

RUFFY COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN 2018-2022



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INTRODUCTION

In 2005 the Strathbogie Shire Council, with funding from the Department of Planning and Community Development, introduced a community planning model that in 2012 consists of eight community action groups across the Shire. These action groups are comprised of members of the community, whose role is to develop and implement a community action plan for their particular community.

The Ruffy community enjoys living in a beautiful and quiet environment; its strength is a strong community spirit, and it has used this to develop a range of great community assets and social events enjoyed by its residents and visitors to the area.

The guiding vision of the Ruffy Community Action Group is to build on these community values and strengths to achieve:

- a sustainable future for the Ruffy area, balancing compatible economic development with maintaining important environmental and social values
- harmonious interaction and cooperation between old and new residents, different interest groups within the community and with the responsible authorities
- a well-informed community that participates actively in matters that affect it.

To achieve this vision, the objectives of the Ruffy Community Action Group (RCAG) are to:

- develop and implement a community action plan that reflects the aspirations of the Ruffy community
- support individual community groups to achieve their objectives by working cooperatively with them and coordinating as necessary
- provide an effective link between the Ruffy community, the Strathbogie Shire Council, and other relevant agencies
- provide a forum for free and open discussion about matters of concern keep the community well informed.

RCAG ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR

Since its formation in 2009, RCAG has played an important role within the Ruffy community. As a facilitator and through cooperative arrangements with the existing community groups, it has helped to bring about:

- the purchase of the Ruffy School site to allow the creation of the Tablelands Community Centre (TCC) – planned for and managed by the TCC Committee
- a substantial upgrade of the Ruffy Recreation Reserve to provide better facilities for equestrian events – planned and supervised by the Ruffy Recreation Reserve Committee in conjunction with the Ruffy Adult Riding Club

- a range of improvements to the Ruffy Hall and its surrounds – planned and supervised by the Ruffy Hall Committee.

RCAG has also initiated and implemented some projects of its own:

- the establishment and operation of the www.ruffycommunity.com.au website which helps to inform both the Ruffy community and visitors to the area
- the preparation of the Ruffy Streetscape Plan which sets out guidelines to ensure that future development in the Ruffy township is in tune with the community's vision for its streetscape.

In line with its objectives, RCAG has provided at its meetings an opportunity for exchange of information on what is going on in the community and has promoted various social functions and events. It has acted as a forum for discussion of issues of concern, to allow projects initiated by individuals such as the creation of the Ruffy 'Avenue of Honour' Memorial, to receive broader community support. Following up on expressions of concern, RCAG has approached the Strathbogie Shire Council with various requests, including improvements in road conditions and road safety, reduction of fire hazard and changes to signage. Council representatives and Shire officers have generally responded positively to such requests.

Ruffy Community Action Group Office Bearers

Chairperson - Rob Jamieson

Vice Chairperson - Felicity Sloman

Secretary - Melissa McDowall

Treasurer - Ann Laherty-Hunt

Ruffy Community Group Representatives

Tablelands Community Centre - Justus Hagen

Ruffartz - Bron Jamieson

Landcare - Janet Hagen

Ruffy Hall - Henry Noye

Ruffy CFA - George Noye

Ruffy Recreation Reserve/Adult Riders - Pam Sprunt

Local Neighbourhood Watch - Rob Jamieson

DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY PLAN FOR 2018-2022

This plan was commenced following a workshop conducted on 4 August 2017. An invitation to this evening was delivered to all community members in the Ruffy area.

Number of attendees: 30

The evening was facilitated by an experienced community member, Jim Davidson who lived in nearby Terip.

Questions posed included the following:

1. What do you love about living in the Ruffy area?
2. What are the strengths of this community?
3. In ten years, what do you want the Ruffy area to be like?
4. What do you want to do to get there (i.e. what projects and ideas)?

Forum Outcomes: See Appendix One

Key Principles of Ruffy Community Plan

Consultation and Commitment - the community must ensure that its plans and ideas for each initiative is genuinely what people want and fits into the foreseeable future needs of the Ruffy Community. It includes involving residents in developing each initiative that increases community participation, commitment and support.

Sustainability

The committee is seeking to improve quality of life. All the outcomes of any actions must be able to be maintained into the future.

Partnerships

At the centre of community planning is the opportunity to build partnerships between the community and stakeholders external to Ruffy.

Identification of priorities

The RCAG determined to focus on the top 5 priorities identified at the workshop for the coming years.

Whose Responsibility?

Legend:

R=Ruffy Community

S=Shire

O=Other agencies

Priority One - Support for older residents to remain in the district (eg labour exchange, produce exchange, community transport)

This priority was highlighted as we had noticed a number of residents selling up and moving “into town” recently as they found ongoing maintenance of properties too challenging.

Exploration of ideas to implement this is ongoing as it presents multiple opportunities to assist community members, eg transport for shopping and medical appointments, firewood supplies, addressing social isolation, organising social activities.

Further discussion required as to how this need will be met. Responsibility R, S

Priority Two - Informal Community Hub and opportunities for social interaction

Continued support for existing community organisations

e.g. Tablelands Community Centre activities, Ruffartz, Ruffy Rec Reserve, CFA, Neighbourhood Watch, Landcare

Responsibility R

Priority Three - Continued Care/Preservation of Landscape (active conservation)

Landcare Riparian Walks (7 annually)

Snow gum walk maintenance and signage improvements.

Boathole Signage Project and roster to maintain grass levels and access to picnic table.

Responsibility R

Priority Four - Organised activities, points of interest for visitors/locals

Boathole History Project - erect historical information sign at the Boathole Reserve; further historical information collected from the community to be displayed at Tablelands Community Centre and to store history digitally.

Creation of Boathole to Ruffy Walk via “PickMyProject” initiative - application submitted.

Facilitate Historical Points of interest signage around Ruffy township

Annual Christmas party in conjunction with other community groups.

Annual Good Friday Appeal at Ruffy CFA - provide in kind assistance and support.

Recognition of community service from community members. This will be in the form of a plaque mounted on a local granite rock and place in the streetscape of the Ruffy village.

Responsibility: R,S

Priority Five - First Aid Training and Identify local existing skills

First aid training was provided by St Johns Ambulance - organised by The Tablelands Community Centre Committee.

Facilitate Annual First Aid and Defibrillator training.

Installation of a Community AED (automated external defibrillator) partially funded by RCAG, Ruffy CFA, Ruffartz and in June 2018, information session provided.

A number of Registered Nurses in the area made it clear that they would be available if needed in an emergency to assist prior to the arrival of emergency medical services. Registered with GoodSAM App.

Responsibility: R

Communication Methods

It is vital to have a variety of different forms of communication to ensure as many community members are involved in community decisions as is possible.

Ruffy Community Website

Facebook - Ruffy Community - commenced April 2018 by community member.

“The Granite News” weekly newsletter- predominantly online however paper copies still available at Terip and Ruffy for those without access to a computer.

Community Noticeboard outside Ruffy Hall

Informal ad hoc gatherings

Communication through the respective community groups.

Project Types

How we will work...

Some projects may not need any further support from RCAG; other existing community groups in Ruffy or community members can start their projects straight away.

Some of the ways RCAG can support community members to undertake projects are;

- Promotion of projects on the community website and in *The Granite News*
- Support for how to plan a project or advocacy campaign including liaison with Shire councillor.
- Funding small projects or providing seed funding for larger projects (RCAG receives some funds from the Strathbogie Shire Council to use on projects identified in the Community Action Plan) · Connecting members of the community to each other.
- Partnering on grant applications or letters of support for applications

Appendix One

Ruffy Community Forum 4 August 2017 Summary and Outcomes

In order of priority, as determined by workshop participants. They were also asked to indicate whose responsibility they felt it should be.

Whose Responsibility?

Legend:

R=Ruffy Community

S=Shire

O=Other agencies

The Community Forum in the Ruffy Hall was attended by 30 people representing a broad cross section of the Ruffy Community, including some neighbouring areas. Cr Alistair Thomson represented the Shire of Strathbogie.

After welcoming everybody on this cold night, Erwin Weinmann gave an introduction to Community Planning in Ruffy and outlined the role the Ruffy Community Action Group (RCAG) had played since its formation in 2009. Erwin explained that the main aim of the evening was to think about Ruffy's future and to provide inputs to the development of the new Ruffy Community Plan. He then introduced Jim Davidson as the facilitator for the community engagement sessions during the evening.

Jim posed two questions for everybody to consider, discuss and note down:

1. Three things that make Ruffy and district a special place for you.
2. Three things that you consider could be improved and that would make this community even better.

These questions were first answered individually, then in groups of three and six, and finally each table reported on their highest priority answers, which were then compiled into the two consolidated lists below.

The last session tried to answer the question of who would play the main role in working towards these desirable improvements: the Ruffy Community (R), the Shire of Strathbogie (S) or other agencies (O). This showed that progress towards many of these aspirations is clearly in the hands of the Ruffy community. Finally everybody had a chance to prioritise improvements by placing coloured dots against the items they considered to be most important.

In between the sessions a fine roast dinner was served by the ladies of the Terip Tennis Club, followed by a very well received dessert of sticky date pudding, tea and coffee. There were also plenty of opportunities for people to mingle and to make new acquaintances.

The evening concluded with a short introduction by Cr Alistair Thomson on the Shire's new framework for Community Planning. Action Groups are expected to continue their important role, but they can now

operate under new arrangements as 'Community Planning Reference Groups', governed by a new Charter and Guidelines.

Erwin Weinmann thanked everybody for their important inputs to the development of the new Ruffy Community Plan and stressed that the good initiatives identified will not come to fruition unless people in the Ruffy Community will play an active part in making them happen. At a meeting planned for September the existing Action Group will be replaced by the formation of a new Action Group operating as a Community Planning Reference Group. Everybody at the Forum was asked to provide contact details so that they could be informed of further developments.

Summary prepared by Erwin & Verena Weinmann 9 August 2017

Good Things about Living in Ruffy

- ○ People – community spirit, friendly, inclusive, supportive, accepting, rural lifestyle

- ○ Safety and security

- ○ Tourism – geographic location, accessibility

- ○ Quaint & unique, peaceful, remote, quiet; separateness of the tableland

- ○ Climate – distinct seasons, summer breezes due to elevation

- ○ Environment – clean air, waterways, landscape, rocks, natural vegetation flora, fauna

- ○ Sense of history

- ○ Scenic roads

- ○ Community assets:
 - ☐ Tablelands Community Centre (TCC)

 - ☐ Ruffy Recreation Reserve

 - ☐ Ruffy Hall

 - ☐ CFA

 - ☐ Ruffy Store – hub, social connections of locals and weekenders

*Completed by F Sloman and R Jamieson - in consultation with the Ruffy Community Action Group Committee
- July 2018*