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### OUR NEXT MEETING:

#### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, 29 April  
7.30pm for 8.00pm

#### Guest Speaker:

**Guest Speaker: Pat Reilly, Mayor of Willoughby,** will address the meeting on issues of concern to residents and the session will be open to a Q&A session [see page 5 for further details].

YOU ARE WARMLY INVITED to the Community Centre, The Rampart (down laneway near intersection with The Postern).

## The 2009 Castlecrag Community Fair



*Left: The 'Marion' and 'Walter' puppets look down on patrons listening to a local band at Pam's Cafe during the 2007 Castlecrag Community Fair.*

*Below: Visitors at the Walter Burley Griffin Society stall during the 2007 Castlecrag Community Fair.*

The Progress Association proudly announces that the 2009 Castlecrag Community Fair will be held on Sunday 31 May between 10am and 3pm. The Fair was initiated in May 2000 by the Progress Association to bring together our local residents and the business community to jointly showcase the suburb of Castlecrag to the wider public.

This year's event will be a 'fun day' for young and old alike, with a wide range of stalls run by community organisations and individuals, together with entertainment including an Australian Wildlife Show, school bands and, for the children, a jumping castle, bungee trampoline and face painting. Visitors are also encouraged to enjoy our cafés and restaurants, many of which will provide a special Fair Menu, as well as the extensive wine collection at Castlecrag Cellars.

Simone Selby is again organising our Fair, with able support from Kate Westoby, Jill Newton and John Steel. Simone Selby says: "The stalls will have good quality goods for sale, including with the products of local artists, toy-makers, etc; there will also be community stalls selling cakes, indigenous plants and similar products, and promoting the natural and built heritage of Castlecrag."

Although most stalls have been taken,



any further community organisations, businesses or individuals wishing to conduct stalls at the Fair should contact Simone on 9405 6040.

The Progress Association will again be holding its Trash & Treasure stall at the Fair, the proceeds of which help meet the operating costs of the Association, including the production and distribution of *The Crag*. If you have suitable items for the Trash & Treasure stall, please contact Kate Westoby on 9958 0215 or 0402 465 522, or Mark Crew on 0412 971 861. We will arrange for pick up and storage prior to the Fair if required.

Four local firms have signed up as major sponsors of the Fair and we invite you to meet them on Page 10. All Castlecrag residents are encouraged to support our local business houses.

**Editors**

## THE CRAG

is the community newsletter of the  
Castlecrag Progress Association Inc.

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Castlecrag NSW 2068

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www.castlecrag.org.au

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info@castlecrag.org.au

Please send all correspondence and  
membership renewals to the above address.

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## Community Bytes

### 'Walter' and 'Marion' take time out for repair

The giant puppets of Marion and Walter Griffin turn 20 this November. They were originally conceived and constructed to perform in a community theatre piece as part of the 'Castlecrag Carnivale', which took place in the grounds of our then beloved public Infants School on the marking of its closure in 1989. Since then the puppets have seen many outings and become cultural heritage icons. As reported in *The Crag* No. 165 (October 2007) the puppets have been selected to represent our suburb in the 'Life in the Australian City' exhibition which opens next year at the National Museum of Australia in Canberra.

Time has taken its toll on the puppets and they are in need of restoration and repair. Three of our community organisations, the Castlecrag Progress Association, the Walter Burley Griffin Society and the Haven Amphitheatre Committee, have taken on joint custody of the puppets and, together with Willoughby City Council, have all contributed \$750 towards their makeover. The puppets will be making a number of cameo appearances before taking up residency at the National Museum next year, including leading the procession at this year's Willoughby City's Spring Parade, so watch this space for details.

**Lindy Batterham**

### Changes at our shops

PM Construct, a leading North Shore residential building company specialising in high-level renovations and new homes,

relocated its office to the complex at 3 The Postern, Castlecrag, in February 2009. The firm has been owned and operated by Paul McLean for over 18 years. As indicated in the article on page 10, PM Construct is a major sponsor of our Community Fair.

Sandberg Schoffel Architects moved their base to the office complex at 3 The Postern in early 2008. SSA is a design practice consisting of the husband and wife team of Michael Sandberg and Sarah Schoffel and a small number of highly dedicated staff. They moved their office to Castlecrag after 13 years in Mosman to be closer to home and school. They too are major sponsors to our Community Fair and further details of the firm and its scope of operations appears on page 10.

Jeff Pharar, the proprietor of Romano's Italian Restaurant, was a major sponsor of the 2007 Castlecrag Community Fair and has again stepped forward to sponsor the 2009 Fair. The restaurant has recently introduced special pasta nights, which have been popular with patrons, each Monday and Tuesday with a range of pasta dishes for only \$10 each.

Shoppers were treated to a party at the Castlecrag Pharmacy on 3 April when Mary Bognar celebrated 25 years of service to our community. Congratulations to Mary and her team. There has also been rumour and innuendo regarding action by The Quadrangle shopping centre management over the serving of 'eat-in food' by Gourmet Source delicatessen. *The Crag* understands that agreement was reached on this matter, but one party has subsequently changed their position. Gourmet Source is also a major sponsor of the 2009 Community Fair.

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### Community Bytes cont...

#### Parking in The Bastion

Residents in The Bastion have expressed concerns about on-street parking and traffic flows in this important street that provides the only access for seven other residential streets. Council's traffic engineers note that, due to the narrow roadway width, vehicles parking on the north-east side of the road reduce it to a single trafficable lane causing considerable congestion in peak periods. Banning parking in The Bastion altogether is considered the best option to improve traffic flow, but is unlikely to be popular with residents. A second option is to create two car parking spaces within constructed parking bays on the nature strip between houses 15 and 17, and a further two between Nos. 11 and 13. Given that the spaces provided would primarily benefit the residences within close proximity of the bays and that the measures would involve a considerable cost to provide a benefit for only a small localised section of the community, the Willoughby Traffic Committee has recommended that the works should only proceed if they are funded jointly by the residents and Council.

**Bob McKillop**

#### Northbridge Playgroup

The Northbridge Playgroup joined in the Australia-wide activities for National Playgroup Week from 22 to 28 March 2009, commencing with a picnic on Sunday 22nd for local families to meet the Playgroup members. The week was devoted to play for the under 5s and their families. The Northbridge Playgroup meets at the Warners Park Centre during school terms on Mondays from 10am-12 noon, and on Wednesdays and Fridays from 9:30-11.30am. Infants at the centre play with lots of toys, try a craft activity, make music, learn songs, dress-up, play with the sand, have story time, enjoy parties twice a year, and play with other children in a safe environment under parental supervision. New members are welcome. For more information about Northbridge Playgroup please contact Michelle Currie on 0424 958 515.

### President's musings

'Together We Grow' has been my exhortation to us all over the last two years. Meanwhile the world economy has swept from irrational exuberance to equally irrational negativity. It is vital for us all to find the positives in our current situation and translate them into local beneficial action.

Like many long-term residents of the Middle Harbour peninsulas, my childhood was steeped in Depression-era values: frugality, neighbourliness, simple pleasures, home-made fun, and exploring the bush valleys with my school-mates. Our families' aims were few: satisfy real needs, not capricious wants; save for the future; borrow only for value-building; and seek enduring relationships, not materialistic pleasures. In short, our credo was Live Simply: make or repair rather than buy; cultivate backyard veggie patches with fresh greens and herbs; entertain one another; join local organisations; shop locally and employ local residents. Perhaps our current economic climate calls us to revisit these values. How fortunate most Castlecrag residents are to be able to pause in our glorious autumn sunshine to reflect and re-evaluate our lifestyles. Here's a recent snapshot: Walking the 400m to catch the community bus down to The Haven's play *Cosi*, we passed two bright-eyed girls walking a neighbour's dog, a proud grandparent pushing a pram, and a young parent pedaling with two small boys following close behind. All said a cheery Hello as they passed. Four different ethnic origins, all Castlecrag residents, all enjoying simple pleasures.

But will such diversity and harmony persist? A key problem for older Castlecrag residents is the difficulty of staying in or near the Crag when the family home is too big for their needs. We need a better mix of large and small housing, with more accommodation

on the level terrain within walking distance of the shops. The recent imbroglio over medium-density possibilities adjacent to the Northbridge Plaza has been instructive. An excellent multi-stage community consultation process led by Northbridge Progress Association (NPA) and Willoughby Council painstakingly developed a Consolidated Framework Plan for discussion. It suggested over 100 new units to a 3-storey limit, a multilevel carpark, and minimal (10%) retail expansion.

Unfortunately the majority of people at the NPA public meeting on 25 February focused on aspects like traffic access, mistook this initial 'mud-map' sketch for a fully-fledged development proposal, and then demanded "no changes" to the Plaza. Ironically most of them were the very people who will want to remain in the area, and might wish for the option of buying into such a development in 5-10 years' time. Please tell us what options would you like available to enable senior residents to stay in this suburb in smaller accommodation - email us at: [info@castlecrag.org.au](mailto:info@castlecrag.org.au)

In this my final contribution to this column, I wish to thank all those who have contributed over my two years as President, most especially my fellow committee-members. Thanks also for the support given more widely to our community by Willoughby City's councillors and officers, especially our current Sailors Bay Ward councillors Adrian Cox and John Hooper, and until recently Mary Johnston and Trevor Morgan, as well as by our State MP Gladys Berejiklian.

My best wishes to the new President and Committee that you will elect on 29 April, and the new Sailors Bay Ward councillor to be elected on 2 May.

**Bruce Wilson**



### Magic Places

This small, delicate and beautiful fungus, *Coprinus disseminatus*, photographed by Peter Moffitt in The Retreat Reserve near The Bulwark, Castlecrag, lives for only a few days.

## Castlecrag Progress Association Inc. Membership Form

### ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION FOR 2009

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## Back to the polls in Sailors Bay Ward

On 8 February 2009 Councillor Trevor Morgan resigned for Willoughby City Council, citing health and family reasons. As a consequence, there is to be a by-election in Sailors Bay Ward to fill the vacant position. This will be on Saturday 2 May, with our local polling booth again being at the Castlecrag Community Centre.

Nominations for the by-election closed on 1 April and we have six candidates standing. Profiles of the candidates provided to *The Crag* are presented below in alphabetical order. All list themselves as 'Independent'. A 'Meet the Candidates' meeting is being hosted by the Northbridge, Castlecrag and South Willoughby Progress Associations on Wednesday 22 April. Details are provided in the Community Notice Board (page 12), and in a flyer that will be distributed with this issue of *The Crag*.

**Gail Giles-Gidney** has been a Castlecrag resident for 13 years and has been active in local bush care groups. She and her husband Jon have two children (aged 15 and 11). As a local resident with school-aged children, Gail argues that she is well placed to give families a voice to defend their community interests in Council. With a background as a project manager with Lend Lease and a business management degree from the University of Technology Sydney, Gail believes she has the skills to get a job done. The key issues of her campaign are:

- Protecting our unique heritage and natural environment, while accommodating the needs of our growing community;
- Protecting our public open space, and ensuring that local recreational groups have equitable access to sporting and training facilities;
- Addressing traffic safety and parking issues, particularly excessive speed around residential and school zones; and
- Supporting appropriate development in terms of location and design, guided by clear and unambiguous rules, including shopping precincts, and seniors accommodation.

Gail invites Castlecrag residents to the campaign launch and afternoon tea on

Saturday 18 April from 3–4pm at Laurelbank on the corner of Penshurst and Laurel Streets in Willoughby. Please RSVP to pam@gailgg.com.au

**Mary Johnston** of Northbridge has previously served as a councillor for Sailors Bay Ward from 1996–2000 and from 2004–2008. No details have been provided.

**John Lightfoot** is a resident of Northbridge and has lived in the area for 16 years. Following 20 years' overseas experience as an Australian Trade Commissioner in Europe Asia and Africa, he established his own business development consultancy ten years ago focussing on small and medium businesses. For eight years he was on the Board of and ultimately Chairman of the NSW Small Business Development Corporation which represents the interests of small business to the State Government. John currently provides advisory services *pro bono* to an organisation providing grant aid to businesses of all sizes that aid the poor in developing countries.

John's particular policy interests for Council are:

- Re-emphasising local shopping and community centres;
- Managing streetscapes to maintain ambience;
- Commuter parking;
- Local street speed limits;
- Sporting facilities;
- Practical climate change work.

**Andrew Duncan McMichan**, a Willoughby resident, has nominated, but no further details are available.

**Tony Mustaca**, a former teacher and Senior Education Officer and now a self-funded retiree, has lived in Chatswood nearly all his life. He was elected to Council in 1995–1999 and again in 2004–2008, serving as Deputy Mayor 1996–1997.

Tony feels qualified to be a candidate for Sailor's Bay Ward as it now incorporates a large portion of the original East Ward that he was elected to represent in 1995. In his

two terms as Councillor, Tony has dedicated himself to the service of the people and he has had a lifelong involvement in community organisations. For instance, he is the former chairman of the Willoughby Zone Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal (1995–1999), chairman of the Mercy College School Council (1996–2003), and founding member / chairman of the Education for Disadvantaged Children Council (1972–1992).

While not initially a supporter of the Civic Place project, Tony acknowledged the people's decision in the referendum and consistently supported the project during his 2004–2008 term on Council. He believes he is the person most capable to provide Council stability and also to maintain vigilance over the Civic Place Project. If elected, Tony's priorities are to:

- Ensure that Council has effective policies to conserve and maintain the environment for future generations;
- Value and preserve our heritage, while supporting appropriate and sensible development;
- Ensure good governance and sound financial management through transparency and accountability;
- Improve facilities and provide credible rates discounts for senior citizens and for young families;
- Ensure that adequate and affordable childcare facilities are available;
- Work with State Government authorities to reduce traffic congestion and pollution through better public transport;
- Replace existing street lighting with efficient and cost-effective solar powered alternatives; and to
- Maintain our playgrounds and sporting facilities and deliver other basic services efficiently.

**Angelo Arthur Rozos** is also a nominated candidate. He stood in Middle Harbour Ward in the 2004 council election and was also a candidate in the State seat of Davidson in the 2003 election.

**Editors**



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## Traffic and parking update

Traffic and parking issues are, it seems, perpetually on the agenda for the residents of Willoughby and the agencies that are responsible for their management. This item provides an update of matters that have arisen at the Willoughby Traffic Committee in February and March 2009, together with comments on relevant issues that have arisen in other forums.

In *The Crag* No. 170 for February, I highlighted the pressure being generated on our residential streets by residents, workers and commuters who use them as private parking lots, generating congestion in narrow streets. In 2009, the Willoughby Traffic Committee has also received submissions from residents in several areas who have been fined for parking on nature strips and subsequently seeking special exemption to park there.

This ban is not some strange regulation created by local councils; Australian Road Rule 197 clearly states that: 'A driver must not stop on a bicycle path, footpath, shared path or dividing strip, or a nature strip adjacent to a length of road in a built-up area' and it is the responsibility of drivers to know and observe the rules. Parking in a driveway across a nature strip constitutes an offence. The rule has been introduced to enhance the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists by maintaining good sight lines. In addition, parking vehicles on nature strips is destructive for the street trees and shrubs that Council has established in our streets. Given the apparent ignorance of the law by many motorists, Willoughby City Council has resolved to conduct an education campaign on this subject and it has approached the RTA for assistance with materials.

In the February article I also alluded to the situation arising from the need for the Willoughby Traffic Committee to respond to individual requests from various parts of the city, which makes it difficult to maintain

an integrated response across a larger area. In short, addressing a traffic congestion or parking problem in a particular street or outside a specific premises is likely to divert the problem elsewhere. With this in mind, Deputy Mayor Barry Thompson gave notice of a motion that:

1. Current arrangements for vehicle parking in public space within the city be reviewed.
2. Further measures be introduced to limit free and/or unrestricted use of the city's streets and carparks by commuters.
3. Measures be considered to more effectively manage any form of continuous, long-term parking on Willoughby's streets.
4. Any net revenue raised by implementation of these strategies be earmarked for increased provision of local public transport.

Cr Thompson stated that he had raised the notice of motion for two reasons. First, the problem of commuter parking has become more widespread around our city so that more councillors are becoming more actively involved in commuter parking issues. Second, he hoped that passage of the Notice of Motion would be timely for the issue's consideration in the 2009/10 Plan of Management.

The General Manager noted a matter of increasing concern for residents is that parking demand from commuters is spreading further into residential streets, which limits opportunities for residents to park outside their homes, may increase traffic volumes and lead to, if not real, then perceived, increases in dangerous on road conditions. He therefore supported the holistic review of the management of parking in the city proposed in the motion. Council unanimously passed the motion at its meeting of 9 March 2009.

**Bob McKillop**

## CPA Annual General Meeting

The Mayor, Pat Reilly, will be guest speaker at the 2009 Annual General Meeting of the Castlecrag Progress Association. Pat will cover the issues currently attracting attention by Council and will then field your questions on subjects of concern to our local community in Castlecrag. This is a great opportunity to engage with our mayor and ward councillors on local issues and to keep abreast with what is happening in our community.

While Pat will conduct the election of Progress Association office bearers for 2009 at the conclusion of his presentation, this will be short and brief. Refreshments will be served prior to the meeting from 7.30pm and there will be a social get together immediately following the meeting. We hope to make this an opportunity to meet people from our local community and to share ideas.

**Bruce Wilson**  
President

## Beware of *Atrax robustus*

Residents should be mindful of unwelcome residents in letter boxes. While removing our neighbours' mail recently, as they were on holidays, I became aware of a very hostile and dangerous lodger: *Atrax robustus* otherwise known as the Sydney funnel-web spider.

After discussions with friends I contacted Royal North Shore Hospital and was immediately directed to the Emergency Department. As instructed, I delivered the specimen (in a glass jar) to the Triage Window of the RNS Emergency Department.

Although the nurse on duty was less than delighted at the new arrival, it seems that major Sydney hospitals are pleased to receive any living funnel web spiders for the production of specific antivenene.

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# The Brave New World: Changes to NSW Planning

**Editor's Note:** Much of the following article was prepared for the February issue of *The Crag*, but space limitations precluded its inclusion. We now present an updated version that incorporates material presented to the Federation of Willoughby Progress Associations meeting on 21 March 2009.

Greg Woodhams, the Director of Environmental Services at Willoughby City Council, made a presentation on 'Changes to the NSW Planning Legislation' to an appreciative audience at the general meeting of the Progress Association on 28 October 2008. He is presenting updated versions to other community groups, including to the Federation of Willoughby Progress Associations on 21 March.

Greg stated that the changes will require a fundamental shift in the way that local government councils in NSW will have to do things, but he does not see any significant changes in outcomes for Willoughby City, although decisions on large developments will be taken away from elected representatives and placed in the hands of three unelected officials sitting on Joint Regional Planning Councils. Greg anticipates the changes will bring about an important alteration in the role of local government councillors, who will move away from direct involvement in development consents and focus more on policy development. The agenda continues to be about how we can do things faster to get more development in NSW. There may be benefits in some areas. For instance, the joint regional planning panels may help avoid future planning disasters like Catherine Hill Bay.

A last minute power included in the legislation was a provision for objectors to lodge an appeal against council decisions to the Planning Panel. This provides a safeguard to avoid future Wollongong Council-like disasters. In addition, the provision to establish Independent Hearing and Assessment Panels (IHAPs) is supported by the Local Government Association and these are seen as a positive innovation, while local government powers to address unauthorised building works have been strengthened. Exempt development is not a significant concern, but 'complying development' changes 'for Mums and Dads' have a number of worrying features. New

limits have also been introduced on what levies Councils can charge relating to new developments and how they can use funds raised in this manner. These now become Community Infrastructure Contributions and their use is more strictly defined.

Although the genesis of the reform package came from Federal Government pressure to reduce regulation, the overall outcome in NSW has been to create a more complicated system with several new bodies to be established. For instance, the new Planning Arbitrators can make decisions on minor complying development (less than \$1 million) in ten days and only the applicant has the right to make an appeal against these decisions. It is anticipated that, in many instances, Arbitrators will not be familiar with local planning policies and procedures.

A core element of the reforms is the idea of defining Complying Development through a series of codes for different types of development in an effort to streamline the planning and approval process. Codes for single-storey and double-storey residential houses came into effect on 28 February 2009 and one for industrial development is expected to be operational later this year. These codes seek to establish standards that can be applied practically across the state, which has created significant challenges for those developing the codes. The initial code developed by the Department of Planning for single-storey houses, for instance, was not workable, so a special panel was established to rewrite the code. The Complying Development codes differ from Willoughby City Council controls in some key areas. For residential houses, there are only four categories of block size, with Council's FSR control on a typical 600m<sup>2</sup> allotment being 270m<sup>2</sup>; while the Complying Development code allows 380m<sup>2</sup>, although this also incorporates the garage.

The first step in the Complying Development approval process is to determine whether the site is eligible. In Willoughby City, at least half the land is exempt—the criteria being Conservation Areas and heritage sites; foreshore scenic protection areas; bushfire affected areas; and flood prone areas. Council has prepared a large map showing all the exempt areas to assist applicants determine if their land is eligible. The areas most

affected by the new processes will be the industrial areas, and north and south Willoughby for complying residential development. In Castlecrag; only a small area of the avenues is not exempt.

If a development is complying the process can be handled by either Council or a private certifier. Applicants are responsible for assessing whether the site is eligible for complying development and that the design complies with the code. There is no stop-the-clock provision; if something is missing from the complete checklist in the application, it is an automatic refusal. Currently, a developer will also need TPO approval before removal of a tree on the site. The Council or private certifier have 10 days to process and issue a Complying Development Certificate (CDC), which is also the 'construction certificate'. The permissible hours of work have now been incorporated in CDC guidelines (same as normal DAs). Neighbours within 40m of the site need to be notified with a courtesy letter that a CDC has been issued. A CDC is valid for 5 years, which is expected to create problems for Councils being rung up by irate neighbours when the house next door is demolished some years after a CDC was issued. Over time the character of streets where Complying Codes apply is expected to change.

Greg concluded both presentations by noting that the Planning Institute and other professional bodies have argued that the Environmental Planning Act (EPA) is obsolete and requires basic reform. The planning reforms have been undertaken without any basic review of the EPA, and have focused narrowly on processes rather than the wider strategic principles.

Some of the issues to emerge from the question and answer session at Castlecrag in October are also covered below:

*Can you explain more about the Heritage Act?* It looks like there will be a review of the Heritage Act in the next year or so. There are no proposals to change heritage conservation areas in Willoughby, although Council is looking at exempt development in Conservation Areas. In the Griffin Conservation Area the key issue is the overall landscape, so things are much more complex there.

*Why hasn't Council been more proactive in relaxing controls in Conservation Areas?*

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## Brave New World cont...

Greg responded that this was because there has not been community support for such changes. There may be some individuals who want relaxation, but the attractiveness of Willoughby City and its life style amenities is seen as an outcome of the planning controls. The primary driver of the planning process is the environment. We may have become mired in process, but in the end, we need to ensure that developments that occur do not negatively impact on the environment.

*What can be done in terms of models to demonstrate what good plans/applications are about?* Greg responded that it would be helpful to demonstrate good design models, but not to get involved in process details. A danger is that such efforts may try and set a 'one size fits all' type of model that cannot be applied to the special settings of many localities in Willoughby.

*What issues need to be addressed in the new Environmental Planning Act?* Greg responded that a new EPA for NSW needs to be updated to reflect the strategic principles that underlie the Act. Frank Sartor had made some progress in getting other states and territories to move towards a national approach to reforming the legislation, but recent political changes may have set this process back. A fundamental principle is community control of local planning and it would be useful for those making submissions to the NSW Upper House inquiry to highlight this.

Cr Adrian Cox addressed the meeting. He stated that the most difficult challenge faced by councillors is negotiating through conflicts that emerge between residents over development proposals. His view is that Willoughby City Council has generally been good in assessing DAs in terms of the time taken, but implementation of the planning reforms during 2009 will bring many challenges. Adrian thanked the Castlecrag community for its proactive approach in dealing with planning and development issues.

Peter Moffitt summed up the evening by stating that the community recognises that Castlecrag is a special place and their concern is to conserve these special features. Greg Woodhams indicated that Council plans to develop guidelines for new residents to help them work within the planning controls and preserve the special features of the suburb.

**Bob McKillop**

## Northbridge Plaza expansion shelved

Willoughby City Council unanimously voted to discontinue work on the Masterplan for the redevelopment of Northbridge Plaza and the Council car park on 23 March 2009. This turnaround came after AMP Capital Shopping Centres (AMPCSC), managing agents for the owners, decided to shelve its expansion project after concluding that "it fails to generate a financial return for a number of reasons".

The Masterplan work had taken 18 months of detailed work by Council officers, AMPCSC and the community representatives, with inputs from several firms of consultants. All the work was funded by the Plaza owner through its manager, AMPCSC.

Council agreed that the technical and legal work to date should be incorporated into a reference document to be considered should circumstances change in the future. In the meantime, Council will continue to work with AMPCSC to investigate how the Council car park can be better managed and improved. Council officers will also report on upgrading Harden Park and improving the connectivity between the Plaza and Northbridge Town Centre for pedestrians.

The withdrawal by AMPCSC followed a public meeting at Northbridge on 25 February attended by 107 people at which the joint Council, AMPCSC and community Technical Working Group presented the concept plans prepared by the master planning process to date. The meeting rejected the proposed sketch plans as a basis for proceeding further with the Masterplan for the redevelopment of Northbridge Plaza and the Council car park. In particular, there was strong opposition to the proposal to build residential units on the Council car park land. There was also opposition to the proposal to close access to the shopping centre from Harden Avenue.

A theme of the Northbridge meeting was a deep concern that the public consultation process had failed to adequately communicate the existence and implications of the public's legal rights, particularly the Statutory Trust over the car park land. Without understanding its rights, the community felt it could not properly make judgments about the project.

The Northbridge Plaza Masterplan was also discussed at the March meeting of Northbridge/Castlecrag/Middle Cove Chamber of Commerce. It concluded that "the proponents of the scheme had not adequately briefed the Community and had not been able to demonstrate a positive impact from the proposals". The Chamber also expressed concern that the Masterplan did not adequately assess the potential impact of the development on important existing community facilities, in particular the environs of the Castlecrag shops and the strip shops in Northbridge, including lengths of Strathallen Avenue and Sailors Bay Road.

In a statement given to the Council meeting on 23 March, the Northbridge Progress Association (NPA) President, Peter McNair, thanked Council for the opportunity to participate so closely in the Masterplan process. He noted that NPA's involvement had cost the organisation more than \$29,000. Mr McNair said that NPA had not opposed the redevelopment of the site, but sought a number of important provisos. He said that NPA supported the shelving of the Masterplan, but it was concerned about the inadequacy of information provided to the community and the lack of documentation of the community's opposition to some Masterplan outcomes. Council agreed to include correspondence from NPA in the documentation to be preserved for future reference.

**Malcolm Lye**

## Lookout, wildlife about!



In March 2009, Retreat Reserve lost an echidna to a road accident on The Bulwark, just before 7am

on a weekday morning. Echidnas travel within their territory in the early hours of the morning and late in the afternoon. They are only 25–30cm high and a dark colour with sandy coloured spines. Other wildlife using the roads in Castlecrag includes eastern water dragons, possums, birdlife and snakes.

**Terese Haywood,**  
Retreat Reserve bush carer

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## Castlecrag Local Plant Guide



Above: The cover page of the Castlecrag Local Plant Guide. The final version may have minor changes from the images shown here.

It has been a long and tortuous journey, but the Castlecrag Local Plant Guide is in the final stages of production, with quotes from printers currently being evaluated. They will be available at the Castlecrag Community Fair in May. A copy will be delivered to each household in the suburb, and Willoughby City Council will also be distributing the booklet.

The project was initiated in 2004, when the Castlecrag Progress Association was awarded a \$3000 Enviro-Grant to 'provide advice to residents on indigenous plants for the garden to enhance biodiversity and to reduce water use, in a brochure listing available indigenous plants for Castlecrag' (*The Crag* 151, June 2004). The project has been managed by Kate Westoby and Gay Spies since the outset, with the initial task being to prepare a list of indigenous species during 2005. Examples of similar publications from Mosman Council and the eastern suburbs were reviewed and a decision was made on the style of production that we wished to produce.

A graphic designer, Amanda Lo, was engaged in 2006 to develop the design of the booklet and a number of versions have been prepared for comment, with progress on this front being subject to Amanda's availability due to her tight work schedule. The major constraint, however, has been obtaining good quality photographs of all the species listed. Often what appeared to be an excellent photograph was found to be of inadequate resolution or, in several instances, the team had to wait for nature to produce flowers of a particular species

that could be photographed for the production. Adrienne Kabos was co-opted to the team in 2007 and has brought new impetus and skills to the challenge of finalising the project.

The wait has been well worthwhile. The 20-page DL-sized booklet is a magnificent production. It is an all colour presentation with 94 high-quality images of our native flora. The guide gives a neat summary (on page 3) of the rationale for using indigenous species in your garden. The following pages list five species of large trees, five species of medium-sized trees and 10 species of small trees; and five species of large shrubs (over 3m), 22 species of medium-sized shrubs (1.5–3m), and 10 species of herbs and shrubs (to 1.5m). There are seven species of climbers (for fences) and scramblers (ground cover); five species of tufted plants; four species of indigenous grasses and ground cover plants; and five ferns. Each entry comprises text on the common name, botanical name and a description of the plant, its flowering time and its best growing conditions presented adjacent to a colour photograph of the plant, usually a close-up image of the flower. The guide concludes with advice on how to obtain further information, including visits to display gardens, and how to source indigenous plants.

While the final cost of the production is not known at the time of writing, it is expected to be around twice the amount of Council's Enviro-grant. The Castlecrag Progress Association is meeting the balance.

**Bob McKillop**



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## LETTERS to the Editor

### Glenaeon School development proposals

I am writing in response to the article on Glenaeon School in *The Crag* of the February. As a long standing resident of Willoughby, having lived in Castlecrag for two decades and now in nearby East Willoughby, I wish to offer my perspective regarding the zoning of the land and its long term impact on the future of this site. This perspective is also drawn from my position as Professor in the History of Education at the University of Sydney and my understanding of education and schools within community life.

The land on which Glenaeon primary school currently stands forms part of a long standing resource for the Castlecrag community. The Castlecrag Public School was established in the late 1940s as part of pressure exerted through the local community in a campaign which also brought the Castlecrag Community Centre into being.

It was because the local community had fought so hard for a school for its children through the 1940s that a strong campaign was mounted by the Castlecrag and wider community from the late 1980s to retain the school at a time when the then NSW Minister for Education was determined to close schools on the lower North Shore. After a number of years a compromise was reached which led to the New South Wales Government selling the site in the early 1990s, but on the understanding that the site would still be used for educational purposes.

The recent decision to approve the construction of two large residential dwellings on part of the original school site will have a major impact on the environment of this long standing school site. Indeed it is hard to imagine how school activities for primary school children could not be affected by the size and nature of the new development. This has implications not only for Glenaeon School but for the community generally.

For almost two decades there have been expectations that the site and its educational purpose would not be compromised. This is now seriously in doubt particularly if further large scale development goes ahead. An important area for the Castlecrag community set aside deliberately for educational purposes almost 60 years ago, is now in danger of becoming just another site for development, considering the current zoning of 2B that would allow higher density of the entire site (13 blocks) in a suburb which is mostly protected by Conservation Area and Scenic Protection Area zonings. And this at a time when the school age population in the area is increasing.

These issues of educational heritage are also significant when considering the overall impact on the specific precinct of this area. For across the road are the two heritage listed Griffin houses which pre-date the educational site by many decades but which were part of the early foundations of the Castlecrag community and its children.

Geoffrey Sherington

### Traffic & Parking

I would like to add my support to Bob McKillop's words in his article 'Traffic and Parking in Willoughby' in last month's *CRAG*, especially funding improvements to sustainable forms of travel and improved facilities for pedestrians and bicycles.

I notice with some disappointment that the draft plans for the Northbridge Plaza redevelopment appear not yet to explicitly provide parking spaces for bicycles. And this at a time when bicycle use is on the increase and is strongly supported by Willoughby City Council. Perhaps this development might allow for the parking of, say, 20 bikes in total. I think this would lead to the loss of only about two car parking spaces.

Having just returned from a long cycling trip overseas I have made a New Year resolution to maintain my new found fitness by using my bicycle as often as I can. This will translate into use for local shopping, trips to the gym and visits to nearby friends. Such behaviour is possible for young and old (I am 61). All that is required is the will.

Maggie Scheller writes with concern (also in last month's *CRAG*) about speeding cars along Edinburgh Road. Might I suggest that an increase in bicycle usage in our community will bring greater personal safety, increased health, and sustainability for all. Not to mention a huge saving in the cost of travel if the other benefits are not sufficiently persuasive.

Neil Glick

## Preservatives in Meat – Do you know the whole truth?

When you buy Pet meat/mince at the supermarket are you getting good quality food for your pet? It looks good – brown in colour, smells ok and is vacuum-packed; and there is a minimum guaranteed analysis (crude protein, fat, fibre etc.) on the label...Unfortunately, there is no legislative control over what is incorporated into the pet food, in particular, the preservatives. This is not the case in human food! Don't be fooled by claims on the packaging.

Preservatives that release sulphur dioxide are commonly added to pet meat/mince to diminish odour produced by bacteria, and delay the reduction of myoglobin and hence make the meat appear brown instead of red. These preservatives, contrary to most beliefs, do not prevent spoilage or putrefaction, but only mask the most revealing signs.

Sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) rapidly inactivates Thiamin or Vitamin B1 present normally in meat and meat by-products. In addition, sulphites have been associated with the full range of food intolerance signs in people (headaches, irritable bowel symptoms, behavioural disturbances and skin rashes) and exacerbate asthma. These may be pertinent in our furred friends, particularly cats suffering Feline asthma and dogs with chronic

bronchitis. A level of 400 mg SO<sub>2</sub>/kg food depletes thiamin by 55%.

Thiamine plays an important role in helping the body metabolize carbohydrates and fat to produce energy. It is essential for normal growth and development and helps to maintain proper functioning of the heart, nervous and digestive systems. Thiamine is water-soluble and cannot be stored in the body; however, once absorbed, the vitamin is concentrated in muscle tissue.

In cats, thiamine deficiency presents with signs of dilated pupils, and a "praying sign" in which the cats head and neck 'nose-dive' towards the floor. In dogs, there are more subtle signs of wobbliness, tremors, depression or seizures. In addition, they may vomit or have dramatic weight loss.

Good sources of Thiamine are found naturally in the following foods, each of which contains at least 0.1 mg of the vitamin per 28-100 g (1-3.5 oz): green peas, spinach, liver, beef, pork, navy beans, nuts, pinto beans, bananas, soybeans, goji berries, whole-grains, breads, yeast, the aleurone layer of unpolished rice, and legumes.

Dr David Ward,  
Veterinarian, VETMED Northbridge

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## Meet our Fair sponsors

Four local firms have signed up as major sponsors of the 2009 Castlecrag Community Fair: Gourmet Source delicatessen, Romano's Italian Restaurant, Sandberg Schoffel Architects and the building firm PM Construct. We offer a profile on these proud sponsors below.



The Gourmet Source delicatessen has operated at The Quadrangle since 1995 providing locals with a fine selection of cheeses, antipasto, take-home meals and other food items. Melinda and Chris Sims took over the business in late 2007 and have introduced an expanded range of products, specialising in local boutique delicacies. They feel they have been made very welcome in The Crag and the business has made a significant contribution to the popularity of our shopping village for people from across the Lower North Shore. In appreciation of the strong support they have received in Castlecrag, Melinda and Chris wish to give something back to the community by sponsoring the Community Fair and helping to make it a great day for all. They will be participating in the Fair, with an additional stall in the parking lot during the day's festivities.



Jeff Pharar and his team at Romano's Restaurant are again major sponsors of our Fair. The restaurant offered an enticing range of specialist food from a stall outside the premises at the 2007 Community Fair and Jeff advises that they will be preparing special treats again this year.



Sandberg Schoffel Architects is a small design practice consisting of the husband and wife team of Michael Sandberg and Sarah Schoffel and a small number of highly dedicated staff. The firm has undertaken residential projects both in Sydney and rural NSW extending from the snow fields to the beaches of the north coast. The principals gain pleasure from working closely with their clients to create exciting, beautiful and sustainable environments.

Their focus is on residential projects, producing architecture which is finely crafted, creating light filled sculptural forms, detailed down to the smallest connections, all with clarity of purpose in the way spaces are composed. Their aim is to distill the essential characters from the



PM Construct is a leading North Shore residential building company which specialises in high-level renovations and new homes. Owned and operated for over 18 years by Paul McLean, PM Construct has completed a number of outstanding projects in the local area since 2002.

If you are considering renovating your property or building a new home please contact their office conveniently located at Unit 5/3 The Postern, Castlecrag. Paul will be happy to meet you and discuss your requirements. Paul and his team are proud supporters of the 2009 Castlecrag Fair. Visit the PM Construct website at [www.pmconstruct.com.au](http://www.pmconstruct.com.au) to view some of their work or phone 9967 4559.

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR SPONSORS AND SHOP LOCALLY



## Cosi at The Haven

Raw-EM's production of Louis Nowra's modern Australian play *Cosi* performed at the Haven Amphitheatre in early March attracted enthusiastic audiences.

Based around the staging of Mozart's 1790 opera buffa, *Cosi fan Tutte*, set in a mental hospital as a therapy for the patients, Raw-EM's young actors gave strong performances.

The opera's title is often misogynously translated as "All women behave like this", but I prefer the wider version: "All people act like this". Thus the modern Australian version becomes a metaphor for aspects of the lives of members of the audiences. Librettist da Ponte and Mozart would have

applauded Raw-EM's success in presenting a simple comedy which comments profoundly, movingly and naturally on human life and manners little changed over two centuries.

The Haven Amphitheatre Committee is looking (read desperate!) for people with a light rigid (LR) driver's licence to volunteer to drive the Haven shuttle bus. The bus is operated as a community service to keep patrons from driving and parking on our narrow roads and is integral to the workings of our unique community theatre.

If you can help, please introduce yourself through [info@thehaven.biz](mailto:info@thehaven.biz) or phone 9958 2127.

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## Council News

### Council acclaimed for its ecological burning initiative

Willoughby City Council's ecological burning programme in its bushland areas is one of 43 Australasian projects that have been 'Highly Commended' by the Global Restoration Network, sponsored by the Society for Ecological Restoration International.

The search for the top ecological restoration projects in Australia and New Zealand was launched by the EMR journal in 2008 to provide a snapshot of the best projects being carried out in the two countries and to stimulate further interest in restoration. The Willoughby project narrowly missed out on being nominated in the top 25 Australasian projects due to the limited scientific data available on ecological burns in the area at this early stage. You can download the full report on the restoration project that formed the basis of the assessment on Council's website at: [www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/Burn-Procedure.html](http://www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/Burn-Procedure.html)

Council's Bushfire Officer, Karl McKillop, made a detailed presentation to the WEPA annual general meeting on 17 March outlining Council's restoration of the city's bushland ecosystems through the reintroduction of appropriate fire regimes. Following an outline of the strategy and processes followed by the Fire Hazard Reduction Team, Karl described a case study of the ecological burn in Explosives Reserve in Castle Cove and the post-fire regeneration there.

You will also find valuable material on the Council website on bushfire prone land and properties, a fire and burn history map, the ecological impacts of fire, and advice of what to do if there is a bushfire. If you check the 'Your Street' link on the home page

and select 'Current Works' you will find details of all scheduled Council works that may affect individual streets (listed by street name), including forthcoming ecological burns and other bushland management works.

### Editors

### Electronic waste collection

Willoughby City Council is conducting another free e-waste event on Saturday 18 April. Residents may deliver items at Bicentennial Reserve lower car park, off Small Street, Willoughby (near Willoughby Leisure Centre). Proof of residence is required.

Acceptable items include computers, monitors, televisions, printers, scanners, video players and more, and should be presented either loosely or in a cardboard box. Plastic packaging such as styrofoam and plastic bags will not be accepted. There is a limit of three (3) televisions and three (3) computer units per household. Large printers or photocopiers will not be accepted. For more information phone Council's Help & Service Centre on 9777 1000.

Council has a zero waste to landfill policy and is actively looking for ways to reduce waste to landfill. Currently, all computer equipment collected in the Council clean-up collection service is sent to landfill. All computer equipment contains highly toxic materials, like lead and cadmium that can over time leach out and cause problems in landfills. It is also a waste of resources as materials, like glass, metal, copper and plastics found in this material can be recovered and recycled.

Computer e-waste will be transported to PGM Refiners recycling facility in Minto. PGM Refiners are able to recycle more than 95 per cent of computer waste. They pull each computer apart and sort out the parts into groups of materials such as plastics, metals and glass. Some computer plastics are melted down and granulated to be used again. The majority of the computer is recycled in Australia but some parts of the computer, including batteries and monitor glass, are shipped overseas for recycling.

### Fridge Buyback programme

Local residents have taken up the Fridge Buyback offer eagerly and Willoughby is

now ranked second out of 38 Sydney councils participating in the program. This outstanding result indicates that Willoughby residents have taken the opportunity to save money and help the environment.

Fridge Buyback is an energy efficiency program supported by the NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change. The program aims to collect, degas and recycle more than 19,000 working fridges from metropolitan Sydney over the next three years saving more than \$24 million in electricity costs and 150,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases.

Participating households will save an average of \$190 per year in electricity bills and eight tonnes of greenhouse gases, as older fridges use up to three times as much energy as new fridges. A total of 278 old but working second fridges have been collected from Willoughby residents since the commencement of the program in 2006, collectively saving an estimated 2,359 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions and approximately \$391,000 in electricity bills.

To qualify for the Fridge Buyback offer, second fridges must be at least 10 years old, 250 litres or larger and in working order. Residents who are thinking of ways to save energy can have their fridge collected by professional removalists and if less than six stairs are involved in the move fridge owners will be rewarded with \$35.

Residents can arrange for a collection online at [www.fridgebuyback.com.au](http://www.fridgebuyback.com.au) or by calling the Fridge Buyback hotline on 1800 708 401 during business hours.

**Rebecca Hill**

### Recycling batteries and fluorescent tubes

Batteries and compact fluorescent tubes are not acceptable in your recycling bin, and pose a threat to the environment if they go to landfill, which is where they will end up if placed in your garbage bin. Willoughby City Council now provides an opportunity to recycle them. These items can be left in the marked containers opposite the lifts on Level 4 of the Council Chambers at 31 Victor Street, Chatswood. Mobile phones may also be deposited there.



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## Community Notice Board

### Community Organisations

#### Castlecrag Progress Association:

*'Representing the Castlecrag Community'*

**Annual General Meeting:** Wednesday, 29 April from 7.30pm at the Castlecrag Community Centre, with the Mayor, Pat Reilly, as guest speaker on issues facing Willoughby City, with a Q&A session (see page 5). [info@castlecrag.org.au](mailto:info@castlecrag.org.au)

**Castlecrag Community Fair:** Sunday 31 May at the Castlecrag shops and car park. It only happens once every two years, so make the most of this opportunity for a great day out for the family, with special attractions for children and engaging activities and leisure for the more mature.

**Castlecrag Conservation Society:** The next meeting, to be held on Thursday 28 May at 8pm at the Castlecrag Community Centre, will be a continuation of 'Celebration of Conservation in Castlecrag' series where attendees are encouraged to contribute recollections of the early years of the Conservation Group of the Progress Association. This meeting will focus on recollections of the campaign to stop the Warringah Freeway through Castlecrag so 'dig up your memories' of this major issue at the time and ... come along! Harold Spies 9958 8569.

**Walter Burley Griffin Society:** 'Castlecrag under the Southern Cross': a guided tour through some of the community reserves and walkways, past some Walter Burley Griffin-designed houses to the Haven Amphitheatre, where Professor James Weirick will speak on the Griffins and the play 'Mirabooka' written for Castlecrag. At 1.00pm and 2.15pm, Sunday 3 May – \$25 non-members, \$20 members. Bookings essential via [info@griffinsociety.org](mailto:info@griffinsociety.org)

**Willoughby Environmental Protection Association (WEPA):** Tuesday 19 May, general meeting at Artarmon Library, Elizabeth Street, at 8pm with guest speaker Shauna Chadlowe on the 'Australian Wildlife Conservancy' (to be confirmed). Information: Gay Spies 9958 8569.

**CragSitters:** This local community group provides contact with available babysitters in the area, see: [cragitters@yahoo.com.au](mailto:cragitters@yahoo.com.au)

### Other Events / Notices

**Willoughby District Historical Society Inc:** 'Australiana Exhibition', a special Heritage Festival event featuring Australiana themes used decoratively. The Exhibition, at the museum, Boronia, 58 Johnson Street Chatswood, is open on Sundays 5 & 19 April, 1.30–4pm; and Thursday 16 April, 10am–4pm: entry by gold coin donation. For further information phone 9419 7354 or 4194 5851.

**Aboriginal Heritage Office:** Open Day, Thursday 16 April, 10am–12 noon. Take a journey of discovery through the new Aboriginal Education Centre at Unit 39, 137–145 Sailors Bay Road, Northbridge. For further information phone 9949 9882.

**Pub Tales:** Sunday 19 April, 11.30am–5pm. This popular Heritage Festival event is back by popular demand! Hear local residents bring Willoughby's history to life with tales of Henry Lawson, sporting legends and TV personalities. Guided bus tour departs from the Dougherty Centre, 7 Victor Street, Chatswood or meet the tour at the Pub. Bookings are essential for the bus tour (Phone 9777 7976) and the timetable is available at [www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au](http://www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au)

**Meet the Candidates:** Wednesday 22 April at 7.30pm, St Marks Hall, Malacoota Rd, Northbridge. Your chance to hear from the candidates standing in the Sailors Bay Ward by-election on 2 May and to ask them questions. Enquiries to Peter McNair at 9958 7670.

**Sydney Opera Society:** Saturday 2 May at 2pm: Victoria Watson on *Dido and Aeneas*. Also 6 June, Moffatt Oxenbould on *Aida*; 4 July, Murray Dahm on *Fidelio*. Venue: the Presbyterian Church Hall, Cnr Laurel and High Streets, Willoughby.

*The Community Notice Board is a service by the Castlecrag Progress Association.  
Please contact [editors@castlecrag.org.au](mailto:editors@castlecrag.org.au) with details of forthcoming events and activities for inclusion.*

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