

Mt Kembla Mining Heritage Committee Inc. Chairman's Report AGM 2006

It is hard to believe it is March 2006, tomorrow.

That leaves us only five months until our Festival 2006.

Following the huge organising effort of the last four festivals I feel we are geared, with a co-operative effort, to stage Festival 2006 – our 5th Festival – and make it the most significant festival so far.

We have our core events in place.

With our combined talent, skills and dedication we now only need to focus on making them all more refined, heritage significant and much better managed. Each year we learn much and 2005 was a sharp learning curve indeed.

We have the combined ability to present a much more relaxed, intimate and stronger "heritage focused" event with a simpler theme, which will hopefully remove some of the stress of organization, which weighed heavily for some extended time, on some committee members who have expressed their concern for the heavy Festival workload.

I have listened closely and with respect to those concerns expressed, especially after the last festival, by our team of Committee Members who are a very effective & multi talented bunch for a very small group. Our combined efforts, while having a very positive impact on the growth and continued expansion of the festival each year, has placed a very heavy workload, sometimes unbalanced, on a few of our more committed members, but essentially this workload is spread on many very hardworking committee members, their families and our volunteers on the festival weekend especially.

As a result I see the need to reevaluate our position and find a solution to working smarter and not harder while maintaining the integrity of the Festival and promoting our Heritage Theme and Signature Cultural events, to full advantage.

We do need a better management structure for the weekend activities & signature events set into place now and a need for current committee members and volunteers to show ownership of events more fully. We need to structure guidelines for a reporting process for each event set into place, so we are able to isolate a problem early and make a solution by offering more support to any event manager where needed.

The role of an event manager is not good enough to be clever at organising an event – you must be able to promote what you are doing. This is a significant challenge. We all need to work together openly to support each other to help identify where assistance is needed and help identify the process needed to solve a problem early.

I hope to see our patrons, Matt Waugh and Colin Markham become more involved and "hands on" with us in 2006. We need some solid assistance with our future direction and their talent, knowledge, contacts, know how and support in achieving our long term outcomes will be invaluable.

MKMHI has developed a very strong relationship with our major sponsors - WCC, BHP Billiton Illawarra Coal & Dendrobium Mine, Port Kembla Port Corporation, DGS Mimaki, Allied Services, Walter Mining and many other sponsors of the various events, and in kind. Through this relationship we hope to develop and improve the quality of our Festival to represent more closely the Heritage of Mt Kembla, by the

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promotion of our cultural events. I also believe by making our Festival more focused and compact the result will be a much improved image of the values representing our long term objectives and direction.

The next period will be the most dynamic in the growth of MKMHI and in particular will serve to raise our profile as a serious contended on the Festivals Illawarra trail, and to be seen as a committed and serious Heritage Group.

We are very much involved with Local Government and NSW Government initiatives currently being undertaken in Wollongong relating to Heritage Mines in the Wollongong LEP. We are also participating once again in a Heritage Week initiative and will continue and increase our involvement in all associated groups and studies.

I would like to thank our committee, our patrons, our sponsors and our volunteers for their valued input throughout the year in all matters, but especially on the festival weekend. The set up and clean up details were especially busy, hard working and generous with their time, equipment and commitment.

Our volunteer's contribution is especially very much appreciated and respected. Our volunteers are the cornerstone of our events success, they are the backbone of the on ground "hands on" operation to make it all happen smoothly and without drama's and are invaluable to our success. Without our volunteers we do not have a festival.

I again say a massive thankyou.

The strong support of the committee, the community, Dendrobium Mine, WCC and our sponsors is vital to the festivals endeavours and we particularly appreciate their contribution.

As always we can achieve best results by getting involved, communicating openly with each other and working together, as it is all about outcomes – and we are well geared to get yet another great outcome in 2006.

I look forward to being a part of and sharing in, all of all the very special things that make Mt Kembla the very unique and wonderful community it is today and hopefully will remain forever.

**Cate Stevenson
Chairperson MKMHI**