The Other Awards

Contents

Preface	**1**
Welcome to 'The Other Awards'	**3**
Host Communities So Far	4
Welcome to 'The Other Awards' Kit	**6**
Purpose of the Kit	6
Philosophy	**6**
Elevate the ordinary	7
Rural Humour	7
Good Food	8
Good Environment	8

Compiled by Neil Smith and Ruth Haggar
on behalf of the Centre for Rural Communities Inc.

Artwork by Anne Lorraine

Published by Monash University
Churchill, Victoria, 2004

© Copyright 2004
The Centre for Rural Communities Inc.
Monash University
Gippsland Campus
Churchill, Victoria, 3842

Steps to Success 9
Who organises it? 9
Our town or…? 9
Money 10
When? 10
Where? 10
Caterers 10
Find the 'Other' Presenters 11
Find an MC 11
Organise local entertainment 11
Organise the teapots 12
Nomination forms 13
Work out the program 13
Prepare the publicity 13
Select the recipients 13
Advertise the event 14
Canvas for nominations 15
Categories 15
Organise display space 16
Send out invitations 17
Organise the food, catering, seating and decoration 17
Name tags 18
Acknowledgement of the CRC 18

The Big Night 19

Appendices 20
1 History 20
2 Sample Running Sheet 22
3 Sample Budget 23
4 Promotional Products 24
5 Perpetual Trophy 25

Preface

While the idea of celebration and fun seems such a simple idea it is something that often gets dismissed or forgotten in the hard slog of community groups and projects. For many of us our community work gets done after (or before) our paid work is done. When we are tired it is not fun.

In the 'serious business' that Community Capacity Building / Community Development has become, the idea that we often learn most – and are most receptive to learning – when we are relaxed and enjoying ourselves is considered unorthodox.

Well, we consider this significant.

We know from our experience over the years that some of the most memorable and outstanding learning experiences, the best networking and the best partnerships didn't evolve from dry and formal meetings, workshops or conferences – but from the conversations over dinner, a coffee (or tea) or a beer. Learning happens best when we are relaxed, enjoying ourselves and open to hearing other views.

We realise it is vital to use this knowledge about how we learn when celebrating community. This IS the essence of 'The Other Awards.'

Underlying the fun of 'The Other Awards' are serious lessons about how things get done – and how we might do things better in our community and between our communities - more co-operatively, with more concern for the environment and more inclusively of our neighbours. These are gentle reminders about listening more, accepting more diverse viewpoints and sharing generously with other communities.

Also layered beneath the celebration inherent in these Awards are some serious and considered philosophies, processes and approaches that are deliberately designed to encourage us all to reconsider and think about how we organise and run events.

While we invite any community to take this idea as their own, it is our desire that you read all of this Kit carefully and take care to incorporate all the little subtleties that we have built into 'The Other Awards' – because that's what makes them unique.

We have found that 'The Other Awards' work best in smaller rural communities – town sizes up to about 3000.

Also, we reckon that 'The Other Awards' will become a major community celebration right across Australia – and we would like to keep a record of this. So please let us know about your event; when and where it is, send us some photos - and we'd love an invitation!

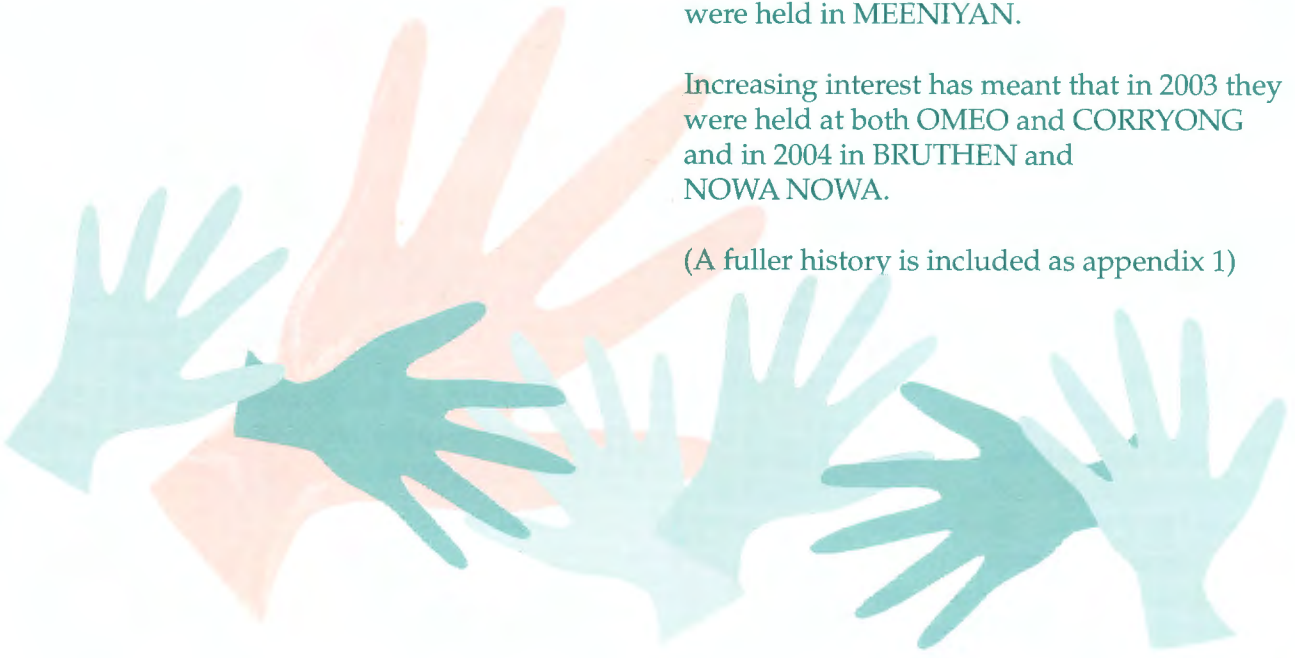
Our email address is
rural.comm@arts.monash.edu.au.

Ruth Haggar
Neil Smith

for
The Centre for Rural Communities

Was it possible to CELEBRATE such achievement and innovation? Imagine if communities got together, learned about what each other is doing, RECOGNISED each other's work **AND** had some FUN. This sounded like a good idea.

And so, 'The Other Awards' were born...



Host Communities So Far

The very first 'Other Awards' were held in 2001 in STRATFORD. The event was advertised right across the Gippsland region and around 50 people enjoyed an evening at the Stratford Mechanics Institute Hall.

In 2002 the focus became more local and they were held in MEENIYAN.

Increasing interest has meant that in 2003 they were held at both OMEO and CORRYONG and in 2004 in BRUTHEN and NOWA NOWA.

(A fuller history is included as appendix 1)

Welcome to 'The Other Awards'

Recognizing innovative, sustainable and socially just co-operative community culture.

Not a competition – a recognition

Which Awards?

Not the Order of Australia, Australian of the Year, Logies, Arias or even Citizen of the Year - but 'The OTHER Awards.' The Awards that celebrate the work of local community groups who work creatively, tirelessly, co-operatively and ingeniously for the good of community.

Why have 'The Other Awards'?

There are many levels of recognition of achievement in Australia. Some of these are initiated by Federal, State or local government while others come from sporting clubs, schools, universities, workplaces, etc. They honour all sorts of excellence from the arts and entertainment through to charity work. Most awards honour outstanding people who have made a difference in their industry, workplace or community.

But before 'The Other Awards' there weren't any COMMUNITY INITIATED awards that recognise and acknowledge the work of their own local community groups and the amazing accomplishments they achieve from year to year.

An idea comes into being ....

One day in early 2001, a few community people were chatting over cups of TEA and coffee. They wondered aloud about how tirelessly people worked in their communities - and did get tired - and kept on working! They talked about just how amazingly innovative rural communities are, and how much of our community life – and our daily life – is supported by local community groups.

A good idea will always keep growing ...

Late one night, while chatting over the last of the red wine, after having enjoyed another successful 'Other Awards,' it was thought that there must be lots of communities who would want to celebrate an event like this - if only they knew about it.

What if a Kit was put together so that 'Other' communities could run their own 'Other Awards'?

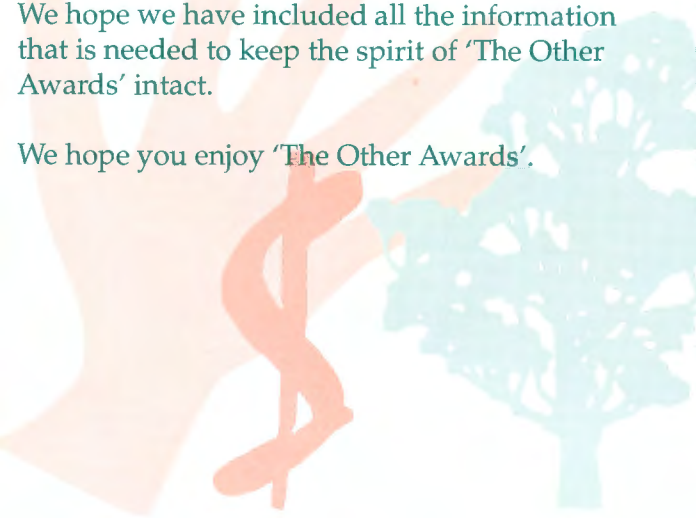
Welcome to The Other Awards' Kit!

The Purpose of this Kit

This Kit has been designed to enable a community group to learn about and understand 'The Other Awards' - and then organise a local event.

We hope we have included all the information that is needed to keep the spirit of 'The Other Awards' intact.

We hope you enjoy 'The Other Awards'.



Philosophy

Imagine people in community groups not only working TOGETHER and co-operating with each other for the good of the whole community - but also CELEBRATING together.

What if we were all encouraged to be more INCLUSIVE and allow for more diverse VIEWS TO BE HEARD? Imagine feeling really listened to and RESPECTED. Is it possible to CARE for our local ENVIRONMENT, whilst also increasing the SOCIAL and CULTURAL WELLBEING of our community? What if our efforts could create a VIBRANT local ECONOMY and increase EMPLOYMENT?

We believe there is NO LIMIT to the potential of a group of people who work together like this. This is to be celebrated and ACKNOWLEDGED.

We also know that we can all learn from each other – even at those times when we have different points of view. We believe celebration, humour, good food, local ownership and respect for each other can be powerful learning tools.

We think the following are subtle but vital parts of 'The Other Awards.'

Elevate the Ordinary
As members of a community, we know that many issues get thrown around when people come TOGETHER over a CUP OF TEA. The humble teapot has therefore been elevated to the SYMBOL of rural community work. When there's a problem to be solved or an issue to be discussed we say - "bring on the TEAPOT!" And when we want to CELEBRATE our achievements, we have sometimes filled that teapot with champagne!

So it makes sense to us that when we want to give out awards that have many practical facets to them, nothing is more fitting than BEAUTIFULLY decorated teapots. Teapots that we hope groups will use at their meetings for many years to come - teapots that have been made and / or decorated locally.

Rural Humour
It is an accepted part of the Australian story that rural people share a distinct and ironic sense of humour.

We like to celebrate this quirky RURAL SENSE OF HUMOUR. Rural people are known for their ability to weather the hard times, drawing on an inner STRENGTH in times of adversity. They've seen it all – bushfires, floods, political strategies, newcomers, high yields, low yields and no yields. They've learnt to see their cup as half full, even in a drought.

Continuing this celebration of our particular brand of humour we have OTHER presenters at 'The Other Awards.' We have great fun searching out FAMOUSLY named people - and you wouldn't believe how many John and Jeanette Howard's and Elizabeth Taylor's we've managed to find!

Good Food

Food has always played an important role in community celebrations – and we believe it is especially important to celebrate 'The Other Awards' by serving good quality local produce.

This honours and supports local producers and suppliers, as well as reflecting the expertise and agriculture of the local area.

'The Other Awards' philosophy promotes environmental sustainability, diversity and encourages change – so it is important that the food and how it is served reflects this - eg. organic produce where possible, no disposable items, creative menus using local produce etc.

Good Environment

We believe it is important to make this event special by creating a beautiful environment. Decorate the venue, use tabelcloths and have flowers, candles or local memorabilia on the table - we have seen someone's collection of unusual and interesting teapots used as table centre-pieces.

Most events are held in a local hall and the foyer is an ideal place to showcase displays of community projects - photos, artwork, posters, etc. This all adds to the sense of importance of the occasion.

Remember, this is a coming together to celebrate the groups and projects that make our communities special and enable them to function in a healthy and positive manner. These things are worth a special effort.

Steps to Success

Who organises it?
'The Other Awards' (registered name) were initiated and developed by the Centre for Rural Communities. However, we believe they are such a great idea that we want to see communities all over Australia running their own 'Other Awards' celebrations on a regular basis. It was that desire that was the impetus for developing this Kit.

Our hope is that a local group – or a shire or regional group – will want to hold their own 'Other Awards' – and will use this Kit to assist them run an event that truly fits the purpose and philosophy we have described.

Just who will organise your event is a self-selection process – and if you let us know that you are doing so, we can assist with support and networking contacts of 'Other Award' organisers. Also, we want to keep track of the whole process so we know where each 'Other Awards' is happening and hopefully end up with a map of 'Other Awards' celebrations right across Australia.

So if you have decided that your group wants to hold an 'Other Awards,' the next step is to ask around your community to see if there are other groups who would like to assist you in organising the event. This shares the workload, encourages participation and spreads the 'word' more quickly.

Should it just be our town or...?
Probably one of the first questions you will ask is – should it just be our town or can it be bigger?

We think that the 'Awards' work really well when a few towns get together to celebrate. Consider inviting up to half a dozen small towns in your area (depending on the population size) to share the event. This helps networking between communities and will bring ideas and groups along that haven't met each other before – but who share common issues. It also enables one of the towns to learn the skills to organise next year's event.

Money
Once you have decided who will organise it, the next question is always – how much will it cost and where do we get the money?

We suggest you work out a budget – see the sample budget included in this Kit as a starting point. To date philanthropic foundations, shires, state government and other community organisations, etc. have funded 'The Other Awards'.

We have always tried to keep the 'ticket' price quite low so that everyone who wants to is able to attend. The two major costs are the teapots (approx $80 each) and the dinner (approx $20 - $40 a head). You will need to find someone who is good at writing submissions; think about sponsorship from businesses, local government, service clubs etc.

When
Pick a time in the year that is suitable and that doesn't clash with busy times in your community (deb balls, football finals, harvest, etc). Allow yourself plenty of time to do all of the organising - probably about 10-12 weeks after you have secured the funding.

Where
If a number of communities are involved it makes sense to pick a central location. We favour community halls, and it is best if it is a venue that is inviting, local and friendly. It will need to be able to seat the numbers of people you are expecting/aiming for. Events to date have had between 50 and 180 people. Make sure it has heating if it is being used in winter and adequate kitchen facilities. You will also need enough space in the foyer or elsewhere for the community displays. Book the venue early so you are sure it is available.

Caterers
It is a good idea to find and book the caterers early. Discuss the venue and kitchen facilities with them, and your ideas for a menu.

Find the 'Other' presenters
We think it is really important, in fact vital, to the humour and philosophy of 'The Other Awards' that you try to find people who have famous names. It is surprising how often in our communities, just down the road or in the next town there is a John Howard, an Elizabeth Taylor, a Max Walker, Brett Lee or a Kath and Kim. Their names might come from politics, sport or entertainment – they just need to be an 'other' famous person. Ask around and get people involved in this search.

Once you have found them, talk to them about the event and see if you can get their agreement to participate. Generally we give them the role of handing out the 'Awards' (teapots and certificates). We like to use an MC to 'run' the evening. These special guests are best seated at the top table nearest where the presentations will take place.

Find an MC for the evening
Is there someone well respected and experienced in this role in your community? Do they have charisma? Can they put people at ease and encourage fun and participation? Remember, you will have to fully brief them about the meaning of 'The Other Awards'.

We have found that the choice of an MC is critical to the success of the evening – they are the voice and the mood setter, so take time to find the right person.

Organise local entertainment
Entertainment always rounds out an evening, and is a good way to foster and promote local talent. Find out if there are there any local performers who have written songs or poems about an issue, the area or the environment. Is there a local singing group or comedy act?

Remember that while the entertainment is important, it is there to complement the rest of the evening and should be kept to an appropriate time slot.

Organise the teapots

The teapots ARE the 'Awards,' so in keeping with the community spirit, we believe it is important to get these made or at least decorated locally. In the past we have used local artists, ceramics groups or even organised classes where community members can participate in the making and design, whilst learning new skills.

It's great to see the teapots made in a range of shapes, colours and styles. This way the artisans work is acknowledged and ensures each teapot is a unique and local work of art. We also believe it is important to have 'The Other Awards' and the year painted on each teapot as this commemorates the uniqueness of the occasion.

Group photo, Nowa Nowa 2004

You will also have to think about how many teapots you need – we generally have at least 16 – though there is no right number. Remember this is a recognition of community work, not a competition.

Consider also printing up a certificate that can be framed, eg. Best Environmental Project, 2004. These can be given to winners as well as being used for notable mentions for groups not receiving a teapot.

Nomination forms
A nomination form will need to be drawn up. These can be sent out to all local groups and made available at local store(s), the post office or newsagency, and advertised in the local paper. A copy is available upon request via email.

Work out the program
We have included a sample running sheet in the Kit. Remember to allow time for informal mingling, networking and talking before and during the evening. Also it is important to allow 2 or 3 minutes for every group receiving an award to talk about their group or project. This lets other interested people know about them and allows for contact, networking and further information.

Keep in mind that while some entertainment/ music is important it needs to be neither too long nor too loud – as both of these stifle the talking. Also remember that this is a draft program – and as the event gets closer the program may change – that's OK.

Prepare the publicity
You will need to prepare press releases and posters. It is a good idea to nominate a few spokespeople who have a good understanding of this Kit and feel confident to promote 'The Other Awards' publicly. Copies of posters are available via email on request.

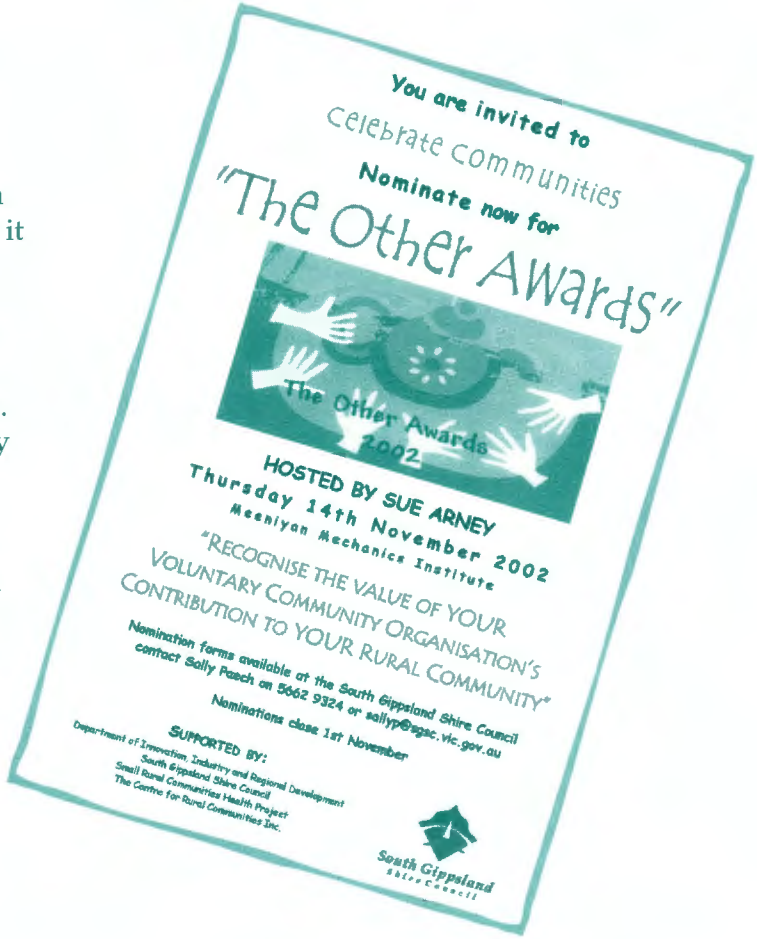
Select the recipients
Once you have received the nominations, you will need to determine which groups will receive a teapot and which groups won't. This is the hardest issue we have had to deal with because usually everyone wants one of these fabulously decorated teapots.

To avoid groups feeling left out, the 'Notable Mention' certificate is the next best thing. This way, everyone receives something. You will need to think long and hard about which groups deserve a teapot and then make sure you have enough. Remember to think about this early as the teapots will be made before recipients are selected.

Advertise the event
It is important to let the whole community know that you are hosting 'The Other Awards.'

"The what?" Most people will have no idea what you are talking about, so this is where it is vital to clearly explain the philosophy of 'The Other Awards' - fun, celebration, co-operation, etc. Use your networks – talk to people and encourage them to come along. Don't just rely on posters and press releases. Word of mouth is always best. Allow plenty of time for the grapevine to work.

Community radio or regional radio are also good mediums for spreading the word. Consider doing an interview to get the message out. We also use local community newspapers.



Canvas for nominations

When canvassing for nominations, remember that the FOCUS of 'The Other Awards' is always on grass roots organisations. We acknowledge evidence of:

1 co-operation, inclusiveness, creativity;
2 local development;
3 sustainability;
4 socially, environmentally and economically responsive and responsible projects;
5 community driven projects – as opposed to government or funding driven;
6 networking into and with other communities.

Nominations are judged on the above criteria, and those groups that meet this are selected to receive Awards.

The organising committee will have to mail nomination forms to the community groups as well as having personally talked to them about 'The Awards'. Be aware that many groups tend not to self nominate – so you will need to be creative and persistent. Build up an expectation around the Awards and the evening – and if necessary provide some assistance to ensure groups nominate. At one 'Other Awards' (held after the major fires in Victoria/NSW of 2002/3) every local CFA brigade was nominated – something that they would never have done themselves.

Categories

The categories for awards that we have used are:

- Community Enterprise Development
- Arts Development
- Environmental Responses
- Social Sustainability

Community Enterprise Development - covers projects such as community newspapers, community banks, co-operatively owned hotels, post offices and general stores. The community runs these projects, which have a business focus. This category has sometimes been called Enterprising Community.

Arts Development - includes festivals, street art (public benches, sculptures etc), art projects undertaken by a school or aged care facilities etc.

Environmental Responses - includes projects by Landcare groups, efforts to preserve roadside vegetation etc.

Social Sustainability - projects that support the vibrancy of local community and encourage and facilitate community participation and diversity. Think about the projects that make your community more social.

Sometimes people have changed the titles of these categories whilst keeping the intent.

Organise the display space for community projects

This is a great opportunity to showcase local and other ventures of interest. It also keeps the community updated with what's happening. The full spectrum of issues needs to be covered - arts, environment, community business (community banks, newspapers, etc.) festivals, economic development, etc. Displays can be in the form of photos, artwork, videos, models, murals, etc. Give plenty of notice to groups so they have time to think about and plan their display.

Encourage nominating groups to bring along a display. These can be set up in the foyer or wherever you are serving the nibblies on arrival. This provides a point of interest for early arrivals and is a good conversation starter. It also encourages groups who nominate to attend.

Send out invitations

Who do you want to attend? Make a list of all the people you would like to come and make sure they all receive an invitation. Special invites might include local MP's, councilors, local identities, etc. This is an opportunity to showcase the work of your communities. Let them know that they are invited to participate in the celebrations but are not required to speak.

Organise the food, catering, seating and decorations

Food

- Pre dinner drinks & nibbles (local wine or a sherry, fruit juice, cheeses, etc) encourage conversation and mingling amongst the displays.
- Source as much good quality local produce as possible - and it's a special treat if you create a distinctly different menu. This is an opportunity to promote what's available in your region.
- Remember to find out about special dietary needs eg. vegetarian, gluten free, etc.
- BYO alcoholic drinks works well for the main meal.
- Serve real tea in a TEAPOT and real coffee.

Catering

- If you have enough funding, hire waiting staff - another local opportunity eg. Secondary school or TAFE students or a community group.
- Keeping the environment in mind - don't use disposable items.
- Encourage people to book early as this will help with the catering.
- Explain to the caterer that good food is part of the philosophy.

Seating

Have tables of 6 to 10 people - perhaps with place names. Think about how you can encourage people to mingle and meet new people, rather than simply sitting with people they already know.

Decorations

Make it special so it feels like a CELEBRATION. Each table can have flowers, teapots, tea cosies, etc. Be creative - use your imagination. You might invite local schools to help with this project.

Name tags, etc

Name tags are a good idea, especially when you are meeting a lot of new people. Make sure you have them pre-made for each person, and they can be collected at the registration desk on arrival. Monies can also be collected here if necessary.

Depending on numbers and hall size you may have to organize a PA system for the evening.

Acknowledgement of the Centre for Rural Communities

It is important to acknowledge that 'The Other Awards' are a project, which has been developed by The Centre for Rural Communities Inc.

(Refer to Appendix for details)

The big night has arrived and it looks something like this ...

6:00pm
People begin arriving at a local community hall. At the registration desk they receive a name tag, and are then welcomed into the foyer where there are displays of community projects - both local and from surrounding areas. There are drinks and finger food available, perhaps waiting staff and live or background music. There is time for mingling and chatting.

6:45pm
Everyone is ushered into the main hall where tables are set with place names for a meal. At the front of the hall are the MC, Other presenters and the 'Awards' table - with all the decorated teapots and certificates. The MC welcomes everyone and explains overview of evening.

7:00pm
Main course served - fresh local produce.

7:40 - 8:00pm
Music/singing by local entertainment.

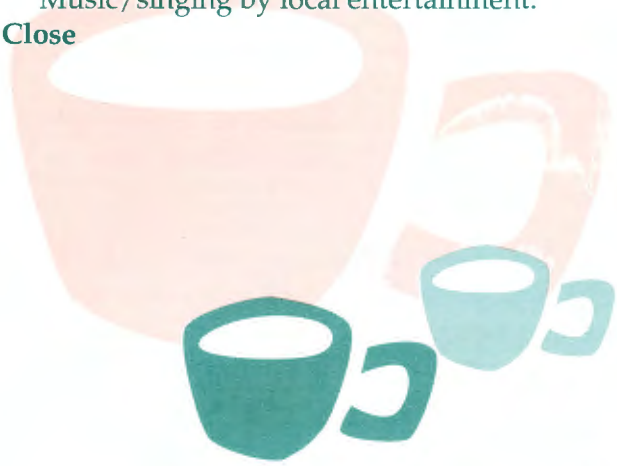
8:00pm
The MC will call the first of the 16-20 successful nominees forward who will be able to choose a teapot from the Awards table. The Other presenters will present this to them. They will have an opportunity to speak for a few moments about their project.

8:45-9:00pm
Dessert served.

9:00-9:30
Round two of presentations.

9:45
Tea/coffee,
Music/singing by local entertainment.

Close



Appendix 1

History

The very first 'Other Awards' were held in 2001 in STRATFORD at the Mechanics Institute Hall. The Lance Reichstein Foundation, The Small Rural Communities Health Consortium (SRCHC) and The Centre for Rural Communities Inc. (CRC) provided the funding, while Wellington Shire provided the support. This event was advertised across the Gippsland region.

In 2002 the Awards were held in MEENIYAN at the local community hall. The State government, the CRC and the South Gippsland Shire funded these. Learning from experience, we kept this as a more 'local' event.

In 2003, two 'Other Awards' were held. The first was in OMEO at the former shire hall in conjunction with the Fourth Victorian Small Rural Communities Health Conference. Funding was through VicHealth, while the Omeo District Hospital undertook the major organizational role.

The second was held in CORRYONG and was sponsored by Upper Murray Health and Community Services.

In 2004 both BRUTHEN and NOWA NOWA celebrated the 'Other Awards' with support from the State Government, the East Gippsland Shire and Lakes Entrance Community Health.

Sally Paech, Neil Smith and Helen Sheil at Meeniyan.

The Centre for Rural Communities Inc.

(CRC) is a community based incorporated association based in Gippsland and was formed in 1995 to work towards the development of rural communities that are socially, environmentally and economically sustainable. The CRC has worked with Gippsland communities to develop and refine transformational educational strategies in the interest of rural sustainability.

The CRC promotes a new understanding of rural development, building on existing assets, local knowledge, resources and management by local people. It maintains that co-operation and collaboration are key principles of community development programs.

The Small Rural Communities Health Consortium was established in 1998 and is a partnership between six small health services across Victoria. The partnership works together and with their communities to ensure a vibrant future for small rural communities.

The consortium take a very broad and encompassing view of health – believing that a socially, economically, environmentally and culturally vibrant community contributes to the physical and mental health of its residents. The SRCHC also organised the Small Rural Communities Health Conferences.

Garyelle Rose, Kate Cartwright, Marietta Herni at Meeniyan 2003.

Appendix 2

THE OTHER AWARDS - SAMPLE RUNNING SHEET				
TIME	ACTIVITY	MC ROLE	MUSIC	COMMENTS
6.00 - 6.40pm	Arrival at hall, registration, name tags Drinks and nibbles		Local Music	Count numbers of attendees
6.40 - 7.00pm	People take seats. MC welcomes everyone and introduces The Other Awards (origins, values and explains categories).	Ask people to take their seats, introduce speakers and announce main course being served		
7.00 - 7.40pm	Main course - buffet			Starting time flexible - will depend on how things proceed.
7.40 -	Music / singing			
8.00 - 8.45pm	Awards presentation - Round One - Community Enterprise, Enterprising Communities, Environment and Arts.	Introduce the 'Other' Mayor. Announce Awards. Chat with Winners Announce dessert.		
8.45 - 9.00pm	Dessert			
9.00 - 9.30pm	Awards presentation - Round Two - Social Sustainability, all categories. Thank you to sponsors and funders. Call for a community host next time. Good night.	Announces Awards and chat with winners		
9.45 - Close	Coffee, chatting and music		Local Music	

Appendix 3

SAMPLE BUDGET

COSTING FOR THE OTHER AWARDS

Expenditure:

Performers	(local groups / other entertainment)	$ 300.00
Event Organisation	(if someone gets paid to do some organising)	$1,000.00
Overheads	(phone, post etc.)	$ 200.00
Media Advertising		
Signage and Banners	(if affordable)	$ 200.00
Posters	(A4 size colour photocopied @ $2 ea x 100)	$ 200.00
Brochures and Entry Forms	(photocopied, 2 sided, 2xA4 ea@10c per pc x 500)	$ 200.00
Catering	(cost approx. $20 per head - say 60 @ $20)	$1,200.00
Cost of Teapots	($50 ea, these then need decorating, allow $30 ea - $80x16)	$1,280.00
Hall Hire		$ 200.00
PA Hire		$ 100.00
Hall Decoration	(pay for flowers? Hire tableclothes)	$ 100.00
TOTAL		$4,980.00

Income:

Entry Fees to attend evening - 60 people @ $10.00	$ 600.00
Funding required	$4,380.00

Depending on a few things this could end up being less, some costs may actually be cheaper.

Appendix 4

Promotional Products

To further promote and advance the philosopy of rural communities working together we have had some 'tea-shirts' printed with the slogan "driving the rural conspiracy".

The word conspiracy originated from a Sher and Sher quote.

"There is no conspiracy against rural Australia. Ironically, however, what is needed most is a conspiracy in favour of rural Australia.

....to conspire merely means to plot together toward a common goal : literally, to breathe together as one."

We have chosen this slogan because of it's intriguing nature and hope it starts many a conversation.

The tea-shirts come in a range of styles and colours. Prices on request.

Appendix 5

Perpetual Trophy

The Other Awards continue to grow and evolve. In South Gippsland we have included a perpetual trophy which is a 100 cup coffee urn and album. This is awarded to the host community.

The community has use of the urn for its community events, weddings etc. for the next year and can use the album to record the story with photographs and newspaper clippings of events at which the urn is used. Over time this will become a record of the public events in each community during the year they have the urn.