



LINVILLE PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

2022/23 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As many of you would be aware, I am writing this report on the other side of the world after Jan and I left Linville in February to spend a few years travelling. So please forgive me for not being present for today's AGM.

First off, may I say that I hope today's meeting is a more civilised affair than what we witnessed 12 months ago. The behaviour of some members that day was disappointing to say the least, and I can only hope it will not be repeated today.

Linville Progress Association is a small organisation dedicated to the betterment of our village and district. It can only do that if its members - individually and collectively - are committed to working together towards a common goal.

As most of you would be aware, Gail Bawden was re-elected president at last year's AGM, with Carolyn Barker as secretary and Isobelle Torralba as treasurer. For personal reasons, Gail resigned from the presidency later in the year and I agreed to step into the position on a temporary basis until today's AGM.

A condition of me agreeing to take on the position was that the Management Committee be expanded to five people, and Gail volunteered to fill one of those roles, along with Deb Booker-Johnston.

Poor health then forced Gail to resign from the Management Committee late last year, leaving four members. Unfortunately, that made it difficult to continue with the volunteer coordination role I was keen for the two additional committee members to pursue.

I would like to suggest that the incoming executive maintain the five-member structure for the Management Committee as I believe it provides a broader focus and cross-section of opinions when decisions are being made. I would also urge the Management Committee to make volunteer coordination a key role of the two additional members.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Gail for her efforts on behalf of the association over recent years and hope she is able to once again play an active role when her health allows.

The past 12 months has been full of significant achievements for the association and the Linville district. As usual, the hard work has been left to a small core group, but I believe we have achieved many good things and to some extent bridged the gap between those who put their hands up to do the hard yards and those who prefer to be less active.



I don't think we will ever really connect with those people who prefer to sit on the sidelines and criticise or spread misinformation, but unfortunately that is the nature of many small communities and groups such as our association. I only hope that for the good of the Linville district in the future, those who choose to undermine this association's efforts remain in the minority.

Looking back on the past 12 months, one of the big successes was the annual Linville Heritage and Arts Festival in November, which was run by a small committee headed by my wife Jan. That committee spent six months preparing for the big weekend which saw 42 events held – from the return of the Qld Symphony Orchestra's Angel Strings Quintet for "Under The Stars Revisited" to the inaugural Linville Bush Poetry Competition, the Linville Art Prize, community markets, live music, a fashion parade, chainsaw wood carving, camp oven cooking ... the list goes on.

The festival was a huge success and ran without a hitch. The feedback from within the community and from the hundreds of visitors to the town was overwhelmingly positive. None of this would have been possible without the hard work of Jan and her committee and the involvement of Linville's businesses – The Linville Hotel, the Linville Store and Café, Total Sawmilling and Timber (Linville Sawmill) and The Picnic Society. A big thank you to all of them.

It was also pleasing to see the students and parents of Linville State School become involved in the festivities and I thank principal Jane Dean and P&C president Lisa Kunde for making that happen.

I would encourage whoever is steering the association for the next 12 months to make the Linville Heritage and Arts Festival a priority on the 2023 calendar. I believe it is a great thing for the Linville district – not only for the number of visitors it brings to the town but also the sense of community spirit it helps foster – and would encourage more members to become involved.

I know there is a push to hold the festival every two years but fail to see why it should not be an annual event, as long as there is a committee of people willing to do the hard work involved in organising it.

Another feature of the past year has been the ongoing development of the Linville Community Garden. The opening of Stage Three of the garden and the unveiling of Rosie O'Brien's beautiful stained glass artwork "Resilience" in the lower corner was another highlight of the festival and it provided a stunning backdrop for Under The Stars Revisited.

The behind-the-scenes work in the garden has been particularly pleasing. Our Work For The Dole participant Chris Hamer has helped keep the garden looking lovely, while its ongoing care has been a labour of love for Rob Connor and, more recently, Molly Talay, who has spent countless hours there watering, seeding and tending the plants.

In more recent times, Jenny Anastasi and her son Ben have rolled up their sleeves and with some innovative thinking and plenty of hard work, have begun making changes that I would encourage you to see for yourself today, if you haven't visited the garden recently.

Along with the community garden, the Linville Progress Hall is the main asset of the association and the community, and it has undergone some significant changes in the past 12 months.



Thanks to the hard work and generosity of Lionel Tinney, the wall beside the stage was rebuilt with new timber and I think you will agree looks significantly better. When he wasn't busy in the garden.

Chris Hamer carried out painting and minor structural work on the toilets, while a working bee just prior to the Heritage and Arts Festival gave the building a much-needed tidying.

During 2022 we managed to secure building insurance for the hall for the first time, thus protecting our most valuable community asset. Thank you to Ian Schipp for his generous donation to help us do this, as the building insurance fee is a heavy impost on a small organisation.

With an influx of new members prior to last year's AGM swelling our membership to more than 160, we decided to add an insurance levy to the annual membership fee to ensure the insurance costs could be met in future. Unfortunately, most of those new members have not renewed their memberships this year – for reasons best known to themselves – leaving the cost of building insurance an ongoing concern.

I would encourage the new executive, and members in general, to make finding a solution to this problem a top priority. It won't be solved by simply making vague statements about holding fundraisers. There needs to be a firm plan to which all members are committed in order to ensure the community's most valuable asset is protected.

The association has moved ahead with displaying the community's war-time memorabilia in two display cases which, I hope, will be the first of several purchased to provide a fitting display for what is an important part of the district's history.

In recent months, the hall has played host to several events including Linville State School's end-of-year presentation night, the wedding of a local couple, the Saved By The Bells concert and workshop and an Energex community information session.

Community BBQ breakfasts have continued to be held at least every month as one of the association's key fundraisers. I would encourage the incoming committee to expand this program to fortnightly during the summer months and focus on attracting visitors using the camping ground. I would also encourage more members to become involved as volunteer helpers at the BBQs as they have so much potential as fundraisers, but it often seems to be the same people doing the work.

A special thanks to our treasurer, Isobelle Torralba, who has spent hundreds of dollars from her own pocket over the past 12 months to provide raffle prizes for the community BBQs and other special events, such as the Under The Stars concert. Thank you, Isobelle.

Over the past 12 months, the association has successfully applied for more than \$16,000 worth of grants including RADF grants of \$5629 for the Angel Strings concert and \$2525 for the Saved By The Bells concert and workshop; a Community Assistance Grant of \$1761 for the pizza oven and garden pergolas; a Disaster Recovery Grant of \$5500 for the Resilience mosaic in the community garden and a Rates Discount Community Assistance Grant of \$1500.

A significant achievement by the Management Committee, I think you will agree.



Obviously, I will not be seeking re-election today, but I extend my best wishes to whoever is elected to the role, as well as his/her fellow members of the executive team.

I hope the incoming committee and members recognise the benefits of the direction the association has taken in recent years and focus on working towards making it an inclusive, energetic and positive organisation while ignoring the negativity which some in the community appear so focused on.

All the best.

DAMIAN BATHERSBY

22 March 2023