



Strathewen Christmas BBQ

The end of year Christmas BBQ was a great success with 200 people attending. It was great to see everyone enjoying good company and getting into the spirit of the night.

Christmas Carols were led by Mary A. and the Avolaettes, who were accompanied by Norma Nelson on piano. Then Santa took time out of his very busy schedule to come and deliver presents for all the children.

Our appreciation to:

- Mary Avola who led the organisation before and on the night.
- Lois, Gail, Norma, Vicki, Kathy and Marion for being great Santa helpers.
- Santa Clause and his CFA sleigh!
- Bill, Malcolm and David for their grass cutting and fencing.
- The Hurstbridge CWA and the Warrandyte Patchwork group who supplied special gifts.
- All members of the Resident Support Group who helped out in various ways.

Thank you to everyone who came on the night and made it so enjoyable.

Change to statement of purpose

The postal ballot to determine whether the Association would amend its statement of purpose, to remove reference to the provision of support to businesses, attracted 80 votes, and every vote was in favour of making the change.

The statement of purpose has therefore been amended accordingly, and as a consequence the Tax Office have now confirmed that the Association has been granted charitable status.

Bushfire Relief Fund

The postal ballot also considered whether the Association should set up a Bushfire Relief Fund. Again, 80 votes were cast, and every vote was in favour of setting up such a fund.

The Tax Office have also been advised of this outcome, and have requested that we now execute a Trust Deed to establish the Fund, and they will then decide whether to grant deductible gift recipient status to the Fund.

A grant of deductible gift recipient status will enable the Fund to seek donations from a number of charities that are only able to provide funding to organisations with such a status.

VBRRRA support for rebuilding the hall

The Association has now received official confirmation that the Victoria Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority (VBRRRA) has approved the allocation of funds (\$1.4 million) to allow the community hall to be rebuilt.

Karl Apted did an excellent job in preparing an outline scoping document, with associated cost estimates, and the Strathewen Public Hall was one of the first major construction projects to receive a pledge of funding from VBRRRA.

The Association has confirmed to VBRRRA that Strathewen Public Hall Inc, are responsible for rebuilding the hall, and that the Association will provide the Hall Committee with support in undertaking the project. We look forward to seeing the funds actually paid into the Hall account.

Commemoration Service – 7th February 2010

Plans are being finalised for a commemorative service to mark the first anniversary of February 7th.

The service will be held at the Strathewen Oval from 10:00am and will conclude at approximately 11:30am.

The service will be conducted by people either from the Strathewen community, or with ties to the area and the local community. The service has been developed to allow people to participate through the placing of messages and flowers, and through music, songs and prayer.

More information will be forthcoming and invitations will be sent all residents and friends of Strathewen in the New Year.

We plan to make the event as private as possible and have commenced discussions with the Diamond Creek Police to seek their advice and support in this regard.

The draft program is available on the SCRA website.

Choir for Commemoration Service

The Chocolate Lilies Choir will take part in the Commemoration Service at the Strathewen Oval on 7 February 2010.

Choir leader Nerida Kirov has chosen songs of hope, renewal and connection with the land. The songs have been written by Michael Leunig, Kavisha Mazella, Tommy Lewis and Melanie Shanahan.

Some Strathewen residents have listened at earlier performances at the Strathewen Community Centre and have expressed interest in rehearsing for the commemorative service.

Nerida has set aside three rehearsal dates to be put in your 2010 diary:

- 7.30 pm Thursday 28 January at the Community Centre Strathewen
- 12.30 pm Sunday 31 January
- 7.30 pm Thursday 4 February

All welcome.

Eltham High lend a hand

In July a small group of year 9 and 10 Students from a class called "Working Community" at Eltham High School approached the Association committee suggesting they would like to do a gardening project to brighten up the environment of Strathewen.

They decided to make a couple of garden boxes which could be placed initially at the Community Centre, then moved elsewhere should the need arise.

They approached several timber outlets to identify the appropriate timber, and in the hope of a donation. They also visited Strathewen to check out where the planters could be placed.

The students had a good deal of fun making the boxes, and ended up with more than they had originally intended. The results, as you may have noticed, are now sitting around the Community Centre. After summer the Gardening Group will position the planters, fill them with soil, and plant them out.

Our thanks are extended to the "Working Community" students: Chandra Bintara, Monty Abdzurak, Olivia Smith, Matt Girdstone and Jake Anderson.

Plum puddings

The two Plum Pudding sessions proved to be very popular. There was plenty of laughter and chatter which resulted in 35 puddings being made. Big thanks go to Agnes Perry who prepared and coordinated these fun sessions. The proof will be in the eating on Xmas Day! We are sure no-one will be disappointed.

The world's smallest comedy festival - *Stand up for Strathewen*

As you can see, the comedy festival now has a name, and comedians have received an invitation to participate from the Resident Support Sub-committee.

Some of the invited comedians have been making us laugh for years (Jimeoin, Adam Hills, Tripod, Dave Hughes); others are less well known but are experienced and have received good reviews.

We will not know the names and numbers of comedians who wish to participate, or the exact date of the event, until mid-January — watch this space!

All ideas for this event are welcome, please contact anyone on the Resident Support Sub-committee.

Chookin

Thirty six colourful chooks were delivered to the children and Principal of Strathewen Primary School on Tuesday 15 December. Most of the twenty two knitters attended and those who couldn't make it will be sent photos of the memorable day. There was a real chook present in the front row of the class but it looked quite flustered when thirty six weird coloured fowls entered the class room and it had to be returned to the chook enclosure outside.

The names of the children were read out and chooks were handed over, some flying through the air to children seated at the back of the class. Knitters were delighted

to meet the child they had been knitting for and present them with their gift. Some boys put their chooks on their heads and there was general laughter and excitement all round. Children looked impressed when they compared their coloured drawings with the finished chook. Achieving some of the designs was equivalent to completing puzzles or sudokus at times.

In addition to the chooks delivered to the Primary School children, there are another ten chooks ready to be delivered to other children of Strathewen.

We have since heard reports that children are tucking their chooks into bed at night and snuggling up for sweet dreams. One mother felt that holding the chook was 'like holding a baby'. Some chooks are travelling around with their owners to meet grandmothers over Christmas. One chook, Coraline, as it has been named, kindly sent me a Christmas card and seems to be settling into her new home very comfortably.

As anticipated, there is a high degree of chook envy emerging amongst siblings and relatives so the chook knitters have agreed to take up their needles again next year. There is also talk of a spinning circle beginning. Requests for chooks can be left on the chook form at the Strathewen Community Centre. Contact Barbara Joyce or the Resident Support sub-committee for more details.

Community Memorials update

The first Community Memorials discussion meeting was held on Sunday 13th December at Arthurs Creek Hall. It was important to begin the discussions on this important issue as soon as possible, to let people know what is happening and to provide ideas and direction for the Association's Memorials Working Group.

We were very fortunate to be supported during this first discussion, and in the future process, by John Richardson and

Andrew Coughlan from Red Cross, and Dr. Rob Gordon. Dr. Rob we know from a number of times he has spoken to our communities on the physiological and psychological impacts of disasters. John and Andrew have worked for many years in community disaster recovery at a state and national level, and are assisting us as part of Red Cross's commitment to community recovery.

During the meeting, John and Andrew spoke on the development of community memorials in previous disasters such as Port Arthur, Bali, the Canberra bushfires, and other international events. Dr. Rob spoke about what memorials mean in community recovery and how we might best undertake our discussions.

It is anticipated that the development of memorials in Strathewen will take many months, involving discussion, planning and more discussion. The process will be very open, and community members will have many opportunities to participate.

The SCRA Memorials Working Group has been established by the SCRA Committee to research best practice, explore concepts, and undertake the day to day work of assisting the Strathewen community develop and implement the concepts of memorials. It will consist of community representatives, Nillumbik Shire Council and other expert members as deemed appropriate.

The SCRA Memorials Working Group will include 3 representatives of the Association. This includes the Chairperson, Steve Pascoe, who has been appointed by the Committee. The Working Group will report to the SCRA Committee.

Should you wish to become an active member of the Memorials Working Group, please contact Steve Pascoe directly – there are only two positions to be filled, and the time commitment required will not be small.

The Memorials Working Group will begin to develop a consultation plan in the New Year, but it is anticipated that a series of community discussion events will commence late February.

The Association committee has endorsed a number of points to assist in framing the community memorials discussion:

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

How you can get involved

Community Reference Group - Expressions of Interest sought

Along with regular consultation and feedback to Association members, it is proposed that a Community Reference Group be established.

The Community Reference Group will be made up of members of the Association who wish to play an active role in the development of community memorials in Strathewen.

Members of the Community Reference Group will be consulted regularly, and will be expected to provide comment on issues regarding the development of community memorials.

The Association will shortly be seeking “expressions of interest” from Association members who would like to be considered for inclusion in the Community Reference Group.

Expressions of interest forms will be emailed to members shortly and will also be available on the Strathewen community website, from the Community Centre, or by contacting Steve Pascoe (details below). The forms should be filled in and returned to the Association’s post office box by 1st Feb 2010.

For more information on the development of community memorials in Strathewen, contact the Memorials Working Group Chair, Steve Pascoe, steve.pascoe@knox.vic.gov.au or 0407 326 770.

Old wire collection at Hall site

Thanks to the generosity of Joe Hollyoak Earthmoving Kinglake, the 7 tonne pile of wire on the Primary School tennis court was stuffed into one Simms Metal bin. The bin was kindly organised by Graham and Pauline Tims of United Metal Recyclers and the profit donated back to the Strathewen Community Renewal Association resulting in \$1300. I’m sure getting rid of old fence wire and supporting the community will appeal to most folk, so we’ll do it again. This time the wire should be delivered clean (no wooden droppers or posts) to the Hall site. When we get enough we’ll order another bin.

Paul Kelly

Some very resourceful primary school parents led by Adrian Hyland approached Paul Kelly to entertain the school community and some other fortunate residents at a concert during November. While Paul Kelly was the star attraction the support acts were brilliant. The Strathewen Primary School and

Hurstbridge Co-op Ensemble performed very professionally and impressed their audience. The young Bluegrass Band were superb and had everyone clapping and tapping along. As for Paul Kelly, it was a privilege to see such an accomplished performer in such intimate and familiar surroundings. The finale involving the children of Strathewen, on stage with Paul singing “From Little Things Big Things Grow” brought the house down. Paul and Dan Kelly’s performance will be remembered for a very long time as a most generous healing gesture.

Land management workshop

The Nillumbik Environment Recovery Working Group held a very successful workshop at Hazel Fox’s property in November. It was a great line up of speakers on a wide range of topics: pasture improvement, erosion and waterway management, weed and pest control and recovery of native animals. The Working Group has stepped up their help to landholders. Tim O’Donnell (9433 3207) has arranged funding for many property owners wishing to fence remnant bush from pasture and Lori Arthur (9433 3211) is organising the register for free blackberry control.

Excessive Speeds in Strathewen

A number of residents have contacted the SCRA Committee expressing concern about the speed and behaviour of traffic on our roads, particularly heavy vehicles and tradies working in the area. We have contacted the local police and Shire Traffic department seeking some support in managing the situation.

Vale Marilyn Langmead

The memorial service conducted by Marilyn's family provided a fitting tribute for a woman who loved her family and gave so much of herself to other people. Marilyn was also a daughter of Strathewen who freely contributed her energy and enthusiasm to the local community. From her work as bursar at the Primary School through to her roles on the Hall Committee, Tennis Club and beyond, Marilyn was fully engaged with her community. Marilyn was amongst the handful of residents who first saw the need for our Renewal Association and then helped to make it happen. On behalf of the Strathewen Community Renewal Association we extend our deepest sympathy to David, the Langmead and McKimmie families.

A Message from the Chairperson

During the past five months the members of our SCRA Committee have attended twenty, three hour committee meetings plus one or two sub-committee meetings most weeks and then shown their support by attending other meetings, community gatherings and social events. Our Association has conducted numerous community meetings, health and wellbeing activities, workshops, small group meetings, a family day, thirteen building forums, a building expo and a Community Christmas Party. It has been a very demanding period for all of us but we are proud of what we have achieved and the way our community has stuck together. We have set high standards for ourselves and our Association is widely respected as a result. We have a long way to go but the pieces are fitting together.

On behalf of the Association I would like to thank our Committee members and the members of the Residents Support, Environment, Re-building, Grants/ Funding and Communications Sub-

committees who have worked so hard to keep the momentum going. I would like to acknowledge the excellent support from the senior officers at Nillumbik Shire who have respected the need for a community driven recovery plan. I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of Jane Hayward and the Primary School Council and staff who have worked tirelessly to maintain some sense of normality for the children and their parents, while also grappling with the technicalities, politics and bureaucracy of rebuilding the school. Thank you to the Landcare Group who have been steadfast in promoting Strathewen's environmental and property recovery to government authorities, applying for funding and running a range of very practical activities. Thank you to our ever growing Strathewen Public Hall Inc. membership and its committee who have achieved an excellent pledge of funds to rebuild our Hall. Finally, thank you to our Arthurs Creek/Strathewen CFA Brigade and the Arthurs Creek Mechanics Institute for your ongoing care and support.

I know it will be a difficult period for many of our members. May you all have a safe festive season and find some peace from the trauma and stress of this past year.