



President's Report 2010

Australia Day led off the year's activities for the MRCA. We were visited by the Australia Day Ambassador, author Valerie Parv. A barbecue was held outside the Hall, and there was a good turn out by the community.

Australia Day followed closely on the heels of the Tea Tree Creek Fire which began around midday on the Burra Rd on the 17th of December 2009, a total fire ban day. Three houses were lost on Calabash Rd in the Tinderry Mountains and there was much damage to property along Tinderry Rd. The MRCA set up an appeal for funds which raised \$2,000. In consultation with the community it was decided to divide the funds between the four local fire brigades; Michelago, Colinton, Anembo and Smiths Rd, in recognition of their outstanding efforts on the day. Thankfully, there were no lives lost but many people have been traumatised by the event. We hope that time is healing those affected. The MRCA organised for the community a comprehensive debrief of the fire from the RFS on the 27th of January. This was attended by the Hon Steve Whan.

On a happier note, we held a very successful May Fair on the 2nd of May. The weather was kind and some 400 people attended during the day. The 25 or so stall holders arrayed around the oval track reported good interest in their displays and the crowd was entertained by live music, whip cracking, sheep dogs, games for the children and the Michelago fire brigade putting out a gas fire. The Fair was opened by Mr Dean Lynch, the Cooma-Monaro Shire Council Mayor. Some \$2,700 was raised for the community.

Other fund-raising events were barbecues held at Bunnings, Tuggeranong on the 14th of June and at Harvey Norman, Fyshwick, on the 9th and 22nd of March and the 7th of November. Overall just over \$5,000 was raised during the year.

Upgrading of the oval continues to be a focus for the MRCA. Following the completion of the exercise track, the Cooma-Monaro Shire Council found further funds to build a rail fence along the eastern perimeter. This will protect the oval and the cricket pitch from vehicle damage. A submission by Council, on behalf of the Michelago community, to FAHCSIA for funds to install a barbecue and picnic tables on the west side of the oval was unsuccessful but will be revisited in 2011.

Another project is to restore the tennis courts to the south of the oval. At this stage the surface has been sprayed several times to remove weeds. We are planning to remove the old fence and replace it with steel pipe and netting. The tennis court shed will also be upgraded.

During the year we have made a number of submissions to Council. The Draft Management Plan was made available to the community late in 2009 and a submission was made to Council by the end of January. A presentation of the submission was made to Council at Cooma on the 15th of February. On May 26th the Mayor, Councillors and staff attended a public meeting in the Michelago Hall to discuss the plan. Although most of the items listed in our submission remain unfunded we were successful in getting repairs scheduled for the junction of Micalago Rd and the Monaro Highway.

Other submissions were: a response to the Council's Play Ground strategy, a positive response to the 15 lot development in the village and an objection in support of the local community to the development of an airstrip near Baroona Rd.

Future activities will focus on the continuing upgrade of the facilities at the oval including sun protection for the children's play area. Another activity we have been progressing is the idea of documenting our heritage, and Gay Lawler is writing a history of Michelago which will provide content for our web site and we hope will lead to an affordable publication for sale to residents and others interested in the history of the region. We are also interested in a photographic display in the Hall featuring the founding families of Michelago and the surrounding region. Last but not least is the Driver Reviver initiative at the Colinton Rest Area being led by Sandra Lauer. We are hoping for support for this important safety and fund-raising initiative from members and the wider community.

Another topic on our agenda is a plan for the village. This will need to be consistent with the Council's Local Environment Plan when that is released. One aspect of this will be the future of the railway land and associated buildings. Currently the land is the responsibility of State Rail and the buildings are leased to the Australian Railway Historical Society (ACT branch). Recently the Michelago Landcare Group has been working with the Australian Rail Track Corporation to control overgrowth of vegetation on the disused land. In the longer term we need to discuss with State Rail their plans for the use of this land and how it can be integrated into a village plan. Comments on this would be very welcome.

Finally I would like to thank all the members of the Committee for putting in a huge effort on behalf of the community. Also to Cathy Morison for managing the website and setting out the Newsletters. Without their help none of the above would have been possible Well done and again my heartfelt thanks.

Tony Robinson
21 January 2011