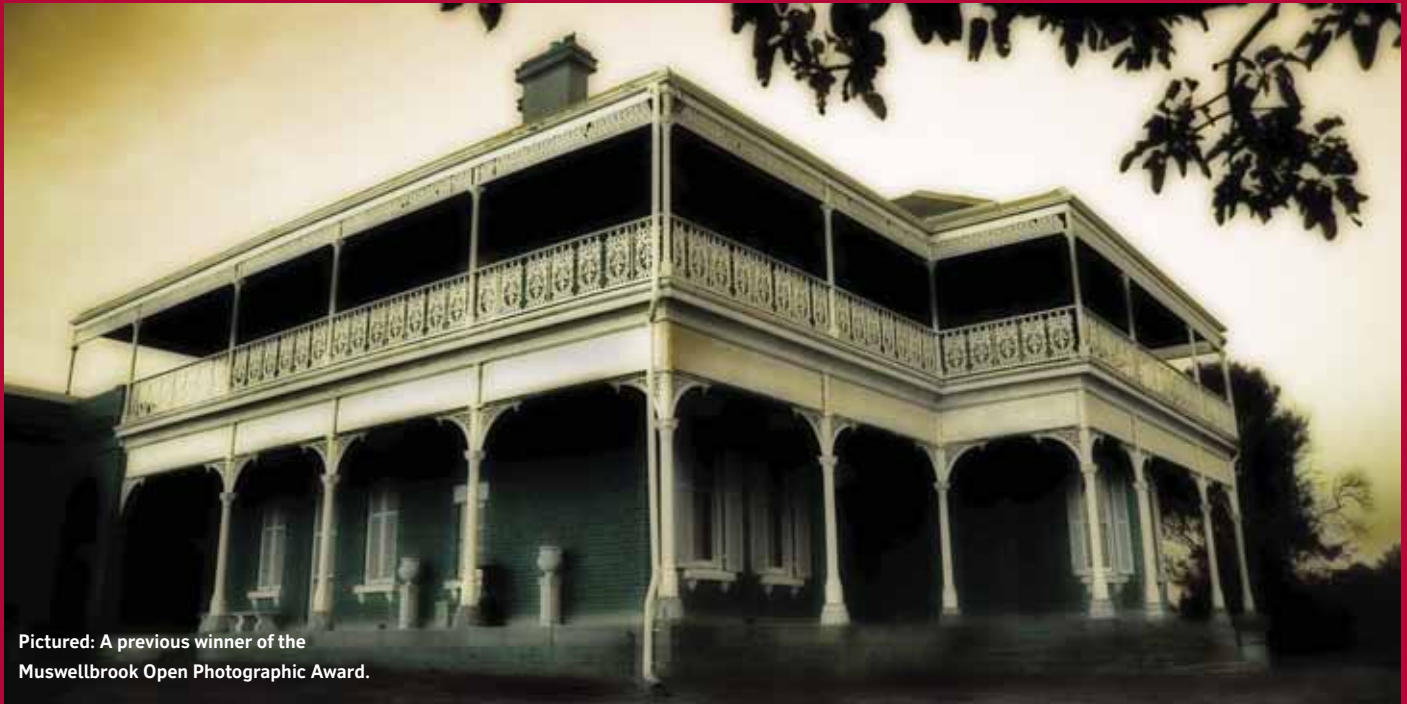


Coal & Allied community newsletter Muswellbrook edition

Issue 3 - February 2010



Pictured: A previous winner of the Muswellbrook Open Photographic Award.

Snapshot on photographic award

Nearly 200 entries have been received for Muswellbrook's 22nd annual Open Photographic Award, with this year's winner set to be announced at an awards ceremony in Muswellbrook on 13 March.

Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre Manager Brad Franks said this year the prize money for the winning artist has increased to \$6000, which attracted photographers from across Australia to enter the national award.

"Since the award began in 1987 we have been proud to receive entries from some of Australia's great photographers, as well as have the continued support of Coal & Allied which donates the prize money for the winning artist," Brad said.

"Each winning entry becomes part of the permanent collection at the Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre, and after 22 years of running the award

it means we have a great selection of art for local residents to enjoy all year round."

Brad said previous entrants have been judged by some of Australia's greatest photographers including David Moore and Rex Dupain, as well as photographic curators from both the NSW Art Gallery and the National Gallery of Australia.

"This year our guest judge is Julie Sundberg, Executive Manager Education and Outreach at the Australian Centre for Photography," Brad said.

"Julie will have the tough decision of choosing our finalists, then selecting the overall winner for 2010's award and recipient of the \$6000 prize money.

"Having Coal & Allied as the long term sponsor since 1987 has ensured the ongoing success of Muswellbrook's very own photographic competition, as well as helped us attract some of the

country's artistic greats as judges.

"Muswellbrook students will also benefit from having Julie as a judge this year as she has generously donated her time to visit local schools to talk to students about photography while she is in town for the awards."

Coal & Allied General Manager Studies Antony Bijok said; "The Muswellbrook Open Photographic Awards are a great opportunity for local residents to participate in a coveted national competition, and also learn more about photography by visiting the arts centre during the exhibition period."

This year's 22nd Muswellbrook Open Photographic Award will run at the Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre from 13 March to 18 April 2010.

From the General Managers



Antony Bijok - General Manager Studies.

Welcome to the first edition of the Coal & Allied Community Newsletter – Muswellbrook edition for 2010.

We have hit the ground running this year on a community front and have announced our continuing support of the Upper Hunter Show. I am also looking forward to attending the opening night of the 22nd Annual Muswellbrook Open Photographic Competition in March to see who will receive the \$6000 prize money for the winning entry, which has again been donated by Coal & Allied.

In 2008, Coal & Allied completed an engineering feasibility study on the Mount Pleasant thermal coal project located adjacent to the Bengalla coal mine near Muswellbrook in the Hunter Valley.

We are now currently reviewing the 2008 engineering feasibility study to update the economic assumptions and technical design considerations. Coal & Allied anticipates being able to secure long term take or pay contracts with Port Waratah Coal Services for Mount Pleasant.

In the meantime, Coal & Allied is in the process of identifying modifications that may be required to the existing regulatory consents and approvals, and the company is proceeding to apply for those remaining regulatory consents and

approvals which are required to progress the proposed development of Mount Pleasant. We will continue to keep you informed of our activities with this project throughout each step of the process.

We welcome any feedback or questions regarding our operations. If you would like any information from Coal & Allied please drop into our shopfront in Muswellbrook (19 Bridge Street) or call our freecall number – 1800 727 745.

Andrea Sutton - General Manager Operations Bengalla.

2009 saw some significant work completed on site. Our ROM Hopper has been moved closer to the coal handling and preparation plant, which has allowed for the old facility to be decommissioned and for infilling in this area to begin. Work also commenced in our Wantana pit in preparation for mining to begin in this area in 2010.

Last year we increased our rehabilitation work with 13 hectares of land rehabilitated, and rain late in the year assisted in good early growth of the seeded areas. Muswellbrook residents will start seeing the results of our work from this year, especially from the side of the mine which faces the town. Our environmental team will spend the next three years returning this area to a mix of pasture and native vegetation.

Our focus on health and safety at Bengalla remains as we enter the new year, and we ended 2009 with some great safety initiatives. I would also like to congratulate the Bengalla Emergency Response team who achieved second place in the 2009 Hunter Valley Opencut Mines Rescue Competition.

In late 2009, Bengalla announced the recipients of our annual undergraduate scholarships and I would like to congratulate the six successful applicants. Bengalla is proud to support local students continuing their education and I wish them all the best for their future studies.

For 2010, calendars are already filling with some great local events. I am pleased to announce we have continued our support of the Upper Hunter Show which is on again in March as well as our involvement in Bursting with Energy Expo. The Bengalla Cup will be run in August as part of the Spring Racing Festival and we are also planning the next Bengalla Open Day, scheduled for Spring 2010. The Open Day is an opportunity for our neighbours and community to tour the site and find out more about the operation.

I would like to thank the community for their comments, suggestions and support in 2009 and look forward to working with the community again in 2010.

Getting ready to burst with energy

The ninth annual Bursting with Energy Expo is set to light up the Upper Hunter Show this year, with a number of interactive displays and activities planned to keep the crowds entertained.

The Expo brings together representatives from the mining and energy industries to help the community to learn more about these industries.

The popular National Science and Technology Centre's Questacon Science Squad will also be back and will be held for local schools on Friday 19 March. Thiess Services will also be at the Bursting with Energy stand, running interactive sessions to help Upper Hunter residents learn about recycling and waste management.

Coal & Allied's Bengalla mine continues to be major sponsors of the show, which is on 19 – 20 March at the Muswellbrook Showgrounds.

For a full programme of activities and events visit the show's website: www.upperhuntershow.com.au.



Above: Last year's Bursting with Energy Expo showed how pedal power can generate electricity.



Bengalla Environmental Advisor Amy Harburg on some of the mine's rehabilitated land.

Mine's rehabilitation to start rendering results

The Muswellbrook township will soon start to see evidence of rehabilitation work which

has been underway at Bengalla to help significantly reduce the visual impact of the mine to the Muswellbrook community.

Bengalla General Manager Operations, Andrea Sutton, said the rehabilitation works will help enable the side of the mine which faces the town to blend in with the surrounding landscape.

"Muswellbrook residents will start to see work taking shape during 2010, and it will take around three years to return the area to a mix of pasture for grazing and native vegetation," Andrea said.

"We know that this is an important issue to the community, and we are pleased with the progress to date, and will continue to keep the community informed as this work continues."

Last year Bengalla completed 13 hectares of rehabilitation with the assistance of local suppliers and contractors, which was three hectares above its annual target.

"We also began trialling a new waste treatment product sourced from a local supplier. A

Muswellbrook agronomist was also employed to work with our environmental team to provide advice and ensure the accuracy of seeding rates at the time of planting," Andrea said.

"It is important to us that our local communities actively participate in the economic activity that results from our operation, and all of the equipment and labour used in our rehabilitation work were from local labour hire companies."

Andrea said throughout Bengalla's life, a range of rehabilitation programmes will continue to be enhanced to manage its impact on the land on which it operates to help ensure the land will be available in the future for other uses such as agriculture.

"We take this work very seriously, and last year we were delighted to be recognised for this work in Coal & Allied's "Environmental Sustainability Award 2009", presented by the Hunter Business Chamber," Andrea said.

Grants bring \$3 million into Shire

Muswellbrook Shire Council's Community Grants Officer has been hard at work over the last 18 months, helping the Shire secure nearly \$3 million for community projects.

Executive Officer of the Coal & Allied Community Development Fund Stephen Sneddon said there has been a 56:1 increase in grants secured for Muswellbrook and the surrounding community since the role was first implemented.

"The Coal & Allied funded Community Grants Officer has worked to build on the \$50,000 in grants awarded from 2007/08 to nearly \$3 million in 2008/09, and helped five times as many projects gain approval for funding – which shows the value of having a dedicated role within the Shire," Stephen said.

"A recent big win for Muswellbrook was the long sought-after upgrade to the Muswellbrook library, with funding secured from the Federal Government's Community Infrastructure Programme by Muswellbrook Shire Council. The funding application was supported by the Community Grants Officer."

Stephen said groups from across the Upper Hunter have used the assistance of the Community Grants Officer not just for advice on how to fill in an application, but also to find out what funding sources are available to them.

"While community applications are rarely on the same scale as Council applications, the impact is equally significant and cannot be measured as easily on a dollar to dollar ratio", Stephen said.

"Programmes outside of Council core business have also been expanded and developed through the Grants Officer position; from the Muswellbrook Active-Over-



Community Grants Officers from Upper Hunter councils.

Fifty exercise programmes to the Denman Pony Club securing funding to upgrade their facilities.

"By helping local groups access funding for community projects, we are helping to build capacity in the Hunter, which results in a more sustainable community."

Coal & Allied funds Community Grants Officers in Muswellbrook, Singleton, Cessnock and Upper Hunter shire councils.



Celebrating community partnerships

In 2010 Coal & Allied will continue its focus on the long term sustainability of the communities where it operates, after more than \$1.5 million was invested across the Hunter in partnerships with community groups and businesses in 2009.

Coal & Allied General Manager External Relations Fiona Nicholls said the company's two funds - the Coal & Allied Community Development Fund and the Coal & Allied Aboriginal Development Consultative Committee - have continued to enable the company to build capacity rather than dependency in its surrounding communities.

"In 2009 our Community Development Fund celebrated its 10th birthday and since 1999 we have invested more than \$8.4 million into the region through this fund," Fiona said.

"This includes \$1.2 million in 2009 across 15 partnerships, plus an additional \$1.3 million commitment over the next three years to programmes across the region.

"Our funding supports programmes big or small - from helping Muswellbrook residents learn more about memory loss through workshops with Alzheimers Australia, through to funding a dedicated Community Grants Officer at Muswellbrook Shire Council.

"Our Aboriginal Development Consultative Committee has also played an integral part in supporting projects that benefit the Upper Hunter's Indigenous community, and in 2009 provided \$421,000 across 14 projects.

"Projects supported include our secondary assistance grants which helped Muswellbrook High School provide targeted support to its Indigenous students, and the Parents and Learning programme which has helped Indigenous children in Muswellbrook discover a hidden love of reading.

"What makes these two funds

unique is their focus on developing partnerships which help us to work together with local community groups to develop and implement initiatives that address regional issues."

For more information on the Coal & Allied funds, visit our website: www.coalandallied.com.au

Bengalla awards undergraduate scholarships

Five local students have each received \$3,000 towards their university studies as recipients of this year's Bengalla Undergraduate Scholarship Scheme.

Now in its 10th year, Bengalla has been awarding five scholarships a year to local students; four to Muswellbrook High School students, and one to a year 12 student who is a child of a Bengalla employee.

Recipients of this year's scholarships are; Michael Duck, Jessie May Hayne, Kate Thornton, Nikki Whyburn and Katie Andrews.

Bengalla's second annual scholarship programme is an engineering scholarship which has been running since 2005, and offers a local student \$8,500/year for four years of engineering-related study.

Scone High School graduate Chris Sampson was the recipient of this year's engineering scholarship, and is about to start his first semester of an electrical engineering degree at the University of Newcastle.

In addition to financial support, Chris will also receive valuable industry experience through vacation work at Bengalla as well as the opportunity to apply for the Rio Tinto Coal Australia Graduate Programme upon completion of his degree.

The scholarship is open to year 12 students at Muswellbrook High School, St Joseph's High School in Aberdeen, Scone High School and Scone Grammar School.

Mount Pleasant Community Consultative Committee

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Cr Jennifer Lecky (Deputy Chair)	PO Box 122 Muswellbrook 2333	6549 3700
Chris Gidney	PO Box 122 Muswellbrook 2333	6549 3770
Trevor Parkinson	71 Brecht Street, Muswellbrook 2333	6543 2445
Pat Watts	"Warrabee" 186 Castlerock Road, Muswellbrook 2333	6543 1782
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