

Mannering Park Community Hall



Completed Community Hall

Mannering Park Community Hall has a rich history dating back to its origins in the mid-20th century. Initially established by the local community in 1948 on crown land near the junction of Vales and Rutleys Road, the first hall served as a central gathering place until the construction of Vales Point Power Station necessitated its relocation in 1959.

Residents of Mannering Park decided to build their own hall by purchasing an ex-Army hut from the Department of Interior from the Greta Migrant Camp. This was aided by a generous donation of land by Mr. Bill Spencer. The land was located at the bottom of Cheryl Street.

The transformation of the ex-Army hut, incorporating elements of the original hall into its design, marked a significant community effort. Initially doubling as a primary school until 1964, the hall remained a vital hub for local activities and events.

In 1973, following tragic incidents elsewhere in Australia relating to community halls, a government inspection was ordered. The government inspection in 1973 uncovered significant building defects, which posed safety concerns that needed to be addressed and rectified within 3 months, otherwise the hall would be closed. So the local community faced a pivotal decision.

On the 12th of September 1973, residents held a public meeting where they decided to construct a new facility instead of repairing the existing hall. Led by a dedicated newly formed fundraising committee under the guidance of Trevor Wrightson as President/Treasurer; Val Carrol as Secretary and Bill Christian, a retired accountant as the auditor, the community launched successful fundraising ventures.

Notably, the 200-club fundraiser, featuring prizes including a new car, captured widespread support and popularity, selling out rapidly. Ailsa Graham collected approximately 50% of the money for the 200 Clubs that were run.

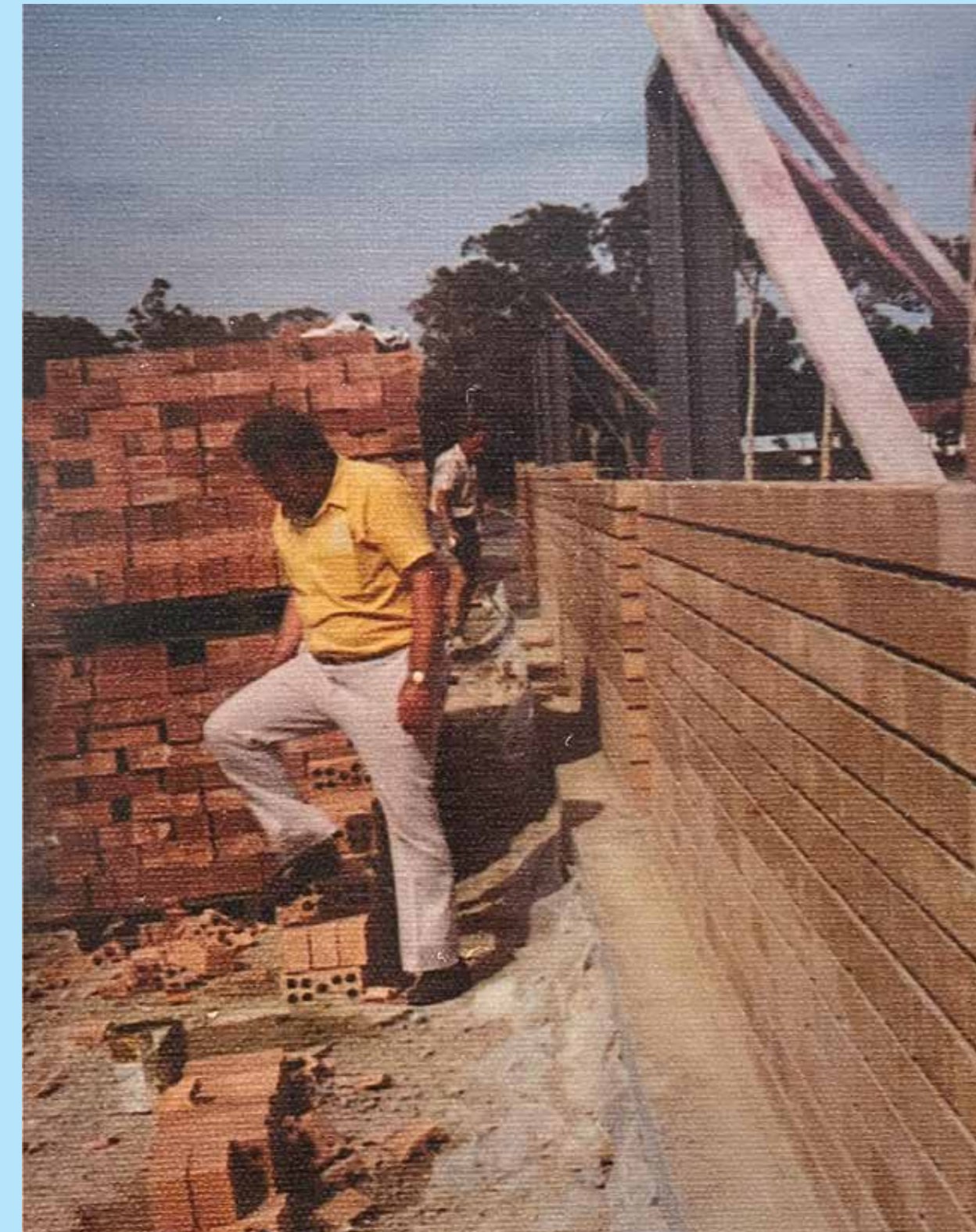
A total of \$361 was raised from the chook raffles; auctions of donated goods \$340.83; Housie \$723; Door-knock Appeal \$171.20 and \$150.53 from a mile of coins placed along Vales Road.

The monster Christmas stocking raffle raised \$250 and had been presented to the winner when the local bread delivery man turned up with the same ticket, C19. On closer inspection it was a faded pink ticket which he kept in the windscreen of his van. Trevor was able to show him the winning ticket, embarrassed, he was last seen making a hasty exit.

The Shire President of the time, John Dawson, pledged assistance with matching funds and said Wyong Shire Council could allocate the ground to build a new hall.

A special meeting was called by the Mannering Park Progress Association, where they decided to sell their current land and hall and donate the funds to the new hall at the new location. This raised another \$7500. The National Coal Board donated \$1000 to the cause. The Wyong Shire Council was true to its word and matched the donations dollar for dollar.

Now that the Mannering Park community had the money, the Shire organised for an Architect to design the Hall, then quotes were obtained for its construction. The cheapest quote for building of the hall was \$110 000.



Trevor Wrightson inspecting progress

Luckily, many tradespeople who were members of Progress Association were available, so the community proposed to the Council that they would build the hall under Council's guidance. Building began on the 6th of November 1976.

The concrete slab took 21 trucks of concrete with just as many volunteers helping to lay it.



Pouring the concrete slab



**Back Row (L to R) Alan Roy John Hoyes Bill Britton Bert Martin (Painter) Trevor Wrightson
Front Row (L to R) Ken Kelty Trevor Scott-Young Keith Kelty Alex Robertson**

The photo above is of the eight dedicated men who worked on the hall for 14 months plus the painter.

The Shire President, Mr Tim Farrell, who stated that it was the most gracious and well-appointed hall on the Central Coast, officially opened the Mannering Park Community Hall on the 18th of November 1978. Also in attendance was the State Member for Wyong, Mr Harry Jensen, and he presented a cheque for \$10 000 for furnishings.

From that point, a Council appointed volunteer committee, known as the 355 committee, managed the operations of the hall until December 2016. The hall today is now under the care and control of the Central Coast Council.

The following is an extract from the Newcastle Herald in April 1977.

SELF HELP LABOUR SAVES \$40,000

The project is a tribute to the township and the way in which the various groups came together to form a Community Development group to work for the good of all.

The Council supplied plans for the Hall and Architectural supervision throughout the construction by Architect, Mr Peter Andrews.

It took 4 years and 2 months after the Mannering Park Progress Association's decision to build a new hall for it to be opened.

The first meeting in the new community hall was held on the 11th of November 1977.

Today, Mannering Park Community Hall stands as a testament to community spirit and resilience, continuing to serve as a vital centre for social, educational, and cultural activities in the area.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

History provided from a work by Trevor Wrightson complemented by hall signage

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Mannering Park Progress

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