

Kids awarded for positive contributions

< Bernard Gardener

"Next year's awards night will be bigger and better!" declared Des Kelly on the morning following the very successful 10th annual Kids in Community Inc. awards night at the Lismore Workers Club on July the 8th.

Des Kelly is president of the not-for-profit Northern Rivers organisation, Kids in Community (KIC). Des told the Richmond River Sun that planning had already commenced for next year's spectacular. The organization concerns itself with the welfare of youth on the Northern Rivers.

"On an almost daily basis, the front pages and websites of most national newspapers feature reports of youth and drugs, alcohol and violence. Kids appear out of control and detached from their community."

This reporter was fortunate enough to attend the event and quickly discovered the truth – the far greater majority of our kids contribute in positive ways to the community.

The KIC awards acknowledge the roles played by kids and by their mentors. All young people and mentors in the five local government areas of Kyogle, Richmond Valley, Lismore, Ballina and Byron are eligible for nomination in the various categories as individuals or as a team.

Richmond Valley was a little under-represented, although Evans Head did well. The Green Team from the Evans River K12 School, Christina Blokland from the Mid-Richmond Neighbourhood Centre and the entire crew of the Centre's Chill Café were all nominated.

Tara Wilson, Chill Café supervisor was nominated individually "for her everyday actions which encourage other young people, indigenous and non-indigenous, to make positive decisions and contribution to the community."

Evans River K12 student Brody Moore was nominated for "his quiet, unobtrusive confidence that makes him one of life's quiet achievers."

Casino's Nadine Smith made it onto the list of finalists for "being the inspiration behind the

best ever Youth Week in the Northern rivers." Nadine organised Crankfest Extreme at Evans Head. It was no small feat, attracting 2000 odd young people and their families.

Des Kelly's volunteers and sponsors are rightly proud of their organization and its products. Their successful formula has attracted the attention of the mayors of the adjoining local government areas – Tenterfield, Tweed, Armidale, and Grafton.

Planning for next year's awards evening has commenced in earnest. "The format will be amended slightly, with an even more spectacular night of stars," said Des. "We are also writing a manual of the years task's, starting from the morning after the big night."

He went on to explain that the manual would be for the benefit of other regional communities who wish to employ the successful KIC formula.

Digital images of all nominees are available gratis. Phone the organizers on 6624 4053.

For more awards information, go to kic.com.au, or email info@kic.com.au



Tara Wilson, (inset) Christina Blokland and Chill Cafe were all acknowledged at the awards.

The Sun is in your hands: Farewell and thanks

You (as community members, colleagues and contributors) - are now being consulted on the future of the Sun. Already thoughts and ideas are buzzing around thanks to the talents of the MRNC Committee which includes a wide range of community members - Glen Cook, Todd Yourell, Maureen Follers, John Clayton, Norelle Evans, Ian Drinkwater and Viv Walkington who are all available to chat with you about any ideas, concerns or just plain feedback. If you have any ideas or opinions you wish to formally register please direct them to admin@mrnc.com.au, Attention GM Gretchen Young, or PO Box 163 EVANS HEAD 2473 or call 66824334, asking to speak to Ms Gretchen Young, General Manager or Maureen Follers, Secretary Management Committee.

Dear Contributors and Readers
I have a significant announcement to make that will affect the future of the Sun - which as you are probably aware is the only independent paper in our area, and the only newspaper that covers the Richmond Valley exclusively. The July 2009 issue of The Sun will be the last which will appear under its current model - run by a volunteer editor and auspiced by the Mid Richmond Neighbourhood Centre. The sheer weight of the Sun's success and its surprising growth has caused it to simply burst out of its community-based volunteer run model. It will be looking at different ways of operating and a variety of options; and you are invited to offer opinions and ideas.

The decision making process for this next step will lie in the hands of the Mid Richmond Neighbourhood Centre (MRNC) Committee, which on behalf of the community owns the masthead.

Nobody imagined 4 years ago when we first started up the Sun as a community newsheet that it would be received so well, and contributed to so heartily, or grown so rapidly as it has. Remember that we started out as a group of volunteers with an experimental print run of 1500, covering only the towns of Evan Head, Woodburn, Broadwater and Coraki. Now we are a 32 page monthly tabloid contributed to richly by 120 local community writers, with a print run of minimum 10,200 covering the whole

Richmond Valley. We have provided employment for dozens of people in writing, distribution, printing, and ad management. Much as we have all tried to keep this model pure and simple, its commercial success means it has outgrown the way we operate.

A factor in all this is that my family and I are relocating to Sydney for at least 6 months and at a time when I have to say the whole project was getting too big for me and stretching the resources of the MRNC to its limit. Much as we have tried to create a 'paid' team structure to replicate what we have all achieved, to date that just has not been possible to the satisfaction of everyone concerned. The last few weeks has forced a few realisations - the first being that the MRNC is not a publishing house. And the second is that I have not and am not interested in turning this into a 'paid' job.

On a personal note, I feel we have all been on this amazing adventure together. I offer a deep thanks to those of you who have engaged in this project and with whom I have vigorously discussed issues, argued, debated and laughed. I have read almost every word of every contributor in the past 38 issues prior to print - and have got to know you so well! In running this paper I have experienced this community in an intense and thorough way - and it is the energy from the people here - their variety and passion and wisdom and craziness that has been the lifeblood of this paper.

As to the future - I believe the appetite for information and the enthusiasm with which the Sun has been nourished by its community will ensure that it will continue in some form or other.

Maria Walsh

Key characters in the Sun story!

A huge Thank You to:
Di and Brian O'Farrell of LJHooker, our first advertisers, who instantly got all their staff to listen to my 'presentation', and gave me a little applause after I talked about the 'idea' of a community Newspaper. They became our faithful advertising supporters along with Nicki and Mick Metcalfe, the Woodburn Evans Head RSL Club and the First National team! Thank you to all our advertisers - particularly those small businesses in Casino and Evans Head and Coraki who supported us - you have allowed our newspaper to thrive.

88.9FM, our media partners, for all those interviews together in your radio shack at Bora Ridge. Radio 88.9FM are a self-made force in radio-land and have raised the bar on what community radio can achieve (consider that they get exclusive interviews with every major politician who comes to this area!). They have sustained and strengthened the Sun in so many ways. I remember calling a lot of people to discuss the notion of starting a paper, not a positive experience in many cases, but **Roger and Robyne Wood** were the ones who went 'whoopie' and invited me straight over.

Thank you so much to those brave people who have taken an active role in governing this area and believe utterly that a vital part of their role is to communicate to their community: **(the late) Ray Jeffery, Barbara Jeffery, Owen Crawford, Donella Kinnish, Stewart George and Mayor Col Sullivan** (who I know will not miss my Sunday calls, yet never rejected them!).

Anne Mazzitelli and her team at Clarence Review for offering mentorship and skills so liberally and kindly.

Annette Phelps who seems to handle her job at RVC with such ease and grace - thank you for making appointments for us to interview your 'charges'.

To our local **MP Steve Cansdell** and his effortlessly good and lovely manager **Debbie Newton**; thank you for your camaraderie and tireless work for this community.

To publicist **Murray Lees** whose polite suggestions for our future and razor sharp intellect caused so many 'aha!' moments

for us at the Sun. Not only that, but your advertising support kept us off the soup line for months each year!

To **Member for Page Janelle Saffin** and her media adviser **Lee Duncan** for making political reporting so easy and enjoyable - such a pleasure to report on someone who works so hard and does so much.

Helen Fredrickson! for her vast amount of typing as a volunteer, and her stunning insights into the community which made the beginning of the Sun so effective.

To **David and Jackie Parkinson** for the wealth of experience they imparted which made the whole project possible.

To **Maureen Follers** for her guidance and fine example in volunteering, and for her sheer ability to listen to me rant, rave, yell and generally gently debrief.

To **Jody Guest** our fabulous ad manager, for being assiduous, and the most self motivated person I know without losing her kindness and gentleness. And our travelling talent **Melissa Lutton** for her layout magick and being a true inspiration as someone who follows her muse.

Paul Shaw - for making it possible for me to stay sane and get my life back, thank you for your journalistic skills and hard work.

John Davies and the **late Roz Fischer** of the Living Museum who welcomed The Sun staff with open arms and open minds (and in-kind services) right from the beginning.

Dr Richard Gates, for rattling everyone's cages, including mine! Most people know how fearless you are, but not so familiar with your genuine sense of compassion for people in need.

Most of all thank you to that sophisticated operation known as the **Mid Richmond Neighbourhood Centre** which quietly develops intensely practical and caring programmes that serve our community. They have been the back room energy providing all the services that keep the Sun running. **Donna Bertoli** I owe you a great debt in wise words, extreme patience and intelligence. And **Gretchen Young**, your foresight, street smarts and keenly sharp sense of social justice are a great gift to those around you. *Maria*

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Family friendly makeover for Bowls Club

< Kim Cousins

Evans Head Bowling Club is getting a \$2 million makeover to make it more family friendly for both visitors and locals - if it can meet council requirements.

"The \$2 million development is part of a strategic plan," Bowling Club manager Roger Hong said.

"The restaurant will be expanded to seat 250 and a kids room and gym will be added."

The start of work has been delayed by about six months due to development application (DA) issues.

After officially lodging the DA with council,

Roger said it has come back with 18 conditions that must be met by the club before any work can take place.

Council are concerned about increased noise from the car park and the impact it could have on people staying at the neighbouring Silver Sands Caravan Park.

"We've had a noise assessment person here taking recordings, they will send a report to council," Roger said.

"There were also lighting problems as part of crime prevention, so people can't hide behind things."

Although DA problems will delay the renova-

tions by as much as six months, Roger is optimistic that they will happen.

He's hoping the new club will bring more people into Evans Head and a different demographic to the club.

"We need to expand to suit changing families in the area," he said. "We're trying to diversify, there are a lot of younger families in town now."

Roger estimates that half the clubs' members are visitors from out of town.

"We get a lot of people from Queensland sign in," he said. "They come to Evans Head because it's what places like Palm Beach used to be 20 years ago."