

## **FROM THEN TO NOW**

Late November signalled the end of our formal involvement as community workers with the people of Kingston East. Although in the beginning we had been the initiators and motivators of many of the events in this story, we were no longer central figures. We knew that K.E.N.G and all its associated groups were self-sufficient and would continue in our absence.

Of course the story of Kingston East did not end with our departure. The following year, 1985, we were replaced by another two Social Work students who were able to help with the writing of submissions for funding through Welfare Services and the Commonwealth Employment Programme. After much lobbying, K.E.N.G successfully acquired a block of land from the Logan City Council in June 1985. Unfortunately, the house promised by developers was not made available, and the long, hard slog that Sue foreshadowed in our first meeting has become a reality. The search for suitable building to place on the land continues. Frustration and disappointments have been many, especially when dealing with bureaucracies. The Justice Department managed to "lose" the constitution three times. In September 1985, eleven months after lodging the application, the group finally became the Kingston East Neighbourhood Group Incorporated.

Activity in the community has expanded. There are now two youth groups, and the playgroups have continued; there is a fruit and vegetable co-operative, coffee mornings each fortnight, and K.E.N.G membership has increased. K.E.N.G fundraises by means of the ever-reliable baby shows, craft stalls and lamington drives. Plans are in the final stages for a community newsletter, and for a programme of school holidays activities during each holiday period next year.

K.E.N.G continues to fight Logan City's negative media image by replying to newspaper and television reports with positive examples of initiative and self-help. Members' skills in running meetings and dealing with bureaucracies and their knowledge of possible resources within the welfare sector have all increased. While the difficult first year has taken its toll, at K.E.N.G's first Annual General Meeting people were determined to keep moving forward. Their determination and the Kingston East achievements this far illustrate just how much untapped energy and potential exists in the suburbs of our large cities in Queensland – energy and potential that we release when we work together to improve the lives and meet the needs of people in our communities.