the enthusiastic leadership of Bob Richardson we have continued to undertake minor repairs and improvements around the village through the 'Bootstrap Brigade'. Much of this work does not get noticed; Bob has become expert at detecting and intercepting urban maintenance crews of any sort and nudging them in useful directions. For example, we now have good piles of mulch close to all the new plantings alongside the creek, and the stormwater drain passing under Victoria Street now flows to the creek.

More visibly, Bob enlisted Greg Flowers and others to establish a couple of log seats alongside the historic well off Gladstone Street, and helped get the Jan Spate Hitching Rail constructed. Other activities include ongoing maintenance of tree plantings, fence painting and repairs at Mulinggarri Gardens, and maintenance of the garden beds at the bottom end of Victoria Street.

As a separate, very important activity, Bob has acted as coordinator for the Community Fire Unit which involves equipment maintenance, recruitment, training exercises, and liaison with the Rural Fire Captain.

As advised during the year, the Association envisages the establishment in the coming year of a Hall 'Mens Shed', based at the Cottage and associated garage at the school. When this is achieved it is possible that the scope of our present 'Bootstrap Brigade' activities can be expanded.

Residents are encouraged to let the Association know of jobs that might be taken on – and to join in when we organize the work!

### **67th NATIONAL SHEEP DOG TRIALS, 11-16 MARCH**

The Association again gave its support to the National Sheep Dog Trials in March. Association members Helen White, Bob Richardson, Angie Hazlehurst, Marion Banyard, Garrie Greenwood, Trudy Mansfield and Jenny Hobson were actively involved in organizing & managing a range of special activities for the week. These included a childrens art competition, a morning tea, a wine & cheese evening and a roast dinner at the Pavilion. Others whose efforts were greatly appreciated were Tony and Margaret Morris, Brian Banyard, Mike Hobson and David Hazlehurst. The activities were greatly appreciated by the 'Triallers' and will be continued next year. A DVD of the event is being prepared. The Association sponsored 'Doctor Stovepipe', the band entertainment at the dinner.

### **COMMUNITY BANK PROJECT**

Alastair Crombie and Bob Richardson became members of the steering group set up after a public meeting to explore the potential for establishing a community bank in Hall, and assisted with publicity efforts via the community website, and attendance at various events. Residents will be aware that this initiative has been put on hold – in part the victim of unlucky timing.

### **HALL VILLAGE BRASS BAND 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CONCERT**

We were delighted to be able to assist the Hall Village Brass Band in staging a Twenty- fifth Anniversary concert at the school grounds on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Under the baton of Ex-Army Director of Music Colin Fischer, the Band entertained a large gathering with a great array of pops, marches, opera, and classic brass band pieces. Speakers reflected on the origins of the Band in Hall, and the desire of the Band to maintain its connections with the village.

In thanking the Band Alastair Crombie expressed the hope that this Concert will become an annual event, and that the Band will indeed revitalize its roots in the local community.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

#### **Wallaroo and Spring Range Residents Group**

The most important membership development during the year was the formal establishment of the **Wallaroo and Spring Range Residents Group (WSRRG)**. The group consists of those members of the Association living in NSW and is formally constituted as a sub-committee of the Association. Val Wiseman is the initial Convenor of the Group, while committee member Judy Roberts played the major role in establishing the group.

The Group arises from a well attended public meeting on 18 August 2008, called to consider some topical planning and development issues. A further meeting on October 6<sup>th</sup> approved the idea of forming a residents group under the umbrella of the Association with the following purposes:

- i] to further the interests and welfare of Wallaroo and Spring Range Residents; and*
- ii] to represent Wallaroo and Spring Range Residents on matters affecting their interest; and*
- iii] to protect the amenity and character of the Wallaroo and Spring Range district.*

Yass Valley Council now recognizes the Group and has set up regular communications via the Association, including notification of Development Applications.

‘Over the border’ residents have always been a welcome part of the Association, but this development gives real substance to the ‘District’ in our name, and we hope the Group will grow in size and strength.

### **Affiliated organisations**

We are also very pleased to have all three local churches as members, bringing to ten the number of local community organizations that are affiliated with the Association [full list below]. This has the benefits of enabling us to communicate with each other more readily, and to represent the community to government in greater strength and depth.

As well as communicating to members via the website and the Rural Fringe, the Association issues periodic email news updates about matters of importance.

Alastair Crombie  
 President  
 26 July 2009

<b>VHDPA Committee Members 2008-2009</b>
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Alastair Crombie	President
Bob Richardson	Vice President
Tony Morris	Vice President
Elaine Leckey	Treasurer
Jo Hall	
Brian Banyard	Public Officer
Helen White	
John Starr	
Judy Roberts	
Angie Hazlehurst	
Greg Palethorpe	

Rural Fringe Editor	Allyson Wedrat
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<b>VHDPA Committee meetings 2008 - 2009</b>
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20 August	AGM and General Meeting
10 September	
15 October	
26 November	
21 January	
5 March	General Meeting
18 March	
15 April	
29 April	
3 June	
22 July	
12 August	AGM and General Meeting

<b>Affiliated member organizations</b>
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ACT Dressage Association  
 Hall Pony Club  
 Hall Polocrosse Club  
 Hall Rugby Club  
 Hall Primary P&C Association  
 The Rotary Club of Hall  
 Hall Village Brass Band  
 Wattle Park Uniting Church  
 St Michaels and All Angels Church)  
 St Francis Xavier Church