

# OUTBACK COMMUNITIES AUTHORITY - NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2012 - 13

## CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS FOR THE AUSTRALIAN INLAND MISSION

On the weekend of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of October Beltana welcomed over 300 visitors from interstate and overseas to celebrate the founding of the Australian Inland Mission (AIM).

Famous Australian, the Rev John Flynn, began his work as the Smith of Dunesk missionary in 1911 in this small town. Travelling through the remote settlements and outstations of the outback, he developed the ideas of earlier missionaries and persuaded the Synod of the Presbyterian Church to form an organisation dedicated to the physical and spiritual welfare of the people of the inland.

In 1912 this became a reality and the Australian Inland Mission was formed: padres patrolled vast areas, nursing sisters ran hospitals in remote townships, the pedal radio was invented to aid communications and airplanes were used to transport the sick and injured to medical help.

The AIM no longer exists but its work is carried on today by the Presbyterian Inland Mission, Frontier Services and the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Representatives from all of these organisations were in Beltana to acknowledge the lives and work of the many people who helped to make Flynn's vision a reality.

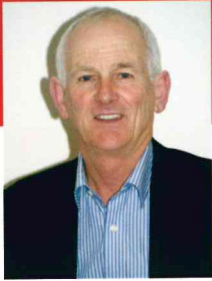
The tiny community of Beltana with many helpers worked together to build a cairn opposite the church and a shelter in the cemetery before the weekend. Accommodation in the area was booked out months in advance and many campers set up around the hall for the weekend.

Official events included: a church service and plaque unveiling at the Smith of Dunesk church, tree planting at the cemetery, a formal dinner at the old railway station, book launches, a dance, a photography competition, historic displays, a silent auction, stalls, displays and a historic walk. The RFDS brought its flight simulator; a full scale model of an air ambulance used for training complete with a "patient", and the Leigh Creek Health Service took advantage of the occasion to run a community health stall.

OCA supported the event with funding to build a new cemetery shelter and to help cover some of the infrastructure costs of the weekend.



Above: Photos from the AIM weekend events around Beltana.  
Credits: Glenys Aird for the story and photos.



## Chairman's Message

I think 2012 has been a mixed year for the outback, with large sectors of the resources industries taking a step sideways and a return to a more normal tourism year after the boom.

No look back at the year would be complete without paying special respect to Adam Plate's tremendous contribution and decades of passionate advocacy for the outback.

The OCA's year has seen the successful beginnings of a new system of town management for Andamooka, the completion of the sealing of the Oodnadatta airstrip, (which adds another to the network of 24 hour access strips in the outback) and opening of the debate about our long term communication needs, through the Outback Broadband Project.

Looking a bit further into the future, the OCA has concluded the year by making a firm commitment to launching a whole new conversation with outback people, very early in 2013. This will be about *what you think* are the opportunities, directions and new projects, looking well into the future of our unique region. We look forward to this ....it is bound to be a stimulating exercise.

On behalf of everybody at OCA....all the best for a safe and happy Christmas.... and the development of an even stronger outback community in 2013.

**Bill McIntosh**  
Chairman



## General Manager's Message

The end of year presents the opportunity to reflect on the activities of the Office. Perhaps the biggest outcome for the year was the implementation of a Community Contribution Scheme

(CCS) in Andamooka and the appointment of a full-time Community Administrator into the community. Faced with a changing population and increased expectation on their limited volunteers, Andamooka needed assistance to ensure the town was able to both manage and embrace these challenges. It was a bold move to partner with the OCA and enormous effort was put into getting the Andamooka CCS over line. I am proud of my staff and the committed volunteers of the Andamooka Progress and Opal Miners Association who have shaped this ground breaking collaboration.

Now the Outback enters its traditional quiet period, a time for rest and recovery for some, for others, including the Office, it is a time to take a deep breath and plan for the new and varied challenges that await us in 2013. I thank all the Outback volunteers who support the Office, and the Office staff and wish you all a safe and happy festive season.

**Mark Sutton**  
General Manager

## Penong Football Club Secures Funding for Solar Panels

The Penong Western United Tigers Football Club has been successful in receiving \$10,000 from OCA for the purchase and installation of solar panels for the clubrooms. Penong is a member of the Far West Football League that currently includes clubs in Ceduna, Thevenard and Koonibba Aboriginal community. The Tigers were formed in 1974 and have won eight premierships, the latest in 2008.

"The Western United Tigers pride itself on having a large volunteer base. Everyone is prepared to do their bit to make the club a better place," said club Chairperson Jason Wild. "The savings from the panels will allow cheaper membership for the club which will encourage new and existing members to join our supporter base. This is important because the club provides a vibrant hub for locals to socialise."

The solar panels are expected to generate enough power to offset around \$7,000 annually of power bills, the equivalent of 55kw per hour. The panels are expected to be installed before Christmas through a sub-contracting arrangement with a local electrician.

"This is the first time OCA have funded a project of this type and it will have benefit for this strong outback sporting community. The solar panels will reduce electricity costs for all clubs that utilise this facility, including football, netball and tennis," Mark Shirley, OCA Community Development Officer said.

OCA would like to encourage other communities to look at their facilities and consider similar initiatives for funding opportunities in the future.



Left to Right: Lee Warmington, Bronwyn Workman, Shane Trowbridge, Andrea Baldock and David Stott

## By Frances Frahn, OCA Board Member

The OCA Board held its November meeting at Blinman and used the opportunity for members to get to know the town and community.

Our visit began with an underground tour of the Heritage Blinman Mine, conducted by the entertaining Cherie. While some members were involved with the project in its early stages, for the rest of us this was a very pleasant surprise. The work the Blinman community put into this project is a credit to them, and I encourage everyone to visit the Mine for a great experience and a lesson in how a community can create a drawcard for the region.

In the evening, OCA hosted community members for dinner at the Hotel, followed by a discussion session. All Members found this a constructive time to gather thoughts, concerns and ideas from Blinman and Parachilna residents. Part of OCA's charter is to be a voice for these concerns, so it is valuable to hear them first-hand. Some issues were addressed immediately by OCA staff on their return to Port Augusta, which goes to show why community members should attend these public meetings. If we don't know, we can't help!

The next day OCA held our meeting in the Blinman Hall, dealing mostly with operational matters such as approval of CARM agreements (as always, minutes are available on the OCA website). Our usual workshops about policy review were also held in the morning. This month, we spent much of our workshop time thinking about new ways to work with the whole outback community and connect with people who may not have been involved with OCA previously.

I can confidently speak for all OCA Board Members when I say that our community visits are the highlight of being involved with OCA. From these visits we get to meet with community members and hear not only what the problems are in a community, but also to hear what works well. I encourage everyone to take any opportunity they can to visit other outback towns, to let OCA know about what works and what doesn't in their region, and to share this information widely. This is truly important to becoming a stronger, more united outback community.

Lastly, a huge thankyou to the Blinman community for making the OCA Board Members welcome, and especially to the residents from Blinman and Parachilna for taking the time to meet with us to better serve the community.



Above: Toni Bauer, Pat Katnich, Bill McIntosh and Frances Frahn

At the November meeting, the OCA Board released an Order Making Policy for community consultation. "The policy outlines how and when the OCA will apply its power to order a person to do, or stop doing, certain things that affect the safety or general amenity of any outback community" Bill McIntosh, Chairman of the OCA said.

The process of implementing the policy follows OCA's commitment to being guided by the wishes of local communities in the application of these powers.

"We seek the views of outback communities about how they see this policy affecting them in either improving their lives, or unintended negative impacts. By providing us feedback we can revisit the policy to ensure its purpose is maintained, but any negative impacts are minimized," he said.

Mark Sutton, General Manager of the OCA said "the making of orders will be a useful tool enabling the Office of the OCA to influence those in the community who may have a disregard for the safety and amenity of others".

A letter, copy of the draft policy and a reply paid envelope, will soon be sent to outback community-based associations. Those residents and landholders registered with the Office of the OCA will also receive a consultation package. For people not registered a copy of the draft policy can be downloaded from [www.oca.sa.gov.au](http://www.oca.sa.gov.au), requested by email, or ordered from the Office by phone on 1800 640 542.

Comments on the draft Order Making Policy should reach the Office of the OCA by 12 January 2013 by mail or email.



Above: OCA Board Members meet in the Blinman Hall, November 2012





**Name, title, location**

Jeff Page, (ex) Secretary and Executive Support Officer - Oodnadatta Progress Association Inc.

**How long have you been living in the outback?**

I went to Oodnadatta firstly in 1977, returned back there in 2002 for 3 years and then returned again in 2010 until mid-November 2012. Previously I have lived in Minnipa, Tarcoola, APY Lands, Coober Pedy, Pt Lincoln and Ceduna.

**What brought you here?**

Work. I was a Police Officer in each of the above communities.

**What's your vision for your community?**

To leave it in better shape than it was when I arrived. To get local members to work together in an enduring manner to improve the Community because it is after all, their Community and 'transients' like myself come and go, (in my case three times over) so I have endeavored to get the Community to push ahead with projects for the benefit of the town.

**What's the best and worst thing about living in the bush?**

The worst: the travelling to get somewhere, the high cost of almost basically every necessity including fuel and grocery items. The best: I find that people in the bush are extremely resilient, resourceful, tolerant and have a display of camaraderie not found anywhere else. The beauty of the bush for which most Australians never really see or appreciate.

**What's the biggest change you've seen in the past 10 years?**

People communicate far more freely with each other through the various social networks. While I personally don't use them many pastoral owners / workers do as a means of overcoming the distance factor to keep up with family and friends. I think it helps to overcome the isolation factor and allows for worker retention which is vital for the pastoral industry.

**Most vivid memory, natural disaster, town event?**

I was in Port Lincoln during the 2000 Tulka fires and to oversee the fight to prevent loss of life and witness the devastation and loss of housing and natural bushland was something I won't forget.

**Message for people new to doing business in the region?**

Do your homework. Freight costs are the killer for any business in the bush. Don't let it put you off but it is a substantial part of the business cost.

## Comings & Goings...

2012 has seen a lot of movement as longstanding volunteers have departed community based positions. We farewelled Jeff Page from his role as Progress Secretary in Oodnadatta; Peter Allen retired as Chairman of Andamooka Progress and Opal Miners' Association in September; Ross Fargher bade farewell as Chairman of Parachilna Progress Association and we farewelled outback legend Adam Plate in tragic circumstances. More in the summer E-News.

The Gawler Ranges Progress Association again hosted the 'Dress Up to Cut Up' formal ball in 2012 at Nonning Station, on Saturday 17 November. 140 guests from all over the state enjoyed a wonderful evening of food, wine and dancing.

OCA supported the event by providing a grant to buy tables and chairs. "That really helped us keep the cost down, as a result we were able to donate more to the Royal Flying Doctors Service."

"We won a grant through Outback Communities Authority this year to buy tables and chairs, so we didn't have to hire them for the ball," commented committee member and Ball organizer, Katrina Morris. "That really helped us keep the cost down so we are able to donate more to the Royal Flying Doctor. It was very much appreciated."



Top Left: Fiona Fagan, Katrina Morris, Michelle Lord; Top Right: Rachel Veller & Mikki Longbottom; Bottom Left: Ford and Katherine Kean & Kylie and Bruce Lockwood; Bottom Right: Brenton and Jo French.

## Contact us

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