

Allenville - Turning the Soil

Builder Michael Hartigan onsite at Allenville as published in the Bangalow Heartbeat, May 2008 Like most builders Michael Hartigan is proud of his trade, and even prouder of his workmanship. Having worked in the industry for over 20 years and having built an estimated 25 architect designed homes in the area; you would think that not much could test a man of his abilities. "Obviously I have done my fair share of project management and continue to glean great satisfaction from the start-to-finish process of building," says Michael "however, with this particular job I've had to think outside the square, improvise and in some situations just hope for the best." He is of course talking about the exciting prospect of constructing a purpose built home for quadriplegic Richard Allen and his young family. "When Richard broke his neck playing for rugby for Bangalow, it came as a great shock, not just for his team mates and immediate friends but also for the community at large." Michael, a committee member of the Richard Allen 14 Fund says that he is astonished with the resilience shown by Richard, Kylie and Clover. "In the days that followed the injury, things were really tense, we weren't even sure if Richard would make it." Thankfully Richard has made a good if not full recovery and after being recently released from hospital he has made numerous trips back to Bangalow. "It is amazing to witness just how important Bangalow is to the family," says Michael "it has such a tremendous effect on their psyche and is probably one of the most important ingredients for Richard's health and his families happiness."

What started as a pipe-dream almost twelve-months ago is now tantalisingly close for Michael and the other members of the Fundraising Committee. Through their continual fundraising and generous donations from both the public and private sector, the committee reached a momentous occasion last week with the lodgement of house plans to council. Whilst Michael and the RA 14 fund Committee are happy with the result, they realise that there is still a lot more to achieve. "We're currently in the process of trying to offset much of the material cost, and that's going to take some time - but as a committee, and as a community, we have come a long way."

The Richard Allen 14 Fund is having a soil turning ceremony onsite at 7 Paperbark Place, Clover Hill Estate at 2pm on the 3rd of May. There will be live entertainment plus a BBQ provided by the Bangalow Lions. Everyone is welcome. Come and meet Richie and his family and engage in a community project that will deliver enormous benefits, not just to the Allen family, but also to the whole community. We look forward to seeing you there.