

## The Gallery's History

The building operated as a Tourist Information Centre and the Tourist Authority had difficulty in continuing this service and in 1996 our Society was able to occupy the building to be conducted as the Toukley District Art and Tourist Information Centre. The building is the property of Wyong Shire Council and our Society has the management under a delegated authority from Council. It provides for Society meetings, workshops, tutorials, exhibitions, informal paint-ins, library and Tourist Information.

There is a continuous display of member's artwork and finance to cover overheads, running expenses and general maintenance is raised from commission of the sale of artworks. The centre is now open seven days per week 10.00am to 4.00pm. It is staffed entirely by volunteers from the Society without subsidy from Council or Central Coast Tourism. The combination of Art and Tourist Information is a good one and the Centre has done much to promote Tourism in the district.

When we gained the use of the building it was relatively small with a large verandah. Permission to enclose the verandah area was obtained from Council and an application made for a Grant under the Federation Community Project's Program. In the absence of any information on the application for a Federation Grant, a grant of \$50,000 was obtained from Wyong Shire Council for improvements to the Art Centre and we were able to enclose the verandah and create an attractive and functional art centre. Actual construction work was completed in June 1999 and fitting out continuing until October 1999 when the grant was fully expended and before the improvement program could be completed.

In July 1999 advice was received that our application for a Federation Grant had been approved for \$23,210 which we received in October and December 1999. This has allowed the improvements to commence with Council's assistance to be completed in September 2000. A shade structure has also been erected and this compliments the centre visually and provides for outdoor art activities and for recreational use by the community. The Projects Grant has enabled our Centre to be improved so that it provides a very suitable and fitting Community Project to mark the Centenary of Federation. In the words of the Project Officer of the Federation Community Projects "your project is an achievement which will be of lasting significance to the community and one which will ultimately benefit Australians now and in the future".

In August 2007 we commenced further improvements to the gallery by building a workshop area totally funded by our Society with community funds at a cost of \$36,000. After a Development Application was approved by Wyong Shire Council, the work was carried out by the Wesley Mission Work for the Dole organisation. The completion of the workshop cost a total of \$38,000. This work was completed early March 2008. Without the Work for the Dole we would not have been able to achieve this project. The project has added a value of \$80,000 to the Council owned Art Gallery and Information Centre. We have approximately 120 members and this new workshop will be of benefit, not only to our members but the general community in the Wyong Shire.