

De Nederlandse Vereniging Neerlandia Ltd.

The proud owners of their own premises, this society has the space and the opportunities to organize a great variety of functions and "do's". In the clubhouse at the corner of Bantry Bay Road and Gratton Crescent, French's Forest, there are dance evenings, bridge-drives, picnics, disco evenings, a klaverjasclub, and many more activities. These are well attended, especially when there is a B.B.Q. or a smorgasbord on.

All the various functions and activities are announced well in advance in the club magazine "Neerlandia News". This club supports no specific charity but gives donations to different institutions such as the Cancer Society and the Society for Disabled Children, just to name a few. One of the highlights each year is the Heritage Day Festival in March, which is run in conjunction with the N.S.W. Heritage Week.

"Neerlandia" originated in the Narrabeen Tent Village (now known as Lakeside Caravan Park) in March 1954. When living in a 'migrant hostel' was already unpleasant for the Dutch, who are so keen on 'gezelligheid', it is not difficult to imagine the persistence or sheer guts needed, for the people in tents to keep up their morale. And they did! A break was essential under these circumstances and therefore it was no wonder that in a short time the club could boast about 180 members. When the tents eventually were folded up, as the people moved into houses, the functions were frequented less by the members. When T.V. became popular, the interest waned to such a degree that the committee began an extensive membership drive.

In close cooperation with the K.L.M., a group-travel division was formed within the club, and soon after, the first groups set out for Holland at a discounted rate. For the purpose of group travel, "The Link" was formed. This was a national body, administered by "Neerlandia", the CDMA, and DASI, necessary for the organization of Group and Charter Flights. Membership rose to approximately 1500 and more than 1200 people visited their relatives and friends in Holland. At the moment, the club has 295 members.

With this great number of members, combined with the number of activities, the first step was set for the building of the clubhouse. In 1970, when group-travel ended, Neerlandia had \$22,000 in the bank. During this time, the club had a soccer team, which later changed into the Warringah Soccer Club and is still going strong. The culmination of all these events was the laying of the foundation stone for the clubhouse in 1977 by the then Consul-General of the Netherlands. As said before, the club donates to various charities and has also received assistance from the Government. This assistance was given in the form of leasing land to build on from the Warringah Shire Council. After final inspection by this council in June 1984, a

Public Hall License was obtained through the Services Department of the Department of Local Government. In that same month, final payment was made to the bank on a loan of \$25,000. If interested in joining this club, please contact the Secretary.