

December 2013 - Foundation reports on outstanding year

Benalla's Tomorrow:Today Foundation made its yearly report to the community at its Annual General Meeting last month. Tomorrow:Today Foundation is a philanthropic organisation, formed and run by local people to provide funds for local community projects. The purpose of the Foundation is to enable the people of Benalla and district to create a stronger, more resilient and prosperous rural community.

International guest speaker Diana Leat, former trustee of the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund inspired guests with her story. In her opening comments, Dr Leat said that she had often shed tears at AGMs, "but not from joy. The many stories told at this AGM by children and teenagers have made this the most moving and best AGM I have ever attended," she said. Young children and parents, volunteers and students, teenagers and community mentors showcased their involvement in a wide range of Tomorrow:Today Foundation projects - all aimed at 'building a stronger tomorrow by acting today'.

Speaking about the parallels between the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund and Tomorrow:Today Foundation, Dr Leat commented that it was not about "the quick fix. Both have a 'tangled skein of wool' approach to bringing about lasting change. A tangled ball of wool is infuriating. Pull one bit and you're likely to make the knot harder to undo, to tighten it and make it worse. Most major social issues consist of a whole tangle of issues," Dr Leat said.

"The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund attempted to untangle the skein of wool, which is exactly what you are doing here. I am inspired by your work. They are the best tears I've shed at an AGM."

Chair Sally Gamble, reported on an outstanding year for Tomorrow:Today Foundation.

"Our Education Benalla Program continues to engage children and families as well as schools and support services in a whole-of-community approach to improving educational outcomes," Ms Gamble said. "Having carried out the detailed research and development necessary to create this groundbreaking program, we have steadily been increasing the level of activity since it began in 2010. The Education Benalla Program is unique and increasingly being viewed as a model for community-led investment to bring about long term change."

The importance of the Community Fund was highlighted by the Foundation's Treasurer, Adrian Aldous. "Since our first Small Grants were distributed in November 2003 we've awarded \$106,000 to 38 different organisations in Benalla and district," Mr Aldous said.

He outlined the current Challenge Appeal to add \$100,000 to the Community Fund during the 2013 calendar year, with community donations being matched dollar for dollar by generous local supporters. "This will help build a substantial Community Fund to benefit Benalla, forever," he said.

Tax deductible donations to Tomorrow:Today Foundation can be made over the counter at the local Bendigo Bank, by downloading a donation form at www.tomorrowtoday.com.au or by contacting the Foundation on 5762 1211.

October 2013 - Program builds connections

Cooinda Village residents and FCJ students recently joined together in an inspirational concert at BPACC. The 'Let's Find our Voice' program used the power of singing and storytelling to promote personal wellness and build community connectedness. The project was made possible by a grant from Benalla's Tomorrow:Today Foundation.

In opening the concert, Margaret Aldous, Chief Executive of Cooinda Village spoke of the research which indicates that "singing gives our immune system a boost, assisting in the management of depression and anxiety. It increases self esteem and feeling of wellbeing, reduces stress, energises and brings people together, encouraging a sense of community. The benefits of storytelling are similar; it increases tolerance, understanding, builds bridges and provides connection."

For several weeks prior to the concert, residents and students came together under the guidance of dedicated teachers and staff to practice and enjoy singing together. Many of the older people also shared their life stories with the students, with four of these stories beautifully presented by students on the day.

Ian and Bev Grace who attended the concert later wrote, "...thank you and congratulations to the Cooinda team and FCJ, on such an inspiring and uplifting concert today. We are sure that the Cooinda residents' spirits and hearts were filled with joy. What a great team of young people and teachers. We are sure these experiences will help them along life's journey. We had a tear in our eyes."

Tomorrow:Today Foundation Chair, Sally Gamble, said that grants to local projects were made annually from the interest earned on the community fund. "The community fund will benefit Benalla and district, forever" she said.

The Annual Appeal is underway. With examples such as the Cooinda Village and FCJ College project, the time is right to consider making a donation.

Personal donations are tax deductible and can be made over the counter at the local branch of the Bendigo Bank or by visiting Tomorrow:Today's office, Cecily Court Nunn Street (shop 10 down the end of the court); by mail to PO Box 281 Benalla; or by bank transfer; see www.tomorrowtoday.com.au.

Sponsorship by local businesses can be claimed as a normal business operating expense and gives even greater flexibility in the range of local organisations that can be supported. All enquiries to Tomorrow:Today Foundation on 5762 1211.



July 2013 - Benalla celebrates NAIDOC Week

Article by Kaitlan Thals, Benalla Ensign

The community gathered at Benalla's Indigenous Community Garden on Monday to celebrate NAIDOC Week. About 50 people were taken on a tour through the garden, including out of town families, locals, Benalla police and Benalla Health staff.

Local Indigenous community member and active promoter of Aboriginal culture Chris Thorne led the walk, competing with two kookaburras singing from the trees. Mr Thorne was awarded the prestigious Dame Phyllis Frost individual award at the National Tidy Towns Awards in 2007 for his involvement in the development of Benalla's Indigenous Community Garden. His role in promoting the history of the local Aboriginal culture to local Benalla Rural City schools and his ongoing passion for working with young people.

Susan Colmer and sons Michael, 13, and Ainslie, 10, came from Shepparton to attend the walk. "We saw it was on and thought it would be a good day out; the boys like cultural things," Mrs Colmer said.

Mr Thorne said NAIDOC Week was about "celebration" and hoped to make this walk an annual event on the calendar during this special week.

The creation of the Indigenous Community Garden was a partnership project between Tomorrow:Today Foundation, the local Indigenous community and Benalla Rural City Council.

To find out more about NAIDOC Week and for a detailed list of NAIDOC Week events visit www.naidoc.org.au



Photo: Courtesy of Benalla Ensign

June 2013 - Groups given funds

Article by Kaitlin Thals, Benalla Ensign

Small community groups in Benalla and district can upgrade and improve their services following a grants handout of almost \$50,000.

Local charitable organisation Tomorrow:Today Foundation donated \$20,000, where Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal contributed \$20,898 to 18 small groups across the region.

TTF chair Sally Gamble said due to the growth of the Community Fund, TTF was able to support groups throughout Benalla and district that gave so much of their time and energy to help create a stronger community.

"They are groups of volunteers who are working really hard for our community and I think they really show the support of the community, and this will enable them to carry on their good work," Ms Gamble said.

"We had about twice as many applications as we could fund this year, it was a shame to have to turn people away, but we've supported a great range of different groups in the community."

Ms Gamble said funding came from the organisation's Community Fund and the communities support towards the fund had been "sensational."

The FRRR Small Grants for Small Rural Communities program is uniquely operated in conjunction with 15 national philanthropic donors.

Local groups who received funding through TTF and FRRR included; Benalla Aquatic Centre, Moorngag Public Hall and Recreation Reserve, Rural Housing Network, Benalla and District Family History Group Inc., Goorambat Public Hall Reserve, Benalla Theatre Company Inc., Tatong Heritage Group Inc., Benalla and District Preschool Partnership Bernard Briggs Kindergarten, Benalla and District Preschool Partnership Munro Ave Preschool Centre, Benalla Health, Benalla Music Camp, Benalla Rose City Band, Benalla Toy Library, Benalla Uniting Church, Broken River Potters, Coinda Village, Waminda Neighbourhood House and Baddaginnie Community Inc.

She said this year their focus was on projects relating to; families with young children, youth development, community connectedness and addressing social disadvantage.

Ms Gamble said the Foundation's 'Challenge Appeal' was open and would continue to build the Community Fund to be able to support local solutions to changing community needs.

Donations can be made at the local Bendigo Bank or visit the Foundation's website for more information at www.tomorrowtoday.com.au.



Photo: Courtesy of Benalla Ensign

May 2013 - THE CHALLENGE IS ON!

For every dollar given to Tomorrow:Today Foundation's Community Fund this year, another dollar will be added. That's double the benefit. That's the challenge.

Tomorrow:Today Foundation Chair, Sally Gamble, said their 'Challenge' Appeal was a wonderful opportunity to work together as a community to provide financial resources for local community benefit.

"This year donations will be matched dollar for dollar, up to a total of \$50,000, by ten remarkably generous local supporters who have each committed up to \$5,000 to the Appeal", she said. These local supporters want to see Benalla prosper, and have taken the best possible action to encourage a great community response" said Sally.

"To realise the full generosity of the ten supporters, we need to raise at least \$50,000 by the end of the year. If we raise \$20,000 then we will have it matched with \$20,000; the challenge is on to get to \$50,000 so we can double the donations and raise \$100,000 by 31 December."

Jenny Milner-Marsha Watson Pharmacy has just given \$5,000 towards the Challenge Appeal, helping the Foundation on its way to meeting its \$50,000 target.

All money raised by the appeal is added to the permanent community fund. The income it generates is used to support annual community grants for a broad range of local charitable projects.

Personal donations to the 'Challenge Appeal' are tax deductible and can be made over the counter at the local branch of the Bendigo Bank or by visiting Tomorrow:Today's office, Cecily Court Nunn Street (shop 10 down the end of the court); by mail to PO Box 281 Benalla; or by bank transfer; see www.tomorrowtoday.com.au.

Sponsorship by local businesses can be claimed as a normal business operating expense and gives even greater flexibility in the range of local organisations that can be supported. All enquiries to Tomorrow:Today Foundation on 5762 1211.



Photo: Courtesy of Benalla Ensign

March 2013 - Small grants available

Now is the time to apply for a small grant from Tomorrow:Today Foundation. Applications from local organisations and groups are invited for activities that help build a stronger, more resilient and prosperous rural community.

All applications must be received by 5pm next Tuesday.

"As our Community Fund has grown, thanks to wonderful community support, so has the Foundation's ability to support local charitable projects," Foundation Chair Sally Gamble said.

"We're hoping to get lots of applications from across Benalla and district. If your group needs from a few hundred up to a few thousand dollars, for a good idea that will benefit the local community, then get in touch with the Foundation now."

Funding priorities for Tomorrow:Today's small grants this year include: families with young children, youth development, community connectedness and addressing social disadvantage.

Applications for projects that do not fit these priorities will still be considered for funding.

Tomorrow:Today Foundation will again be working in collaboration with the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal (FRRR).

Guidelines and application forms for Tomorrow:Today's Small Grants are available on its website at www.tomorrowtoday.com.au or by calling into the office at Shop 10 Cecily Court, 66 Nunn Street, Benalla. To discuss your idea or proposal, phone the Foundation on 5762 1211.

Applications will close at 5 pm on Tuesday, April 2.



Photo: Courtesy of Benalla Ensign

March 2013 - Vouchers help with school expenses

Tomorrow:Today Foundation is again helping local children to start school on a positive note.

The Foundation has distributed 515 vouchers worth \$27,500 through the 2013 Sidney Myer Fund/ FRRR Back to School Program.

This is the ninth consecutive year that Tomorrow:Today Foundation has helped Benalla and district families in need, with back to school expenses for their children's education.

More vouchers than usual were distributed this year thanks to local community support.

Tomorrow:Today Foundation Director, Bill Dobson, thanked the Rotary Club of Benalla, Benalla Lions Club and Soroptimist International as well as a number of local families who all supported the purchase of extra vouchers.

"We knew there was extra need in the community this year," Mr Dobson said. "When we discovered that we could buy extra vouchers on a two for one basis we approached a number of groups and received strong support, enabling us to send \$2,250 in cash to secure \$4,500 worth of extra vouchers."

The vouchers are distributed to school principals who arrange for them to be distributed to families experiencing financial hardship. The vouchers assist families in need to purchase essential items such as books, stationary and school bags as well as shoes and clothing at the start of the school year.

Benalla P-12 College Principal Barbara O'Brien said the vouchers were greatly appreciated. "This year there was great need among our families as all students needed to change to a new school uniform. We really appreciated the work Tomorrow:Today did to ensure our vouchers were tailored for use at our uniform shop."

The 2013 Back to School Program is an initiative of the Sidney Myer Fund and FRRR, proudly supported by the Origin Foundation, the Ian Potter Foundation, the Estate of the Late Edward Wilson, Aussie Farmers Foundation, the Julian Flett Foundation managed by Perpetual, other generous donors, Target and the Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government.

February 2013 - Funding information offered

Local community and sporting organisations are invited to attend upcoming funding information sessions at Goorambat and Benalla.

Representatives from Benalla Rural City Council, Tomorrow:Today Foundation, Department of Planning and Community Development, Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal, Valley Sport and Multicultural Arts Victoria will be on hand to provide information on funding and other assistance available to community groups.

The Goorambat session is set for Monday, February 18 from 7pm to 9pm at Goorambat Hall. The Benalla session will take place at Benalla Town Hall on Monday, February 25 from 7pm to 9pm, with supper provided at both sessions. Benalla Rural City's community development manager Jane Archbold said community groups would be able to hear directly from the funding agencies and regional sporting body Valley Sport.

"Speakers will provide an overview of current funding opportunities and resources available to assist community and sporting groups with projects, events and activities," Ms Archbold said.

"This is a great opportunity for volunteers to hear first-hand the grant opportunities and other assistance available to help their group."