

## Our Club helped build the Wahroonga Park Rotunda



Richard Geddes was very well-known and liked throughout the community; his warmth compassion and general concern for people at all levels of the community is widely recognised. However, in 1999 the very popular Richard Geddes, mayor of Ku-ring-gai, died from a heart attack.

He always spoke about his plans to have a rotunda in Wahroonga Park and it was agreed that a committee be formed to ensure that his dream became a reality as a memorial to the 12 years of his life dedicated to the council.

A Steering Committee was formed and the members were, Bob Howe (chair and friend of Richard Geddes), Gordon Fuller (architect and president of the Wahroonga Chamber of Commerce), Rosalie Geddes

(wife of Richard Geddes), David Dobbin (Mayor of Ku-ring-gai Council), Johanne Tobin (Councillor Wahroonga Ward and Rhonda Bignell (general manager of the Council).

To start the process the Wahroonga Rotary Club donated \$5,000 (Ian Cameron as President) and \$5,000 from The Wahroonga Chamber of Commerce (Gordon Fuller President, and also a member of the Wahroonga Rotary Club). The Ku-ring-gai Council was very supportive and waived Council Fees and helped publicise the fundraising. Other donations were from the public and \$68,000 was raised in just 4 months.

The proposed band rotunda was to be built in the federation style to suit the heritage of the park. It was initially then designed by Geoff Hermon, Gordon Fuller and Michael Spencer. The purpose of the rotunda was to make it a useful facility for the whole community. Therefore, it was built to be of a size that would comfortably accommodate musicians and bands. It was also proposed that an eight metre rotunda would best suit this purpose and not be so large as to dominate the park.

Gordon Fuller worked with Geoff Hermon of the Australian Summer House Company from Dural and built the octagonal Rotunda. Geoff advised that the rotunda's model was what is called the "Castlereagh" which is still made to this day. All timber used was a high grade treated pine. Fastenings and hardware were hot dipped galvanized. Initially Geoff had recommended that the balustrade be made using steel but this was rejected on cost. Interestingly some years later Geoff then had to replace the balustrade with steel as children had vandalized the handrail and other parts of the rotunda. The structure's top, or as it is called a cupola, is made of colorbond.



The rotunda was completed in late 1999 and has become a well-used facility for public concerts, weddings, Australia Day proceedings and meetings. Its setting in Wahroonga Park has been used for a lot of publicity and has stood the test of time.

We feel that Richard Geddes, pictured right, would be more than pleased at the result.

*Photo of Richard Geddes courtesy of the Ku-ring-gai Council.*

*Artwork by Steve McGregor*