

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING MOUNT WILSON PROGRESS ASSOCIATION INC.

**Held on Saturday, 22nd March, 2014
in the Mount Wilson Village Hall, The Avenue, Mount Wilson.**

1. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The meeting opened at 5.35 p.m. when the Chairman welcomed everyone. The committee was recognised, Vice President, Alison Halliday, Treasurer, Libby Raines, Secretary, Moira Green and Committee members, Brian Abrahams, Ted Griffin, Peter Laving and Bill Ryan. The volunteer First Responders and members of the RFS, who have given extraordinary service, were acknowledged.

The time has come for Mary and Ellis Reynolds and Lis Gow to leave Mount Wilson and sell their homes. Mary has left to be closer to Ellis, who left a little while ago. Both have made a great contribution to the community, in particular Mary's endless hours dedicated to researching, writing and preserving the history of the village. Lis, now living with her son on Norfolk Island, has left behind a garden decades in the making.

2. ATTENDANCE

Committee: Richard Beattie (President), Alison Halliday (Vice President), Libby Raines (Treasurer), Moira Green (Secretary), Ted Griffin, Brian Abrahams, Peter Laving, Bill Ryan

Other Members: Helen & Barry Freeman, Ron Green, Diana & Joe Landsberg, Nancy Fox, Judy & Graham Tribe, Loretta Beattie, Mary Holt, Elizabeth & Joe Montano, Gillian & Michael Pembroke, Kim & Tim Gow, Robin and John Leonard, Wendy Holland, Beverley and Graham Thompson, Susie Hope, Owen Haviland, Robert Chesney, Marilyn Laving, Maureen Ryan, Deidre & Michael Wren.

Visitors: Local State member, Roza Sage MP, Ted Sage, Mark Bancroft (Mt Irvine Progress Association President), Brian Carrigan (MIPA Secretary) & Carol Carrigan

Apologies: John & Judy Teulon, Deb Griffin, Bruce Arnold, Alex Halliday, Jane and George Mayne, Linda, Peter, Keith and Beth Raines, Robyn Scrivener.

3. TREASURER'S REPORT

Libby Raines presented the following report:

Mount Wilson Progress Association Inc.

Statement of Accounts 1-7-13 to 31-1-2014

Working Account

Receipts:-

B.M.C.C. - maintenance	11,000.00
Membership	4,783.00

Website - refunds for usage	701.66
A.T.O - GST Refunds	791.00
Rabbait - payments for usage by members	88.00
Interest	<u>458.55</u>

Total Receipts:- \$17,822.21

Expenditure:-

Alan Gunn - maintenance of the reserves	7,069.00
Peter Raines - Waterfall Track labour	1,380.00
Micah Fink - maintenance – tracks, trees, spraying	1,420.00
Johnstones Trees – stump grinding at War Memorial	1,650.00
Finsure Insurance - Business Broadform	1,440.00
Secretary - office supplies, groceries	330.00
C.W. Print - copying, and printing	393.00
Village Hall - meetings and functions	386.00
Website - annual fee and extra gigabytes	370.00
A.T.O. - GST payments	527.00
Department of Fair Trading - annual fee	52.00
Adam's Shed - Glysohate	169.00
- Rabbait	129.80
Mt. Wilson & Mt. Irvine RFS – purchase of photograph	400.00
Transfer to Fixed Term Deposit	2,000.00
Bank Fees	<u>105.00</u>

Total Expenditure \$18,071.60

Total receipts	17,822.21
- Total expenditure	18,071.60
	= - (249.36)
+ Carried forward	11,740.75
	- (249.36)
	<u>\$11,740.75</u>

Bank Balance 1/3/2014 \$11,740.75

Fixed Term Deposits \$20,000.00

Held in 3 different accounts at the best interest.

Libby thanked George Mayne for the purchase and distribution of rabbait and Bill Ryan for supplying drinks for the meetings.

It was moved by Graham Tribe, seconded Susie Hope that the report be approved. It was approved.

4. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Committee Matters

The Lithgow State Mine Fire

No event in living memory has posed such a serious threat or had a bigger impact on Mt Wilson than the State Mine Fire last October. It is unfortunate the name of the fire has been linked with the mine when the military has acknowledged responsibility resulting from explosives training on army land at Marrangaroo on October 16. The members of the Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade did an incredible job with support from many other brigades that came to our assistance. The response of the whole community whether it was fire fighting, catering, communications or other support was a demonstration of amazing teamwork and a great credit to the people of Mt Wilson.

The Progress Association made a gesture of recognition of the work of our RFS brigade with the purchase of a photograph that illustrates the aftermath of the fire with a commemorative plaque that records the effort that went in to save the village. The photograph will be on permanent display in the hall.

Another way of supporting the brigade will be to attend the open days to see the beautiful garden at Dennarque in Church Lane over Easter on the Saturday and Sunday.

Keeping Mount Wilson Looking Good

Keeping Mt Wilson looking good is core work for the Progress Association. It is done with the modest funds provided by the Blue Mountains City Council and includes maintenance of the street trees and verges, the reserves and walking tracks. Examples of work completed during the past six months include:

- The Waterfall Track, perhaps the most beautiful walk in Mt Wilson, is on steep, muddy ground and needs constant maintenance. Peter Raines and David Gunn built a small bridge over an area of the path always deep in mud and has been asked to remove a recently fallen tree from the track.
- In Silva Plana all but the last of the rubbish has been cleared. The mess of old timber around a stump will be burnt this winter. With the late summer and early autumn rain the grass is growing better but needs to be allowed to seed again so bare patches might be green again. The bollards and “No camping” sign removed by the *Gatsby* crew have been reinstalled.
- In The Avenue the area about the War Memorial will be restored to the natural fall of the land now the long dry spring and summer days have passed. New soil will be spread and seeded. The bollards missing at the temporary access way will be replaced.
- Council has been asked to fill and seal the eroded area adjacent the road at the memorial.
- The Bushcare Group has been working this year in the Sloan and Wynne Reserves. Blackberries in Wynnes Rocks Road have been poisoned and agapanthus outside Kirk’s Corner and blackberry behind the War Memorial will be poisoned.

Remembrance Day

Despite inclement weather our traditional Remembrance Day service at the War Memorial was able to go ahead at the memorial. Thanks to Brian Abrahams for organising the event and Alison Halliday for her address. In recognition of the centenary of the start of the

hostilities of the First World War, Alison is working on an update for a booklet on the people of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine who served their country in war.

Communications

The Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine newsletter *The Mounts* and the Community Website continue to get better and better. In the February issue of *The Mounts* there were comments published on the wide appreciation for the communications during the fires. The special issue in November had extraordinary stories of the narrow escape Mt Wilson had from the State Mine Fire. Tim Gow's editorship of the newsletter is very much appreciated. Of course many people contribute but neither vital sources of local information would be the success they are without the ongoing work of Tim and Graham Tribe with the website.

Rabbits and Wild Dogs

There continue to be reports of rabbits in Mt Wilson gardens, especially in Mt Wilson East, and George Mayne has the solution – a stock of Rabbait available for purchase to control rabbits. We have not had reports of the foxes, dingos and wild dogs that were seen in recent years since the October fires. It is possible that many of the predators perished in the fire.

BMCC & Other Authority Matters

Mt. Wilson, Mt. Irvine and the Federal Government Mobile Coverage Programme

The Federal Government has under way a two stage national Mobile Coverage Programme that will provide support funding for areas with poor or no mobile wireless voice or broadband data service.

The Progress Association has joined with the Mt Irvine Progress Association and our RFS brigade to put in an initial submission to the Federal Department of Communications. A working group of Henric Nicholas and Brian Carrigan from Mt Irvine and Graham Tribe and Richard Beattie from Mt Wilson has developed the strategy and submissions putting our case.

We point out the communities are clearly areas meeting criteria for investment:

- a. small communities and in areas that are prone to experiencing natural disasters*
- b. locations with unique coverage problems, such as areas with high demand for services during seasonal holiday periods,*

and as base towers that would provide reliable local mobile coverage they could also have the dual benefit meeting the criteria of

- c. mobile coverage along major transport routes*

as the Bells Line of Road is variously only five to ten kilometres away from Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine.

Our initial submission puts our views on the design of the Programme. We say the key assessment criteria should give the highest ranking for new investment in mobile coverage to

areas prone to experiencing emergencies – natural disasters, accidents, and incidents of serious medical events – events with which we are all too familiar.

Our problem is that Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine are very small communities. Graham Tribe and Richard Beattie met recently with Telstra's Sydney West Area General Manager, Andrew Bogg, and one his engineers to explain our communities' position and hear their comments. Perhaps the biggest problem is cost: a new mobile phone tower costs about \$400,000. To cover the cost before making a return Telstra needs an average of about 400 mobile phones logged on the tower at any one time. For this to happen in our area we would need to have a large number of vehicles with mobile phones on the Bells Line of Road to supplement the 70 or so local residents and contractors who might have their mobile phones on. Telstra would join with other telcos – Optus and/or Vodafone – if there was agreement sharing a tower along with government funding would make it viable. The tower needs to be in the highest location to make sure it covers the largest possible area and as much of the Bells Line of Road as possible. Despite what we hoped for, this means locating the tower at one of the fire stations is not feasible since the coverage would be less. Then there is our heritage area designation which would increase the cost for investigations and approvals of any installation, and there is often community resistance to towers in prominent or sensitive areas.

Nevertheless, our Federal Member of Parliament, Louise Markus, has had a leading role with the establishment of the Mobile Coverage Programme. She has nominated Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine to be included for consideration in the Programme and was most appreciative of our submission (which is available on the Mt Wilson website). BMCC Mayor Mark Greenhill also wrote to the Government to express Council's support for our submission. While we will do everything we can to have a tower or towers built to improve local mobile coverage, the Telstra advice was that there are steps to take that can significantly improve reception in areas that do get some signal. Details of the advice will appear in an article in the April issue of *The Mounts*.

Mr Bogg also undertook to have a close look at the problem of some people in Mt Wilson who have applied for an ADSL internet service and not been able to get one.

Bowens's Creek Road and Bridge and Mt. Irvine Road in the Hawkesbury LGA

The issues of Bowen's Creek Road on our side – the BMCC side of the bridge – and its extension, Mt Irvine Road on the Hawkesbury City Council side have not made the progress we would like. BMCC has regraded the Mt Irvine side but not yet fixed the drainage to prevent a further washaway as happened in February 2013. There has been no progress with Hawkesbury Council's resolution last August that it work with BMCC in "a joint approach (to) be made to the NSW Government seeking financial assistance to reinstate the road and bridge".

Peter Raines asked for military assistance to repair the road after the October fire but the ADF was unable to help because the work was "assessed as a significant Engineering task and . . . (with) the commitments our Army and Air Force Engineering personnel have to the

Transition programme in Afghanistan and other overseas areas, we simply do not have the available professional resources and equipment to assist.”

Road Sealing

The BMCC project to reshape, grade and bitumen seal the roads and lanes in Mt Wilson is nearing completion. Council brought in a huge pile of gravel and road base for the job. The roads were graded and new road base laid down. Wynnes Rock Road was the first to be done. Blocked drains were cleared. Du Fours Rocks Road has been resealed after being in really bad shape last year. Before the road could be sealed, a special contractor was brought in to apply a bitumen gutter onto the embankment on Farrer Road West. It was finished well with a culvert to take the water away. Farrer Road West will be sealed in a few weeks' time after a little more grading work is completed. Farrer Road East has been graded – it may need a little more work – and it will be sealed. Then the work will be finished in Mt Irvine on Danes Way with the road to be sealed too. When the work is complete it will no longer be necessary for council to regularly send out road repair grading crews and over time save considerable cost. The contract for the remainder of the sealing work, the Farrer roads and Danes Way, is expected to be let shortly.

The contractor will be given a list of the people who have asked for a quote on their driveways and the contractor can be expected to make arrangements to meet on site to understand the work required to be quoted. All the work, on the public roads and private driveways, is planned to be completed before it becomes too cold for bitumen laying to be done.

Community Service Requests

Repair and maintenance work undertaken by Council following applications for Community Service Requests – CSRs – initiated by the Progress Association include:

- The landslip on Mt Irvine Road below Wynstay – a new gabion embankment has been built.
- At the Jefferson Bridge over Waterfall Creek damaged and missing timbers have been replaced.

Outstanding CSRs include:

- The replacement this winter of the elms removed last year from The Avenue with 12 advanced Green Beech trees planted to complement others in The Avenue.
- The Five Mile – repaint the faded white lines, and clear vegetation obscuring roadside markers.
- Repair road edge washaways, especially on The Avenue below Church Lane, and install an asphalt gutter to improve drainage outside the Village Hall.
- Secure the Council dump area at the bottom of the zig zag with a gate.

Endeavour Energy

Endeavour Energy has recently been carrying out further upgrades to the electricity infrastructure with the installation of additional grounding of transformers on power poles in Waterfall Road, The Avenue and Wynnes Rocks Road.

Christmas Party The Yuletide season kicked off with our Christmas party on the last Saturday in November. The early date seems to work well as a good crowd came along and everyone appeared to thoroughly enjoy themselves.

To Conclude...

We've had a good six months:

- Mt Wilson was saved from the bushfire
- The village remains in pretty good shape
- Our relationship with Council is good
- We are engaged with the Mobile Coverage Programme
- The dirt roads have nearly all been sealed
- The failing elms in The Avenue are to be replaced
- Storm damage has been repaired

Business Arising from the Report

4.1 Graham Thompson reported rabbits have moved into Cathedral Reserve and requested an elimination programme before they get worse. The Committee will take it on, investigating the issue of use of rabbit in public areas.

4.2 Elizabeth Montano asked for information on progress of the Bowen's Creek Road issue. There has been no communication between the two Councils involved.

4.3 Susie Hope warned of the excessive quotes given to private residents for laying bitumin in private driveways. She advised that wire be used to cover boards placed on the Waterfall Track to prevent slipping in the wet. This is in hand already. She informed the meeting that Baz Lurhmann has been supportive of the Australian film industry and Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine despite the excessive rain while filming.

4.4 Ted Griffin advised that when applying for ADSL don't use the usual approach but to apply through Andrew Bogg.

5. GENERAL BUSINESS

5.1. Roza Sage MP addressed the meeting, expressing her pleasure to be in attendance. She explained the redistribution of the State electoral seats and commended Richard Beattie and all who made submissions.

With regard to the fires, she commended everyone in the community. Roza was based at the time in the lower mountains and could not get to the upper mountains until after the fires. 211 houses were lost in the mountains the worse figure ever. She visited Carisbrook and was horrified at the extent of the fire. The RFS did an enormously wonderful job and the resilience of the community is amazing.

Bowens Creek Bridge – Roza is liaising with District RFS but there is little happening there due to the fires. She will continue to work at it.

The transfer of title of the land the RFS wants for the shed extension is close. The process of working with Department of Lands and Native Title takes time.

As part of the Community Building Relationships programme, Roza gets \$200,000 for the whole electorate. BMCC applied for \$150,000 for the Village Hall, which was far too much to grant. She has suggested to someone on Council that if applications for smaller amounts were made there would be a more favourable outcome.

5.2. Judy Tribe (Village Hall Committee Chairman) thanked Roza and said that she had also spoken to the appropriate person in Council, who seems more prepared now to apply for grants in sections. Meanwhile, the Council money for the work and community fundraising money has been quarantined for the project.

Judy explained that the hall is owned by BMCC but managed by the community committee under Council authority. The Committee works hard to manage and improve hall facilities, but needs support from the community.

5.3 Diana Landsberg announced the first Mount Wilson Autumn Festival to be held on 26th April, saying that if it is well supported it may become an annual event. In and around the hall there will be a market, John Hardy will conduct a historical tour of the Turkish Baths and Church. There will be a “Meet the Authors” session with local authors, Tyrrels Dry Ridge Estate will conduct a wine tasting and sales session and there will be a sausage sizzle. In the evening a concert with local artists will be held.

5.4 Alison Halliday said that she is updating the history of the War Memorial and encourage people to come to the 2104 Remembrance Day Service as it is the centenary of the start of World War 1.

6. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

The next meeting, the AGM will be held on Saturday 20th September, 2014.

The meeting closed at 6.35 p.m. Everyone was invited to stay for drinks and cheese and biscuits.

Signed as a true record

Richard Beattie.

Chairman