

Chair's Report to Old Bega Hospital Reserve Land Manager AGM 2018

December 2017: rumours of BVSC intentions to demolish the Main Building and rebuild Regional Gallery on the site despite Gallery Friends determination that the Gallery should stay in town and expand out and up. In May 2018 we learned that Sibling had been chosen for the design so we were helpful to them in terms of their up to date and close knowledge of Bega and surrounds.

Thanks to user groups for help. We couldn't have such successful events as the Spring Fair and Trivia Night without the collaboration of all the groups.

Mowing and site maintenance. The (mowing) member of the Bega Men's Shed has resigned. He also acted as the supervisor of the CSO workers. John and Richard have taken on this task so the young men (to date) have had a far more pleasant and constructive means to meet their community penalty than the penal alternative. John has taken on the BMS role as he is a member. Thanks to both. Thanks to Ron for the suggestion to begin the OBH/Corrective Services connection and the sterling job he has done as mower and supervisor.

Through April, May, June we waited for a meeting with Andrew Constance. The eventual meeting was late July.

Final Sibling plan and DA? We looked at a draft prior to input from various consultants' reports in late May but the date of submission has been continually pushed back. We thought we had made it until Crown Lands, prior to providing consent, then raised the issue of 2 Aboriginal Land Claims from December 2016 apparently needing to be settled or permission granted for Crown Lands to give permission before the claims are dealt with. This is now in train. Close but not quite there.

July - opening of Cultural Regional Fund application round. We have a local rival in BVSC Regional Gallery although the applications are complementary rather than rival competitive bids.

July - trustees and Friends worked together to provide a successful trivia night at the Bega Club, Tarraganda. Many thanks to Rhonda Jones and her team of helpers who led the activity and to those who provided cakes for dessert and prizes, took money, sold raffle tickets, guided guests to tables, washed up afterwards. Thanks to John who organised the preparation and printing of the raffle tickets so they could be available for sale.

July 29 - finally, a meeting with Andrew Constance - some promises - none of which have led to progress including persuading Minister Barilaro to reply to our requests of 2017 or release the \$500,000 roof grant; no meeting between himself, Trust, BVSC and South East Arts to discuss use of Main Building as an ancillary arts activity centre to complement Regional Gallery; no visit from Premier to convince Crown Lands Senior Management that this state government is committed to restoring OBH to a working centre.

Sibling has continued continuing arranging various reports all of which are crucial to completing the application for the Regional Cultural Centre at the OBH for the Regional Cultural Fund application. An unexpected problem that the chosen Quantity Surveyor looked at the site and almost immediately withdrew through illness. Sibling found a substitute who committed to completing the task immediately as only days remained for us to meet the RCF deadline. Richard has done a great job preparing the Business Case and Application and was called upon to cope with a mass of information not likely to be available before 20/9 with strict closing date 21/9.

Saturday 15 Sept - a grass fire at OBH while CSO workers were clearing the southern fence overgrowth; now not likely to house snakes for this season There was an issue of CSO workers not knowing names of connecting streets when they called the Fire Emergency line that led us to make sure that all user groups have a map and clear information re boundary streets.

Friday 21 Sept.: Richard sent off our application to the Regional Cultural Fund team with an hour to spare -wrangling the Quantity Survey detail which only arrived late on 20/9. QS costs meant that we could only apply for the 'bare bones' version of the restoration as the cost of the full project exceeded the level for applying without a Treasury - compliant cost-benefit analysis! So much to learn and so little time to do it. Minister Barilaro, despite Trust efforts, possible Andrew Constance efforts, and a reminder to Megan Cleary, failed to provide an answer to the roof funding query - Andrew Constance's advice was to assume it would come and apply for the rest of the money - which Richard did. How much longer will it take to get any sort of reply? Very poor political effort. No further progress on any of the other issues discussed with Andrew Constance on 29/7 either. Hardly impressive. Given the required size of the applications including the business cases we should not expect a quick return but, presumably, this will be the regional star turn before the state election in late March. How disappointing to find that BVSC, despite an earlier agreement to do so, failed to provide a letter of support for our application apparently on the grounds that it would be competing with their own application. Clearly a community and cultural centre in a heritage building is not an application for a Regional Gallery. A council that recognised and celebrated (as they claim) community volunteer effort (for a project that would be complementary to their project) would not hesitate to offer support. Their lack of support for another project in their area may well be noted by the assessors and reflect poorly on theirs too. Ditto the (at best) totally neutral response from Crown Lands - 'no objections to the application'. Does this also reflect badly on their attitude to managing let alone enhancing the state owned sites they supposedly care for the good of the community? However, grateful thanks to the groups that did provide support letters including South East Arts and the FunHouse.

30 August - we did receive \$6,122 from the former Public Reserves Management Fund Program (PRMFP), now Crown Reserves Improvement Fund (CRIF), for pine tree removal, Nurses Quarters security external lighting and a new air conditioner for the Cottage.

Sunday 28 October - the Friends' Raise the Roof Spring Fair - a successful event, good weather and plenty of people filled in the postcards to Andrew Constance urging action to restore the Main Building for cultural and community use. Thanks to all the user groups who opened and displayed their activities and wares, stall holders and volunteers who made sandwiches, spruiked, organised prizes and sold tickets in the Chocolate Wheel, cooked, drummed, directed traffic, served on stalls. And the CSO guys who were enthusiastically helpful on the day and enjoyed themselves so much that they have volunteered to return as volunteers in 2019.

31 October: noted that the Premier visited Bega on Wednesday 31 October to make important funding announcements but couldn't spare 10 minutes for a supportive photo at OBH.

Mid November: Richard wrangled another funding bid through the Building Better Regions fund (Commonwealth). Outcome not expected until early 2019 but, presumably, before the expected election. Interesting that the Commonwealth Department asks questions in a rather different format than the state so it requires a substantial effort and different approach. If we are successful with one of these major efforts (dare we hope for success with both?) we can anticipate a busy 2019 prior to the end of our 5 year tenure in mid December. We could hope that some of the many hours of thought, robust discussion, meeting time and background research will result in \$\$\$\$ and, at least, preliminary construction activity.

December: RCF grants announcements expected. A small group of Trust and Friends volunteers putting in hours of effort selling raffle tickets in Carp St despite the challenges of the weather. Thanks to all the trustees for the effort expended this year especially Richard with keeping close tabs on the details required for Sibling to get the DA close to completion and submission before 2018 ends and the massive effort in writing the BBRF and RCF applications plus the postcards idea; John for keeping tabs on our ever increasing complex grant expenditure and sharing his general

construction experience; Jay for sharing his knowledge (and expertise) of OBH structures, longstanding policy and practical, general building expertise; Claire for knowledge of history, people and places in the Bega Valley, expertise in punctuation and written language; Warren for sharing his recent knowledge and experience of building and new techniques; David for upgrading his IT skills, looking more often at his emails and sending encouraging replies. We have worked well together, disagreed at times but made decisions focussed on our combined dream of a vibrant community and cultural centre that we can be proud to promote; and which will enhance the activity options and quality of life for the Bega Valley and wider community.

Patricia Jones
Chairperson
10 December 2018