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OUR NEXT MEETING:

GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday, 24 February
7.30pm for 8.00pm

The Goba! Food Crisis: What it means for us

Guest Speaker: Bob McKillop
Rural Scientist and agricultural advisor to developing countries. Bob will discuss the risks and benefits of GM crops. For more on Bob, and Food for Thought, see page 6.

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

Castlecrag Private Hospital 80th Anniversary



Then and now. Left: The original O'Malley house of the 1920s, prior to Griffin's two-storey extension and Eric Nicholls' extension along The Sortie Port. Right: The hospital entrance of today.

Castlecrag Private Hospital has reached the grand age of 80 and local residents, doctors, current and former staff and friends celebrated this milestone with a cocktail party on Tuesday 9 December 2008 in the hospital grounds.

We were delighted to be able to entertain Dr Ron Rivett, the son of the founder of the hospital, Dr Edward Rivett. A highlight of the evening was the arrival at the party of the first baby born at the hospital, a lovely gentleman from Northbridge who surprised us with his presence having seen the article in the *North Shore Times*. It was wonderful to see ex surgeons, anaesthetists and nursing staff including Dr Vic Holland, Dr Dick Stephens and Betty Duesbury and to hear their stories from many years ago. Bruce Wilson from the Progress Association was also a welcome guest.

The hospital began life as a very small community hospital formerly known as 'Cabarisha' (named after a legendary American Indian healer of some four centuries ago) which has grown over the

years and for a long time mothers and babies were the priority, with it being a maternity hospital. However the focus has changed and Castlecrag Private is now concentrating on sports injury surgery, plastic surgery, ear, nose and throat and dental surgery with a specialist medical / palliative care unit. There are 42 beds and 3 operating theatres.

Many well known sportsmen and sportswomen have been treated at the hospital from various sporting fields including top level cricketers, rugby union and rugby league players, Olympic athletes, soccer players and boxers.

Castlecrag Private is known for its warm, friendly and community feel even though it has well and truly moved into the 21st Century. The hospital is now owned by the Ramsay Health Care Group.

We would like to thank the local community for its ongoing support of the hospital.

**Roslyn Adams,
Executive Assistant**



Willoughby District Historical Society NEEDS YOUR PHOTOS!!

The Museum is arranging an exhibition of **AUSTRALIANA** in April 2009 for Heritage Week and needs photos of motifs of **AUSTRALIAN FLORA AND FAUNA** from your home.

We are happy to come and photograph them for you or you can email your photos to marywt@iprimus.com.au. Please contact Paul Storm, Vice President: 9419 7354 or Mary Thom, Secretary: 9419 5851

THE CRAG

is the community newsletter of the Castlecrag Progress Association

PO Box 4259
Castlecrag NSW 2068

web page:
www.castlecrag.org.au

emails to the CPA:
info@castlecrag.org.au

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

COMMITTEE 2007-2008

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- Vice Presidents** Kate Westoby
David Harrop
- Secretary** Jill Newton
- Treasurer** Diana Jones
- Committee** James Fitzpatrick
Elizabeth Lander
Bob McKillop
Howard Rubie
Gay Spies OAM

THE CRAG

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9958 4516

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email: editors@castlecrag.org.au
Letters to the Editor are welcome.

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Community Bytes

Our shops

We welcome two new shops at 122 Edinburgh Road and wish both enterprises every success:

Mattana at Shop 3, a hairdressing salon for men and women of which Alain Mattana is the proprietor. Alain lives nearby, loves Castlecrag and has another salon in Mosman. He came to Australia from Lyon (France) 15 years ago with his Australian wife. Opening hours are 9am-6pm Tuesdays, 9am-8pm Wednesdays to Fridays, 9am-6pm Saturdays. Tel for appointments: 9958 1313.

Serin Cini at Shop 4 which the proprietor Larissa Snowden describes as 'showcasing a personal selection of emotive brands, cherished antiques and hand picked furniture'. Opening hours are 9.30am-5.30pm Mondays to Saturdays; phone number: 9958 0111. Browsing in this most attractive shop is recommended.

Jodie McGregor Flowers: Following their wins as the 2008 *North Shore Times* True Local Florist of the Year and the NSW and ACT Champion of Champions Florist, Jodie McGregor flowers was crowned the Australian Champion of Champions Florist for 2008 at a glittering awards night at Star City in December. Jodie, Stephanie and Adrienne were thrilled with the award and are now busy preparing for Valentine's Day on February 14.

Newsagency: Meanwhile, our long-standing newsagency business at the northern entrance to Castlecrag has closed. This has not come as a surprise, but older residents will view its passing with a degree

of nostalgia. For all those who experienced frustration that the newsagency next to the bus stop did not sell prepaid bus tickets, the good news is that these are now available from the Castlecrag Pharmacy. See Chandler Lane article on page 9.

Clipso Hairdressing at 18/100 Edinburgh Road is now open on Sundays 10am-2pm with staff rostered for duty in rotation. Tel for appointments: 9958 0170.

Eco Boats on Middle Harbour



Eco Boats Australia is a new business specialising in electric boats, based at Northbridge Marina. In an era when the impact of human activity on the environment is of increasing concern, electric boats offer a greener alternative means of enjoying the beautiful waterways of Middle Harbour without adverse environmental impacts. Eco Boats has for sale and hire electric boats that are emission-free, low maintenance and able to cruise all day while costing less than a dollar to recharge. They have the added advantage of being ultra-quiet, making them the perfect boat for a relaxing day of sunset cruising on Middle Harbour with family, friends or business associates. For more information,



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Community Bytes cont...

see the website: www.ecoboats.com.au or phone 9929 8834 to make a reservation or arrange a test drive.

Northbridge-Castlecrag Chamber of Commerce

The Northbridge and Castlecrag Chamber of Commerce was formally launched by the Mayor, Pat Reilly, at the Northbridge Golf Club on 7 October 2008. Gladys Berejiklian, the State Member for Willoughby, was also in attendance. The Chamber is initially focusing on lobbying local government on improving the streetscape and parking access at our local shopping villages, upgrading their amenity through the planting of shade trees and uniform street numbering, and providing business training workshops. Planning has commenced to develop a local business directory and to establish a website. All local businesses in Castlecrag are encouraged to join. Please contact Marko at 9958 6900 or email: marko@northbridgегolfclub.com.au

Sydney Opera Society

The Sydney Opera Society had a well-attended Christmas Party at the Castlecrag Community Centre on Saturday 6 December. It celebrated a successful year in which a full programme of events had been held at the Presbyterian Church Hall in Willoughby; there had been a slow growth in membership and funds had been raised by the Society for the Conservatorium of Music. New members are always welcome and the Society's programme of events is listed in the Community Notice Board. Anyone interested in music is welcome to attend these events.

Nancy Fleming

Children's Holiday Club

The very successful Children's Holiday Club was held again on 6-9 January at St John's Church, East Willoughby under the auspices of the Anglican Parish of East Willoughby (St James, Castlecrag and St Johns, Willoughby). Pastoral Assistant Richard Sercombe was assisted by volunteers from both churches. It is intended to arrange another meeting in the July holidays. Contact: Richard (9958 4377, 0418 291219) for further information.

Richard Sercombe

Community Bytes continues on page 4

President's musings

Making happy days from hard times.

Happy New Year 2009 to all Castlecrag residents and friends. Welcome back from holidays, however short or long they were. For those who stayed on the peninsula, what a variety of weather you shared with many enjoyable things to do around home and friends. For those who went away, didn't it feel good coming back to our beautiful tree-lined roads past summer-sleepy shops, a friendly wave from a familiar face, the warm sunshine and refreshing nor'easter.

Returning from a frozen Europe facing gas and power shortages and worsening economic prospects, I silently thanked Sydney for its 325 days of sunshine and equable climate, and Australia's political and economic stability amidst global uncertainties.

I also reflected on how many Australians have become accustomed to abundance, softened by material comforts and isolated by selfish pursuits. Some have mortgaged their happiness, their existence and their families because they did not know when to stop working, wanting and accumulating material wealth.

With encroaching hard times, there will be increases in job insecurity, poverty, homelessness and even hunger in parts of Australia. Fortunately for our special peninsula, "hardship" will tend to involve cutting back on expectations and non-necessities – not problems in putting sufficient food on the table.

In reassessing basics for an individual's personal happiness, five elements may suffice:

- Earning enough to avoid cold or hunger
- Building our "day jobs" around activities we enjoy

- Forging close relationships and a good social network
- Learning to see negative events in a positive light
- Actively appreciating the good things we share, and being empathetic.

Tougher times are an opportunity for us all to come closer together, re-order our lives, redefine our priorities, and to reconnect with our neighbours and wider community.

How can we reinvigorate qualities like mateship, good neighbourliness and lending a hand to those in need? Let us make a start by keeping an eye out for our neighbours and pause to consider how they might be being adversely affected by recession: from the elderly whose well-earned superannuation or pension is suddenly providing less than planned, to the financially stretched young families.

A cheery "Good Morning" to a passing neighbour is a small investment – with a recession-proof dividend.

All organizations need renewal, and CPA encourages new people and ideas on its Committee. A vacancy currently exists and you are welcome to inquire further at info@castlecrag.org.au. Also I believe that having a new President every two to three years is good for re-energising an association, so I will be stepping aside at the Annual General Meeting in May, pleased with our progress over the last two years, and happy to assist the new President.

And mark your diary now for Tuesday 24th February, 7.30 for 8pm: our first Community Gathering for 2009. Yes, it's free. Just bring a plate and good cheer – for "Together We Grow".

Bruce Wilson

Support OUR Library

The Castlecrag Branch Library, situated off The Rampart at the right-hand end of the Community Centre building, has a tempting display of books recently received and available for borrowing. The library provides a welcoming ambience and caters for children of all ages (with special facilities for toddlers), and young and older adults. Also held are minutes of Council meetings and a large selection of pamphlets and booklets with information on local events and facilities.

Hours: Tuesdays 3.00-4.30pm; Thursdays 2-5pm; Saturdays 9.30am-noon.

Castlecrag Progress Association Inc. Membership Form

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION FOR 2009

I wish to renew / apply for membership for the CPA Inc., and enclose payment of: \$

(\$10 per person, \$5 per student)

If you wish to make a donation, this will be most welcome. I enclose my donation of: \$

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Please post to the Treasurer:

PO Box 4259
 Castlecrag 2068

Queries to:
info@castlecrag.org.au

Community Bytes cont...

Operation Caring Christmas

Thirteen years ago June and Barry Raymond, local residents and parishioners of St James' Anglican Church, had a brainwave of how to extend the spirit of Christmas and founded 'Operation Caring Christmas' for social contact and friendship with those restricted in their activities and 'shut in' through age, infirmity or caring responsibilities. Over the years people of any or no religious beliefs have received visits and small gifts from St James' volunteers. For both visitors and visited it is frequently a wonderful mixture of catching up with old friends and making new ones. Paula Gidley recently took over the reins from the Raymonds; in December 2008 45 households were visited. If you or your neighbours or friends in Castlecrag, Middle Cove or East Willoughby would appreciate a visit in December 2009, please contact Paula Gidley on 9958 0260.

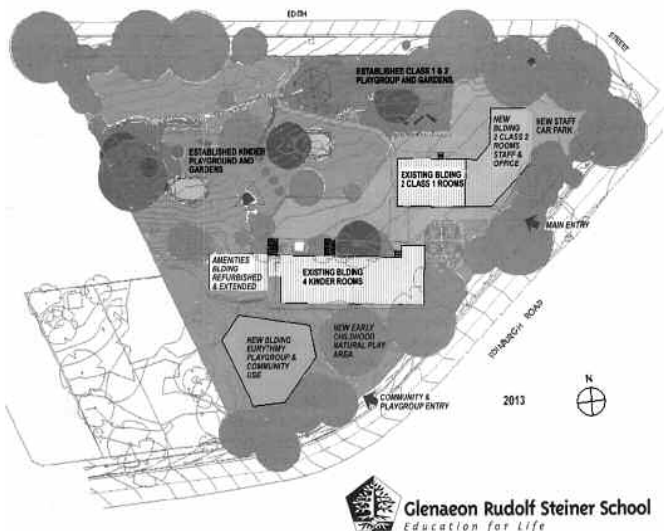
Trish Holdway

Burn-off

In mid November 2008 Willoughby City Council's Fire Hazard Reduction Team completed an ecological burn on a small road island on the corner of The Bastion and The Bulwark, Castlecrag. This site was chosen for an ecological burn because of the many remnant native plant associations present that rely on fire for regeneration (species of *Grevillea*, *Pultenea*, *Banksia*, *Xanthorrhoea*, *Acacia*, and native grasses and canopy trees such as *Angophora*). The team has completed the site's first initial weed, and has observed many native plant seedlings emerging.

Karl McKillop
Bushfire Officer, WCC

Glenaeon School development proposals



redevelopment of current buildings at the Castlecrag campus to house the growing 'early childhood' programme and to enhance facilities available to the school. The accompanying site plan (reproduced here) shows a new building for two Class 2 rooms, staff and office where the present temporary building is located, together with new building for the 'eurythmy playgroup and community use' near the Edinburgh Road corner.

Castlecrag residents may not be aware of the development plans of the Glenaeon Rudolf Steiner School. In August 2008 the School Manager at Glenaeon wrote to 'school neighbours' with a brochure outlining plans and directions for the future. She explained that the School Council had made a series of decisions regarding the school's future covering growth and facilities, finances, management and curriculum.

The attached brochure advised that from 2009 Glenaeon intended to commence double streaming from kindergarten and then progressively to add a second class group at each grade level over the following 12 years. This would require the

The brochure notes that the school 'has existed within a tight financial framework', so in order to put this plan into action the school proposed to sell two residential blocks of land 'surplus to our needs' to raise funds for the development. At a briefing to a small group of immediate neighbours on 15 August, the School Manager advised that the two blocks had already been placed on the market at offers over \$1.2 million each. Their sale was completed on 18 August and a development application by the new owner for two houses is currently being assessed by Willoughby City Council.

Editors

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Land & Environment Court Dismisses Sugarloaf Crescent DA Appeal

In a decision handed down on 2 October 2008 (NSWLEC 1417), the NSW Land & Environment Court upheld Willoughby City Council's refusal of an application for two new attached five-storey six bedroom residences in Sugarloaf Crescent.

Local residents had formed a loose action group jointly representing their concerns to Council and subsequently to the Land and Environment Court. This group commissioned an independent planner to fairly assess the application on their behalf. Members of the group prepared detailed submissions to Council, stating that whilst they supported redevelopment of the site, they were unable to see why such a redevelopment need not comply with Council's planning codes, nor respect its neighbours or its wider context. The Progress Association supported this approach, and also made a submission along similar lines. Council subsequently refused the development application and the applicant appealed to the Land & Environment Court.

After an unsuccessful attempt at mediation, the Court held a site meeting to hear community submissions and to fully assess the application. This was followed by a further two-day hearing in the Court of expert evidence and submissions made on behalf of both parties. The Commissioner, Mr C Brown, immediately handed down his decision on the third morning, rejecting the application resoundingly for various reasons including that the "proposed exceedences of the height requirement in this case are

excessive and create a situation where the bulk and scale of the building creates an overbearing and intimidating presence...". He further added that the building "...would be better treated by stepping up the site."

In his decision Cmr Brown emphasised the need to protect significant trees upon the site and was not persuaded that the proposal was acceptable in terms of overshadowing. He concluded that the proposed development was inconsistent with the identified objectives within the Willoughby Local Environment Plan 1995 and the Willoughby Development Control Plan.

This case, together with other recent cases, demonstrates the strength of our Council's planning documents, and the support they are given by the Court. The decision shows that should a proposal step outside these controls it needs clearly to demonstrate why there is a need to do so, and that any non-compliances with a development standard must demonstrate they have little or no impact on neighbouring properties or the wider community.

We are grateful to Council for so vigorously upholding and defending its planning controls in this and in other recent cases.

Unfortunately the applicant has chosen to resubmit a revised application which seemingly makes little attempt to address most issues raised by the community, our Council and the Court to the first application. This new application is currently being assessed by Council's officers.

Editors

Those Traffic Lights!

In response to a motion by Cr John Hooper an on-site community meeting with council officers was held at the traffic lights on the corner of Edinburgh Road and Eastern Valley Way on 4 December to discuss and witness community concerns regarding a right-hand turn arrow for vehicles exiting Castlecrag. Readers of *The Crag* will be familiar with the ongoing efforts by our community over the past 30 years to have a right-turn arrow added to these lights, only to meet strong opposition from the RTA to the provision of such a facility.

The December meeting was attended by a number of residents from the apartment blocks on the south-western side of Edinburgh Road who expressed concern that the current arrangement with two right-turn lanes into Edinburgh Road for city-bound traffic on Eastern Valley Way made it difficult for them to exit their blocks and they requested this be reduced to one lane. Council officers advised them that such a change would result in a much longer right-turn phase, thereby further reducing the time available for vehicles to exit Castlecrag. It would also generate strong opposition from Northbridge residents who have previously lobbied Council to divert more traffic from Eastern Valley Way to avoid congestion at Northbridge Junction. We understand that the meeting asked Council to write to the RTA requesting a right-turn arrow. The Crag has been advised that Council officers made an informal approach to the RTA on this matter and were advised that there is nothing to stop Council making a further request, but the answer will be the same as previous occasions.

Editors



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Cosi opens at The Haven Amphitheatre



For eight shows only, Louis Nowra's *Cosi* will be presented by RAW-EM Theatre Co at The Haven Amphitheatre, Castlecrag. It builds on RAW-EM's previous years' highly successful productions of *Wind in the Willows* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* which were applauded by reviewers and had audiences either coming back a second time or spreading good 'word of mouth' reports to family and friends. Or in the words of one audience member 'The two productions I have seen of RAW-EM at The Haven have been superb, in production, acting and sheer energy of the cast. What you have done with the staging and almost no props has allowed the imagination to soar'.

Written in 1992, *Cosi* is a modern Australian comedy classic and has become a

standard text for HSC students as well as an AFI award-winning screenplay. It tells the touching and hilarious story of Lewis, a fresh-faced theatre director, in his first job: directing a group of patients at a Melbourne asylum in Mozart's *Cosi fan Tutte*. But no one involved, including ringleader Roy, can sing or speak Italian. Meanwhile, the pressure on Lewis from his university friends to organise Australia's largest Vietnam War protest makes him question where true madness lies: inside or outside the asylum.

Come, bring your friends and enjoy this theatrical masterpiece in your Haven, one of the unique and special features of our suburb, with Saturday matinee, Sunday twilight, Friday and Saturday evening performances for two weekends only! Details on back page.

Lindy Batterham

Keep your moggie indoors from dusk to dawn

The following letter appeared in The Sydney Morning Herald on 13/01/09:

'...responsible cat owners and animal welfare groups place great importance on the protection of wildlife. The Cat Protection society of NSW promotes keeping cats indoors – or if outdoors, in secure enclosures or supervised, and always indoors from dusk to dawn.

'Cats are an important part of our social, not natural, environment. Keeping cats happy and wildlife safe are not mutually exclusive. Sadly, the greatest threats to the environment are people's ignorance and greed. Making a scapegoat of one species will not overcome this.'

Kristina Vesk
Chief Executive

Cat Protection Society of NSW, Newtown

Food for Thought – CPA General Meeting – 24 February

Bob McKillop, a Castlecrag resident since 1976, will make an illustrated presentation to the Progress Association General Meeting on Tuesday 24 February titled 'The Global Food Crisis: what it means to us'. Bob is a rural scientist who has worked in developing countries for the past 46 years, specialising in smallholder farming systems, institutional development and agricultural policy issues.

As several media articles have highlighted over the past year, we now face a global food crisis (GFC) outranking the global financial crisis that has dominated our attention over recent months. The food

version of the GFC has many elements to it, including our water crisis, climate change, the low priority given to agricultural research and the vulnerability of urban populations to the challenges ahead. Bob will use first-hand examples from his field experience to illustrate the critical issue of producing sufficient food to feed the world's population over the coming decades.

Bob is also secretary to the NSW Division on the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science & Technology (AIAST). In this capacity, he was involved in the organisation of two successful AIAST

seminars during 2008: '*Managing Beyond the Panic of Climate Change*' held at Orange on 31 March, and '*GM Crops: Risks and Benefits*' held at Milsions Point on 12 November. Issues arising from these events, particularly the implications of the global food crisis for urban communities, will feature in his talk. We anticipate that the presentation will stimulate a lively discussion on the potential impact of the GFC on our future in the City of Willoughby and what we can do about it.

Editors

The summer itch – FLEAS!!

When a pet is allergic to fleas or has other allergic skin disease, the need to control fleas is critical. The flea allergic dog or cat has a severe, itch-producing reaction. This causes hair loss and can lead to open sores allowing secondary bacterial infection.

When a dog is heavily infested, it is easy to find the fleas. If the numbers are small, it is best to quickly turn your dog over and look on its belly, then look on the back just in front of the tail. 'Flea dirt' or the faecal matter from the flea is also an indication that fleas are present.

A single flea can stay on an animal for up to 100 days producing thousands of eggs. The most important treatment for flea allergy is to get the dog or cat away from all the fleas.

In routine flea control, the secret is to break the life-cycle of the flea at either the adult stage (adulticide) or the egg stage (insect growth regulator or IGR). In allergic animals, both adult and immature stages need to be controlled.

New products for control of immature fleas in the environment appear to be highly effective, long lasting and have very low potential side-effects. IGRs (Lufenuron) are available as a once a month pill (dogs) or six monthly injection (cats only). Adult fleas that feed on the animal treated with Lufenuron produce sterile eggs. The product does not kill fleas. Hence, four to seven months may pass before the flea-free state is reached. In allergic animals, an adulticide (kills adult fleas) will need to be added. Many products are available (Frontline spray, Advantix, Advantage, Capstar).

Complete flea control is invariably difficult. It is important to be vigilant and discuss any issues with your veterinarian. If the itching continues despite intensive flea therapy, other allergic skin diseases need to be investigated at the veterinary surgery.

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Traffic and Parking in Willoughby

There's nothing like a good grumble about traffic congestion or parking issues to occupy our minds here in Willoughby City it seems. A good number of these grumbles eventually make their way to the Willoughby Traffic Committee. This is a technical committee of the Roads & Traffic Authority (RTA) that addresses traffic matters on local roads within the Willoughby LGA. I have served as the representative of the Federation of Willoughby Progress Associations on this committee since the beginning of 2006, so the new year seems a useful time to reflect on the issues that come before it and their implications for our way of life here in Willoughby City.

The RTA has delegated certain powers with regard to traffic matters on local roads to local government councils on the condition that they take into account the recommendations of the Traffic Committee in making decisions affecting local roads. There are four permanent members of our Traffic Committee – representatives of the NSW Police Service, Willoughby City Council and the RTA, as well as the local State Member of Parliament – each of whom has a single vote. Council's vote is held by the Chair of the Meeting, although other council officers attend. In addition to the Federation of Willoughby PAs, other bodies regularly represented are the State Transit Authority and Forest Coach Lines.

Items coming before the Traffic Committee generally originate from council officers, usually as a result of recommendations arising from Local Area Traffic Management (LATM) studies; requests from individual residents, business owners, construction companies, Progress Associations or schools; and requests from other state authorities, such as the State Transit Authority and CityRail.

Apart from one-off requests for road closures and traffic management plans for special events, closures of the North Shore Railway line etc, the great majority of requests coming before the committee fall into three categories:

1. The provision of measures to improve traffic flow or to slow vehicle speeds in residential streets, the latter usually as result of recommendations from a LATM;
2. Requests for parking restrictions or changes, mostly from individual residents seeking restrictions outside their residences or businesses demanding more parking availability in their locality; and
3. Requests to improve pedestrian safety, usually at schools but also in commercial areas.

The committee also deals with requests for changes to bus zones and other special parking provisions (such as taxi ranks and car share spaces), together with the provision of bicycle paths and shared user paths.

Having been involved with the Traffic Committee for three years now, I can offer the assessment that those involved go out of their way to give those making requests a fair hearing and in a large majority of cases a satisfactory decision is reached that addresses the concern raised. In terms of traffic flow and congestion, the requests presented to the committee are primarily concerned with diverting the problem elsewhere. Generally the committee seeks to minimise the overt diversion of problems to others, but the tools available to respond to the multitude of requests by frustrated residents, motorists and business people are limited.

The reality is that too many people now use private cars to move around or through our city and this means of transport takes too much space. While a third of our city space is already devoted to road transport – roads, streets, garages, parking lots, parking stations, show rooms and service centres – the number of cars now exceeds this capacity. Residential streets, originally provided for the movement of vehicles, are increasingly taken up on both sides with private vehicles using them as a parking lot, which is great for slowing traffic, but somewhat frustrating to residents and visitors to these areas.

No government, it seems, has the political will to address the core issue of urban space and traffic management through effective pricing of road use and parking, so council is left to make the most of what it is able to do with its available resources. These include reconfiguring streets to discourage through traffic, introducing parking restrictions (with lots of signs as a consequence), erecting signs to prevent queuing across intersections, and using parking meters and regular patrolling by rangers to book vehicles parked illegally. It's a limited response to a more deep-rooted problem, but for the present, that is all that is available to councils to manage local roads.

Willoughby City Council is encouraging more sustainable modes of travel and the new E-restore levy is, in part, designed to provide additional funding for this. This includes improved facilities for pedestrians and bicycles, as well as better management of traffic flows and illegal parking in our residential streets. I hope to bring you further updates on these issues in future.

Bob McKillop



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Spring Tide: A preview of sea level rise impacts?



Lorraine Cairnes and Mandy Wilson, Willoughby Council's Bushcare Manager, observing the spring tide at the mouth of The Retreat Creek where it runs into Middle Harbour on 12 January 2009.

The NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change invited members of communities along the NSW coast to assist in a volunteer photographic survey of the impact of the king tide on 12 January 2009. This was the highest Spring Tide in daylight this year. 2.1m at Fort Denison was predicted; on the day it was actually 1.96m.

Spring tides are the highest tides occurring each month, around the time of the new and full moon, when the Sun, Moon and Earth form a line. The tidal forces due to the Sun reinforce those of the Moon, and the

tide's range is then maximum: this is called the spring tide, or just springs and is derived not from the season of spring but rather from the verb meaning "to jump" or "to leap up".

The January 2009 spring tide provided an opportunity to observe areas along the coast which are subject to flooding and at risk from erosion and storm damage. It was also an opportunity to raise awareness of the long-term challenges of sea level rise. The Department has presented forecasts of climate change impacts, including the potential for sea levels to rise by 40cm by 2050 and by 90cm by 2100.

The photographic coverage will help the Department to create a statewide snapshot of vulnerable areas, many of which will not have been recorded before. This will help planning for future implications of sea level rise.

DECC apparently had a huge response to its call, and local Bushcare Groups in Castlecrag participated by recording the tide at the mouth of The Retreat Creek where it runs into Middle Harbour. A group of eight observers, mainly from The Oriel and The Retreat Bushcare Groups and joined by Willoughby Council's Bushcare Manager Mandy Wilson, gathered for the event (see photograph).

A few thoughts from the group's discussions and observations:

1. More frequent higher tides will extend the brackish ecosystem further upstream in estuarine creeks, and kill salt-intolerant native plant communities such as ferns.

2. More salt accumulating in the soil might affect some native plants. Existing mature large trees (coachwood etc.) might survive, but the increased salinity of the soil might make it difficult for recruitment of new plants.
3. Some weeds are surviving near the high tide mark now, and might do well in competition with natives in this situation (buffalo grass, asparagus fern, and a few others already seemed to be doing quite well in the spring tide inundation zone). The inundation zone might serve as an establishment area for new weed species.
4. The good news is that some Erhardta weed (Veldt grass) seems to have been killed by the November / December Spring tides and does not seem to be tolerant of salt water.

Lorraine Cairnes
The Retreat Bushcare Group

Beware of the Agapanthus

Gardeners – It is time now to dead-head *Agapanthus* flowers and dispose of the seeds effectively. Unfortunately this attractive plant has become in some places, including Castlecrag, a bushland weed. Recently there have been reports from Victoria, particularly Flinders Island, of invasions into national parks and other bushland, and we clearly do not wish this to happen in our local area.

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LETTER to the Editor

Speeding on Edinburgh Road

A big thank you to the Progress Association for the most interesting meeting on 28 October 2008. I appreciated the opportunity; it was good to hear about issues in our suburb and to get to know some of the people who contribute to our community.

I am writing as a follow-up to the concern I expressed at the meeting regarding speeding vehicles on Edinburgh Road. My husband and I moved to Castlecrag with our 15 months old daughter in April 2008 as we admire the nice architecture of the houses and the green environment here.

We are most concerned, however, with the fact that most drivers in Edinburgh Road do not respect the 50 km/h speed limit. We live beside the Montessori Kindergarten and have been shocked at how fast the cars and buses drive in both directions. Because of my concern, I called the police station at Gordon and was informed that regular patrols are performed in Edinburgh Road and it did not appear to the police that the cars were driving too fast. This is contrary to the experience of many of my neighbours who have been concerned for some time now about speeding vehicles.

Around early September a serious accident happened opposite our house on a Sunday evening around 10 pm. A young P-plate driver was not able to handle the slight turn in front of the Montessori Kindergarten and drove into the wall of a house. The driver suffered a shock and he damaged his car and the owner's parked car completely. It was pure luck that he did not suffer from serious injuries. It was only minutes

after the accident that he admitted to driving at 80 km/h.

On 27 October 2008 Willoughby Council erected a speed measuring device just in front of our house. In a short period (about 5 minutes) I observed at least five cars driving past at speeds of 60-70km/h. During the CPA general meeting in October I was told that this problem has existed for about 30 years and the community had made many attempts to address it. I was distressed to learn that Council had established a Local Area Traffic Management Plan in the 1990s and funds were approved to construct traffic calming devices in 2003-2004, but this work was cancelled because some residents opposed this measure.

This is most unfortunate as we now have a lot of young children living on Edinburgh Road and their parents fear for their safety due to speeding traffic. The problem is particularly serious in the vicinity of the Montessori Kindergarten. In particular, an elderly resident who lives near the bend in the road here and uses a walker finds it too dangerous to cross the road near her place and has to make a detour before she feels safe crossing the street. I am therefore writing to *The Crag* to express my concern and to seek responses from others who wish to address the problem of speeding on Edinburgh Road. Hopefully we should not have to await a serious accident before something is done about this.

Maggie Scheller
Edinburgh Road

Chandler Lane

Many residents of Castlecrag remember the Chandler family and the various services they provided our community. The newly erected sign 'Chandler Lane' on the lane behind the northern side of Edinburgh Road commemorates their contribution to Castlecrag.

Mr and Mrs Chandler senior, who came here in approximately 1942, first leased the shop occupied now by Brenda Harrison as a general store with banking and postal services.

After the war they joined their son Doug in his newly opened newsagency, bringing with them the postal and banking sections of their business. When his parents retired Doug and his wife Elva continued with the newsagency; after his retirement his daughter Vanessa and her husband John Francis took over the business.

Since then the newsagency has passed through other hands, the postal service has been upgraded to a post office and the banking service was upgraded to the lately lamented Castlecrag Branch of the Commonwealth Bank.

One of Doug's brothers, Cecil, and his wife Doreen lived in Eastern Valley Way and provided the local hire car service through the fifties and sixties. In the days before two and three car families became common, every day Cecil collected and delivered a bulging car-load of pre-schoolers to the kindergarten. This was a service much appreciated and relied on by many mothers.

Elizabeth Lander

R&W Northbridge Castlecrag

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Council News

Civic Place Excavation Almost Complete

Excavation works of the Civic Place site by builders A W Edwards are progressing ahead of schedule. By mid January the following had been achieved:

- bulk excavation at 95%
- detailed excavation for foundations and in-ground services at 75%
- concrete at Basement 2 roughly 55%
- Basement 1 formwork at approximately 40%
- Second crane erected

The first pour of Basement 1 was due by the end of January.

Linda Cardew
Project Director

Changes to CouncilCab

From 1 December 2008 the following changes have been advised:

- Bookings should be made directly to Willoughby City Council, telephone number 9777 1000. The booking process will be unchanged.
- Operation times will change to

10am–3.30pm on Mondays to Fridays,
9am–4pm on Saturdays.

- Rate will increase to \$5 per passenger per trip.

Inquiries: 9777 1000.

Call for Community Representatives

Council has called for community representatives on the following committees:

- Natural Heritage and Bushland Advisory Committee
- Griffin Reserves Advisory Group

The aim of these Committees is to advise Council on the preservation of natural heritage in the Willoughby City Council area and in the historic Castlecrag area. Membership consists of councillors and independent community members.

Community members with expertise or an interest in, the preservation of the natural heritage of these areas are welcome to nominate. The Natural Heritage and Bushland Advisory Committee meets monthly, while the Griffin Reserves Advisory Group meets every three months.

For further information on Natural Heritage and Bushland Advisory Committee contact Frances Davis on 9777 7732. For further information on the Griffin Reserves Advisory Group contact Karl McKillop 9777 7710.

Recycling

Residents can deliver compact fluorescent lights (CFLs), batteries, mobile phones and corks to Willoughby City Council, Level 4, 31 Victor Street, Chatswood in office hours.

Chatswood Youth Centre

Chatswood Youth Centre, at the corner of Victor Street and Albert Avenue, is a free, safe and supportive environment for young people aged 12–18 years. Experienced youth workers staff the centre which offers table tennis, pool, games consoles, internet access, chess, magazines, information and more.

For a small fee there is also a music room available for hire complete with guitar, bass guitar, drums, keyboard, microphones, PA, and piano.

The centre is open seven days a week: from 2:30–6:00pm Saturday–Thursday, 2:30–9:00pm Friday. For the latest on events and activities at the centre check www.myspace.com/chatswoodyouthservices, email youth@willoughby.nsw.gov.au, or call 9777 7958 during centre hours.

Rebecca Hill
Media and Marketing Group Manager

Willoughby Leisure Centre

More than 50 group fitness classes are available each week at this Centre in Small Street, Willoughby:

- Yoga: 11.30am–12.30pm Thursdays
- Tai Chi: 11.30am–12.30pm Fridays
- Gentle Exercise Class: 11.30am–12.30pm Mondays and 10.30–11.30am Thursdays.

Classes are free to members of the Centre; casual visits cost \$9.90 per class for seniors or 10 passes for \$89, and \$16.75 per class or 10 passes for \$150 for other adults. Inquiries: 9958 5799.

GASBUSTERS HOME ASSESSMENT SERVICE



Willoughby City Council's new Gasbusters team will help your household save energy, money and the environment.

The Gasbusters Home Assessment Service will provide:

- ✓ Tips for reducing your household energy bills.
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Community Notice Board

Community Organisations

Castlecrag Progress Association:

'Representing the Castlecrag Community'

General Meeting: Tuesday 24 February from 7.30pm at the Castlecrag Community Centre, with guest speaker Bob McKillop. Bob's topic will be: 'The Global Food Crisis: what it means to us' in which he will discuss the risks and benefits of GM crops. All welcome.
For further information: info@castlecrag.org.au

Clean Up Australia Day: The Retreat and Castle Haven Reserves have been registered as a Clean-up site for Clean Up Australia Day on Sunday 1 March. Participants are invited to meet at 9.30am at 68 The Bulwark, Castlecrag, bringing gloves and wearing clothes and shoes that can get wet. Information from Terese Hayward on 0425 242 565 or <http://events.cleanup.org.au/?Retreat+and+Castle+Haven+Reserves>

Castlecrag Conservation Society: Lorraine Cairnes with Peter Moffitt will speak at the next meeting on their recent kayaking trip, from Dawson City in Canada, 475 km down the Yukon River to the town of Circle, close to the Arctic Circle. The meeting will be held on Thursday 26 March at 8pm at the Castlecrag Community Centre. All welcome. Information: Harold Spies 9958 8569.

Castlecrag Community Library: *Support our local library.* Opening hours: Tuesday 3–4.30pm; Thursday 2–5pm; Saturday 11am–12noon. Phone: 9958 8991.

CragSitters: A local community group providing families with an opportunity to network and provide contact with available babysitters in the area. Information: cragitters@yahoo.com.au

Other Events / Notices

The Birds of Blue Gum Birdwatch: Local bird expert Andy Burton will lead free this bird watch, aimed for both beginners and experienced bird watchers, on Sunday 15 February 8–11am at Blue Gum Reserve. Participants should meet at Greville Street Park, on the northern side of Fullers Road, Chatswood West, and bring binoculars and a mug for tea. Bookings are essential, from Bush Interpretive Officers on 9777 7755 or email email@willoughby.nsw.gov.au

Pre-Schoolers Park Scrambles: This free fun walk for pre-school children and their carers will be held on Wednesday 18 February 10–11.30am followed by morning tea, games and story time. Meet at Beauchamp Park, cnr Nicholson and Darling Streets, Willoughby North and bring child or children, snack and a mug. Bookings are essential, from Bush Interpretive Officers on 9777 7755 or email email@willoughby.nsw.gov.au

Spotlight on Wildlife: A free activity for families, including children 5 years old and over, takes place at Harold Reid Reserve on Friday 20 February 8.15–9.30pm. Participants should bring a torch to spotlight animals, and meet at the entrance of the Reserve, Rembrandt Drive, Middle Cove. Bookings essential, from Bush Interpretive Officers on 9777 7755 or email email@willoughby.nsw.gov.au

Northbridge Progress Association (NPA):

The next general meeting of the NPA will be held at 8pm on Wednesday 25 February at St Marks Hall, Malacoota Road, Northbridge. **A panel from Council, AMP and NPA will give an update on the Plaza Masterplan project and answer questions. Castlecrag residents are strongly encouraged to attend since a major Plaza expansion would affect Castlecrag shops and traffic.**

Willoughby Symphony Orchestra: Next concert, titled 'Western Voyage', will include Beethoven's Piano Concerto No 3, Op 3 in C minor and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No 4 in F minor. The conductor will be Nicholas Milton, and soloist: Ambre Hammond (piano). The concert on Saturday 21 February at 8pm will be at the Verbruggen Hall, Conservatorium of Music, Macquarie Street, Sydney; a second concert on Sunday 22 February at 3pm will be at the Riverside Theatre, Parramatta. Information on 9777 7547.

ANZANG – Nature Photography Exhibition: This exhibition in the Council Administration Building foyer at Ground level, 31 Victor Street, Chatswood from Tuesday 10–Friday 27 February, is the result of a major photographic competition held in Australasia, the largest nature competition in the region. Hours are 8.30am–5.00pm weekdays. Inquiries: WCC's Bushland Team 9777 7754; more information on: www.anzangnature.com

Sydney Opera Society: This group meets at 2pm at the Presbyterian church all, cnr Laurel and High Streets, Willoughby. There will be a lecture on 7 March by David Garrett on Werther and on 4 April a recital by the Opera Diploma students from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Further information: Shirley Robertson 9605 5851 or Nancy Fleming 9958 3110.

Willoughby Environmental Protection Association (WEPA): The AGM will be on Tuesday 17 March at 8pm at the Artarmon Library, Elizabeth Street, Artarmon. Speaker yet to be decided: see <http://wepa.org.au/> for information.

The Willoughby Symphony Choir: The Choir will give a choral performance of sacred Easter music, including the requiems of Mozart and Duruflé, on Sundays 22 March and 29 March at 5pm at the Zenith Theatre, cnr Railway and McIntosh Streets, Chatswood. The audience is invited to join the Willoughby City Choir and friends for an extended interval to partake of Easter fare. Tickets cost \$22. More Information on 9777 7547.

Willoughby East Anglican Church, activities for young people: 'Break-In' for years 6–9 meets each Friday at 7pm at St John's Church, Warrane Street, East Willoughby; and Kids' Church at St Johns, East Willoughby at 10.30am every Sunday. Enquiries: Richard Sercombe on 0418 291219.

Bushcare Groups:

Willoughby Council provides groups with a professional trainer for each session. A pleasant morning tea in the bushland is an integral part of monthly bushcare work sessions. All welcome.

The Oriel Reserve Group, meets 9am–12 noon 3rd Sunday each month; next dates: 15 February, 15 March; contact Rob Gibson 0409 035614.

The Keep Reserve Group, meets 9am–12.30pm 2nd Sunday each month; next dates: 8 February, 8 March; contact Matthew Keighery 9967 2682.

The Casement Reserve Group, meets 9am–12 noon 3rd Sunday each month; next dates: 15 February, 15 March; contact Sue Burk 9958 4295.

The Retreat Group, meets 9am–12 noon on the 4th Saturday each month; next dates: 28 February, 28 March; contacts Jill Newton 9967 4933 or Lorraine Cairnes 9958 1213.

The Rockley Street Group, meets 9am–12 noon on the 3rd Saturday each month; next dates: 21 February, 21 March; contact Tanya Coates 8907 9204.

The Cheyne Walk Group, meets 9am–12 noon 4th Saturday each month, next dates 21 February, 21 March; contact Frances David 9777 7732.

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