



It's official. Building activity is on the rise, turning Muswellbrook into a ...

Field of dreams

By Dale Hilly

BRICKS and mortar are on the rise in the Muswellbrook Shire.

Last year 135 new dwellings were approved by the Muswellbrook Shire Council, the highest number in the last six years.

Council laid the foundations for a building boom more than a decade ago according to Councillor Malcolm Ogg.

"The first year I was on council, 1999, the first three council meetings there wasn't a single dwelling application," Cr Ogg told the *Muswellbrook Chronicle*.

"The general manager and mayor approached a number of builders in the Hunter Valley who indicated they wouldn't come past Singleton unless they had at least three dwellings on the go at any given time.

"Council decided to invest its own money putting three new houses on land owned by council to stimulate the market.

"There were other subdivisions we were involved with near Highwood Park.

"Effectively we started developing land so developers would come in and start building houses.

"We decided around 2008 there were so many private developers with a number of subdivisions on the go, council didn't need to be involved competing against private developers so we concentrated on the industrial subdivisions.

"The rest is pretty much history."

In the last six years 592 new houses and 126 multi dwellings and dual occupancies were approved.

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Rising building approvals turn town into a field of dreams

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In November 2011 there were 32 development applications approved including 10 new dwellings, a conversion of a Baerami church to a dwelling and also a seniors housing development of 20 two-bedroom

units.

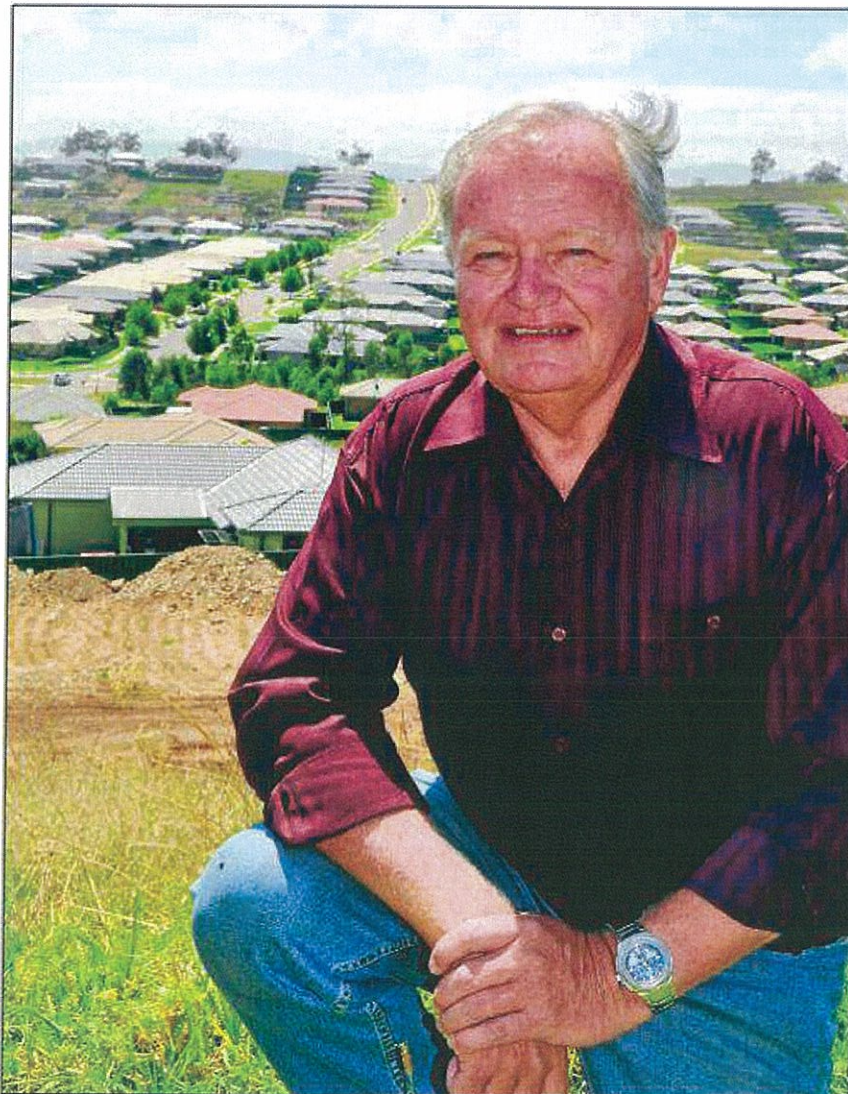
At the last general council meeting in early December approval was given for a preschool in Sowerby Street, a house in Jarrah Place, four houses in Wattle Street on two dual occupan-

cies, and a rural supplies business and veterinary hospital in Sydney Street.

Five units in Martindale Street Denman were also approved.

The decision on a DA for a two storey motel

in Maitland Street, Muswellbrook was deferred to February 2011 while more information on traffic impacts was considered by councillors.



FOUNDATIONS LAYED: Muswellbrook Shire Councillor Malcolm Ogg at Eastbrook Links Estate, just one of the new developments being built in Muswellbrook.