

# MERRIJIG PUBLIC HALL AGENDA

Monday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2007, 7pm

Merrijig Public Hall

NO	ITEM	COMMENT
1	Welcome	
2	Call for apologies	
3	Call for General Business: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>nambahos</i></li> <li>• <i>- wood stove</i></li> <li>•</li> </ul>	
4	Confirm previous minutes	
5	Business arising from minutes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hall Upgrade,               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Written submissions</li> <li>2. Time frame</li> <li>3. Funding</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Trusteeship</li> <li>• Hire of Equipment, Subcommittee Report</li> <li>• Report from Jenny O'Brien on Conference</li> <li>• October Ball</li> </ul>	Pricing Structure
6	Correspondence <u>IN:</u>  <u>OUT:</u> E-mail to Poppe Davis.	Re: decision on trusteeship
7	Financial Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May</li> <li>• June</li> <li>• Accounts for payment</li> </ul>	
8	General Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	
9	Next meeting	
10	Close meeting	



Minutes of Merrijig Hall Inc. Meeting  
Monday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2007

1. **Open meeting:** 7.10 pm

**Attendees:** Chris Dunlop, Noel Willaton, Maz Dowling, Sen Weir, Ted Lovick  
Jenny O'Brien, Loc Sumpter, Dot Corcoran, Kerrie Purcell.

**Chair:** Chris Dunlop

2. **Apologies:** Marie Selstrom

3. **Call for General Business:**

- Community Building Symposium
- Commercial oven
- Wood stove
- AGM
- Extraordinary meeting

4. **Confirm previous minutes:**

**MOTION:** That the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2007 are a true and accurate record of the meeting with the amendment of –  
HALL UPGRADE: 'it was discussed placing the plans on the hall' instead of 'It was discussed by the committee about placing the plans on the exterior of the hall.'

Spelling correction – TRUSTEES: 'conversations' instead of 'conservations'

**Moved:** Maz Dowling, **Seconded:** Jenny O'Brien, **Carried**

5. **Business arising from minutes:**

**Hall Upgrade:**

*(Hall upgrade sub committee held a meeting prior to this meeting)*

Marie Selstrom had requested documentation about Carl Barton's role, Maz Dowling has that documentation from Kaylene Conrick and will e-mail out to committee.

4 submissions were received. Refer Sub committee.

Peter Parry-Fielder & Maz Dowling thought it would be a good idea to create a flyer for the AGM. The flyer would include the plans for refurbishment, our mission statement and the outcome we hope to achieve.

Maz Dowling and Jenny O'Brien to create the flyer.

**Time Frame:**

Maz Dowling has taken notes from the Hall upgrade sub committee meeting and will discuss these notes with Carl Barton.

Carl Barton will start on costing after his meeting with Maz Dowling.



## Business arising from Minutes continued...Hall upgrade

Final plans are to be signed off by committee at extraordinary meeting before AGM.

Plans will be tabled at AGM.

Work will commence on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2007, after 6<sup>th</sup> October Ball. No further bookings for the hall will be accepted from this date until after completion.

### **Funding:**

Maz Dowling has met with RDV who have agreed to allocate \$222,000 to the project, thus giving us a total of \$315,00.

Uschi Steedman has prepared a detailed submission of the Merrijig Hall & Community to accompany the applications. A copy of this is to be e-mailed out to committee members.

Maz Dowling requires the following for the applications:

Copy of Title

Copy of Declaration of Trust

Copy of Insurance policies

RDV & Mansfield Shire have discussed with Maz Dowling that it would be a good idea if the money allocated to us from RACV, \$5,000 'communications donation' be banked into the Hall account. Thus giving the Hall financial balance an increase to meet our allocated target of \$15,000 in cash towards the refurbishment project.

The applications for the funding to RDV and NEVACC will be completed by Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> July, 2007 and both will be lodged after that date.

### **Trustees:**

Ted Lovick, Poppe Davis, Peter Howarth and Chris Dunlop held a trustee's meeting. Poppe had initially felt 'put out' due to the way discussions about the trusteeship had taken place, however after a clear explanation to Poppe, this issue was resolved.

Chris Dunlop has spoken to David Parsons (local solicitor) whose advice was that 'Trusteeship was really no longer an applicable arrangement in this day & age.'

Poppe Davis' main concern is - should the committee go into recession, what will the outcome be? Poppe would like to express her concerns about this issue at the AGM. The Committee agreed that it would be a good idea and the Hall could put forward their views, refer to 'Statement of Rules' take a vote at AGM and seal the decision.

### **Hall & Equipment Hire:**

There is nothing to report at this stage.



Business arising from Minutes continued...

**Communities in Control conference:**

Jenny O'Brien provided a written report to the committee of her attendance at this conference. Jenny would like to speak at the AGM about the Merrijig Community. Jenny also discussed the suggestion of a website. Chris Dunlop responded that Louise Jacob has created a web site – [www.merrijig.com.au](http://www.merrijig.com.au) This web site also has a public notices section that the hall could utilize.

**October 6<sup>th</sup> Ball:** Leave this item to the next incoming committee.

**6. Correspondence:**

**IN:**

**Mansfield Shire:**

Advice of \$500 for use of Hall during bushfires.

**OUT:**

**Poppe Davis:**

E-mail: apology for sequence of events regarding trustee information and invite to a trustee meeting.

**7. Financial Report:**

**MAY:** Balance at 31<sup>st</sup> May 2007 - \$13,240.53  
\$3000 held for the Merrijig Community.

**MOTION:**

The May financial report reflects a true and accurate record of the financial situation of the Merrijig Public Hall.

**Moved:** Maz Dowling,

**Seconded:** Ted Lovick

**Carried**

**MOTION:**

The May accounts are accepted to be paid.

**Moved:** Ted Lovick,

**Seconded:** Noel Willaton

**Carried**

**JUNE:** Balance at 29<sup>th</sup> June 2007 - \$13,818.43  
\$2000.51 held for the Merrijig Community.

**MOTION:**

The June financial report reflects a true and accurate record of the financial situation of the Merrijig Public Hall.

**Moved:** Loc Sumpter,

**Seconded:** Kerrie Purcell

**Carried**

**MOTION:**

The June accounts are accepted to be paid.

**Moved:** Jenny O'Brien,

**Seconded:** Kerrie Purcell

**Carried**

**8. General Business:**

**Community Building Symposium:**

Maz Dowling has e-mailed out to committee members a written report of this seminar.

**Commercial oven:**

Ted Lovick informed the committee that the 'University Ski Club of Victoria' on Mt Buller have donated their commercial oven & range hood to the hall. A letter of thanks and appreciation is to be sent to the Uni Ski Club of Vic.



General Business cont...

**Wood stove:**

Due to proposed renovations to the hall, the combustion wood stove in the kitchen will need to be removed. Maz Dowling has suggested we auction the stove at the Spring Ball, Sen Weir felt that the stove should stay with hall ownership. Chris Dunlop suggested the stove could be installed in the new outdoor area. Ted lovick to ask Graham Barr about the suitability and viability of the stove for Chris Dunlop's outdoor suggestion.

**AGM:**

The committee would like to hold a free BBQ after the AGM. Sen Weir is to check with the community members if Shire Bushfire recovery money could fund this BBQ.

The AGM is to be advertised in both local papers 14 days prior to meeting date. Sen Weir to arrange.

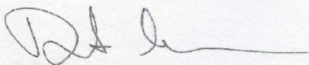
Notification of the AGM to be advertised through Sen Weir's community e-mail list. Sen weir to arrange.

**Extraordinary meeting:**

Maz Dowling is to e-mail out to committee with a date after speaking to Carl Barton, re: submissions received from the public, hall plans.

**9. Next Meeting:** AGM : Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2007 at 11 am.

**10. Close Meeting:** 8.56 pm



Dot Corcoran,  
Secretary, Merrijig Public Hall Inc.

Attachments to these minutes in secretary's records:

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Kaylene Conrick: | Documentation of Mansfield Shire Council roles & responsibilities for the Hall re furbishment. |
| Uschi Steedman:  | Detailed funding submission.   |
| Jenny O'Brien:   | 'Communities in Control' conference report.  |
| Maz Dowling:     | 'Community Building Symposium' report.   |



## Community Building Symposium 19 June 2007

On behalf of the Merrijig Hall Committee and funded by the Mansfield Shire Council, I attended a symposium in Melbourne on June 19 co-ordinated by People Power, a Christian advocacy organisation promoting public policy and social innovation.

Initially the organisation of the event was pretty sloppy, but once things were under way, the program unfolded (copy attached) with interesting speakers and useful comment. Like many similar gatherings, they attract pretty much the same people; public servants, social workers and a broad base of community welfare support workers - I felt that I was not atypical.

With that said, I still felt it a worthwhile exercise and I certainly took away some key learning points pertaining to neighbourhood renewal. I have briefly outlined what I felt were relevant in our application to our community.

### Speaker ~ Dr Phillip Hughes

#### Fragmented Community

- Electronic communications
- Smaller families
- All family members in the workforce, therefore
- Families more mobile
- Families more specialized
- Increased ethnicity

Young people are not born into a community, therefore unable to:

- Build on community
- Build friendships
- Network – creating enjoyment whilst maintaining independence

What do humans need?:

- **Bonds** with other people – personal support
- **Bridges** – opportunity of a wider range of personal contacts which are trustworthy and/or supportive
- **Linkages** – links with 'systems' therefore developing confidence in our environment

Develop community building:

Encourage bonding relationships  
Address dysfunctional relationships

BRIDGING – people are less closely involved, but have an involvement in informal networks

- Common interest
- Cuts across natural boundaries
- Cross cutting ties
- Increased confidences

And therefore Enhances Community by increasing:

- Resilience
- Health



- Motivation
- Skilling
- Engagement
- Leadership
- Listening/response
- Commitment

Have clear aims  
 Commit or align to these aims  
 Have successes  
 Be inclusive  
 Provide a mechanism for managing disputes  
 Value the participants  
 Skilling community members

### **Speaker ~ Jenny Shale**

The Loganlea State High School is a primary point for community development and social capital building.

**Social capital building** begins in schools and is the first step to a healthy community. It develops 'humanness' – many young people interact more with a computer than with a human (parents, etc.). Their teacher is often the human they spend most of their time with.

### ***INTENT, COMMITMENT and PURPOSE***

### **Speaker ~ Louise Staley**

Louise is from a small community of 400 residents near the Grampians/Ararat, which was affected by the bushfires. She talked about two local community events; one organised by the community and the other organised by local government (with a State government guest speaker).

The first event was extremely successful – a Good Friday Appeal formal dinner fundraiser in a local woolshed completely organised and run by locals.

The second event was a complete failure – a book launch "Beyond the Smoke" to raise funds following the bushfires.

- Local government failed to understand the differences in community needs
- Lift the overwhelming level of compliance from community events
- Is government effective in community building?
- Can government successfully manufacture 'community'?
- Every community is unique

### **Speaker ~ Sue Smiley**

Volunteers and community workers are overburdened by government/policy/process/regulations/compliance

How can government support community development?



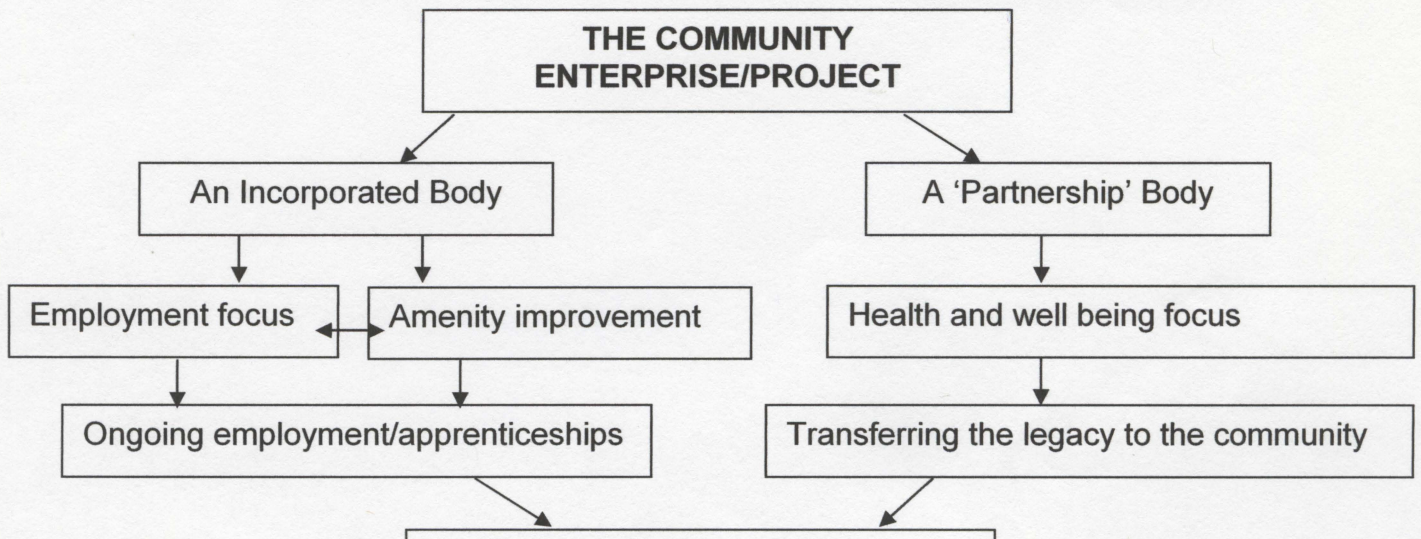
# WORKSHOP ~ COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE & COMMUNITY BUILDING

Neighbourhood Renewal Project in an area of Ballarat.

- How to develop community enterprise?
- And, develop strong partnerships
- Facilitate/co-ordinate agencies with the Community
- Who was benefiting from the funds directed at projects (not the Community!)
- What is the legacy to the community
- Is this making a lasting difference?
- Community enterprise was recognised as the only way to deliver
- Brought agencies and opportunity into the community – **this did not work**
- The resources needed are within the community
- The government and agencies were getting the benefit – feel good, look good in the eyes of the bureaucracy
- Community ownership ↔ Community leadership
- How does the asset revert to the community and remain secure?
- Question whether 'more partnerships' is the answer, sometimes 'less is best'.
- Equitable partnering
- Consultation – allow a long time to cover this process
- How to retain the people whose skills we have developed so that these skills are distributed within the community
- Create long lasting / sustainable change
- What is the vision for the future – how do we want it to look after a period of time?
- Found it difficult to find partners who would commit to 'the vision'
- Agencies were reluctant to commit if there was no government funding – ask "What is the risk factor?"
- **What will the outcome be for the community?**
- **How can the community shape this outcome?**

## A PROCESS:

1. Provide real and sustainable job opportunities and skills
2. Provide enterprising opportunity
3. Maximise resource retention
4. Encourage community self determination – local decision making
5. Provide a vehicle for the legacy of the project (example framework below)





## WORKSHOP ~ INSTITUTIONAL INERTIA

Inertia is not static – it is always ongoing

Elements that make up the community:

1. Citizens/consumers
2. Associations
3. Service providers
4. Funders
5. Regulators

Inertia can be a deliberate strategy to deflect progress

Factors leading to inertia:

- Complexity
- Silos
- Democratic deficit
- “Expertise”
- Fear of change
- Shrinkage of family
- Consumerism/materialism
- Aversion to risk
- Power and its distribution
- Time poor

Barriers to progress:

- Regulations
- Funding guidelines
- Complexity of obtaining information

How to alter the progress/direction of the funding:

HOW are you going to fund, not WHAT you are going to fund.

What have you learned as a result of this funding?

What are the outcomes you want to achieve?



**COMMUNITIES IN CONTROL 2007**  
***From Advocacy to Policy: Communities Driving Change***  
**Report by Jennifer O'Brien for Merrijig Hall Incorporated,  
Mansfield Shire and Merrijig community members**

## Overview

I would like to thank the Mansfield Shire for sponsoring my attendance at the *Communities In Control 2007* conference. It was a stimulating, inspiring, thought-provoking experience for me. I have had relatively limited contact with community organisations, but I am now on the committee of Merrijig Hall Inc and I am the current President of the Delatite Landcare Group Inc. The conference worked for me on two levels: firstly, it provided insights into practical strategies available to community organisations, and showed how the resources of the website [ourcommunity.com.au](http://ourcommunity.com.au) can contribute to ensuring that community organisations survive and thrive. Secondly, it provided insights into some of the debates surrounding the operation of community groups, particularly the need for them to find and use their voices when seeking the best outcomes for their members.

Over the three days the speakers included Brett de Hoot of Hootville Communications, Jack Munday AO, Grassroots organiser; politicians Senator The Hon. Kay Patterson and Peter Batchelor MLA, Minister for Victorian Communities; Bernard Salt, social forecaster; North American social activist Angela Glover Blackwell; Tom Bentley, Executive Director for Policy and Cabinet for the Premier of Victoria; and Sharan Burrow, President, the Australian Council of Trade Unions.

Highlights of the conference were presentations by Community Idol finalists, particularly the one by *two eight two eight* a group from Gulargambone, NSW who had turned a defunct picture theatre into a vibrant, inclusive community centre; and a funny and provocative debate on the topic 'Elected governments – federal, state and local – should decide on community priorities because the only place to influence policy is through elections' chaired by The Hon. Joan Kirner AM.

I was impressed by the diversity, the range, the enthusiasm and energy of the participants: 1500 of them, representing hundreds of different community organisations, gigantic and tiny (including local government, disability advocacy, some with an intensely local focus, providers of services of all kinds) both city- and country-based, from all states of Australia.



**Our Community** is a privately-funded organisation that provides information covering all aspects of running a community group. It comprises a range of resources, training, advice and tools for Australia's 700,000 community groups and schools, as well as practical linkages between the community sector and the general public, business and government. Its main communication tool is the wide-ranging and immensely practical website [ourcommunity.com](http://ourcommunity.com). Access to most of its functions is free.

The **Communities in Control** conference is an annual gathering of community sector workers, volunteers and supporters. Each year since 2003 it has brought together outstanding speakers and around 1500 delegates to listen, debate, network, exchange tips and strategies, and recharge.

Communities in Control takes as its starting point the belief that for communities to survive and thrive they must be in charge of their own destinies; that they must be given practical support to set their own priorities, design their own approaches, and create their own solutions; and that to do this will ultimately create safer, healthier communities.

My focus during the three days was twofold. Firstly, I looked for links from the theme of the conference (**how community organisations can themselves initiate and achieve change**) to the current operations of the Merrijig Hall Committee and the Delatite Landcare Group. Secondly, I sought ways in which I could contribute renewed energy, provide a fresh look at the challenges and share access to an increased level of practical skills. The issues as I saw them were somewhat different in each case. In this report I focus on the connections I made to the challenges facing the Merrijig Hall Committee.

The conference gave me valuable insight into the possibilities the organisation Our Community and especially the website [ourcommunity.com.au](http://ourcommunity.com.au) hold for small community organisations such as Merrijig Hall Inc and the Delatite Landcare Group. As I listened, this overarching question arose: **What strategies could conference speakers and the website [ourcommunity.com.au](http://ourcommunity.com.au) offer for:**

- Increasing the membership of Delatite Landcare and for increasing participation of members;



- Promoting and ensuring the widest possible use of the soon-to-be-refurbished Merrijig hall;
- Determining the role the newly refurbished Merrijig hall should play in the Merrijig community;
- Managing the new multiple-use hall;
- Ensuring ongoing funds for continual improvements required for the hall;
- Deciding whether Merrijig hall and Delatite Landcare should each form a plan of action for the next 1-2 years?

Themes, ideas and strategies arising from the conference

**Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> June: Pre Conference Skills Day focused on marketing community organisations**

- **How community voices can be heard**
- **Gaining members and community support**

**Key Resource:** website [ourcommunity.com.au](http://ourcommunity.com.au), particularly the Marketing, media and Post centre which has been developed to provide the skills and practical tools to build greater public awareness and support for organisations.

**Possible marketing strategies for Merrijig Hall Inc:**

- Develop a **marketing plan** to increase positive awareness of the group.
- Develop a strong consistent and compelling **message**.
- Ensure ongoing **profile**: eg Launch events (eg AGM, new president) and report on them in local press.
- Build a **website**; launch it; put all local links on it; add all interest area links; \* ensure that we're part of Shire website.
- Audit **skills** within group membership, develop a **data base**, and make use of them as needed.
- Cultivate relevant **journalists**

**Monday and Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> June.**

**The theme of the two days was:**

- **Advocacy by community groups**

Following the theme of the conference, the focus of many speakers was on members of community groups making their voices heard so they can be the basis of policy making, rather than policy being imposed from above, for example by government decision.



Key points were:

- Community groups need to be in the forefront of advocacy and policy if we are to build a society in which everybody can participate and everybody can prosper. Policy **decisions can then be made on the basis of knowledge contributed by community organisations.**
- Community organisations have access to people, "**access to people who have personal stories that can dramatise what it is we need to make a difference.**" (American social activist Angela Glover Blackwell).
- Community involvement in decision making will not necessarily result in new groups of people being part of local service provision. Despite the best efforts of government and community groups, most people are not part of decision-making processes. In other words, **only a very narrow sector of the community actually becomes involved in decision-making. The essential question to try and ask is, "What is it, and under what circumstances, that can help to bridge that gap?"** (From Tom Bentley reflecting on the lessons of the past 10 years of the UK's Blair Labour Government)
- There is a strong relationship between community advocacy, media coverage, social change and policy. The community sector needs **to master the use of modern communications** and ensure that they are sure about why they want publicity and which media suit their needs the best. (From media veteran Sam Lipski)
- Profound **demographic, social and generational changes** have begun to occur in Australia. A couple of examples with local relevance are: new lifestyles are emerging such as sea-change and tree-change; new communities of retirees are forming; these need new kinds of services and care. The changes will have enormous impacts on the composition and behaviour of Australian communities into the future. (From demographer Bernard Salt)

### **My response to the conference**

In this section, I report briefly on some of the ideas I gained from the conference. It is a personal response but it could suggest some



directions we could take and also validate some steps we have already taken.

I began by taking the point of view that Merrijig Hall Inc committee is a community group, which we are, of course. The skills day had direct relevance to our role as such a group, as I have indicated. At first I could see no particular advocacy role that we needed to take. But then I turned the situation around, so that I looked at the hall committee as service providers. From that point of view it seemed to me that we could apply some of the key points of the conference to the relationships we formed with the people of Merrijig, **particularly the idea that the contributions of people in the community are essential for thriving, successful communities.** (Of course, at another time, the Merrijig hall committee might find itself acting as an advocate on behalf of the community.)

In other words, the key points made by conference speakers have direct relevance to the responsibilities of the Merrijig hall committee to other members of the Merrijig community. While most of the speakers referred to relationships between community groups and much larger organisations, such as local, state or federal government, we have in Merrijig a microcosm of that bigger picture.

At the moment I would like to think of the hall committee both as a community organisation and as a provider of services to the people who live in Merrijig. I suggest that one of our aims at the present could be **to explore, expand and improve the relationship between the hall committee and the other members of the Merrijig community.** In this way we might be able to make sure that more than just a small number of people contribute their ideas to our operation.

We made a good start in surveying the community last year. Now, perhaps, comes the time to do some in-depth work on **finding out possible ways the hall could function in people's lives.** Here we could consider using some of the media and marketing strategies available on the Our Community website ([ourcommunity.com.au](http://ourcommunity.com.au)). From this we could consider developing some **principles** on which we would base the operation of the hall. Developing productive relationships with people who are not normally included in decision-making might not be a simple business, but [ourcommunity.com.au](http://ourcommunity.com.au) (which include the texts of the talks at this and previous conferences) would provide useful resources.



## Community Idol

The final section of my report is abbreviated from the website [ourcommunity.com.au](http://ourcommunity.com.au). It tells the story of the community organisation from rural NSW called ***Two eight two eight*** which won the 2007 Community Idol competition. I won't attempt to draw a list of ideas from this story, as I think that by itself it provides some interesting food for thought.

Many small communities are struggling with economic downturn and drought but few are tackling their challenges in such a positive way. ***Two eight two eight*** has led the reinvigoration of the small community of Gulargambone in the central west of NSW (postcode 2828), encouraging locals to seize control of their own future.

Some of *two eight two eight's* initiatives include:

- The purchase and renovation of a dilapidated building in the township's main street, transforming it into a tourist information centre.
- Expanding and improving that tourist information centre so it now boasts an award-winning cafe, art gallery and gift shop selling local handmade craft and produce as well as a successful function centre.
- The use of the cafe's food and quality coffee to draw travellers off the highway so they stop in the town, spend some money and contribute to Gulargambone's economic health.
- The launch of local "movie nights", as the nearest cinema was in Dubbo, more than 100km away. These nights have attracted locals as well as people from neighbouring communities for a meal, a movie and some great social interaction.

These initiatives have created employment for local tradespeople, provided those in the area with an outlet to sell their art and craft, given training and skills development opportunities to people and furnished locals with a venue for their social activities - again, bringing the community together.

In conclusion I urge you all to have a good look at the website [ourcommunity.com.au](http://ourcommunity.com.au). It is full of good ideas.