

UNDERBOOL PROGRESS GROUP AGM OCTOBER 25 2021

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Since our 2020 AGM was held in March this year (due to Covid restrictions), the Progress Group Committee has had to continue its operations mainly through emails, SMS and Messenger. At times it has felt as though we have been in recess, because of the lockdowns that we have experienced again this year. However, the Committee has been following up with a number of projects, and has continued to support other community initiatives, and sought funding when required.

We have to thank Colin Aikman for donating his time and the materials to construct a frame to display a plaque which gives historical information about a cart owned by the late Ted Crothers, and donated to the community for display by his son, Howard. The plaque is now in place beside the cart in the area opposite Gloster's Garage in the main street.

The Progress Group was invited to contribute to the filming of community points of interest in Underbool and District. This was a small part of the promotional material which featured the towns along the Mallee Track. Sonia did a fantastic job in describing how the Outen Park Memorial Pillar project evolved, and all while being filmed. A number of other locations including the CFA, Pool, Primary School, Bowling Club, Recreation Reserve, the main street and the local businesses were also featured, with Cameron providing the comments. Together with Murrayville, Walpeup, and Ouyen communities, we commend the huge efforts of our Community Advisor, Cassey, to coordinate the filming. The end result should prove an excellent medium to encourage tourists to our part of the country, when the borders are finally open, and city dwellers can travel to regional areas once again.

Committee members Joan and Bev managed to sell the remaining 'Back to' memorabilia, and the resulting funds have been set aside for the maintenance of the old Country Party building which has significant historical value for the Underbool community. Recent contact with MRCC (October 25th) indicates that the building has still not been handed to the Progress group officially, but when that time comes, the Group can apply for funding for painting and repairs.

Following last year's successful application for a two thousand dollar Christmas decoration grant from MRCC, approximately \$900 was spent on a variety of lights. While there is more than half still to spend, the Council has once again made another \$2000 available, and the Progress Group was able to reapply. Decisions need to be made how this money will be spent very soon.

The Progress Group has a responsibility to maintain any items they have on display in the Wayside Stop area. A major part of the old roller has been slowly deteriorating for some time, and urgently needs to be preserved due to its historical significance. Several people have indicated their willingness to look into possible restoration- Robert McNamara, Ken Jones and Murray Lockett. From reports, I believe the work has been done. Thank you for your concern, and I trust that the roller can remain in its current position.

Finally after many months, the new Outen Park pillars have been finished to our satisfaction. Through extensive consultation with staff at Elmslite, work to complete the pillar plinths has been done. The original work was left unfinished after one Company ceased trading in 2019, so the new Company had to find solutions to some problems which were 'not of their making!' The Covid restrictions over the past two years have also meant that their list of jobs grew, so we are very grateful for their expertise and efforts to assist us. It is now time to consider a date for the Commemoration Ceremony.

Pink Lakes Pantry continues to provide a valuable service for our town and owes its success to the ongoing commitment of its small band of volunteers, especially Phil, who is the Treasurer, and also

the 'Mr Fix-It' man! As always, the Pantry is hoping for more volunteers to take a turn on the roster, bearing in mind the Government requirement that all volunteers working out of home are to be double vaxed.

Through a variety of consultation methods within Underbool and District, the Community Plan is in its drafting stage. It should be noted that the Progress Group is not the 'owner' of the Plan as it is a plan which all groups and individuals within our district can have a say, and have equal rights and responsibilities to ensure that relevant goals can be met. By working together in partnership with all stakeholders including the sporting clubs, educational groups, Health and Emergency Services and relevant levels of government, Underbool and District will continue to be a great place for all who call it home.

The Progress Group's mission statement reads:

To maximise opportunities to ensure the sustainability and future of the Underbool district, and its aims are

- *to enhance Underbool district by both maintaining existing facilities and developing or assisting with development of new facilities and encouraging beautification.*
- *preserve and promote local history and heritage assets.*
- *encourage activities which will help Underbool to remain economically viable.*
- *provide a forum for the representation to local government or other bodies.*
- *help to provide a safe and welcoming environment for both residents and visitors.*

The Underbool Progress Group is a non-profit community organisation open to all residents of the Underbool area and can only achieve the above aims if individuals are willing to step up and volunteer for their local community. Each and every individual has some skills to share, and you all have ideas to put forward.

Now it is time to thank the current committee for their commitment – to Lynda as Treasurer for the last couple of years, and to Nita who has been a supporter of Progress for many years- I wish you well with whatever path you follow in the future. To Bev our Secretary, and Sonia Ass Secretary – thank you both for your efforts, and to Joan as Vice President for standing in for me at functions and other events. Nicole, you have always attended meetings and responded to the emails and messages, which is much appreciated as you have a busy life with children going in one direction and you in another. Last but not least, I say a very special thank you to Cassey our Community Support Advisor, who has always been available to provide a sounding board, steer me in the right direction with regards Council matters, and links to other information.

Underbool has been my home for 50 years and it will always hold a special place in my heart. I was made to feel very welcome when I first arrived in town – the population was considerably higher back then. I have seen lots of changes – some positive, and some not so good. There was always a strong commitment to the idea that 'if you want something then you have to get in and do it yourself' – many projects achieved by volunteers! I hope that model of achieving goals has not been lost, just put on the backburner for a while. It is my sincere hope that all the newcomers to the district will be made to feel as welcome as I was, and that they can be encouraged to give something of themselves to the community in which they have chosen to make their home.

It has been a pleasure and a learning experience to be able to contribute to the projects and achievements of the Progress Group and other community organisations. I wish everyone well in the future, and look forward to the Underbool Press, the notices and reports on the Community websites and in the North West Express to keep me up to date.

Frances Lynch