

# Strathewen Community Renewal Association Inc.

## Committee Meeting No. 17

*Tuesday 10 November 2009*

Community Centre, Bowden Spur Road Strathewen

### MINUTES

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#### ITEM 1 ATTENDANCE – 7:45 pm

Present:

Committee Members: Karl Apted, Mary Avola, David Brown, Malcolm Hackett (Chair), Peter McLennan, Bronwyn South, Denis Spooner (left early), Georgina Robertson Stecher, Steve Pascoe

Ex-officio Members: Maria Romanin (VBRRRA), Ben Pollard (Nillumbik Shire Council)

Apologies: Darren Bradshaw. Matthew Gravette, Peter Jenkinson

Visitors: Ben Hubbard (CEO VBRRRA), Sally Craig (Head of Community Engagement VBRRRA)

#### ITEM 2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Held over to next meeting.

#### ITEM 3 CORRESPONDENCE

##### **Correspondence In:**

- Hall Committee – letter requesting SCRA support. See 10.4
- Soroptimist International of the Goldfields (Kalgoorlie) – offer of support
- Tamika Curran, Heart Food – letter of apology for late meal

##### **Correspondence Out:**

- None

#### ITEM 4 OFFERS OF SUPPORT AND LEADS

##### **Definite offers:**

- **Beyond Blue** – Training for community volunteers is going ahead. The places offered to St Andrews have not been taken up so the training will be held at Strathewen on Wed 11<sup>th</sup>.

##### **New offers**

Soroptimist International of the Goldfields (Kalgoorlie)

#### ITEM 5 GOVERNANCE

##### 5.1 Conflict of interest and confidentiality declarations

There are no conflict of interest or confidentiality declarations required by the meeting's business.

ITEM 6 CALENDAR

	Mondays	Sub-committees / Community Groups
	Tuesdays	SCRA Committee Meetings
	Thursdays	BBQ nights
	Fridays	Mens nights
<b>November</b>	Thursday 12	Environment Recovery Working Group St Andrews 10 - 12
	Sunday 15	Animal bushfire memorial service.2.30pm at 235 Chad's Creek Rd
	Wednesday 18	Interior design and decoration St Andrews 7-9PM
	Friday 20	Pasture Field Day
	Saturday 21	Government House reception for CRCs
	Wednesday 25	Fire Smart Garden Design 6:30PM to 8:30PM Yarra Glen
		Dr Rob Gordon Christmas Hills
	Saturday 28	Building Expo 11AM to 4PM
	Sunday 29	Fire Smart Garden Design 10AM to 12 NOON Yarra Glen
<b>December</b>	Saturday 5	Pasture Field Day Eagles Nest Road Strathewen
	TBC	BAL and fire levels St Andrews
	Thursday 17	Christmas BBQ
	Saturday 19	Santa at Whittlesea 4 – 7:30PM
	Saturday 20	Carols by Candlelight Arthurs Creek

It was noted that we need to publish the calendar on the website before the minutes are accepted.

ITEM 7 VBARRA

Ben Hubbard, CEO and Sally Craig, Head of Community Engagement.

Ben described his position as a backroom role to Christine Nixon. He manages large projects such as Grocon, material aid and the community villages. VBARRA's focus is now on development of a Statewide Recovery Plan that compliments the Community Recovery Plans. He reported that VBARRA has a very good relationship with Nillumbik and the Strathewen renewal committee is working well and is well structured.

VBARRA is currently working on 980 initiatives across 30 bushfire affected communities. They are currently working to identify which projects can / can't be done and where the funding comes from.

VBARRA aims to pull back when a community is ready to take responsibility.

Ben provided feedback on the topics we raised before the meeting:

- Housing – the villages are increasing in size and VBARRA has no more funds to apply. VBARRA is keen to support innovative local solutions but they require data on the projected need and a proposal.
- Blacksmiths tree – no amount allocated in Statewide plan. VBARRA will provide support once the site is determined.

*Q: Steve – Challenge is that Committee is fire-affected. Tough ask to develop fully budgeted project proposals?*

A. I took this as: the damage and needs of some communities relative to their size and resources means that the support from VBARRA has almost ended (example Bendigo City). While the intention is to hand over to Councils and affected communities VBARRA won't disengage while there is a need. How this is achieved where the recovery process runs longer than VBARRA's charter is an issue.

*Q. Malcolm – Acknowledged first round was infrastructure projects. SCRA wanted executive support. Will VBARRA fund such a position?*

A. Constraints on VBAF are significant. There is a reluctance to pay for salaries and to pay for things governments would otherwise do. They will get communities to resubmit requests as projects and/or consultancies.

*Q. Malcolm – Should we put pressure on Bill Shorten?*

A. Basically Federal Government has no money. Ben will work through the proposal with his staff.

*Q. Georgina – Will the remaining funds be redistributed after the relief payments are allocated? Will more go to communities?*

A. VBRRRA needs flexibility for people who are still presenting. 43 million in Statewide Plan (from VBAF fund) only 12 million tagged against projects so far. 75% of 380 million is for agencies and individuals. The only income VBAF now receives is interest payments.

*Q. Denis – is the case management service running down?*

A. No. Get in touch with VBRRRA if anyone is told they don't have a right to case managers. Assumption is that the services will be required for a long time.

*Q. David Brown – the SCRA has a responsibility to implement communities projects Is this an option?*

A. VBRRRA pretty agnostic about who will rebuild. VBRRRA will hold discussions with Nillumbik Shire Council next week. For example, committee of management for local hall could be responsible provided the risk is acceptable.

*Q. Ben Hubbard noted that in some communities there were tensions as new leaders emerged on the recovery committees. He asked whether new skills were required?*

A. Malcolm - People have learnt that they value the community. Our job is to support the existing committees.

A. Georgina – Training is available and we are beginning to take advantage of this.

A. Malcolm – We have a good well skilled community.

*Q. David / Peter M – Certainly want to talk to VBRRRA about housing.*

A. VBRRRA doesn't have much discretionary funds. They can use relationships, knowledge and access to corporate donors. There are fewer constraints on VBRRRA than other agencies allowing them to do things differently for each community.

*Q. Peter M – Other NGOs seem to think they can help with housing?*

A. VBRRRA could work up a package and shop around the NGOs.

Malcolm stressed that Nillumbik Shire Council also wanted to help. The issue needs to be progressed within 3 months.

*Q. Denis – can the VBRRRA building group be given more powers. Builders are not progressing the works fast enough and appear to be using delaying tactics once people sign contracts .*

A. Ben has met with Building Commissioner and a member of the Building Commission will work with VBRRRA so that they can better understand each others processes.

*Q. Malcolm – What about economic development? Our CRP included support for small businesses.*

A. Commercial activity can only be incidental to the application of funding. VBRRRA may be able to lever funding from NGOs.

*Q. Bronwyn – We have a Nillumbik Environment Recovery Working Group which engages all the agencies except Department of Sustainability and Environment and the Department of Primary Industries. As the major agencies can they be involved?*

A. VBRRRA will get DSE and DPI to Nillumbik meetings.

Q. Bronwyn – Very little funding was made available for works on private land?

A. VBRRRA will review our environment proposal. Most of the funding for the environment has been allocated to DSE and Parks Vic for work on public land. The economic and environment pillars of recovery do not have the same priority as the social and rebuilding.

The meeting stressed that improvements to people's properties were essential for their personal wellbeing as well as for the environment.

Q. Peter M – Blacksmiths group will need support to engineer and move the tree?

A. VBRRRA is very engaged with tree project.

Q. Georgina – are there more funds available for community based activities?

A. SCRA should develop a calendar of proposed events and make a funding application for the whole package.

Q. Ben Pollard. – Can a locality increase power capacity to cover new facilities?

A. Yes, VBRRRA is working with SPAusnet. Ben Pollard should approach VBRRRA to progress this.

#### ITEM 8 NILLUMBIK SHIRE COUNCIL

Ben Pollard stressed caution when applying for project management funds so that VBRRRA/Nillumbik/SCRA don't duplicate applications.

Australand will come back within week with revised drawings for the Strathewen oval and sports pavilion. We do not have a timeline for consultation as yet.

The lease for the community centre still being finalised. Nillumbik can't prepare a service agreement for us until the lease is completed.

Grass needs to be cut and VBRRRA are considering fencing and a carpark. This needs to be followed up with Mal and Faye when the lease is finalised.

CFA Fire Awareness meeting – raised issue of SMS service based at CFA. It was decided that the CFA should approach the community to seek their permission to be placed on a local CFA SMS list. The Association could send an SMS telling people to respond to a CFA number if they wanted to give their number for a CFA local SMS alert service.

This was Ben's last meeting with us in his Community Support role. Thank you, Ben.

#### ITEM 9 MEMORIALS

Steve reported that he met with some agencies to discuss the concept of a Memorials Working Group. VBRRRA sent a research paper on memorials with emphasis on how Government intervenes. We have strength in being community-based.

Steve tabled his report and recommendations. (See below)

- Need third party to lead discussion. Proposed individuals have been involved with Bali and Port Arthur.
- Can't limit memorial to one concept. Loss is defined in many different ways.
- Need a community reference group of the bereaved.
- Need to engage Nillumbik to ensure zoning and planning issues are addressed.

Steve proposes we establish Working Group reporting to this committee and chaired by this Committee. It is suggested Nillumbik could support the group.

<b>Resolution</b> - It was resolved that Steve will chair the working group on behalf of the Association.
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**ACTION:** Steve will organise an introductory session on memorials for the community.

ITEM 10 GENERAL BUSINESS

**10.1 Christmas Party at McKenzies**

The McKenzies are holding a Christmas Party on their property at Wattle Glen and would like to invite the whole community.

There are two options:

1. The event is supported by the Association. For this to occur Nillumbik Shire Council will have to apply their normal risk management so that it can be covered by their events insurance, or
2. The Association could advertise the party with a disclaimer that it is a private event.

**ACTION:** Georgina will talk to Angela.

**10.2 Building Expo**

Everything is progressing well.

**10.3 Newsletter**

David requires articles by 4PM this Sunday.

**10.4 Hall Committee**

It was agreed to provide the Hall Committee with all the support they required.

**10.5 Commemoration**

The Resident Support Group is starting to consider options for the commemoration to be held on 7/2/2010.

Next meeting Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup>

Meeting closed at 10:50 PM

**ACTIONS LIST**

No.	DATE	ACTION	REFER	PROGRESS
1		Purchase fencing trailer and equipment	Malcolm	29/9 -Still waiting on pole driver
6	15/9/09	Write letter to residents who are not members of SCRA	Malcolm / Bronwyn	4/11 Ongoing by personal contact
10	22/9/09	Invite suggestions for equipment for tool library	All residents (to Malcolm)	29/9 Ongoing 4/11 Push slasher Denis/Malcolm
14	22/9/09	Eltham Women's Rural Group to prepare 'Thank you's' for people/organisations who have supported us.	Resident Support	4/11 The group now has some photos to work with.
16	29/9/09	Obtain support to co-ordinate volunteers	Malcolm Nillumbik	20/10 Peter met with CentaCare, Nillumbik and Baptist Church.
17	29/9/09	Talk to Susan Rouvrey at the RCC and write a letter to agency staff asking that general information be circulated through the bulletin.	Malcolm	

19	29/9/09	Invite Dr Rob Gordon to November evening	Peter M	4/11 Check whether Rob thinks his commitment at Christmas Hills includes Strathewen
20	29/9/09	Obtain a useful printer	Maria	4/11 Ongoing
21	29/9/09	Setup mens support group	Peter M Steve	4/11 Ongoing
22	29/9/09	Provide feedback to consultants on oval master plan.	Malcolm	6/10 Unsatisfactory response from consultant. Malcolm will follow up further.  20/10 Malcolm and Georgina were happy to negotiate the main communal space back to 10m X 12m. The consultant is negotiating with Glen from Cricket Club.
23	6/10/09	Application for charitable status with the Tax Office	David	20/10 Could be implemented via a disaster relief fund.  4/11 Nothing before middle of November.
24	6/10/09	Cleaner required. Start by offering job to Anne Simmons.	Bronwyn	4/11 Contract cleaners Connect2Clean will employ John Primrose.
25	6/10/09	Apply for a grant for repairs and maintenance of Community Centre	Denis Georgina	Maria advised we need to add this to our Community Recovery Plan.
26	20/10/09	Follow up volunteer training from Beyond Blue	Peter M	4/11 Session to be held on Wed 11 <sup>th</sup> Nov. All Committee members have been offered a place.
27	20/10/09	Christmas decorations for the Centre	Maria	
29	20/10/09	Request VBRRRA to give priority to a playground for the Centre	Steve Maria	4/11 The playground will be included in the next round of funding.
30	4/11/09	Letter of thanks to John Farnham	Malcolm	
31	4/11/09	Processes for deciding on memorial site(s) to be finalised.	Steve	
32	4/11/09	Contact Ramsay Health to formalise a donor relationship	David	
33	10/11/09	Finalise lease for Community Centre	Nillumbik	
34	10/11/09	Enter into Service Agreement for upkeep of Centre	Nillumbik	
35	10/11/09	Organise introductory session on memorials for community	Steve	
36	10/11/09	Establish level of support for McKenzie Christmas Party	Georgina	

# Strathewen Community Renewal Association

## The Development of Community Memorials

Presented by Steve Pascoe and adopted by the Committee 10/11/09

### Background:

The bushfires of 7th February 2009 had a catastrophic impact on the communities of Strathewen. Many lives were lost, the majority of houses were destroyed, the natural bushland environment was changed beyond recognition, domestic, farm and native animals were lost, livelihoods were adversely impacted, and social bonds and connections have been changed forever. Grief and loss includes all of the above (and more) and is experienced by members of the Strathewen community, neighbouring districts and may include people who have no previous association with, but are now linked to Strathewen through tragedy.

Through community visioning activities the need for memorials was identified as a very high priority. Research from the development of previous disaster memorials shows that the development of community memorials can be very difficult, with the potential to create community division and dissatisfaction. The process for developing memorials must be very well managed and involve extensive and comprehensive community consultation. There will be many opinions as to what memorials should be and these must be brought into a consensus that meets the needs of the affected communities.

We need to recognise that there will be many expressions of remembrance throughout the community, at personal, neighbourhood and whole of community level. The concept of memorials may include events, places and physical structures.

### Memorials Working Group:

The Strathewen Community Renewal Association Committee (SCRA) will establish a Memorials Working Group to research best practice, explore concepts and develop proposals for community memorials in Strathewen. The SCRA Committee will conduct the process of community consultation and decision making.

### Membership

The Memorials Working Group will consist of representatives of the Strathewen Community Renewal Association (SCRA), Nillumbik Shire Council, the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority (VBRRA) and other members as deemed appropriate. The working group will report to the Steering Committee.

The Working Group will be chaired by a member of the SCRA Committee.

It is proposed that community members with a strong interest in the memorials development might form a Reference Group.

### Support:

Administrative and executive support will be provided through the Strathewen Community Renewal Association by Nillumbik Shire Council.

### Assumptions:

1. That the discussion on memorials will include events, locations and physical structures.
2. That community memorials will reflect and allow for remembrance of the range of losses and meet the needs of persons and families affected.
3. That community memorials will include a place of quiet contemplation and reflection.
4. That the donated Blacksmith's Tree and the Labyrinth will form part of a community memorial.
5. That a community memorial may attract visitors from outside the area including international.
6. Land acquisition may be necessary as there is limited community land on which to site a physical memorial.

### Considerations:

1. What has been learned from the experience of other communities
2. What locations are suitable ?
3. What is an appropriate budget ?
4. What funds are available ?
5. How would the memorial/s be maintained in the long term?

**Community Engagement:**

1. The community engagement process will be extensive and transparent and facilitated by independent and appropriately skilled persons.
2. The community engagement process will be staged to allow broad, evolving conversations with in the affected communities.
3. The engagement process will include reporting back to community members on decisions and outcomes.

**Process:**

## Stage 1. Research

What is the purpose of the memorial/s?

How should the memorial's meaning be expressed?

What elements should be included in a community memorial?

How will commemorative events link with a community memorial/s ?

## Stage 2. Are there opportunities, is there a need for more than one community memorial ?

What site/s would best suit the memorial/s ?

What land use restrictions are there?

What funds are required and available ?

## Stage 3. Planning

Development of a design framework and design brief

Development of long term maintenance plan

Development of proposals for commemorative events

## Stage 4. Invitation for designers to submit design concepts.

## Stage 5. Selection of the successful design.

## Stage 6. Implementation

Construction of memorial/s

## Stage 7. Commissioning of memorial/s