

Draft Chair Person's report

The new year began with a set back. Our attempts to get road safety issues addressed seemed to get nowhere. We were advised Council would not spend any money on upgrading the footpath to the school and the Minister for Transport fobbed us off with respect to road safety issues on the Lobethal road. But we persisted. As a result we find that the path to the school has been upgraded and Council is discussing ways in which we can create safe walkways between Lenswood and Forest Range. Mark Goldsworthy has been prepared to assist in paying for the printing and distribution of the Road Safety survey – results have been collated and we will have a series of motions about these shortly. But what is particularly heartening is the attitude of Council. We had a meeting with the CEO and the head of planning – in an ideal world they would like to see recreational cyclists banned from using not only Lobethal Road but Greenhill Road as well. We appreciate that governments have limited funds but if we can use our imagination to provide low cost solutions we will stand a better chance of getting something done – however, Council support does mean that we should be prepared to continue to push hard to ensure that road safety issues are addressed.

We also decided to put an extra effort into making sure the Harvest Festival was a success. A small group of us started planning immediately after the last AGM and as the event drew closer we found more and more people willing to assist. What is particularly heartening is that about 60 people gave up some of their time to make the day a success. The feedback we received was uniformly positive. I do want to single out the efforts of some people. Caroline Chaplin as our Festival co-ordinator spent long hours securing sponsors, arranging the bands and ensuring that we had sufficient stalls to make the event a success. The fact that she managed to bring Foodland on board meant that the Festival was promoted state-wide. It helped achieve one of the objectives of the festival to increase awareness of the significance of the local Apple and Pear Industry. Sam Perna is the other person who deserves a mention. Prior to coming to live here Sam spent 20 years as the Chair of the Wangaretta Field Days. His expertise meant that at comparatively short notice we were able to include a field day. He spent many hours cajoling businesses to take part – it was not only a financial success but added a much appreciated extra dimension to the festival.

The incoming committee will have to decide whether or not to continue with the festival. The results from the survey indicate that there is general agreement that it should serve three purposes: provide an opportunity for the community to get together, promote local industry and to raise funds – all three are equally important. It is also clear that in order to ensure that the whole community has the opportunity to participate it will need to be held on a Saturday.

In addition to the foregoing the Association organized a Quiz Night, a couple of busy bees and we drafted a submission for the Memorial Park to enable them to get \$2,000 as payment towards a much needed electricity upgrade. In a similar vein we have submitted an application for \$17,500 to enable us to restore the Forest Range Hall to its former glory.

We have also made representation to Council about the state of the Old Garage at Lenswood. We have advised that both Cam Stafford and I have approached the owner to see how we can get the place tidied up. Whilst he has been long on promises he is short on actions. Council feels that it is now at last in a situation where it can make a case in court that it has taken all reasonable steps to get the owner to comply with its directive to tidy up, hence a court order to force compliance is now more likely.

We can be pleased not just with what we have achieved but the range of those achievements and the impact that those achievements have had not just within the community but also outside of our community.

One of the challenges that communities face relate to the cost of insurance. We have received a quote for \$2800 to insure the Association. So far we have managed to structure our affairs to that we can piggy back on the insurance of other groups – The Harvest Festival comes under the umbrella of the Memorial park, a Busy Bee where we demolished part of the Forest range change shed was covered by the insurance that the Trustees have taken out. Nonetheless it remains a major problem – we have made several representations to Council arguing that Council should be able to take out some form of umbrella insurance to cover community groups. In raising this issue we have had considerable support from other community groups and associations. At one of these meetings one person recounted that they wanted to organize a walk as a fund raiser for the CFS. Excellent idea – but when they did their sums they found that before they would have needed to find the money for the insurance first. Council has acknowledged that insurance costs are a major problem and is currently looking at ways it can assist.

Likewise we have made representation to council that it needs to employ a senior person to take on the role of events co-ordination. Again I am pleased to report that Council has created a new position that of Director of Community Services to take on that role. Feedback from both Council and community groups has been that they appreciate the constructive criticisms the Association has made of Council policies.

To some this may seem a trivial thing but if our Association is perceived as making a constructive contribution then when we ask for support we are more likely to get a sympathetic hearing.

Last year's AGM was an opportunity for our community to become informed about proposals to gain World Heritage Listing for the Adelaide Hills. As an Association we have no control over whether such a listing will eventuate. However, some of us on the committee believe it important that the Association is part of the conversation about World Heritage listing for by being part of the conversation we can help set the agenda and ensure that decisions that are made will enhance our community not destroy the capacity of community members to pursue their livelihood.

The idea that the Association should also be the voice of the community is controversial. Part of the problem is that one of our shortcomings is that we have not had the resources to keep all members of the community abreast of the

various projects in which we are engaged. One way we could address that is to work through the various community groups that exist to ensure that people know what is going on. But that is a decision for the incoming committee.

For now it is sufficient to note that there are members who are not happy with the direction that the Association is taking. Although the direction that the association takes is shaped by the committee, it is the chairperson who as the public face of the Association has to accept responsibility for the actions or lack of action of the Association. I remain convinced that it is important for the Association to be the voice of the community – to work with the various voluntary groups in the Community: The CFS, The School, The Bowling Club, The Apple and Pear Growers, The Cherry Growers, the Memorial Park and the Forest Range Trustees to give help and support where needed. Perhaps our slogan ought to be: The Lenswood and Forest Range Community Association: Two names, One Community, One Voice.