



# BRAIDWOOD COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 17<sup>th</sup> Sept 2024

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2023-24

Founded in 2018, the Braidwood Community Association is an inclusive community group open to all full and part-time residents of the Braidwood District. It is an incorporated organisation. It holds monthly open meetings and has an elected committee which also meets monthly.

The **Objectives of the BCA** are to:

- *Promote and develop Braidwood and its surrounding areas, to further enhance the well-being and sustainability of our community.*
- *Provide a forum to discuss issues affecting the Braidwood community*
- *Develop collaborative strategies to address these challenges*
- *Reflect the interests of the Braidwood community to all levels of government*
- *Help strengthen local community capacity through networking with other community organisations*
- *Assist in activities which will enhance the natural and built environment of Braidwood and surrounding areas, including the provision of community facilities.*

2023-24 has been another busy year for the BCA. Open meetings have been held each month to discuss issues affecting the Braidwood Community. The Committee has met every month, sometimes more often, to follow up on issues raised, and to plan ways to represent our interests to Council and other levels of Govt. We have attended Council meetings to speak on matters affecting the community, and written submissions in response to Council and other consultations. We have represented the community in meetings and workshops and worked with Councillors and QPRC staff on documents such as the Braidwood Community Plan. We have supported other community groups to represent their interests. We have reached out to service providers to try to improve services for Braidwood residents. We have invited Council staff to meetings to provide information on Council projects and invited Mayor Kenrick Winchester to our open meeting in June. We organised the Meet the Candidates event on September 5<sup>th</sup> to enable residents to meet and talk to many of the Council candidates.

**Some of the ways we have represented the community in the last year:**

1. **Detailed submissions** on the revised Queanbeyan-Palerang Community Strategic Plan – Towards 2042 (March 2024) and the QPRC Integrated Plans 2024-25. These are available on our website.
2. We worked with QPRC staff to help develop the **Braidwood Community Plan**. This was presented to Council on June 26<sup>th</sup> 2024.
3. **QPRC Affordable Housing Working Group**. Sue Murray and Sarah Leheny have joined QPRC's Affordable Housing Working Group representing Braidwood and surrounds. In this early stage of the group we have worked on the Terms of Reference and have heard from Homes NSW on what action they have proposed, and have commenced, in the LGA to supply more affordable housing. At present this housing is intended only for Queanbeyan. The Working Group has been quite active in its interaction with Council, and Sue and Sarah will ensure Council, via the Working Group, are reminded of the need for more affordable housing in Braidwood.
4. **Rates Structure Review Panel** – Sue Murray and Jan Mason attended 2 meetings of LGA community representatives (April 2024) to receive information on the current Rates Structure and to discuss whether the current structure required any changes. The group decision was to retain the current structure.

5. **Regional Drought Resilience Plan** (May 2024). Sue Murray was invited to take part in two workshops with other LGA representatives. Michael McGrath also attended these meetings to ensure that the perspective of rural residents was heard.
6. **Community transport.** BCA has contacted Eurobodalla Council and Valmar Support Services and researched options for transport to medical appointments in nearby cities.
7. **Mobile and internet Services.** BCA organised a public meeting with Kristy McBain and Telstra representatives on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2024, to provide information and answer questions on changes to Telstra's service provision and connectivity issues in this area.
8. **QPRC Community Christmas celebrations.** Catherine Bell and Sue Murray are involved in ongoing planning with QPRC staff for the QPRC Community Christmas Party in Ryrie Park.
9. **Braidwood Pool.** We have had discussions with the community and QPRC staff re upgrading the heating at the pool, and possibly providing a cover to make it useable year-round. Responses provided by Council staff indicate that the cost would exceed Council's resources and would require external funding.

#### **Support for other local organisations has included:**

1. Support for community efforts to replace an Early Education and Childcare Centre for Braidwood.
2. Support for the work done by BYPAA to develop the Glasshouse (the Old Library) as a centre for activities with young residents, with after-school activities almost every weekday.
3. Contact with Council staff after discussions with representatives of the Life Centre re repeated flooding of the Life Centre building. Council has allocated funding in the Operational Plan 2024-25 for work to address the drainage issues in this area.
4. Sue and Sarah worked with Braidwood Urban Landcare Group on the Braidwood European Wasp Offensive to reduce the numbers of European wasps in and around the town.
5. John Tuckwell and Sue Murray represented the BCA in several meetings and workshops organised by the BAVBC to develop ideas to promote tourism initiatives for the region.

#### **Focus for the Future:**

Over the years we have developed a list of issues and projects which the community wants to see progressed. We've had success with some of these, while many others remain on the "to-do" list. The Council election this year provided an opportunity to update a previous survey of community priorities, and to gain a commitment from candidates for Council to work to progress the top 6 community priorities during the next Council term. While the final Council make-up isn't known, we are confident that we have the support of the new Council to work with us on these issues and projects.

Some of the issues we will be following up are:

1. **Rural Roads.** This is the number 1 issue for the Community, where we will monitor the impact of the third grading team on improving the timely implementation of the grading schedule and keep raising sealed roads in need of repair and improvements.
2. **Strategic Plan for Braidwood.** We first need to have the Braidwood Structure Plan and the 15 Year Review of the State Heritage Listing to be completed, which together with the Braidwood Community Plan will provide the basis of this plan. The draft Braidwood Structure Plan will be presented to Council in December. The BCA successfully requested a delay in the consultation period to avoid the busy summer holiday period.
3. **Harmonisation of water (and sewerage) charges** across the LGA. This requires a decision by Council, which is yet to be made. Council staff have linked this to the 'refresh' of what is known as the Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan (IWCMP) for Palerang (which is an extensive exercise of estimating future new investment in infrastructure for the next 30 years due to both growth and replacement of existing infrastructure). We have been seeking transparency on where this process is at and when will be the key future milestones in the process, both to try and keep the process on track and be ready to respond to the draft report. It is hoped that this will be during the current financial year. We are also monitoring the state of the Palerang Water Fund as the increases imposed in 2021-22 appeared to have been larger than needed due to

conservative assumptions used, which requires questions on notice to be asked. The BCA opposed the 15.6% increase in the 2024-25 Palerang Water Access Charge and will continue to do so. The cost of the Bungendore's water supply pipeline and who will pay for this remains a key issue of concern.

4. **Braidwood's Water Security.** This continues to be a matter of concern to residents. Again we await the updated Palerang Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan to be able to respond to projections and plans for the future.
5. **Community transport.** This is one of our community's top 6 priority issues as indicated by the recent BCA survey. We will follow this up with the new Council as a priority.
6. **Heritage.** The Milestone 3 report for the 15 Year Review of the State Heritage Listing of Braidwood and its Surrounds was released in July 2024. BCA did not make a submission as the time available for consultation was very limited. The general perception was that it is a very comprehensive report with recommendations that will require considerable funding from the State Government. We will be following this with great interest, given that heritage conservation is an issue that ranked highly in our survey of community priorities.
7. **Seniors' needs.** We are having discussions with Community Development staff at QPRC about encouraging service providers to use the Glasshouse as an information hub for Seniors services.
8. **Plans for 88 Wallace St (Old D&S site)** and the Stage 1 off-street carpark behind this site.
9. **Roads, footpaths, traffic issues in town.** These are important issues which we will continue to highlight.
10. **Environmental enhancement of Braidwood and villages.** In particular, the implementation of the QPRC Urban Forest Strategy.

## Acknowledgements

The BCA could not function without support from many people and organisations. Our sincere thanks go to the following:

- Mayor Kenrick Winchester and the QPRC Councillors who have taken a genuine interest in our local communities and consulted with us about local issues and projects.
- QPRC 's General Manager Rebecca Ryan for her active interest and involvement in our community issues.
- The members of the QPRC staff who respond to our submissions, answer our questions, provide information, attend local community meetings and do their best to support our local projects.
- The wonderful staff of the Braidwood Servicemen's Club who make us so welcome at the Club and provide whatever help we need.
- The many hard-working local organisations who work for the good of the entire community, both in Braidwood and in the Villages and other localities.
- The Braidwood Bugle and Braidwood's Changing Times for providing us with media coverage and supporting our community endeavours.

My personal thanks go to the hard-working members of the BCA Committee who generously commit their time, ideas, expertise and enthusiasm to work for the community. The 2023-24 Committee are Sue Murray (President), David Anthony (Vice President), Sarah Leheny (Secretary), Martin Glover (Treasurer), John Tuckwell (researcher, submission writer and all-round expert), Judy van Rijswijk (Publicity) and Trish Sargeson. Our grateful thanks and best wishes go to retiring Committee member Trish Sargeson who has worked hard on issues relating to Seniors needs and Community Transport and represented the BCA on the Braidwood MPS Community Consultative Committee for several years.

Finally thank you to all the BCA members who have supported us in our endeavours for the communities of Braidwood and District over the last 6 years. We look forward to another year of working with all levels of Government and local organisations to enhance the well-being and sustainability of our community.

Sue Murray  
President, Braidwood Community Association