

## Government land in the abandoned Warringah Transport Corridor for sale

The last issue of *The Crag* described the process whereby a team of consultants has been engaged by the Department of urban Affairs and Planning (DUAP), RTA and Willoughby Council to prepare a planning strategy for the surplus lands of the abandoned Warringah Freeway Corridor. It also remarked on the quite outstanding efforts of our residents in the 1970s to set up an inquiry into the feasibility of the freeway, the *Commission of Inquiry into the Warringah Transport Corridor*, and the recent action of the Progress Association in writing to the Minister for Planning to ask that these sites not be sold and that their management pass in perpetuity to Willoughby Council.

*The Commission of Inquiry into the Warringah Transport Corridor* was set up in September 1978, David Kirby BA LLB appointed as its Commissioner, and his recommendations made in April 1982. Public contribution to the Inquiry was enormous: 841 submissions were received, 6,852 people subscribed to various petitions and many people appeared before him to give evidence. During the course of the inquiry, the Commissioner became acutely aware of the importance of saving the environment of the northern escarpment, and so recommended. (see below)

This surplus land falls into four precincts. **Precinct 1** is two small grassy knolls opposite the Leisure Centre in Small Street, Willoughby; **Precinct 2** is the 3.9 hectare area between Eastern Valley Way and Mowbray and Windsor Roads plus two blocks in Warners Avenue; **Precinct 3** covers the car parking space adjacent to the newsagency, and 3 blocks in Raeburn Avenue. **Precinct 4** relates to various land parcels on the northern escarpment of Edinburgh Road and four blocks facing Seaforth. Almost without exception, development of these lands has not occurred. Although zoned as residential, they have always been regarded as green and open spaces within the public domain. The land in Small Street was once hard upon a stinking, unhealthy open garbage pit; the land between Mowbray Road and Eastern Valley Way is riddled with springs and unstable ground, and includes a creek which exits into Sailors Bay; the land beside the newsagency allows a 'green' welcome to Castlecrag and gives much-needed parking space which allows immediate access to the shops; and the northern escarpment provides significant urban bushland devolving onto Sugarloaf Bay, is part of the area listed on the register of the National Estate and also by the National Trust as Middle Harbour Landscape Conservation Area.

The northern escarpment, as part of an unbroken green corridor which extends from Sugarloaf Point to Bantry Bay and beyond, was recognised by Commissioner Kirby to have such outstanding bushland and scenic values that the freeway and further residential development were rejected (page 342 of the *Commission of Inquiry into the Warringah Transport Corridor*). "But the escarpment does not stand alone" he said, "it stands, along with a series of spectacular bays and headlands, surrounded by the magnificent deep waters of Middle Harbour. The one adds lustre to the other."

His particular recommendation so far as the escarpment is concerned was stated thus: *The Inquiry recommends the preservation of the escarpment as open space:*

- *The management of the escarpment should be entrusted to Willoughby Council*
- *The Council should be given a grant to assist in the administration of the area, being part of the money derived from the sale of properties no longer required*
- *The properties within the escarpment which are still privately owned should be progressively acquired to ensure continuity of the reserve*
- *The open space within the escarpment owned by the department of Main Roads should be transferred to either the Department of Environment and Planning, or the Willoughby Council, as the case may be.*

There are three important state policies which are pertinent to the northern escarpment and the waterway to which it descends. They are:

- **SEPP 19** – Bushland in Urban Areas (launched in Harold Reid Reserve because from it could be observed the splendour of urban foreshore bushland giving onto the unspoilt waterway)
- **SEPP 23** – Sydney and Middle Harbours
- **SEPP 56** – Sydney Harbour and Tributaries.

If you are concerned about the future of these lands in our City of Willoughby and the value they have in our community, do come to voice your opinion at the Community Workshop No.2, to be held at the Council Chambers on Thursday 17 February at 6.30pm.

# The Castlecrag Kindergarten

For many years, small informal kindergartens operated in Castlecrag, functioning in rotation in various private homes. The early years of the war saw a growing population and within a short time, numbers had grown to such an extent that it was decided to build permanent accommodation for the kindergarten children. Although there were fewer than 800 people living in Castlecrag, already a strong community spirit, the legacy of the Griffins and the early residents of the suburb, existed. The demand for kindergarten accommodation gave birth to the idea of a Community Centre which would cater not only for the children but also for the community. In 1943, the Castlecrag and East Willoughby Community Advancement Co-operative Society under the guidance of Frank Duncan was formed to build the Centre. Frank had worked for co-operative societies in England and was a strong advocate of their principles. Griffin's company, the Greater Sydney Development Association (GSDA) was approached to release land from The Keep Reserve off The Rampart, for the Community Centre. An agreement was drawn up providing for the land to be transferred to Willoughby Council, with the administration and use of the land and building controlled by the Co-operative. Edgar Deans, the secretary of the GSDA, an Alderman and later Mayor of Willoughby Council, gave valuable advice and assistance in overseeing this agreement with Council.

Fundraising then began in earnest. Fetes, parties and dances were organised and by 1945 about 680 pounds had been collected. Willoughby Council gave one thousand pounds to the project. Eric Nicholls drew up plans for the Centre, and when transfer of the land was completed in 1946, groups of residents cleared the land and started erecting playground equipment. Residents such as Joyce and Bob Batterham, Rawson and Nancy Deans, Chris and Thora Sorenson, Anne and Ken Thomas, Jimmy and Marjory Mason and Manfred Souhami, gave many hours to this community enterprise. Some of Jimmy's wooden building blocks have stood the test of time and are still in use at the kindergarten.

Post-war building shortages and restrictions caused many delays. The kindergarten operated from a shelter shed while the new building slowly rose beside it. The Centre was officially opened in November 1947 at a cost of 2,540 pounds, a tribute to the hard work and determination of those early residents.

During the kindergarten's formative years its secretary was Anne Thomas. Anne, a science graduate and teacher, had lived in Castlecrag since 1939 and throughout the forties and fifties she organised major fundraising efforts. She was the real activist-founder of the entire project and would take pleasure in knowing that three generations have benefited from her quiet determination in setting our pre-school on such strong and sure foundations.

With the retirement of the kindergarten's first teachers Olive Mason and Naomi Long and due to the need to maintain the kindergarten's high professional standard, it was decided to become affiliated with the Kindergarten Union. Joan Dove was appointed director. She held that position for twenty five years and was much loved and respected by innumerable children. Since her departure the enrolment has changed from forty children attending for five full days to eighty children attending for three and two full days.

The kindergarten is a monument to the drive and community spirit of our previous residents and it continues to provide our pre-school children with that standard of excellence those people envisaged. To enrol your pre-school children, contact the director of the kindergarten on 9958 5393.

**Elizabeth Lander**

**Progress Association Meeting Dates for 2000**  
At Community Centre, corner Rampart and Postern,  
Tuesday 22 February 8pm  
AGM Sunday 26 March 2.30pm  
Tuesday 2 May 8pm  
Tuesday 27 June 8pm  
Tuesday 29 August 8pm  
Tuesday 24 October 8pm

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## President's message

A belated welcome to the new year and new millennium!

In January the Progress Association put out a special one-page issue of *The Crag* to advise residents of the public meeting held on 22 January in connection with the proposed sale of the remaining land in the abandoned Warringah Transport Corridor. At present, this is the dominant issue impacting on Castlecrag. The purpose of the meeting was to inform residents of the present status of the review's study of some 70 'strategic portions of land' remaining in the Corridor, and to this end, the event was most successful.

Some 100 residents attended the meeting and enjoyed the magnificent setting in Harold Reid Reserve on a fine summer morning. Willoughby Council gave assistance in providing photographs and maps of the areas under consideration. These enabled a better examination of the Northern Escarpment from the Reserve's vantage point and a clearer understanding of the recommendations put forward by the consultants for each block of land. The Mayor, Pat Reilly spoke on Council's position and concerns with respect to the Corridor land, and Council officers Greg Woodhams and Alfred Bernhard responded to questions from the audience. As a result of suggestions put forward at the meeting, the Progress Association has written to Council requesting that consideration be given to incorporating an economic analysis into the review. This analysis would look at the long term costs and benefits of retaining, ie not selling, the strategic portions of the land in public ownership, for what are believed to be financial returns of short-term benefit.

Whatever your interest regarding the future use of this land and the impact of this on Castlecrag, you are urged to attend the Community Workshop to be conducted by the consultants scheduled for 6.30pm on Thursday 17 February at the Council Chambers in Chatswood, when the consultants will provide a briefing on their recently revised draft and recommendations for each land portion, and opportunity will be provided for you to ask questions and put your views.

As reported earlier, the Association has been planning for a Community Fair in June this year. Andrew Kirk and Kate Westoby have devised a format in which the community groups will link up with local businesses to make a great day for everyone. If you have any ideas, Andrew and Kate would like to hear from you!

**Bob McKillop**

### The next Progress Association meeting

will be held at

the Community Centre, corner Rampart and Postern,

**on Tuesday 22 February 8pm**

## The Castlecrag Community Fair

Make a diary entry now for **Sunday June 4** 10am-3pm so you don't miss the inaugural Community Fair.

All of our fourteen community groups will link up with local businesses to make a great day for everyone. There will be lots of stalls with goodies for sale, 'specials' at the local shops, great food and wine to sample, interesting displays, music and happenings to delight children of all ages. Castlecrag's older residents will be specially catered for. With so many people pitching in, this will be the first of what will become the major event in the suburb. If you want more information, would like to help out, or have any suggestions, call **Andrew Kirk** on 9967 2327.

More in the next *Crag* newsletter.

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**Friday 17, Saturday 18,  
Friday 24, Saturday 25 March**

Shakespeare's magical romantic comedy will come to life amidst the eucalypts and tree ferns in the **Haven Amphitheatre**. Bring the family for a spellbinding evening of fun and frolics in the Athenian woods.

Teresa Bell directs a seasoned troupe of performers: Luc Anthony, Monica Brian, John Bell, Emma Gillespie, Mark Hadden, Peter Hunt, Alex Shapievesky, Peter Smith, Donald Sword, Karen Starch, Marianne McEwan (costume design), with Castlecrag youngsters Ruby Batterham, Joshua Burgess, Oliver Probert and Ariana Claridge.

Tickets are available 'at the door'. **No parking at the theatre.** Free shuttle bus service to the theatre from Castlecrag shops.

For information call 1902260532  
Ticket prices: \$15 Adults \$12 Concession  
\$10 children

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Kevin Duffy 9967 2362**  
for more information

#### **APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP / RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP**

Membership fee is \$10 per person (\$5 for students and those on a fixed income). Membership is for the calendar year and is renewable from 1 January 2000. Members must be at least 18 years of age.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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. The names of the people applying for membership should be supplied with the membership fee. A person who was a member in 1999 will automatically be eligible to vote in 2000 as soon as year 2000 membership is paid (as long as the 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.