

## HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

Grant supports Mt Cotton Hall project



**Mt Cotton, Sheldon, Thornlands, Victoria Point, Redland Bay**

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### Work has now started on the Mt Cotton community's most important renovation project.

I am pleased to have been able to secure a \$3000 Councillors' Small Grant to help cover the cost of restumping the historic hall which has been at the heart of Mt Cotton for almost 80 years.

The hall is testament to the strength, will and spirit of Mt Cotton's pioneers, who cleared raw scrub in the 1930s to build their farms and set the scene for the community of today.

That community spirit remains strong enough to make Mt Cotton Hall one of the busiest and most popular in South-East Queensland.

Mt Cotton Hall Association president Laurie McKenzie, vice-president Narelle Byrne, hall co-ordinator Richard Liowillie and their committee are to be congratulated for keeping a near-full booking sheet.

The dances on the third Saturday of the month are always popular, often drawing up to 120 people from throughout south-east Queensland for a night of old time/new vogue dancing to live music.

They are well worth the \$8 entry fee for the country-style supper alone.

The hall also has been the scene of some memorable productions by the highly entertaining Mt Cotton Drama Group.

Laurie and his team look after the hall largely unassisted. Their work is a great example of the

community looking after itself, which makes it particularly satisfying to award this grant to ensure the hall remains in good shape for generations to come.

Mt Cotton has retained its strong rural culture and whenever there has been a big local issue, everyone looks to meet at the community hall. Every time there is something that is a focus for the community, it gets argued out in that hall.

It is definitely a cornerstone of the community, completely run by the community.

As Laurie and Narelle put it — where else would you find a community centre where locals have not only celebrated weddings and christenings but birthdays, anniversaries and wakes as well.



Mt Cotton Hall president Laurie McKenzie with Cr Julie Talty as well as vice-president Narelle Byrne and her husband, Mark.

## INSPIRING SENIOR

Such is her character, attitude and enthusiasm for story-telling, most people do not initially realise that Division 6's Inspiring Senior for 2013, Robyn Bree, is legally blind.



Robyn had to retire from school teaching when she was in her 40s due to her loss of vision but she certainly lost none of her literary passion.

Now in her eighth year as a "Writing for Pleasure" tutor at Redland's U3A, Robyn continues to write and is involved with the Dickinson Literary Award. She uses technology to help her.

Robyn reviews books for several publications, including the Blind Citizens of Australia women's magazine. She has spent 21 years on client committees for people with blindness and was awarded an Order of Australia Medal in 2002 for her long-standing contributions to the Royal Blind Society and also Friends of the Royal Blind Society.

Not only does Robyn lead a full and interesting life helping both sighted and low vision people, she is also a primary carer for her husband, Ross.

She is truly amazing, truly inspiring and says: "We show our strength by how we handle what life puts in our way."

## QUARRY UPDATE

You may be aware that Deputy Premier Jeff Seeney has used his "call-in" power in relation to the application to expand the Barro Group quarry. As your representative for Mt Cotton, I have already made approaches on behalf of Division 6 residents to the Deputy Premier and I have asked that he support our community.

The "call-in" does not mean an automatic decision – it means the Deputy Premier will now re-assess the application, with his ultimate decision being final with no right of appeal. I will be lobbying to make sure all

the reasons Council rejected the proposal in July 2013 are reconsidered, and I will be highlighting the strong community opposition as well as the potential impact on the environment, road safety, businesses and neighbouring homes.

I acknowledge the difficulty of this decision for the Deputy Premier with regards to protecting a resource but I will also be urging him to look at all the issues that have affected the history of this matter and to ensure the views of our community are prioritised and weighed against any expansion of quarrying activity.

## HELP TO HEAL HEARTS

The Redlands now has its own much-needed bereavement group, Healing Hearts, thanks to the efforts of local mums Veronique Haas and Sheryl Cuell.

The group meets at The Cage Foundation's meeting room at 9 Dollery Street, Capalaba, on the second Tuesday of each month.

Veronique and Sheryl saw a desperate need for local help after they lost their sons, one in a traffic accident and the other to suicide.

Veronique found that during the enormous trauma which followed her son Tristan's death, there was nowhere local to turn. Eventually she found comfort with a Compassionate Friends group at New Farm. Sheryl had to travel to Mt Gravatt's SOS group (Survivors of Suicide) after the death of her son, Taylor.

When the pair met recently they decided to start a non-profit group in the Redlands for parents who also had lost children in tragic circumstances.

Their goal is for a place where parents can feel nurtured and free to discuss whatever they need in a confidential and relaxed environment.

Veronique says the loss of a child causes far greater pain than anyone can imagine unless you have experienced it for yourself, and to share that pain with others who have suffered it is invaluable and a powerful healing tool.

For information, contact Veronique Haas on 0418 186 440 or at healing.hearts@outlook.com.