

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING MT WILSON PROGRESS ASSOCIATION INC.

**Held on Saturday, 11th April, 2015
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 Nancy Fox, Ted Griffin and Lorraine Barrett. In the temporary absence of Moira Green the minutes were taken by Alison Halliday. The Chairman then went on with his introduction.

As a result of the Special General Meeting scheduled for 6.15 pm, I will adjourn this General Meeting just before then to consider the proposed new constitution and after then if necessary resume this meeting.

Unfortunately our Secretary Moira Green is unable to be with us just now but Moira hopes to join the meeting a little later. As most know, with great regret, Moira and Ron are moving to Springwood leaving an indelible imprint on Mount Wilson. The many, many hours and days Moira and Ron have given to community service in Mount Wilson has been extraordinarily generous. Ron for a good number of years was the chairman of the Village Hall Committee after the hall resumed its place in the community following being closed down for an extended period and repaired by council in the early 2000s. Where would we have been if it was not for Ron stepping in to conduct Remembrance Day services when the minister was unavailable? Moira has been the most wonderful, diligent, thorough and reliable secretary of the Progress Association. We are very lucky to have had Moira provide such a secure foundation for the Progress Association for such a long period – 13 years since 2002. And there is much else she did whether it was RFB catering or on so many Saturdays opening the hall for the all-too-few people who would wish to borrow or return books to the library. This is not quite a farewell to Moira and Ron. Moira has offered to continue to be our secretary for a little longer as she and Ron remain in Mt Wilson. At the suggestion some of her work might be shared out, she wouldn't hear of it! Thank you Moira in absentia – Moira's will be a hard act to follow.

I am delighted Lorraine Barrett has joined the Committee following the resignation of Brian Abrahams. Welcome Lorraine!

This is the first time in many years Brian has not been a member of our Committee. Brian's resignation brings to an end an extensive term of service with the Association where he was particularly responsible for organising the Remembrance Day events and our annual Clean Up Australia Day rubbish collection. We'll miss Brian's experience and his anecdotes.

We have new members, Sue and Steve Woolfenden of Trelm in Hay Lane, and Matt Mason of Sefton Cottage in Church Lane. Welcome!

And we will never forget the thanks due to our volunteer First Responders and members of the RFS who give extraordinary service. Forever – thanks to them all!

I'd like to mention the passing of Alan Gunn. Alan was an icon of the area. Mount Wilson is just not the same place without seeing Alan on his tractor slashing verges, moving logs in Cathedral Reserve, or driving around with him talking about the next job. He did so much for the Mount Wilson Progress Association acting as the agent of the Blue Mountains City Council to maintain the appearance of the village. As well as tractor work he planted trees, did stonework, cleared countless fallen trees and branches from the roads after storms, and cleaned up mess left by picnickers and campers. He constantly came up with good ideas for how to improve the area. He and his sons Stewart and David did work for many of us – fencing, earthmoving, tree clearing and much more. We miss Alan and express our condolences to his family and friends. In recognition of Alan's service to the community the Progress Association will extend with new plants the wonderful group of waratahs Alan planted on Anniversary Walk below Wynstay towards Davies Lane. I'm very pleased Alan's widow; Ellie is able to be with us this evening.

On a happy note it is wonderful to have another Raines arrive in the community. Jack Mathie Raines was born to Linda and Peter in November and is a brother for Bill. Jack's middle name "Mattie" is in honour of Mr and Mrs Davies, Matt and Flo, who lived at Woodstock, in Davies Lane, when Peter was a young boy. The Davies treated Peter as though he was their own son. I think it is wonderful that the Davies' place in Mount Wilson history is further cemented through another Mount Wilson generation. The Davies and Woodstock were my introduction to Mt Wilson in about 1952.

I would also like to acknowledge the significant contribution the former local member of the state parliament made to Mount Wilson. Over the last four years, Roza Sage often attended our formal meetings and social gatherings. She supported our successful efforts to remain in the state seat of the Blue Mountains rather than be transferred, as the State Electoral Commission first proposed, to the adjoining seat down the mountain – Hawkesbury. And she was instrumental in our being awarded the funds necessary to finally fill the piggy bank made up our donations and Council's contribution for the extension of the toilet and store room area for this hall.

2. ATTENDANCE

Committee: Richard Beattie (President), Alison Halliday (Vice President), Libby Raines (Treasurer), Moira Green (Secretary), Nancy Fox, Ted Griffin and Lorraine Barrett.

Other Members: Judy and Graham Tribe, Steve and Sue Woolfenden, David and Sarah Howell, Loretta Beattie, Mary Holt, Robin and John Leonard, Stephen List, Rosie Walsh, Susie Hope, Owen Havilland, Alex Halliday, Diana and Joe Landsberg, Jack Davies, Jill Hoskin, Wendy Holland, Barry Freeman, Maureen and Bill Ryan, Deb Griffin, Marilyn Laving, Philip and Jane Beeby, Joe and Elizabeth Montano, Neville Whan, Beth Raines.

Visitors: Councillors Don McGregor and Sarah Shrubbs, the Secretary of the Mount Irvine Progress Association Bruce Kerrigan, Ellie Gunn, Duncan Peppercorn, Mary Reynolds and Tim and Kim Gow.

Apologies: Louise Markus (MP), Mark Bancroft (MIPA), Ron Green, Robert Chesney, Tom and Suzanne Bassett, George and Jane Mayne, Thom and Johanna Renton, Peter and Linda Raines, Peter Laving, Graham and Beverley Thompson, James Stein, Stephen and Margaret Dean and Helen Freeman.

3. TREASURER'S REPORT

Libby Raines presented the following report:

Mount Wilson Progress Association Inc.

Statement of Accounts 1-10-14 to 1-3-2015

Working Account

Receipts:-

B.M.C.C. - maintenance	5,500.00
Membership	800.00
Website - payments for usage	300.00
A.T.O - GST Refunds	837.00
Rabbait - payments for usage by members	80.00
Donation towards drinks for Christmas party	150.00
Market Day payment from stall holders	320.00
Interest	<u>369.55</u>
Total Receipts:-	<u>\$8,356.55</u>

Expenditure:-

Peter Raines -Maintenance	2,970.00
Micah Fink - maintenance	1,100.00
David Gunn-Watering of new beech trees	400.00
Finsure Insurance -	1,440.00
Oley Media Website Maintenance	490.50
C.W. Print - copying, and printing	178.99
Service at War Memorial 11 November 2014	225.00
Drinks for Christmas Party	403.81
Emma Leslie film for website	13,00.00
RFS Grante for 2013 fires, passed onto RFS	9,070.60
A.T.O. - GST payments	429.00
Department of Fair Trading - annual fee	53.00
Bank Fees	<u>....59.50</u>
Total Expenditure	<u>\$29,815.40</u>
Total receipts	8,356.55
- Total expenditure	29,815.40
	= (21,458.85)
+ Carried forward	25,328.46
	<u>\$3,869.61</u>

Bank Balance 1/3/2015 \$3,869.61

Fixed Term Deposits \$20,000.00

Libby thanked Alison Halliday for the payment for the cost of printing the *History of the Mt Wilson, Mt Irvine and Bell Soldiers' War Memorial* booklet

It was moved by Barry Freeman, seconded by David Howell that the report be approved. It was approved.

4. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

What a wonderful summer and early autumn we have had – good rain followed by plenty of sun and hasn't everything grown? Mount Wilson could hardly be much more alive, well and full of vitality with, for example, the Progress Association's first Autumn Festival coming up next Saturday. The photo on the brochure was well-intended but mistaken in revealing ivy on the gate post. Ivy is a real weed on the mountain.

Committee Matters

As usual I'll start with Committee matters and the first is the issue of our assets. This sound and light equipment [projector and audio equipment] is ours but like all such technology it is coming to the end of its life. This has also been recognised by the Village Hall committee.

Of much greater significance that has not been addressed for years is our ownership of the two acres of land opposite, the Marcus Clark Reserve. The MWPA has been the owner of this land since July 2006. The transfer from the former trust ownership was facilitated during Graham Tribe's time as president and with assistance from Maurice May and others.

Although a walking trail and flora signage has been developed as originally envisaged when the property was acquired, no further use has been made of the land. The walking trails are overgrown in places. The Committee is currently considering matters such as public liability insurance. Ted Griffin has spent much time on this issue as he says to protect the Association in the event of "bees stinging or snakes biting" let alone tree branches falling on someone! The committee is currently looking at all aspects of our responsibilities and opportunities the land might have to offer the community.

Emergency access to our area when Mount Wilson Road is closed by fallen trees as in the 2011 wind storm or fire as during the 2013 State Mine Fire has been a long-time contentious issue. Mount Irvine Road from Bilpin to Mount Wilson was opened in January 1935. In the 1940s American engineers assisted with the construction of the Bells Line of Road as an evacuation route for people in Sydney in the event of a Japanese invasion. The new road was to be an alternative to Mount Irvine Road. As the tide of the war turned and the Americans were assigned elsewhere, work slowed meaning there was good time before the new road was finished and took over from Mount Irvine Road. Now the RFS has taken over the task of winning support from the emergency authorities and local, state and federal governments to have the old route restored to a condition as least as good as necessary for RFS, ambulance and police vehicles to use. David Howell will be talking about this later in the meeting.

There has been ongoing success for the RFS. In recognition of the outstanding community engagement plan – pre-prepared, tested, implemented and followed-up with a lessons-learnt study – the brigade was a joint winner of the National 2014 Resilient Australia Award. Beth Raines, Kathleen Oakes, the federal Minister for Justice Michael Keenan, and Kim Gow were there at the ceremony at the War Memorial in Canberra. A Red Cross project in the Hunter was the other winner.

On top of that, our former local state member, Roza Sage, presented Brigade Captain Beth Raines with the recognition of being the Blue Mountains Local Woman of the Year for her outstanding leadership. (Applause)

The Progress Association was also successful with a grant application on behalf of the RFS for a post State Mine fire NSW and Commonwealth government grant program. The application was for signs aimed to improve safety and property protection by communicating to residents their responsibility for fire preparation, alerts for current risks, and a timetable for action. We also have new signs to clearly identify locations for emergency incident management. All up – \$9,070 worth of temporary signs!

Despite the mist and drizzle, Remembrance Day 2014, marking the centenary of the declaration of the First World War, was celebrated in Mount Wilson at the War Memorial. Ron Green delivered the address and conducted the service. The choir's enthusiasm and voices were in no way diminished by the damp weather. Richard Prentice laid the wreath. Later in the Village Hall, Alison Halliday continued the tradition of presenting biographies of two of those soldiers whose names appear on the War Memorial. Alison also revised and arranged the printing of a new edition of the *Mount Wilson War Memorial History*.

Important in the village too are social and other events like the Melbourne Cup lunch organised by the Village Hall Committee, our joint Christmas party with the RFS and the active group of parishioners who attend St George's Church. There will be no Yulefest this year because of work being carried out on the Village Hall.

Good communications within our small society and the wider world are all important helping to create strong social and community ties and making information about Mount Wilson available to people interested and who might like to visit. Tim Gow has continued the excellent work as editor of *The Mounts* and Graham Tribe works on the website recently adding our new Facebook link and refreshing the home page with the Autumn Festival information. Thanks Graham and Tim.

Our constitution – both the current one and unchanged in the proposed new one – provides a means for us to come together and express views and discuss issues relating to Mount Wilson; and to express and represent the views of members, carry out your wishes as far as possible, and cooperate where desirable with local, state and other authorities.

The money we receive from the Blue Mountains City Council is the Association's major source of funds with membership subscriptions at present being the only other regular revenue. The Council money is far from enough for our contractors to maintain the reserves, verges, street trees, walking tracks and the removal of the endless fallen branches whether over roads, tracks or broken fences. Over a very long period, Alan Gunn did much of this work with his much used equipment at a cost to the Association well below today's competitive heavy equipment maintenance work cost. We will be approaching Council with a submission detailing the work Council has agreed should be done with it costed at current rates. Inevitably this will be a request for a substantial increase on the \$22-28,000 we receive presently. Perhaps two or three times as much.

In the meantime, since Alan's death in October Council has on one occasion sent a crew for a day to do some maintenance. Since then Peter Raines and Micah Fink have been able to do some of the necessary work but we still have in front of us the task of getting adequate funding for all the work that needs to be done in a timely manner to have the Council-owned public areas of Mount Wilson looking as good as they possibly can.

We allowed Silva Plana literally to go to seed in an attempt to have the ground recover its cover after the damage done during its occupation for the sound stage for *The Great Gatsby* production. The end result is now pretty good.

For many years the Bush Care Group had as many as 15 volunteers meeting regularly to take weeds like holly, ivy, agapanthus, honeysuckle and jasmine from public land. Unfortunately the group is sometimes now down to two or perhaps only one with Libby's work spraying the eucalypt saplings along Mount Irvine Road evident at present. I'm afraid this is a sign of the changing demographic in Mount Wilson. It is also a sign we all need to control invasive weeds on our own properties that can migrate to the bush through bird activity and climbing fences from private land.

In the absence of sufficient volunteers and with little litter or other rubbish not already picked up in Mount Wilson, the Committee decided to discontinue involvement with the Clean Up Australia organisation.

[The President's report was interrupted at this point, 6.15 pm to allow for the Special General Meeting. It resumed at 6.45pm]

I have mentioned the objects of the constitution and especially the "means for us to come together and express views and discuss issues relating to Mount Wilson" in the context of what the Committee has been doing over the past 12 months and will be doing in the future. The community survey we did in 2012 had these key results:

Q6 Do you think consideration should be given to **working to increase the number of visitors to Mt Wilson**, particularly targeting people who one day might like to become residents. **Response: 73% said Yes.**

Q7 In the interest of increasing visitor numbers among people who may in future become residents would you be happy to see: **More local B&Bs – 73%; A local café – 91%; Marketing and promotion encouraging garden visitors, picnickers and walkers – 79%;**

Q11 Currently the Mt Wilson community has committed members, many well over retirement age, running and working for the Progress Association, Fire Brigade, Historical Society, Village Hall, St George's Church, and other groups. In the absence of requests from younger people to join and lead these groups, **are you concerned about the future effectiveness and local control of such core community activities? Response: 76% said Yes.**

The *second* of the initiatives we have taken to fulfil the wishes expressed in the survey is next weekend's Autumn Festival – the Progress Association's first fundraising activity in many

years. Nancy Fox has taken on leadership of the project and has a great team of supporters. Way back in the early 1950s the Association had big ideas – they built this hall! We hope for good weather on the day.

The *first* of the initiatives was a response to the 79 per cent of you in favour of marketing and promotion, encouraging garden visitors, picnickers and walkers – the web video *Mount Wilson – Discover the Beauty*. Thanks to Peter and Marilyn Laving. Our web site only established in 2011 has now had more than 945,000 content view hits! We have had a very positive response from the community after people have watched the video and will be working on further initiatives which will be brought to you.

Government and Local Government Issue

The Federal Government has under way its national black spot Mobile Coverage Programme that will provide \$100 million support funding for areas with poor or no mobile wireless, voice or broadband data service. As you know, we have made a submission pointing out Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine meet the requirements: small communities, prone to experiencing natural disasters and in locations with unique mobile phone coverage problems. The Department of Communications is saying this week the telcos, Telstra, Optus and Vodaphone, have until Thursday (16 April 2015) to submit their initial proposals for the new towers they would fund with assistance from the government. The original period to apply to be considered for better coverage was extended by a month and there are now about 6,000 applications. I wrote to Paul Fletcher, who has political oversight of the programme, and is the parliamentary secretary responsible to communications minister Malcolm Turnbull for the project. Fletcher replied this week pointing out many of the 6,000 location requests are nearby so the real number of towers required is smaller. He expects between 250 and 300 base stations will be built. The first locations approved by the government will be announced in June. Fletcher has agreed to meet to discuss the issue as it affects Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine.

At this point a question was asked from the floor about whether the towers ran on electricity. ‘Yes’ was the answer. It was also pointed out that the tower on Mt Tomah nearly failed during the State Mine Fire. A generator offered to our community was far too small to be useful.

BMCC Issues

Work council has done in the last six months brings to an end the saga of the replacement of the failing elms in The Avenue with the green beach trees planted as replacements. These were watered to begin with, and have benefitted from the recent rain.

Then, again after five years we have been talking with council, Peter Laving has succeeded getting a gate placed on the council dump. At least there should not be further illegal dumping of timber and vegetation creating fire hazards under the power lines.

Power lines are also a serious problem in Mount Irvine Road down from Davies Lane where Endeavour Energy’s contractor Asplundh has butchered the golden elms. This young avenue

of copper beech and golden elms, planted in the 1960s, is unique in Australia and should be allowed to grow to its full magnificence. In other countries the authorities would ensure such a special, beautiful vista is preserved and maintained – not mutilated. The little, slow-growing trees near Davies Lane were hacked mercilessly. We will approach Endeavour again and ask for the lines to be put underground. It will be helpful if as many people as possible write to Endeavour and copy BMCC. We will email the details to make it as easy as possible for the community to send a message to Endeavour about the destruction and the need for *undergrounding* the cables, not just bundling!

At the general meeting last year Graham Thompson raised the problem of rabbits in Cathedral Reserve. Could we use Rabbait to get rid of them? Council came back with a firm “NO”, the danger to the public, visiting dogs and native animals would be too great. Let’s hope this winter might help get any rabbits still there. Still for private properties George Mayne continues to keep a stock available for purchase.

Outstanding matters Peter Laving is speaking with council about include:

- The 2010 request for safety work in The Avenue actioned in 2015 with barriers put up but now taken away without the work being done! This work is promised to be done by end June 2015.
- Installing a fenced compound behind the fire shed to store spare bins now placed in Cathedral Reserve to accommodate the heavy autumn visitor load. There were 21 bins all filled one recent weekend. We have been assured that they will not be taken away.
- Installing hand sanitizers in the toilets to lessen the problem of people using toilet paper to wipe their hands then dropping it on the floor
- Obtaining additional toilets for the peak visitor season and having them cleaned regularly. (We have learned the Council has no minuted or financial record of temporary toilets being placed at Founders Corner in peak time.)

Summary:

The Committee will:

- Work with BMCC to significantly increase BMCC funding for maintaining council property.
- Obtain all necessary insurance for MWPA assets and activities.
- Continue to work to meet community wishes from the 2012 survey.
- Maintain sound relations with BMCC as projects get done.

and

- Please write to Endeavour about the golden elm butchery.
- Come along and enjoy the Autumn Festival next Saturday.

This report will be published and available on our web site.

Business Arising from the Report

4.1 It was pointed out that the first question in the survey that the President referred to in his report asked if people wanted to keep Mt Wilson “as it is”; and 85% responded to “keep it essentially as it is”.

4.2 Given the desecration of the golden elm trees in Mt Irvine Road there was general discussion concerning the possibility of cables being placed underground, or bundled. It was pointed out that bundling in Church Lane had not prevented those trees from being badly pruned. The cables in Church Lane had been specifically put in to preserve the trees, coming from the supplier’s environmental budget.

The following resolution was put to the meeting:

This meeting of the Mt Wilson Progress Association on 11 April 2015 resolves, in the light of the disfigurement of the avenue of copper beeches and golden elm trees in Mt Irvine Road, Mt. Wilson from The Avenue to Hillcrest Lane; to request Endeavour Energy as a matter of urgency to place the overhead electricity cables underground in the vicinity of this unique vista to allow the trees to develop to the full glorious maturity envisaged when they were planted in the early 1960s.

Proposer: Alison Halliday, seconded Richard Beattie. Passed unanimously.

4.3 David Howell presented an update of the situation concerning the restoration of Mt Irvine Road in the Hawkesbury Local Government Area and Bowens Creek Road in the Blue Mountains LGA. There have been several meetings with various NSW government representatives and councils and it was decided (locally) that the RFS would carry the action forward. He said it was necessary for all levels of government to be involved to re-build the road. The question had been asked as to what sort of road did we want. The consensus seemed to be that it should be a route for 4-wheeled drive emergency vehicles only. The Blue Mountains fire authority indicated support for this type of access with gates stopping any other use. It was also pointed out that if all necessary support was obtained there is money available in emergency services. BMCC Councillor Don McGregor pointed out that the police did not support any such action, wanting the route to be a fire trail only. It was said this would then place the route under the control of the NSW National Parks authority. It was added that we had now to engage with a new state member, and Elizabeth Montano emphasised that this issue was not a political issue but a community safety issue and therefore deserved bi-partisan support. The meeting thanked Elizabeth Montano for her work on this issue.

General Business

There was no General Business.

6. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

The meeting closed at 7.25 p.m. Everyone was invited to stay for drinks and cheese and biscuits.

Signed as a true record

Richard Beattie.

Chairman