



A History of Pymble Turrumurra Kindergarten

Pymble Turrumurra Kindergarten has been affectionately called Handley Avenue, for as long as anyone can remember.

The founders, with all their vision, could never have known their kindergarten would stand so proudly as part of the Ku-Ring-Gai community in the twenty first century.

In 1958, a small group of committed Ku-Ring-Gai residents came together to share a common vision - to establish a community kindergarten. A committee of parents was informed and their working motto became "Building for the Future", which was proudly displayed on their early letterhead. Working closely with Ku-Ring-Gai council, the committee worked tirelessly to locate a suitable piece of land, to turn their vision into a reality. The late Mrs Eleanor Cullis-Hill, a respected local architect, volunteered her time and provided specifications for the site.

If fundraising today is difficult, consider the plight of those early committees. They had to convince people to donate towards a building that wasn't built, on land that hadn't been located. Ku-Ring-Gai Council offered to match money raised by the committee, pound for pound, up 2,500 pounds.

Fundraising was feverish. There were the usual cake sales, jumble stalls and raffles, as well as endless letters sent to local clubs, associations and businesses. But at a time when sherry was the drink of choice for social occasions, fundraising captured that sixties flavour : Cornelius fur Parade, Wig Demonstrations, Theatre Parties, Cigarette tastings and smokos, Dinner Dances complete with gyrating Go-Go Girls, and The Miss Kindergarten Contest.

In 1960, when the committee had all but given up hope, there was a major breakthrough. A new parcel of land to consider, originally owned by the Housing Commission of NSW, with no street access, close to Handley Place.

With a vacant piece of land available from Council, fundraising had to " Rev Up " once again. Now an ionic event in our community, the first Handley "Carnival Fete", was held at St Ives Village Green in 1961. Santa arrived in a helicopter on a "pouring, miserable day".

As the deadline of the building opening loomed, one of the largest and most memorable fund raisers was launched. "Buy a brick to build a Kindy" captured the imaginations and hearts of local residents. This 'roll up your sleeves and get in there spirit", is part of the fabric of the Kindergarten. A team of dedicated door knockers set out on the streets of Ku-Ring-Gai with the slogan, "Every Brick Counts". The campaign raised just over 260 pounds, placing the finish line within certain reach.

In September 1962, with several of the original committee members watching on, the new Kindergarten building was officially opened.

"This Kindergarten is not static—it is still growing. May I point out that this movement to build a Kindergarten has done much more than just that. By bringing so many of the members together in a true community of purpose, I believe it will prove to have done much for the future of the whole area."

President, Mrs Betty Kraus (now Mrs Betty Smout)

Today, Pymble Turramurra Kindergarten still operates in much the same manner that was set down in the original constitution some 45 years ago. Each year, a Board of Management, made up of parents, takes on the trusted role of running the Kindergarten in conjunction with Handley's Director and dedicated teachers. It's like handing on the

baton in an Olympic relay, each oncoming Board of Management is charged with injecting new energy, new ideas and new funds, whilst respecting the traditions of this community monument.

Handley Avenue has been the foundation of learning and socialising for thousands of local children, and has been a meeting place for friendships over five decades. A tribute to the founders and all the parents that have followed, Pymble Turramurra Kindergarten is charging ahead into the twenty first century with the same celebration of community with which it started.