

THE CRAG

NEWSLETTER OF THE CASTLECRAG PROGRESS ASSOCIATION INC.

No. 112

Seventy three years of community development

January/February 1997

ISSN 0814 - 2054



CPA ACTIVITIES - PRESIDENT'S OVERVIEW

Yet another year in the life of our seventy three year old Progress Association nears completion — a year of considerable achievement, for which thanks are due to the many members and residents who have so ably assisted in that effort.

The Crag makes possible the publication of this article covering some of our activities over the last year. It is delivered six times each year, due to the untiring efforts of its volunteer distributors: Rita and Eric Kaye, Judith Keller, Adrienne Kabos, Diana Jones, Rose Hazlewood, Lisa Sherrington, and Annette, David and Mac Robertson. They have done this task for too many years to count, and I am sure that I speak for every one of you when I place on record our thanks.

My thanks also go to those of our members who were elected last March to shoulder the responsibility of committee work. The diligence and expertise they have brought to this time consuming-task has been considerable and has enabled the smooth running of the management of the Progress Association.

Our constitution was approved in April 1992. Its preparation and safe passage to acceptance by the then members were due in no small measure to the enormous effort made by Eric Kaye and the late Lee Davis. After a lapse of only three years, it was resolved that a review be made of the constitution. The resulting draft constitution was put to our members last November, when a significant number of members did not approve and the motion was lost. The Progress Association records its thanks to Nils Korner, Peter Meares, Ray Neal, Tom Boyce and Gordon Shrubbs for their having confronted and completed the task of review.

For many years we have held only one annual fund raising event, the *Trash and Treasure* stall at the Willoughby Community Festival. The profit we made in 1996 was not as great as in previous years and I feel that consideration should be given to a different type of fund raising this year. Suggestions please!

In January 1996 a Task Force for the historic Foreshore Cottages in Sugarloaf Bay was appointed by Willoughby Council. It comprises 7 councillors, 5 residents of Willoughby and various representatives from recognised bodies, but no representative from the Progress Association, despite our having submitted a request. Over many years we have pursued innumerable avenues to retain these historic items. We approve Willoughby Council's formal adoption of the heritage recommendations made by the consultants, appointed to investigate the status of these maritime based buildings.

The Foreshore Building Lines remain a subject of lively discussion. Many years ago, FBLs were placed on properties in Castlecrag. The thinking behind them is that they protect the natural environment and they are based on the relevant terrain's contour lines, not a specific distance from the nearest water body. In May 1995 Council appointed a consultant to review the FBLs in Willoughby. The consultant was assisted by a Council-appointed committee. That work was completed in February 1996, when the report was presented to Council. It endorsed the community's views which were expressed at the community workshops held in three suburbs. To date this report has not proceeded to public exhibition for comment. Last October Willoughby Council and the Department of Urban Affairs & Planning appealed in the Supreme Court over the earlier decision in the Land & Environment Court, which had ruled against retention of the FBL on Edinburgh Road and Sugarloaf Crescent. That ruling was overturned in favour of retaining the FBLs.

On 2 May 1996, Optus began its aerial cabling in Castlecrag. Immediately our residents turned out to thwart that visual pollution. It is not that the benefits which Optus will bring are unwanted, it is that early 1900s building practices have no place in our society as it marches towards the second millenium. Under Adrienne Kabos' and John Howard's leadership, a fantastic effort was mounted. Every time Optus was turned
(continued page 2)

SEE UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS ON PAGE 5

CASTLECRAG CONSERVATION

an historical perspective

In the 1970s the Castlecrag Progress Association had a Conservation Committee. Later in that decade, a decision was made to establish the committee as a separate entity from the Association, but to still maintain close ties with the parent body. Thus the Castlecrag Conservation Society was born.

The first president and prime mover was Beverley Blacklock, supported by a committee which included Ann Korner, Addie Saltis and Sylvia Taylor. One of the early activities of the new Society was to educate the community on the value of native vegetation and bush regeneration to restore degraded bushland. Beverley, Addie and Sylvia became proficient in bush regeneration technique under the auspices of Joan Bradley, one of the architects of the art of bush regeneration.

The objectives of the Conservation Society in its constitution are:

- To protect, regenerate and promote the living resources of Castlecrag, such as the indigenous species of flora and fauna and other living resources generally
- To protect and promote the non-living resources of Castlecrag, such as historic sites, geological features, views, vistas and other features of landscape significance
- To preserve the Walter Burley Griffin estate
- To liaise with other local, regional state and national conservation bodies and lend support to conservation issues in general that are voted upon and passed at a General Meeting.

With the above objectives in mind, the Society has made major submissions including The Warringah Freeway Corridor, Foreshore Cottages, Bushland Management, Foreshore Building Lines and many minor submissions on issues which had the potential of destroying the natural amenity of Castlecrag. The Society has also supported other conservation organisations on issues such as woodchipping, retention of old growth forests, mining in Kakadu and the latest — development in Hinchinbrook Channel, Queensland.

In the last few years we have seen in Castlecrag the construction of residential mega-mansions out of harmony with the natural environment and, as a consequence, destruction of native trees, shrubs and understorey. This incremental degradation ultimately leads to the overall devaluation of the beauty of Castlecrag.

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Castlecrag is unique in that it enfolds the Walter Burley Griffin Heritage area, but also as a peninsula jutting into Middle Harbour. It is fringed with bushland on private property and public reserves on the foreshores of the Harbour. Due to Griffin's foresight, it is interlaced with small reserves, traffic islands and connecting tracks. This green village makes Castlecrag a place to be fought for so that its unique qualities are not eroded by inappropriate development.

We should all remember that once a bushland area is bulldozed, cleared and built on, that bushland is gone forever.

Harold Spies

CPA President's Overview (continued from page 1)

away from Castlecrag, officers from Willoughby Council, including the Mayor and the General Manager, acted promptly in their support of us, despite the police being called, every time, by Optus. We remain grateful and are proud of the fact that the only conservation or heritage area in Willoughby not desecrated by Optus remains the Griffin Estate. As a watchdog on the situation, we have formed a sub-committee, *Wires Below Ground*, which evokes the initials of Castlecrag's founder, Walter Burley Griffin. Telstra and other carriers are yet to make their presences felt. Be vigilant!

Mobile phones have wide acceptance in Australia and many carriers supply their service. Because carriers are not required to co-locate, Castlecrag stands to have two mobile telephone towers, Vodofone on the *Griffin Centre* and Telstra at the rear of *The Quadrangle*. Both are aesthetically challenging and may present a serious health hazard, especially to those young children at the nearby Castlecrag Kindergarten. Within four hours one Saturday morning last October, 213 Castlecrag residents signed a petition against the Vodofone tower but it was to no avail when presented to Council. Legislation gives a large amount of power to the carriers and councils do not have much manoeuvrability. The Telstra application is before the Environmental Planning Authority. This year there will be de-regulation of the industry and a proliferation of towers could result.

The Progress Association welcomes your participation in its affairs. If you would like to join, an application form is available on the last page of this issue. Castlecrag is justly famous for its community spirit. We hope to see this attribute never fade, while at the same time fighting for ecological sustainability and maintaining social responsibility.

Elizabeth Lander

Willoughby's Environmental Record

Willoughby City Council has introduced a number of initiatives to improve the environment of our city. These are documented in its **1995/96 State of the Environment (SoE) Report** and Council is seeking public comment on the report. The achievements and challenges highlighted in the SoE include:

- Willoughby has emerged as a leader in the area of waste reduction through the introduction of a weekly vegetation collection. The collection of vegetation waste, together with the use of smaller domestic rubbish bins, has enabled Willoughby to achieve a 56% reduction in the amount of garbage going to landfill.
- Extensive bush regeneration activities, based on a Plan of Management for all reserves
- Introduction of an on-site stormwater detention policy and rainwater tank policy
- A local approvals policy which requires 35% of each building site to be set aside for landscaping and natural stormwater absorption
- Challenges include developing baseline data, indicators and monitoring programs for a variety of environmental pollution issues; and tackling air and noise pollution from traffic
- The lack of a comprehensive water quality monitoring program for waterways within the City is another environmental management issue. Of particular urgency is a program to address water quality conditions in Scott's Creek.

State of Environment reports provide an opportunity for community and Council to highlight issues of environmental concern within the City of Willoughby. The Castlecrag Progress Association has prepared a detailed response to the SoE report at Council's invitation. The response is directed toward strengthening the process of integrating issues identified in the SoE into future management plans for appropriate action.

The purpose of the SoE report is to communicate useable information to decision-makers for better management of the environment and to assist in the achievement of ecological sustainable development. The reports symbolise a fundamental shift in the environmental management to be carried out by state agencies, such as the EPA (Environmental Protection Authority), which deal directly with the community when a problem arises. Since the mid-1980s however, environmental management in Australia has moved to a *leading-edge* approach where industry and the community interact directly and, to a large extent, eliminate the Parliament, the Government and the regulator. In NSW, the *Local Government Act 1993* devolved much of the responsibility

for environmental management to local government and its community.

With this shift, the Castlecrag Progress Association has urged Council to encompass the SoE process as not simply a reporting requirement to an external body, but an integral part of Council's Strategic Directions and Management Plan to improve the quality of life in Willoughby City. However, Willoughby and other councils need to build their professional capacity to effectively master this new role.

We feel that effective and user-friendly SoE reports should, in future, provide concise presentations of Council's environment performance targets and achievements against these. In addition, where Council is involved in educational campaigns on particular environment issues, it has an obligation to ensure strict scientific rigour in the identification and analysis of the problem and to present a balanced assessment to the public.

In Castlecrag, we are concerned with managing environmentally sensitive areas — notably foreshore areas, urban bushland reserves, Heritage and Conservation Areas, scenic protection areas and wildlife and habitat corridors.

However, because of their attractiveness, such areas are subject to pressure for larger properties and this expansion is generating pressure on adjacent open space (eg. dumping of waste into reserves and removing trees for expansive water views). The tools available to Council to manage sensitive areas include the Willoughby Local Environmental Plan, Scenic Protection Areas, Foreshore Building Lines and Tree Preservation Orders. Recent experience in our community highlights some opposition to these measures in the name of individual property rights.

This argument lies at the heart of environmental management and protection. The residents of Willoughby are concerned to maintain and protect their quality of life. Water, air and noise pollution from a number of sources, together with attacks on the aesthetic qualities of the environment, threaten our quality of life. The Castlecrag Progress Association response to the SoE report, holds that we can only achieve this through policies and programs based on the fundamental premises of environment management, *namely*:

- Environment is public property
- Wastes from water, land, air and noise discharges are not a right, but a privilege for the discharger

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OVERHEAD CABLING UPDATE

Cables Down Under is the umbrella lobby group representing at least 23 Sydney area groups formed during the great Optus overhead cable invasion of 1996. We publish an update on the situation as it now stands.

The Federal Government has drafted some amendments to the telecommunications code which are considered a farce by *Cables Down Under*. On the 3 December last it was announced by Senator Alston, Minister for Communications, that under amendments to the Telecommunications Code, carriers would have to:

- use grey overhead cables instead of black
- put cables underground at major intersections
- install cables 3.5 metres above ground level.

While this appeared to be some concession to traffic safety and urban aesthetics, in reality the new code now states that:

- the grey cables only apply to the coaxial cable in the street, which means all connections, including those across a road, will still be black
- cables will go underground at major intersections only where there are 3 or more telecommunications aerial cables existing. This does not take electricity cables into account.

As Optus and Telstra are aerially broadband cabling, there is little possibility of ever seeing 3 telecommunications cables above an intersection, therefore qualifying for undergrounding.

- re 'installing cables 3.5m above driveways except commercial premises':

Furniture removal pantechnicons are nearly 4m high, so this would prevent access to properties, forcing them to park on roads zoned as clearways and other mutually inconvenient places.

The new Code has been amended in that a carrier will underground cable where the Council obtains *in writing* the acceptance of all the street's residents to pay the difference in undergrounding cable to aerially cabling. The catch is that this must be done in 15 business days from the time the council is notified by the carrier that it will cable a street.

So, in 15 days:

- Council would have to notify all residents in relevant streets, seeking their views to undergrounding cabling
- Council would have to ask the carrier for the costing
- Council would have to seek and obtain the commitment of every resident in the section to pay the difference in cost, in writing.

Cables Down Under considers it very obvious that the Minister takes no notice of community concern and is only intent on allowing the electronic carriers the maximum benefit to complete their rollout.

Willoughby City Council will hold a public meeting of *Cables Down Under* on Saturday 8 March, 1997. For details, see notice of meeting opposite.



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MEETINGS and EVENTS

CASTLECRAG PROGRESS ASSOCIATION GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday 25th February 1997, 8pm
at the Castlecrag Community Centre.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday 18 March 1997, 8pm,
at the Castlecrag Community Centre.

Nominations for CPA Executive and Committee will be called for by the Returning Officer and elections for those positions held.

Guest Speaker, Alfred Bernhard, Bushland Manager, Willoughby City Council.
Light supper will be served.

All CPA members are encouraged to attend. Memberships must be paid up for 1997 to be eligible to vote. To avoid delay at the AGM, members are advised to send their 1997 membership fees to The Treasurer, Castlecrag Progress Association, C/- 6/77 Edinburgh Road, Castlecrag. New members are advised that their memberships must be ratified for two months before being eligible to vote.

WEPA (Willoughby Environmental Protection Society) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday 10 March 1997
Artarmon Library, Elizabeth Street, Artarmon

Guest speaker: Professor Andrew Beattie, Macquarie University, who will give an illustrated talk, 'Willoughby's Biological Wealth'.

CABLES DOWN UNDER

Willoughby City Council Public Meeting
Saturday 8 March 1997 at 10.30am

On the lawn in front of Bailey Hall, Victoria Avenue, Chatswood.

Willoughby City Council has voted to hold a public meeting, to reflect the view of residents who want to see the overhead cables disappear from our city.

This is your last chance to express your concerns regarding the new code which was to come into effect on 1 January 1997.



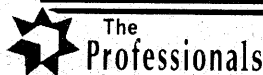
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CLEAN-UP AUSTRALIA DAY

Sunday 2nd March 1997

If you would like to do your bit, there will be adult helpers working from the Leonard Teale Memorial in Rockley Street, down to The Retreat, and also at the Castlehaven shores. They can supervise participating children between 9am and 12mid-day.

If you are a resident of Sugarloaf Bay, you can help clean up the middle reaches of Sugarloaf Creek before the trial of a new gross pollutant trap upstream in Butt Park. Children are most welcome but must be accompanied by a responsible adult. Meet at 9am at 65 Sunnyside Crescent (vacant block). Bags will be supplied. Enquiries, phone 9958 8569.

Wear non-slip walking shoes, a hat and sunscreen and take a drink with you.

Willoughby's Environment Record (cont. from p3)

- Polluters should pay the costs of cleaning up and maintaining the quality of the environment
- The State can revise discharge conditions and prohibit inappropriate discharges
- The public has a right to review conditions under which waste discharges are allowed and pollution prevented
- There must be a method for defining pollution and degradation of biodiversity (and this process should involve the community)
- There need to be standards for a healthy environment to which waste discharges and others having potential environmental impacts can comply using their own initiative; and
- The various elements of environmental management need to be tackled in an integrated manner.

Council's State of Environment Report and the Progress Association's response are available at the Castlecrag Library. Council provides updates on environmental issues under the *Environmental News* section of its Internet Home Page at:

<http://www.sinsw.gov.au/libs/willoughby/envir.htm>

Bob McKillop

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APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP / RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership fee is \$5 per person (\$3 for students and those on a fixed income). Membership is for the calendar year and is renewable from 1 January 1997. Members must be at least 18 years of age.

Name: _____ \$ Signature: _____

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Our Constitution stipulates that a member of the Association must be a natural person who is a resident or ratepayer of the area (designated in Rule 1.3) being over the age of 18 years and has been approved for membership of the Association by the Committee. Two months membership is obligatory for a member to be eligible to vote, but since approval by the Committee usually occurs one month after receipt of application for membership, voting eligibility usually takes three months. The names of the people applying for membership should be supplied with the membership fee. Membership fee is for the calendar year. A person who was a member in 1996 will automatically be eligible to vote in 1997 as soon as the 1997 membership is paid (as long as the 2 or 3 months qualifying period has elapsed). A 'family' cannot be a member because a 'family' is not a real person. If a company owns a property in Castlecrag, then the directors of the company do not qualify for membership of the Association if they live outside Castlecrag.