

LONG GULLY NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL



2002 - 2010 FINAL EVALUATION REPORT



David Boyce 1954 – 2010

If you look up 'champion' in the dictionary, chances are you will see David's photo. He was a champion in every sense of the word: a champion bloke to his countless friends in the community; a champion family man; a champion carer of nature; and a champion of Neighbourhood Renewal. Whether it involved the community garden, Neighbourhood Centre tool library, driving the bus for the kids' holiday programs, turning (burning) the snags on a bbq, or connecting with people, David was a true champion who will stay on in our hearts for the rest of our days.

RICHARD WYNNE MP MINISTER FOR HOUSING FOREWORD



Thank you for giving me the opportunity to write on the positive impacts that Neighbourhood Renewal is having on the Long Gully community.

Neighbourhood Renewal has been making a real difference to communities across Victoria since 2001 - creating a landscape for improved economic and social conditions and providing people with opportunities to take advantage of these. Long Gully Neighbourhood Renewal results have confirmed that residents have experienced real and sustainable change to their community; changes that are improving lives.

This report describes many of the marvellous outcomes Neighbourhood Renewal has achieved in Long Gully since 2002. For example, unemployment has decreased and a significant narrowing of the gap with the State average has occurred, and there are more opportunities available to find jobs.

Overall crime numbers against people and property have been reduced; literacy and numeracy skills amongst primary and secondary students are improving; and community attitude to government has been reshaped in a good way because new partnerships have replaced old fashioned bureaucratic practices.

During my visit to Long Gully after the tragic bushfires of February 2009, I witnessed the grit and determination of the community to overcome hardship. I was in awe of their fighting spirit to restore life to a devastated community, and this iron will is evident in the Neighbourhood Renewal process. The people of Long Gully have worked tirelessly to making Neighbourhood Renewal the success it is.

My congratulations go to Long Gully residents and all your partners for achieving success over the last eight years, and of course, continuing to succeed in the future. You are managing to turn around your communities, transforming them into places where people have a revitalised sense of belonging, can live with pride, and see a future filled with opportunity.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Wynne". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'R' and 'W'.

Richard Wynne MP
Minister for Housing

BOB CAMERON'S FOREWORD



As the local member for Bendigo West, I am immensely proud of the achievements accomplished by Long Gully Neighbourhood Renewal and it's true to say that residents in these communities have transformed - in an encouraging way - how they are seen by the entire City of Greater Bendigo.

Residents have taken a strong and consistently high positive attitude toward making a difference to their neighbourhoods. I have watched as residents imposed great demands on themselves and government bodies to make Neighbourhood Renewal work in a way that has delivered lasting change to the area.

Improvements have been made to the physical environment while pride and participation in community life has been bolstered by the sheer hard work and determination of the residents. People in the area have bonded with various levels of government to increase employment opportunities in the area, improve educational services and reduce crime.

As the journey for Long Gully continues, I am confident that residents will persist in their endeavours to build pride in their communities, devise creative ways to improve their lives, and then dream and make a better future for themselves and their communities.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Cameron". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bob" written in a more stylized, looped manner.

Bob Cameron MP
Member for Bendigo West

MESSAGE FROM THE LONG GULLY COMMUNITY



My name is Jacque and I have been a resident of Long Gully for over ten years.

I believe the story of Neighbourhood Renewal is about people and how they experience change - in others,

in themselves, and how they see their area continually evolving.

I have seen people's skills and capacity develop. Many residents have found abilities in themselves they never knew existed. Some are now doing new jobs and education courses and activities that are creating positive changes in their personal lives.

But the best part of Neighbourhood Renewal is about how we have gone about building relationships and trust amongst the residents of our community and particularly with our partners in Neighbourhood Renewal. We've really encouraged these partnerships to grow.

The great gift of Neighbourhood Renewal has been that we have been listened to and supported by our government partners who became advocates for our community. They bothered to learn what the community needed

and wanted, and gave us much needed support to achieve our goals. Seeing life from our perspective is ongoing and we expect the trust between us to grow and develop as this process continues.

There are so many benefits we've gained by being involved in Neighbourhood Renewal. We have developed long term friendships, which has really bettered our lives. People are taking pride in their local activities, achievements and personal outcomes.

I am proud of all the people involved in Neighbourhood Renewal - we wanted to improve our community and make it a better place to be and we've been successful in doing so. The aim is to continue that journey and build on our past successes.

We've come a long way and the future looks so much brighter than ever before, but we must remember that we still have a way to go. We're working hard at making life better in Long Gully.

EVALUATING NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL

“I say to others that what you put into Neighbourhood Renewal will be tripled in quantity to what you get back.” Barry

Neighbourhood Renewal brings together the resources and ideas of residents, governments, local businesses and community groups to tackle disadvantage in areas with concentrations of public housing, and then build vibrant communities where people want to live.

Initially, community and local agencies work with government bodies to prepare a local action plan for Neighbourhood Renewal. Thirty eight indicators are used to evaluate and monitor Neighbourhood Renewal’s progress against six key objectives (action plan areas). These are:

- increased community pride and participation
- enhanced housing and environment
- improved employment, learning and local economic activity
- decreased levels of crime and improved personal safety
- better health and wellbeing
- increased access to services and improved government responsiveness

The evaluation process provides residents and government bodies with feedback on the effectiveness of Neighbourhood Renewal, and also identifies which strategies are working and which ones need further investment.

Information is drawn from two sources: community surveys and administrative data, which together supply information about current conditions and provide comparative data to measure change.

Three community surveys were conducted over eight years in Eaglehawk and Long Gully and independently overseen by Victoria University. For each survey around 300 local residents were interviewed face to face and 150 nearby residents were surveyed by telephone. Information from government department records and agencies complemented the survey data; combined, these materials give a picture of how Neighbourhood Renewal is performing.

KEY OUTCOMES

Table 1 presents key findings from three community surveys and collated administrative data. For full details on indicators and data sources refer to the Neighbourhood Renewal Evaluation Report 2008 at www.neighbourhoodrenewal.vic.gov.au

The results of the surveys are highly encouraging and show the positive impacts that Neighbourhood Renewal has had since 2002.

Taken as a whole, the result for Long Gully Neighbourhood Renewal shows progress is generally good. There has been local improvement on over two thirds of the indicators, with a limited number narrowing the gap compared to the rest of the State.

Long Gully residents have recorded improvements in employment, learning and local economic activity. Residents perceive a better local economy is delivering new employment opportunities and

jobs and improved employment services. Numeracy and literacy skills amongst primary and secondary students are improving and absenteeism is down.

A really pleasing result shows people are feeling a stronger sense of belonging to their neighbourhood. This means people are identifying more with their area. Participation in local activities has risen strongly.

Indicators show that the quality and availability of community services has improved during the Neighbourhood Renewal initiative.

Future plans for the community will address strengthening perceptions of pride in the neighbourhood, improving safety on the streets, increasing household incomes, encouraging further education, and putting in place strategies to build a healthier community.

Table 1: Key indicators used to evaluate and monitor Neighbourhood Renewal

What Long Gully residents say about ...	Room for improvement	No change	Changed for the better
Pride in their neighbourhood	Room for improvement		
Feeling a sense of belonging			Changed for the better
Integration and participation in local activities			Changed for the better
Physical environment	Room for improvement		
Own housing	Room for improvement		
Public housing acceptance rates			Changed for the better
Job opportunities			Changed for the better
Increased employment			Changed for the better
Decreased unemployment			Changed for the better
Household income	Room for improvement		
Local employment services			Changed for the better
Local economy			Changed for the better
Local education and training opportunities			Changed for the better
Absenteeism in primary school			Changed for the better
Absenteeism in secondary school			Changed for the better
Literacy and numeracy for primary and secondary students			Changed for the better
Number of residents completing Year 12 or its equivalent	Room for improvement		
Further education qualifications			Changed for the better
Feeling safe walking in the street	Room for improvement		
Crime and personal safety			Changed for the better
Crime and personal property			
Seeing the neighbourhood as a safe place to live			Changed for the better
Health and wellbeing of the neighbourhood	Room for improvement		
Local transport options	Room for improvement		
Quality and availability of community services			Changed for the better

PAST...PRESENT...FUTURE...OUR JOURNEY

Since the start of Neighbourhood Renewal in Long Gully, residents are feeling more connected to their community and in greater control of their lives.” Karin

Long Gully is a suburb of the City of Greater Bendigo. The suburb is located three kilometres North West of the Bendigo central business district and at the 2006 census had a population of 3,289.

Settlement of the area dates primarily from the 1850s when gold was discovered. Substantial growth took place between the 1860s and 1880s, spurred on by the gold rush. Significant development occurred in the post-war years, with the area becoming traditional working class. The area has a high proportion of public housing and residents living in rental properties.

Like the suburb of Eaglehawk, Long Gully had experienced high rates of unemployment and seen community services decline in past years. Local infrastructure had suffered some decline.

Determined to overcome social and economic exclusion that negatively affects community participation, belonging and pride, the residents of Long Gully were ready to take up the fight to transform their community when Neighbourhood Renewal was presented to them.

They knew change was possible but it was up to the residents to make it happen.

This story describes the first steps taken by the residents of Long Gully in the long haul towards rebuilding a community.



PRIDE AND PARTICIPATION

Objective: to overcome social, political and economic exclusion that negatively affects community participation, belonging and pride.

“Different things have come out from the community themselves by attending meetings and seeing that there was an opportunity for them to voice their opinions, that someone is listening and they will get some results. This has been very important for getting pride back into the way we feel about our community.” Max

It was a somewhat slow start to Neighbourhood Renewal in Long Gully. Residents were initially wary of its benefits and took time to get involved. Once people could see the big issues were being tackled others in the community climbed aboard. People soon came to appreciate the sense of empowerment they felt from being involved in making decisions that would affect their lives.

As a stronger sense of ownership and participation developed over the course of Neighbourhood Renewal, residents were willing to join committees, attend meetings and participate in community events, but the hard work will continue. The future will involve increasing residents' pride in the neighbourhood and improving perceptions of the area as a good place to live.

Community Garden

A community garden was constructed by residents in Energetic Street. It is a place for learning and employment opportunities, and has increased community pride and participation.

“The garden is for the community and outside residents if they want to join in. Families can garden together, neighbours can talk and people can access local fruit and vegetables. We have 30 garden beds that can be hired so people can grow their own veggies. The gardens are open two days per week so people can water their gardens and help with other things. It's good to see them come in because they get excited seeing their veggies growing.

“I love the community garden because I like gardening and I like going there and helping out. I get to meet different people that I wouldn't normally meet. We have a group of people with disabilities come to the gardens and I like helping them. We grow such lovely and healthy food for the community to enjoy.” Cindy



Long Gully Neighbourhood Centre

The Long Gully Neighbourhood Centre is the former West Bendigo pre-school, which was redeveloped by Office of Housing in 2002 to become the new Neighbourhood Centre. \$250,000 was invested in developing the new facility. People use the centre for a range of social, educational and community activities including children services, an after school program, school holiday program, internet café, primary and secondary homework groups, adult training centre, and it runs an off-site education program from the centre to encourage young people who have left school or are at risk of leaving school re-engage with mainstream education. The Neighbourhood Centre has come to play a pivotal role in building social networks and bringing people together. It's a place where people re-connect with their community.



Bushfire Recovery

"The Neighbourhood Centre became an assistance point in the second week after the disastrous fires of 2009 for those who were affected in any way. We had services such as Centrelink, Bendigo Community Health Services, St Luke's, Bendigo Legal Centre and the City of Greater Bendigo offering their assistance and working with us in the recovery efforts."

"Health assessments were offered by Bendigo Community Health Services. Forty minute consultations provided an opportunity for participants to have their blood pressure, glucose, cholesterol, mental health and wellbeing assessed."

"The Bendigo Bushfire Recovery Action Group meetings are held at 'Our Place'. This group consists of those who lost their homes and loved ones and continues to meet on a fortnightly basis. They have struck up friendships and have found solace in each other's company."

"This has been an experience that I'm sure all of whom have shared would have preferred not to have happened. It has showed the communities of Long Gully and Eaglehawk have resilience and support for each other and our partner agencies care about the community. Many lessons have been learnt by all that will make us stronger if God forbid this should ever happen to us again." Carol



Hard Rubbish Collections

Large items of rubbish were removed by resident volunteers in September 2008. This project was funded through Sustainability Street Project Community Grants Scheme. The aftermath of the big clean-up gave people a new sense of pride in their community.

"The community has taken responsibility to keep the neighbourhood free of rubbish and had hard rubbish collections annually. The first was organised by the workers. The second was organised by the workers and residents; whereas, the third one was community driven with residents like Karen and Debbie working hard and organising the food." Debbie

Other successes

- Linear Park Toddler Playground was constructed in 2002 and funded by City of Greater Bendigo
- Local residents trained in photography and their works are showcased at the Corner Gallery at the Neighbourhood Centre. This area is used to display Centre Projects as well
- "A Brief History and Reminiscence of Long Gully" was written by local resident George Ellis and 100 books were given to communities in Neighbourhood Renewal areas
- Long Gully Pride Art Project was supported by SEEDS Bendigo at the Neighbourhood Centre, Community Garden and BMX Track. A series of postcards resulted from the art display
- National Tree Planting Day was held in Long Gully. It was a great success with 198 people taking part, many of whom were family groups, with 5,000 trees planted



HOUSING AND THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Objective: to improve run down housing, degraded physical environments and a lack of good quality accessible infrastructure.

“At first I didn’t believe the difference that new fencing and street landscaping would make to the area. I had to eat my words when it was all done because the area looked like a new suburb.” Debbie

Throughout Neighbourhood Renewal public housing has undergone significant improvements with over 250 housing works completed. Housing that had been in poor condition had been demolished and replaced with new housing. Other existing homes have been upgraded and front fences replaced or erected.

People with better homes in the area are saying the upgrades have helped to change their lives and enhanced their personal sense of happiness. Results show that turnover of public housing tenants has decreased by four per cent equaling the State average. The future is about increasing residents’ satisfaction levels with their house or unit and building a more positive view of the physical environment by residents.



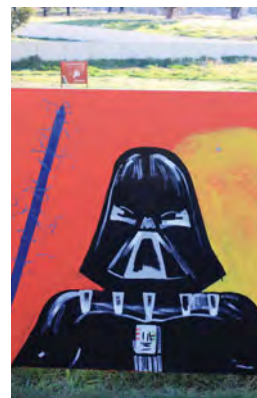
New housing additions, fencing upgrades and housing refurbishments

Long Gully Redevelopment was a significant housing redevelopment: 69 new housing units constructed, 72 three and four bedroom properties upgraded, redevelopment of the West Bendigo pre-school into the Long Gully Neighbourhood Centre undertaken, new street lighting was installed, and there was the installation of 72 solar hot water services. Over 250 houses had some form of work undertaken including rewiring, insulation and new fencing. The building program also provided many local residents with the opportunity for employment and to learn new skills as members of the community helped in the works.

Linear Park Improvement Project

Neighbourhood Renewal and City of Greater Bendigo joined forces to fund the Linear Park Improvement Project. The project involved landscaping, re-vegetation and weed control, construction of a low bridge across the drainage swale to reduce soil erosion, protection of grasslands and provision of greater accessibility for residents to surrounding shops. \$78,000 was spent on the project.

‘Colour the Gully’ community art project, which became part of the bushfire recovery process, was undertaken to beautify an area that had been within drought mode and then went through the bushfire which left the area dull and lifeless. Artist Ben Winspear was employed to work with the community – we designed and produced 30 panels of art work. The good thing was that we didn’t have to have any artistic talents. (Thank goodness). It gave many a chance to express the way in which they were feeling and have therefore been quite therapeutic. These panels are placed along the Linear Park walk way, around the local BMX track fence and at the Centre. This project started in October 09 and finished in May 2010. There has been a steady flow of community engagement and the panels look great!’ Carol R



2.4.2003

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Objective: to transform health inequalities and reduce the burden of disease.

“Traditionally men don’t talk about health issues, but by getting them working in a group they will talk together as a group and that will gradually get them to open up and talk and to get assistance with any health issues.” Ian

The residents of Long Gully and Eaglehawk in partnership with local and State governments are working together to improve access to local health services and to target programs for residents. The community understands the importance of a healthy approach to life and was ready to promote health and wellbeing in every way it could.

Their efforts to improve physical activity, mental health, diet and nutrition and social connectedness are already bearing good results, but a lot of work still remains to be achieved. The aim in the future is to identify a list of priority health issues for the neighbourhood and including these in the Community Plan and improving relations with relevant health providers.



Bendigo Menshed

“The major benefit of The Menshed will be in regards to men’s health issues. Traditionally men don’t talk about health issues but by getting them working in a group they will talk as a group and that will gradually get them to open up and get assistance with any health issues.” Terry

Fatties in Disguise

“Fatties in Disguise is a program where a group of residents meet weekly to provide peer support in relation to weight issues. It’s not just about getting fit and healthy, but it’s about educating people about ways to lose weight sensibly and stay healthy. Member’s ages range from 23 to 70. We started our own group at the Neighbourhood Centre because many commercial weight loss programs are very expensive. People pay what they can afford so no one is excluded. People come to our group to lose weight, build friendships and support networks, and most of all have fun.” Debbie



Sustainability Street

Sustainability Street is a three year community strengthening project with a focus on ecological sustainability.

BMX Track at Linear Park

The construction of a BMX Track at Linear Park in Long Gully now provides an excellent area for kids on bikes.

Other successes

- Let’s Do Lunch – a fortnightly lunch for single mothers to enjoy a bit of ‘free’ time when their children are occupied with craft and other activities (with child-minding volunteers) so they can make new connections and reduce isolation
- Chat’n’Chew is a social support group that meets weekly for morning tea
- Youth Group provides inclusive activities for young people including an internet café, school holiday program and a girl’s netball team
- Colgate Bright Smiles Program is a free ongoing dental card for six Long Gully children that commenced in June 2008
- Stepping Out Walking Group walks one session a week, over 25 residents participate
- Community Cooking is a weekly cooking group for parents and carers of young children
- Pap Smear Program
- Food hampers is an initiative of Menshed to distribute food hampers weekly to residents in need
- Bendigo Street Soccer is a weekly soccer match for homeless people initiated by the Big Issue and supported by St Luke’s
- ‘My Time’ playgroup for children with special needs meets fortnightly with supervised child care present



EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Objective: to reverse poor educational attainment, high rates of unemployment and low levels of economic activity.

“Neighbourhood Renewal has helped people in the area improve their lives and get some action happening where there’s a need for good help.” Candice

The Long Gully community has embraced the education and employment opportunities offered by Neighbourhood Renewal – many unemployed people have found jobs or undertaken employment training, more young people are getting further education qualifications and school absenteeism is down.

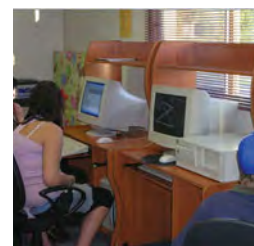
During the eight years of Neighbourhood Renewal, more than 140 residents across Long Gully and Eaglehawk have found new jobs and many others accepted the opportunity to enter further study. There has been a 11 per cent decrease in unemployment - faster than the State average; and the quality and availability of local employment services have improved by eight per cent which was on a par with the State result and more people are getting further education qualifications.

Mums on the Move

These are courses run for young mums to build self-esteem and provide pathways to employment in the community. Approximately 15 young mums regularly attended this program which has delivered several successful outcomes. Typical pathways for these residents are Certificate Courses and Vocational Education and Training programs.

WORKS Project

WORKS Project is a youth pathways program that has aimed to case manage twenty 16-22 year olds into employment or training. Participants engage in a range of activities from personal development, using computers, improving literacy and numeracy. Results have been encouraging with most of the young people finding jobs or re-engaging with mainstream education.



Study buddies

“We found that many primary school children didn’t have a lot of support after school so we decided we should help. With support from the Residents Action Group, we started the program. We had kids who couldn’t read before they came here and now they do.”

“I like working with children and I wanted to do something for the little ones in the area. I like to help the children with something their parents can’t help them with. Reading is a big thing in people’s life and I like to help them to learn to read. We hope to get bigger.”

“At the start we only had six children but now we have eight to ten. The children are prep to year six but I think we should be able to work with older children as well as often their reading and literacy levels are still at primary school age level. This shows how renewal has helped people in the area improve their lives and get some action happening where there’s a need for good help.” Candice

Other successes

- Homework Club for young people to come in after school and finish their homework if the situation at home is not favorable for study
- After School Program
- Learn to Drive is an online instruction course for learning the road rules for learners
- A pathway to employment and personal achievement is provided through a range of traineeships, courses and programs. Twelve residents from across Eaglehawk and Long Gully have undergone training in Cert II Childcare Services in order to gain employment in Family Day Care or at a Childcare Centre

CRIME AND SAFETY

Objective: to tackle high crime rates, a lack of engagement with police, and unsafe degraded environments.

“I wanted to do my bit to help out the neighbourhood so I got involved in Neighbourhood Watch. Neighbourhood Watch has definitely helped to reduce the numbers of crime against property and vandalism in the area, and has taught us some really good techniques for crime prevention.” Pam

Ensuring personal safety and reducing crime in the area are two major priorities for the community of Long Gully. In spite of the 13 per cent reduction in crime residents still claim not to feel entirely safe walking along the street. Many initiatives have been introduced to improve the physical environment such as hard rubbish removals, renovations to parks and gardens and better fencing; future plans will focus on eliminating antisocial behaviours, house burglary and property damage to complement these other improvements.

Neighbourhood Renewal projects that have shown positive outcomes included:

- Community Safety Day was held in Linear Park, April 2005, with safety service providers offering information and displays, and entertainment for the children. The Safety Day provided a positive focus to engage local residents and strengthen communities in discussions with safety providers about what safety concerns mattered to them. The day was an excellent way to inform and involve local people and engage with organisations such as Victoria Police and Fire Brigade. In the relaxed and friendly atmosphere of a day in the park, dialogue between residents and safety service providers enabled them to identify key issues, discuss priorities, and plan future directions for improving community outcomes

- Community Safety Audit - the community undertook a complete safety audit and presented their findings to City of Greater Bendigo, Office of Housing and Vic Roads for action. Areas of concern were identified during the auditing process and a strategy was developed to deal with the major issues. The aim of the audit was to find ways to make the area a safer place to live. Actions undertaken included new street lighting near parks and major walk ways, which have helped to reduce overall crime in the area
- Street lighting audit - the community undertook an audit of street lighting and presented findings to City of Greater Bendigo
- Neighbourhood Watch where residents meet monthly with Victoria Police



ACCESS TO SERVICES AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSIVENESS

Objective: to improve access to services and government responsiveness.

“We have formed long lasting friendships and our skills and confidence have increased. More people in the City of Greater Bendigo are aware of us whereas before they didn’t know about us. We have better links with local agencies and organisations. More activities are being driven by our community members and agencies and organisations are listening to our needs.” Lizz

Before the arrival of Neighbourhood Renewal, Long Gully’s story was similar to Eaglehawk’s. Local infrastructure had been neglected somewhat, the delivery of health services to residents had experienced decline and unemployment was an issue causing concern to the area. The consequences were straightforward: Long Gully felt isolated and unsupported by local and State governments.

Renewal brought new hope and new alliances with government bodies. It introduced a joined-up, place-based approach embedded in the way services, State and local governments worked in the area.

For the first time in years, residents became engaged and empowered to influence government priority setting, services delivery and resource allocation. The results show that 68 per cent of local residents believe the quality and availability of services has improved and the following achievements are examples of Neighbourhood Renewal’s success.

- The Long Gully Multipurpose Facility has been in development for nine years and was originally instigated by the Long Gully Legends Football Club. Planning and development of the new community facility at the Long Gully Oval will be used by a cross section of community groups including youth groups, sporting groups, recreational teams, training and business enterprise developments
- ‘Communities for Children’ is a four year project to improve the health and wellbeing of 0-5 year olds, across five areas of Bendigo (including Long Gully and Eaglehawk). Activities include: Mother Goose Program, which is a mother/child bonding program (15 families); Music N Stuff Playgroup (10 families) and Violet Street Primary School Playgroup (8 families); Community Kitchen (5 families)

- Long Gully Aquatic Centre is managed by the community. Twelve volunteers meet regularly to manage the facility on behalf of Council
- The Neighbourhood Centre has been redeveloped with funding from local and State government bodies
- DHS funding for redevelopment of Long Gully Community Garden
- ‘Communities for Children’ funded for further four years from July 2009
- SEEDS Bendigo received funds from Department of Sustainability and Environment and Neighbourhood Renewal to construct a Backyard Sustainability Garden
- ‘Money Minded’ short course on money matters, budgeting, contracts and handling finances was facilitated by a Financial Counselor



LONG GULLY AND EAGLEHAWK 'OUR PLAN, OUR FUTURE 2010-2012'

"The future starts right now." Kathryn

Eight years after the Eaglehawk and Long Gully Neighbourhood Renewal projects started, residents are looking to write the next chapter in their story.

'Our Plan, Our Future 2010-2012' is the vision for our community which identifies any unfinished projects from earlier plans and also includes new actions that have been identified as new priorities by the community.

Key priorities for the next two years will include:

- Safety and Community Engagement
- Community Assets and Local Plans
- Healthy People Healthy Communities
- Education, Employment and Training

Tributes must go to the City of Greater Bendigo for the invaluable role it has played (and will continue to play) in the implementation of the government's Mainstreaming strategy, which aims to sustain the benefits of Neighbourhood Renewal by embedding the three key elements of Neighbourhood Renewal - joined up government, place management and community governance - into the planning and funding processes of local government.

Mainstreaming has meant a major shift for Neighbourhood Renewal during the past 18 months as Council facilitated the process (with Neighbourhood Renewal support). The Mainstreaming Plan 2009 was developed in consultation with local agencies and community members; a governance structure was established and the Mainstreaming Steering Committee was formed.

Decision making on identifying key priority areas for future investment will be the responsibility of the City of Greater Bendigo and linked to local requirements and priorities. This will ensure that stronger bonds develop between the Neighbourhood Renewal community, agencies, local and State governments as everyone works toward reducing the gap between disadvantaged communities and the rest of the State.

The Eaglehawk and Long Gully Mainstreaming Steering Committee thank everyone who has participated in Neighbourhood Renewal and invites everyone in the community to get involved in the future.

"The Mainstreaming Plan 2009 which has been overseen by the Steering Committee makes us feel confident about the future. As the old saying goes, those who don't have a plan, plan to fail." Bev

WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED ALONG THE WAY

The journey of Neighbourhood Renewal has been a long one and so much of lasting value has been learned along the way. New friendships have been forged, openness and hope nurtured in the community, further education and employment opportunities presented, trust in government improved, and confidence in a better future has been established.

The people best placed to express how they feel about Neighbourhood Renewal are the residents of Eaglehawk and Long Gully.

"Neighbourhood Renewal has been very positive for my community. The various projects and changes to our area like new fences and better street lighting have given people pride in their area and made us feel more secure."

"Communication between the community and government and service providers has been greatly improved and has helped people like me to get involved. Personally I was a very shy person. Only in the last three years have I found the confidence to speak up and my confidence is growing. I have had the opportunity to join groups which has improved my confidence year by year. I am learning new things all of the time and prepared to take opportunities when they come along. I would say to people get involved! I am always encouraging people to spread the word about Neighbourhood Renewal, what it is and what it can offer your community." Margaret

"We have started building new relationships and increasing awareness within the local government areas. We have increased pride in our communities. We want to be known in our own right. We have learned to be patient with government and understand that their ways are sometimes slow but they do get across the line." Karen

"Neighbourhood Renewal has been very positive for my community. The various projects and changes to our area like new fences and better street lighting have given people pride in their area and made us feel more secure."

"We have started meeting new people who we wouldn't have had the opportunity to mix with before and forming alliances with them. As a community we have been supported by Neighbourhood Renewal to speak up, learn new skills, be confident of ourselves, and go hard at the future." Carol

For information on this report or Neighbourhood Renewal email:

Fiona.williamson@dhs.vic.gov.au

Or visit the website:

www.neighbourhoodrenewal.vic.gov.au



Carol Rasmussen has been the coordinator of the Long Gully Neighbourhood Centre for more than twenty years. During her glorious reign, the community has benefitted enormously from this wonderful woman's wealth of knowledge, skills and wisdom. Carol has seen the highs and lows of her community, and during Neighbourhood Renewal, has helped to build and shape her community alongside the residents. Carol is to be congratulated for her patience and persistence along our journey. She has helped us to learn and taught us to laugh, and the community, as one, all love Carol.