

Howlong Community Progress Association Incorporated

AGM President's Report –Monday 29 August 2022

HCPA has been set up to make a difference for the Howlong township, to establish projects of benefit to the community, and to oversee these from start to finish.

BACKGROUND:

On 20 September 2020 a small group initially met to solicit a general consensus in regard to formation of a progress association. As a result a working group was formed, and the Howlong Community Progress Association Incorporated was set up. However attempts to host a first public meeting to allow for community input was hindered for many months with Covid restrictions and lockdowns.

Finally on 24 May 2021, the first public meeting was chaired by Cr Longley with 74 people attending.

- Committee members were declared by a public show of hands. Cheryl Cook, John Skinner, Robyn Roland, Sheryl Pitman, Stuart Sizer, Sue Gibbins, and Sue Wearne.
- A survey of community concerns was held, and a report prepared for the new committee to assess and prioritise projects.

Our first committee meeting was held on 1 June 2021 when office-bearers were elected: President – S Sizer; Vice President – R Roland; Secretary – C Cook; Treasurer – S Wearne.

- A membership database was established - currently we have 133 Individual members and 18 Business members.
- Annual membership will run from 1 October each year to allow for voting rights and nominations at any AGM which will be held prior to this date.
- Since our inception, we've held 21 committee meetings and hosted 3 public meetings.

PROJECTS ACCOMPLISHED:

Website

Securing a Federation Council Community Grant of \$2,900 enabled us to develop our website and a dedicated webmail address (info@howlongprogress.com.au).

www.howlongprogress.com.au has been live for a while now and special thanks to Cheryl Cook and Robyn Roland for their many volunteer hours involved in this lengthy project.

The website provides for:

- Updates on projects and upcoming events; community news; promoting Howlong; assisting council in promotions of important information sessions; participate in cultural & regional marketing; online membership applications and a contact tab for confidential comments

Public Meeting - Police

50 people attended on 8 November 2021. Inspector Paul Huggett spoke about the role of policing in NSW with his message to Howlong residents to make sure you report all unusual activities as the police can only act when they have sufficient information. He also expressed how important it is that you ask for the name of the police officer you spoke to in case follow up is required.

Clean Up Australia Day

Our first successful community project was held on 6 March 2022. A great crowd turned up and groups were sent out to different areas. A sausage sizzle cooked by the Croquet Club was a wonderful way to complete the morning, and volunteers enjoyed the company of old and new friends. A large haul of rubbish was taken off our streets, parks and outlying roads close to town, and a big thank you goes to all who helped on the day.

Howlong Has Talent

The sub-committee of Colleen Bell; Sue Gibbins; Jenny Enever and Elise Taylor, together with our committee's support, saw the culmination of our first amateur talent quest held at the Mighty River Room at Lowe Square on 20 March 2022. We were very grateful to our major sponsors, Howlong Local Thrifty Store and David Longley. Together with other wonderful donations, a very successful Howlong Has Talent event was run, and we hope this can be an annual event for Howlong.

Public Meetings – First Responder Service (CERT) x 2

On 5 April 2022 Ambulance NSW as guest speakers entertained 50 attendees with an informative presentation on the benefits of forming a Community Emergency Response Team (aka CERT). A list of names who were interesting in becoming clinical volunteers was taken, and a second Q&A meeting was arranged specifically for those volunteers. This meeting was held on 25 June at the Golf Club, resulting in a final list of 30 names that may become first responders. Applications were distributed and need to be returned by 1st October 2022 in order for Howlong to be placed on the NSW Ambulance training list for early 2023.

Desiree O'Brien, Superintendent, Clinical Volunteers | Clinical Operations Directorate, based in Sydney, expressed her gratitude to HCPA for co-ordinating these successful meetings. We were advised last week that governmental approval has now been given for Howlong to have our very own CERT. This means a vehicle will now be ordered and fit-out arranged when it arrives. Hopefully our CERT will be fully functional by mid-late 2023, with the response vehicle stationed in Howlong staffed by first responders on a roster system. We have one more meeting on 4th October for applications to be handed in, then Ambulance NSW takes over the screening of applicants and their extensive training.

HCPA will now remain as a conduit for communication when required. I'm proud to say our committee's role has proved very fruitful after many admirable, yet unsuccessful attempts by others in the past. This is a BIG win for the entire community!

Other activities that are ongoing

- Cemetery toilet - The construction of a disabled toilet at the cemetery is now progressing with preliminary soil testing done. Some financial support from grant funds yet to be applied for, plus other donations of time & materials should see this project complete within a year.
- Memorial Park planning for an expansion and facility upgrade
- Walking tracks development – watch this space for developments

- Meetings with Justin Clancy MP and letters to politicians re town water supply and the need for a bypass
- A continued push for a town bypass for heavy vehicles. This issue will soon become even more important with the expansion of the gravel and sand quarry on the Riverina Highway. Our committee representatives have a meeting in Justin Clancy's office with the Senior Executive of Transport NSW and Federation Council within a week.
- Hawkins & Sturt Street tree assessment and planning -Council will engage an Arborist to provide a detailed assessment of the street trees in Howlong, and a report on appropriate trees for eventual replacement.
- Community Transport Service – This service could start soon with the offer of the Golf Resort bus and some possible Club Grant funding plus the need for some volunteers to make this service happen.
- Council made it clear that initiatives that come from the community will gain far more support at all levels of Government. We are making this happen.
- Hume Bank wish to work with us to conduct a community education program on internet banking security and scamming processes. This opportunity will be available soon.

As you can see there is much we have already achieved, but there is much more to do. Engaging the community is critical to our outcomes.

Thanks to the Committee for their tireless work and volunteer hours to achieve so much in such a short time.

Thanks to the Golf Resort for their ongoing support and use of the club for public meetings.

Our only resident councillor, David Longley, has worked with us to push and promote the projects we have presented tonight, and we thank him for his input and support.

To make the Howlong Community Progress Association a vibrant, productive, and valued organisation in the Howlong Community, it was important for the initial committee to make an impact. I am proud of what we have achieved so far but there is so much more to do.

Our success is dependent on community involvement and support, and we need your ideas and input.

Stuart Sizer

President
HCPA