

Uki News

Issue # 1

An initiative of UKIRA

May 2001

Uki on the Move

In May 2000 the Uki Residents Association set in motion a community consultation process facilitated by the Tweed Shire Town Centre Committee and sponsored through the NSW Department of State & Regional Developments – Main Street Program. Whew, what a mouthful! To get the ball rolling the Uki Residents Association, which is now formally named the Uki Village & Districts Residents Assoc. Inc. (UKIRA) set up and facilitated a community meeting at the Uki Hall last June 2000. Many people reading this Newsletter will remember that event and other meetings soon after that set the stage for a co-ordinated Town Centre Program and the development of a Strategic Plan looking to the short and long term future for the Uki district. Please note that although called “the Town Centre Program”, the focus includes the broader district as well as the village zone, particularly as most of the eight hundred or so households serviced through the Uki Post Office are in fact outside the village.

Our First Year

In less than a year since those well attended public meetings in June/August 2000, a great deal has been achieved and many initiatives set in motion. A new slogan – Uki “Where the mountains touch the sky” – has been well received and will be used on letterheads and some promotional material. Plans for a footpath extension in the town, a grand plan for Sweetnams Park, road upgrades, a Community Technology Centre, our first of many community dinners, grants approved – others applied for, a river side clean up plan and much much more.

Less visible are the hundreds of hours of meetings and work by a growing group of dedicated people – locals who hold a bright vision for the integration of the past, present and emerging cultures of the Uki district into a forward looking plan.

A draft Vision Statement to come out of these early community meetings states “To obtain sustainable growth through sensitive tourism by preserving, enhancing and promoting Uki’s natural and spiritual environment, creative community and historical village”.

Isn’t that fantastic! – a vision that truly includes all stakeholder interests – but how can we do it? Easy, by playing team!

So, out of the initial public meetings five working groups were formed based on the areas of strongest interest from those present at the meetings.

The groups are as follows:

Economic Development & Marketing
Urban Design/Town Infrastructure
Youth & Community
Environment
Art & Culture

A sixth group is the central committee of the UKIRA which co-ordinates the whole process and facilitates/oversees most of the administration and correspondences to Council, Government and non-government organisations.

Local Economic Renewal

The Economic Development & Marketing group is focussed on developing strategies for sustainable economic renewal and the broader marketing of Uki and districts to attract visitors, tourists and appropriate businesses. A successful application to the Department of State & Regional Developments for a *Town Life Development grant* has allowed a number of projects to commence including this bi-monthly newsletter which is funded for one year under the grant of about thirteen thousand dollars.

The first project financed by the grant however was the selection and appointment of a marketing and tourism consultant, Mr Terry Watson, whom we warmly welcome to our team, and who has already conducted the initial workshop on Tuesday May 8 attended by about twenty five local business owners and interested persons. The desired outcome of the consulting project is to create a Strategic Marketing Plan for the Uki district. Anyone interested in the plan can view a copy at the Uki Post Office.

Other initiatives ear-marked for funding include the establishment of a Community Technology Centre, development of a Visitors Leaflet, a Uki promotion brochure, the publication of a local telephone and business directory and the erection of a fixed tourism Notice Board with map and guide.

Further information regarding the Economic Development and Marketing group is available from joint leaders Gloria Roszkiewicz on 6679 5395 and Elaine Harding on 6679 5255.

What goes Where

The Urban Design group is focussed on issues pertaining to roads and traffic management, footpaths and crossings, street lighting, bus shelters, signage, parks and other

developments. Construction of a Pedestrian Refuge was completed by Tweed Shire Council prior to Christmas and more recently new streets light have been erected over the crossing to provide greater security and comfort in that zone. Further work already completed includes replacing the bottom step at the front of the Anglican Church and some curb and gutter in the same vicinity.

The Park Path

Tweed Shire Council have responded positively to calls from the **Urban Design** group to build a pathway linking Sweetnams Park to Uki village. Sections of the path have already been laid during construction of the new Smiths Creek bridge and Council is now in the process of finalising an appropriate route for the remainder of the path and is consulting with residents whose land might be affected. It is hoped the entire path will be completed during the 2001/2002 financial year but this is still subject to formal budget approval. In the interim, Council will look at the possibility of laying further sections with gravel.

The exciting first stage of development is work on a section of about 100 metres of path from the Buttery to the butcher shop which will hopefully be carried out under the **Work for the Dole** program with commencement aimed for August. Tweed Shire Council has generously agreed to provide assistance by way of plans, approvals and, open the champagne, materials. We are planning for the actual construction to be carried out by Work for the Dole participants under the guidance of a project supervisor. If you are a local trades person willing to gift your assistance with overseeing please contact Phil Carr on the number below. More info in the next Newsletter.

Sweetnams Park Master Plan

With input from a number of the committee groups a grand plan for the park has been submitted to council. Situated on the outskirts of town the park represents a wonderful "gateway" opportunity for Uki and could become a fabulous show piece for our district. The objective of the plan is to create a unique park that attracts visitors and locals alike and offers opportunity for education, recreation and preservation.

There are two stages to the proposal. The first is to plant a Local Natives Botanical Demonstration Garden on the land which is adjacent to the old quarantined cattle drenching yards. The gardens would feature local rainforest and riparian species, each signposted with relevant data and would become both a place of study and interest as well as being a practical botanical nursery for propagation of local natives. Ongoing maintenance of the garden would possibly be jointly shared by Council, The Environment Groups, Uki Garden Club and Work for the Dole people. One option being considered is a "Sensitivity Walk" for the disabled and visually impaired including Braille signage.

Within Stage One of the plan is the construction of appropriate picnic and Bar-B-Q facilities and possibly including a toilet/amenities block (subject to DA approval). Timbers from the old Smiths Creek bridge have been retained and will possibly be utilised for park structures. Council has already agreed to erect the picnic tables under this years budget meaning that the garden and the picnic facility could all happen at the same time.

Road Safety for Ankle Biters

The second component of the Sweetnams Park plan is the construction of a kids bike track for the under tens. This facility would be constructed from recycled rubber and comply with Standards relating to the softfall characteristics for children's playgrounds. It is envisaged that the track be constructed with a centre line, pedestrian crossings and sign posts and be used for kids to learn about road rules and safety and even just to have fun. The softfall rubber construction is relatively flood, fire and vandal proof and lasts for many years. One local resident with experience in playground construction has offered consulting, expertise and specialised equipment to help bring the plan to fruition. Plans for this are being discussed with Ray Clark, the Road Safety Officer at Council who is willing to do the research on costings and grant availability which is great.

This would be the first young children's facility of its type in the Tweed and be absolutely fabulous for the very young and families.

Overall the plan for Sweetnams Park is a huge project needing assistance from Council, Government and Environment Groups which is always more forthcoming when there is firstly a strong local commitment. If you have an interest in any aspect of the Sweetnams Park plan including Work for the Dole or Supervising please contact the **Urban Design** group leader Phil Carr on 6679 5855 or Cath Donaldson.

Changing Lanes

In response to many suggestions from the community about the road from Uki To Murwillumbah the **Urban Design** group has met with Bob Missingham from Tweed Shire Council to discuss improvements. To date they have successfully negotiated for some key lane changes which we hope will be implemented over the coming month. The changes are:

To reverse the overtaking lanes approaching Uki and the new Smiths Creek Bridge so that one lane comes into town and double lanes leave the town as you head to Murwillumbah and; to reverse the double lanes on the Uki side of the Byangum Bridge so that we have the overtaking lane coming toward Uki. At this stage council has not committed to a timeframe but has indicated their willingness to make the changes.

Friends of Uki Community Dinner

Following a suggestion from the **Economic Development and Marketing** group UKIRA proceeded to organise a "Friends of Uki" community dinner. The dinner which was held at Uki Dreaming Café on May 5 was a huge success with over ninety people in attendance playing games, winning prizes and sharing ideas. About \$450 was raised on the night for UKIRA which helps with the administrative costs of these community projects. The next dinner is planned for September, watch this space for more details.

Uki Youth

The **Youth and Community** group is about the welfare of young people and has been active in exploring possibilities for grants and funding of youth activities. Many thanks to Debbie Hodge and Jane Parrott for their research efforts and submitting a grant application for a Youth Forum/workshop which unfortunately was unsuccessful. The kids bike track at Sweetnams Park will receive input and the possibility of a BMX/Skate Park for Uki, possibly near the sportsground park, has been raised. One couple has offered the use of their half pipe skating ramp for raising funds for these projects – look out for opportunities to let your kids have a skate at upcoming community events. President of UKIRA, Cath Donaldson has also been active on behalf of the youth at Uki and has approached Jessica Walker at the Family Support Centre at Tweed Heads about the possibility of a Youth Forum at Uki. The Forum will focus on bringing ideas forward from local kids about what they want for the area. The owners of the Buttery are keen to assist in the possible hosting of the event

For further information on Youth and Community matters contact Cath Donaldson on 6679 5041.

Clean and Green

The **Environment** group works on behalf of us all to promote more sustainable approaches to life and the development of strategies to clean up our environment and regenerate local native flora and fauna. The group has been successful in gaining a grant from the local Landcare Group of \$200 for the printing and distribution of a Weed Identification pamphlet for the Tweed. The publication, **Environmentally Sensitive Gardening**, has been designed with a view to preserve and promote the species within the special area within which we live. You have probably received one recently in the mail but if not it's available at the Uki Post Office.

People interested in the **Environment** group should contact Sue Phillips on 6679 5091.

Work for the Dole comes to Uki

The Tweed Training and Enterprise Company who

manage the Work for the Dole program in our region have been very helpful in assisting UKIRA to develop a submission for a Work for the Dole crew to help out with the projects at Uki. Phillip Dickson from Tweed Training has indicated that Uki and district residents will get first bite of the cherry for the positions available and then, if more participants are needed, they will look further afield. This is great for Uki's unemployed as over 66% of Work for the Dole participants go on to full time work. A variety of Uki projects will utilise this program and so the submission will bundle these together to create a work program of at least two days per week for up to six months or more for the lucky participants. Projects include the footpath, Sweetnams Park and a riverside clean-up campaign. Although final approval has not yet been received, all indications are positive that our application will be successful.

If you are unemployed and interested in this project either as a participant or supervisor give Tweed Training and Recruitment a call on 1800 353 945.

Local Native Flower Poles

Although the Art and Culture group has not been overly active to date a number of initiatives have surfaced that fall into this camp. We have all observed power pole painting projects in the district ala Mooball with its cow motifs and the colourful rainforest poles in Glenock Cl. and many others at Byron Bay. The idea for Uki receiving most support to date is to paint the poles in the village and approach roads with a native flower theme. Linking in beautifully with the Botanic Garden at Sweetnams Park each pole would feature a different species such as Melastoma Affine, a lovely pink/mauve, with the next pole being the yellow Golden Pends, and the next Salmon Bean (orange, red and purple) followed by Hibiscus hetrophyllis (yellow with red centre) and so on and so on. The whole idea could be expanded further to include bush tucker and bird attractors for example. Visitors coming via Murwillumbah would be welcomed to town by a forest of flowering poles. Its got to be a vast improvement to the never ending reminders of North Power towering over us.

Other art projects needing attention include the design of brochures for Uki, completing the mural in the Hall Trust grounds, banners for events and possibly some sculptures along the walk from the village to Sweetnams Park. If there are any artists out there who would be interested in exhibiting their talents in these very public ways or who would like to offer input into the planning and implementation of art projects for Uki, we want to hear from you. Please call Joey Lonza or Lisa Gajr at The Art Bank on 6679 5799.

Sweetnams Park – Who Done it?

On the Saturday night before Mothers Day Sweetnams Park was vandalised by persons unknown using a vehicle. Large areas of grass have been damaged in the park but most disappointing is the damage to the new path and safety posts near the new bridge. Posts were knocked down and will need replacing and the footpath area has been churned up by a car doing wheelies. If anyone out there can provide information or saw anything at all happening at the park on Saturday night, May 12 please contact Murwillumbah Police who are keen for leads. This kind of consistent destruction to our collective public property cannot be tolerated, it has happened too many times already and must stop. Along the same theme a petition to have a stronger Police presence at Uki is being circulated and you can show your support by signing at the Uki Post Office or Uki Shopping Centre.

Rally Around Uki

The Endeavour Foundations' annual Gold Coast to Birdsville and Back Car Rally is being staged in July and Uki is the final nights stopover and party before the run home to the Gold Coast next morning. Rally organisers have approached UKIRA regarding catering for the event and we have subsequently linked them up with the Sports Club to host the event. The rally cars will be arriving throughout the day and setting up camp in the sports field. Come on out and see the cars and meet the crew. On Friday night **July 20** a huge party will take place with a live band, food and refreshments. Proceeds from the catering will go to the Uki Sports and Recreation Club who will be organising the two day event. Put the date in your diary now for a great night out at the Sports ground then back up for breakfast at 5.30am Sat. morning.

Need a Lawyer? We do!

UKIRA is seeking the services of a solicitor who would be willing to give us free legal advice from time to time on various matters pertaining to our future community activities. Please contact Cath Donaldson or Phil Carr if you can help.

UKIRA

Any and all residents – note residents not just ratepayers – are welcome to join UKIRA. Membership is \$5 for individuals and \$10 for families. We meet at Uki Hall on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.00pm.

The next meeting of UKIRA is set down for 6.30pm, Tuesday June 6 at the Uki Hall. We plan to conclude business promptly and then receive local Federal ALP Candidate, Jenny McAllister at 7.30 pm to talk to our community about her political platform and her aims regarding education, small business, Regional development, telecommunications etc. All are welcome to attend. Maybe some other candidate could speak at a future meeting if we want

Editors Note

Hello and welcome to the first (long awaited) Uki and Districts Newsletter. The purpose of this Newsletter is to provide the community with feedback from UKIRA on local happenings and events and, as the publication evolves, provide a forum for you to have your say by way of Letters to the Editor and articles about your particular interest. Some of you may be interested in advertising and we will be making a limited amount of space available for small ads. One way that we can assist local clubs and business communication needs is by offering the opportunity to include inserts in our bi-monthly distributions. We have not as yet formalised our rates, however they will be quite modest so if you are interested you can contact me on the number below.

Subsequent editions will have more graphical components such as photos etc and, as necessary, the publication will expand.

I am interested in hearing from sporting organisations wanting to publish event results and local interest clubs seeking coverage. We have adopted a democratic approach to the evolution of this publication so feedback from the community is welcomed. If you would like to write some copy to promote your activity or viewpoint or comment on the new slogan etc, you can post it to the address listed on the top of the Newsletter for consideration. The next edition of **Uki News** is due out mid July so get your contributions in early.

And finally, President of everything and Rowlands Ck. resident Cath Donaldson is a powerhouse of energy and enthusiasm and has contributed greatly in bringing the community into action and discussion. As President of UKIRA Cath has done an outstanding job in liaising with Council, Government and other organisations and for all your work and inspiration Cath we collectively extend a huge thankyou to you. Thanks and well done.

Edwin Macpherson – Editor
6679 4232

Dates to Remember

Endeavor Rally Party – Friday July 20
Red Cross Street Stall at Uki Hall – July 1
Big Morning tea – Thursday May 24
Uki Markets – 1st Sunday each month.

Invitation for Creative Banner and Flag making project– Centenary of Federation Project. For all interested there is a workshop at the Buttery. 10:00am Sunday June 3. Contact Gloria Roszkiewicz on 6679 5255.