

Save Bungendore Park Inc.

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18 Sep

The Bungendore community centre



The Community Centre is to be demolished to make way for the proposed new High School – and the only reason that Bungendore has a

Community Centre is due to the foresight and hard work of local residents over the past 45 years.

“Back in 1976 this small town was acknowledged as having ‘a wonderful community’.

It still has, and it, and its hard won community facilities must not be lost.”

In 1976, Peter Brown, the local Anglican Minister and his wife Miriam saw that although Bungendore had a wonderful community, it had no community facilities save the churches and pubs. With minimal public transport it was difficult for many people to even get to Queanbeyan. The community nurse had to operate from her car, hardly a hospitable place in the depths of winter or under a scorching summer sun. The residents rallied. They formed the Bungendore Community Aid group, known as the BCA, and over the years it grew with the demands of a growing population. It still serves the community today.

The BCA was run totally by volunteers and operated from the building in Gibraltar Street where the Gathering is now located. These premises were procured from the Public Trustees at a peppercorn rent. They provided facilities for the Community nurse, the Commonwealth Employment Centre, and meeting rooms for the Senior Citizens and other community groups. A community library

was established with a donation from Elma Broadbent. In the early 1980s the BCA lost the use of these rooms when the Public Trustees finally settled the matters of a Will. Pressure was then put on the Yarrowlumla Council to provide new facilities to house the community groups. The BCA, a grass roots initiative, had operated successfully for many years on a voluntary basis with not a penny from Council. Council responded to community pressure with the offer of two rooms at the School of Arts, next to the Primary school, with the third room to be used by the Scouts and Playgroup.

Some time later the BCA was informed that the historic School of Arts was to be demolished by Council to make way for a new, long overdue purpose built community centre. The BCA informed them that although Council managed the School of Arts building, they did not own it or the Crown Land on which it was built. This they disputed, but the BCA provided the hard evidence! It wasn't difficult.

Little seems to have changed since the Yarrowlumla Council morphed into the Palerang Council, or with the more recent amalgamation, QPRC. The new Community Centre was built on its current central site on the corner of Turallo Terrace and Majara Street in 1986. It has been well used over the intervening years by many community groups and has operated as a Baby Health Centre, and Community Nurse and After School Care facility. The BCA stores the medical equipment, which is loaned to local residents, free of charge. Many people, grateful for the service, have made donations which allows the BCA to purchase more equipment. Medical equipment is expensive. At least 100 people benefit from this service each year, once again run by volunteers. The central location of the Community Centre is ideal, easily accessible to both local residents and those from outlying areas.

Early this year Council notified the BCA of the planned demolition of this well-sited and well-used community facility to provide more land for the proposed High School. However, it did not offer any alternative site or facilities to provide storage for the valuable medical equipment, equipment that is the result of the generosity and "can do" spirit of the volunteers, community donations and fund raising over the past 40 years.

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It still has, and it, and its hard won community facilities must not be lost.

< The Bungendore public swimming pool Save Bungendore Park Inc.

Bungendore, NSW
bungendoreparkactiongroup@gmail.com
Incorporated in New South Wales under the
Associations Incorporation Act 2009

A dog's tail from the park >

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