

Welcome to the 2016 Michelago Region Community Association Annual General Meeting. Again the past 12 months have been full, rewarding and productive.

The year started off with the commencement of construction of the gas compressor station on Burra road by a company by the name of Jemena. There was much concern about the number and size of trucks travelling through the village and on the rural roads. At this stage I believe that the works are complete and final repairs to the road are yet to be done.

These concerns opened up much discussion about the need for a footpath for residents, particularly children, to ensure safe passage from the school and homes to the shop, the hall and the playground. Discussions were held with council and appeals made to our local member to ensure that our needs were met and our request was heard. The construction of this path is due to be completed by July 2016.

Our inaugural ANZAC Day service officiated by Reverend Mary Thorn was the first major event on the calendar after the AGM. At the time we were lucky to have a temporary cenotaph in place thanks to Mr White, Romney's father who made it for us. The day was well represented by locals and family members of those members of the armed forces who were from here or signed up locally as indicated on the plaque. Mr David Ryrie, the grandson of Major General Granville Ryrie of Michelago Station spoke on the day about the war and its role in our future. It was a beautiful day and one to be remembered.

A permanent stone cenotaph has since replaced that temporary cenotaph and will be a sign of remembrance of those who were prepared to fight for all of us. There is room enough on the cenotaph to honour those locals who served in other conflicts. A project for the future. The stone cenotaph was officially opened some seven months later during our celebration of the Men from Snowy March on November 7 2015 commemorating 100 years since the landing in Gallipoli. This event and service was again well attended with Marchers, horsemen and locals, followed by lamb stew and rolls, tea and Anzac biscuits.

I have jumped ahead of myself. After our ANZAC celebration came the Michelago Mayfair. Again we were blessed with lovely weather and plenty of visitors. A sign of attendance was the fact that we ran out of food, however there was enough to see and do to keep everyone happy. Several of the more successful stalls were shared with other community groups and I believe it was profitable for all.

The proceeds of the Mayfair are earmarked to go towards a playground suitable for older children of ages 6- 16. We were also very fortunate to receive a significant donation from Jemena to go towards the construction of the playground. This will be situated below the existing playground. Work has not started yet as we aim to complete the tennis courts as much as we can before a new project begins. The playground has been ordered and with all my fingers and toes crossed it will be completed by Mayfair 2016.

This is not to overshadow the construction of the two tennis courts, one of which doubles as a netball court. Construction started in November but weather and other factors slowed completion. The surface is now down and work on the fence is continuing before the lights are installed and they will then be ready for business. The coach is all lined up for lessons and plans are afoot for Friday night social tennis and lessons plus Sunday lessons.

Again I jump ahead as we held a successful Bunnings BBQ two weeks after the Mayfair. Volunteers were in short supply being so close after the Mayfair but the girls from Canberra Girls grammar community service programme helped out willingly much to our benefit.

The last of our Pot Luck Suppers was held in June. The attendance was getting low. A justifiable gathering was a stretch on the calendar of many so we decided not to hold them any more.

A fun filled Trivia night was held in August. Thanks to John Tollis for being the Quiz master and Emcee. Thank you to all prize donations, both from locals and surrounding towns. It was another profitable evening and all proceeds have helped us towards erecting the tennis courts.

More fund raising was held in the form of a couple of Pie Drives. This was greatly supported and is a good way to ensure something is available for dinner on a Friday night when, at the end of the week, we no longer feel like cooking. Thank you to Bredbo Gourmet Pies for their support.

Throughout the year, on three occasions, we ran a sausage sizzle at the Bredbo markets to support the Bredbo CWA and community. Again this earned us a little pocket money, however we have elected to discontinue this support as those who have run it in the past are no longer available. Thank you to all who have helped with these over the last couple of years.

Throughout the year the Michelago Railway station has been in constant use. MRCA meetings have been held there as well as morning teas, the ANZAC and Men from Snowy March event and of course the Christmas in Michelago carol night. Again a beautiful night as it is always sunny in Michelago and with great attendance there were lovely carols led by Romney Kelly. The children enjoyed seeing Santa arrive on the fire truck and watch the sun go down over the hills to the west.

Of course the year starts off with an Australia day breakfast and the Australia Day ambassador in attendance. There were balloons and flags and a delicious breakfast cooked by our volunteers. Thank you.

Last but not least is the seemingly sudden proposal by the state government to merge councils throughout the state to form larger and potentially more economically efficient shire councils. Michelago is presently part of the Cooma Monaro Shire Council, which is proposed to merge with Bombala SC and Snowy SC. This would make a large SC and would include a lot of National park and rural roads. The general feeling of the Michelago community is not to merge, this is consistent with the CMSC itself. If the merger goes ahead, there is a division of thoughts between residents that Michelago should either move to join Queanbeyan SC or continue to stay with Cooma/Bombala/Snowy. I have sent out feelers to the community to get a sense of the commitment to either proposal. The first survey met with a good number of responses against the merger and a clear split of favour towards either council. The follow up e-survey was much less passionate and as a result we may lodge a submission against the merger, though our argument against it is weak.

Well I think I have included all and everything and have wrapped up the year in a few paragraphs. Work is continuing to complete the projects in the pipeline:- the tennis courts, the clubhouse, the playground and the footpath.

Thank you all of you for your support, help, input and ideas.

Also as many of you may know I am stepping down as president. I have really enjoyed my busy three years and I have enjoyed meeting residents, working with my committee and forging on to develop some recreational facilities and activities for the residents of Michelago. Thank you to my committee for putting up with me as I let loose with ideas and grand schemes! I know it is not the last you will see of me and I wish the new committee all the best.

Thank you