



CASTLECRAG
PROGRESS
ASSOCIATION

THE CRAG

A voice for the community since 1925

ISSN: 0814 2054

No. 218

SEPTEMBER 2024

Northbridge Baths Centenary

Celebrations on 12 October. *Story p4*

National Trust Heritage Award

Glass house in Bulwark gets a gong. *Story p5*



Rainy day gardener at MGP. p14.

We are now, hopefully, reaching the final stages of the approval process of the DA for the redevelopment of the old Quadrangle site at 100 Edinburgh Rd. Our most recent advice is that the DA will go to the Sydney North District Planning Panel for determination on 9 October 2024. Anyone who has made a submission to Council may register to address the Panel and a selection of those who register will be invited to speak.

CPA continues to support the project. In our submission of 1 March 2024, we expressed the view that the approval process for the DA should proceed as fast as possible as the design has much merit and fits within the envelope defined by the new LEP for the site.

There was a total of 408 submissions to Council from CastleCrag residents and other interested parties including CPA. Of these, 18% were strongly supportive of the project and did not raise any concerns

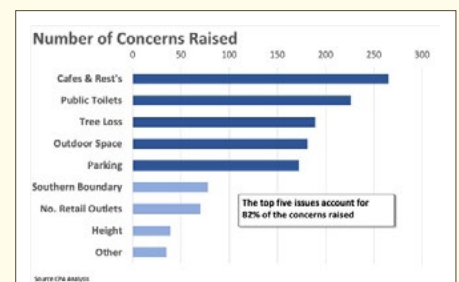
Update on Shopping Centre Saga

other than that the project should proceed as soon as possible. A further 27% were also supportive but did raise concerns from a short list of 8 common issues. The rest of the submissions were either neutral or explicitly opposed but the concerns raised were nearly all from the same list of common issues. Overall, just 5 of these issues accounted for 82% of the total number of concerns raised (see below).

We have reviewed the revised DA documents and have formed the view that the developer has acted in good faith to satisfy these 5 key issues:

- Cafés and restaurants – The drawings show possible usages for the 5 retail spaces on the ground floor as well as the location of kitchen exhaust ducts.
- Public toilets – In the basement, where retail parking is provided, there are 2 male and 2 female toilets, an accessible toilet and a parent's room only a few metres from the retail lifts that lead up to the ground floor.
- Trees – We understand that all the trees along Edinburgh Rd, on Council land, will be protected including the large tree (Tree #1) at the eastern side of the site adjacent to the car ramp. Also, we believe that some new arborist reports indicate that more trees might be saved. Additional trees are to be planted in the space in front of the supermarket.
- Outdoor spaces and furniture – The developer contacted CPA to seek community ideas about the possible use of the public open space in front of the supermarket and retail space. We contacted our members, compiled a rough sketch and forwarded to Greencliff. The developer is working with Council to provide power to outside areas and spaces for functions such as the CastleCrag Fair.

- We don't believe that an absence of details or plans for alfresco dining will prevent cafes or restaurants using the 4m wide area to the North or some of the space to the West, at least as far as the lifts.
- Parking – The parking provided in the DA observes the current parking requirements including the residential quota of 1.25 spaces per 3-bedroom unit.



CPA continues to support the redevelopment of the site at 100 Edinburgh Rd. One recurrent theme, raised by so many of the 400 submissions, is the community's deep desire to have its social hub restored. The residents have waited long enough!

Paul Stokes

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THE CRAG

is the community magazine of the
Castlecrag Progress Association Inc.

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- Vice President** Wendy Radcliffe
- Secretary** Tim Donohoo
- Treasurer** Diana Jones
- Committee** Gay Spies OAM
Wendy Radcliffe
Leon Smith
Tim Donahoo

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We welcome letters and contributions
from residents about local issues.

Send to: editors@castlecrag.org.au

Letters should be concise (preferably less
than 250 words).

Editorial guidelines are on the web page.

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Design and print production

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From the Editor

The August blooms of wattle have faded to brown as we hurtle into September and see and smell Nature's beautiful Spring displays. Who has heard the First Koel? For those new to the suburb, it is a big, black migratory bird that arrives in early September, lays its eggs in others nests, and has an annoying repetitive call that one hears day and night!

This edition is packed with local stories and news. See the historic photos of Northbridge Baths as it gears up for its centenary celebrations. Do you have any old photos of family members or friends at the Baths you could share for the occasion?

Congratulations to Marika and Jamie Perrow for winning this year's National Trust Heritage Award for Built Conservation for their restoration of the Glass House in The Bulwark. It is a unique house and one of Castlecrag's most interesting. It is in the running for more awards this year.

It was disappointing to hear of the presumably unsupervised 'boy's-own adventure' in Tower reserve, which caused considerable damage to the regenerating bushland over a recent weekend. They showed a total disregard for the plants and habitat they pitched their tent and trampled over. I'm sure Marion would have blown the whistle on the boys and instructed them why it's important to nurture nature.

This is my final issue as Editor of *The Crag*. I took it on in 2015 and have produced 27 editions in that time, taking it from an 8-page black and white newsletter to the 16-page colour magazine you hold in your hands today. I've enjoyed the challenge of creating each issue, thinking up stories and deciding what to run with in words and pictures. I'm sure I'll miss it! It's been a demanding (unpaid) job, but very satisfying, and I know people have appreciated my work over the years.

Tim Donahoo, long-time resident and new CPA committee member, has thankfully stepped up to take over the editorship. He has written an article in this issue about Phil the Butcher's expansion of produce. I'll work with Tim on the next issue to show him the ropes, and will still contribute articles from time to time, particularly on my special interest – local history.

Thank you to our wonderful designer Meredith, and the people who have contributed articles over the years, especially the regular contributors – the Mayor, Mary Anne Veliscek, Hilary McDonald, Matt Keighery and Paul Stokes.

And thank you to the CPA for trusting me with your journal, and giving me the creative freedom to produce *The Crag* over the past 9 years.

Lindy Batterham



Bib and Bub turn 100!

The State Library and Nutcote are both celebrating the centenary of May Gibb's comic strip, *Bib and Bub* with special exhibitions, featuring comic strip reproductions, original books and newspapers and items relating to the comics.

May Gibb became Australia's first female cartoonist by producing a weekly comic that followed the adventures of gumnut baby brothers Bib and Bub, first appearing in Sydney's Sunday News on 3 August 1924. Running for 43 years, *Bib and Bub* continues to hold the record for Australia's longest running comic by a single artist.

The predominantly six panelled stories that married Gibb's wit and distinct illustrative style were hand-drawn in her studio at Nutcote. The comics regularly depicted current socio-political matters and often reflected the personal views of Gibb herself.



From the President



The new Committee of the CPA was elected at the AGM on the 19 June this year. It was held at the Willoughby Bowling Club and followed the stepping down of Vice Presidents Paul Stokes and Kate Westoby, Committee member Ruth Kendon, and Crag Editor, Committee member and Cultural Officer Lindy Batterham. The Committee expresses its thanks for their significant investment of time and experience over many years. Paul will be representing us at the Sydney North Planning Panel determination of the Quadrangle redevelopment and Lindy has kindly offered to produce this, her final issue as Editor of *The Crag*.

The new Committee consists of Diana Jones (Treasurer), Gay Spies, Leon Smith and myself, and new members Tim Donahoo and Wendy Radcliffe. I was brought into the CPA Committee, as Environment Officer, when the Castlecrag

Conservation Society, where I was President, was absorbed into the CPA. At our first committee meeting Tim Donahoo was elected Secretary and Crag Editor and Wendy Radcliffe nominated as a Delegate to the Federation of Willoughby Progress Associations and I was elected President.

I was born and raised in Castlecrag into a socially and politically motivated family. Dad represented our community as a councillor (then called Alderman) on a green ticket before there were such things. It was the heady days of the Water Board carving up the bushland reserves to install the sewage system, a greater awareness of the Castlecrag Reserve System and walking trails and the culmination of the campaign to close the Warringah Expressway Corridor that would have decimated the Northern Escarpment, its landscape and bushland.

I trained in horticulture in the early eighties and quickly became enamoured with our local bushland flora. Like many kids, I grew up exploring and discovering the landscape and the wilderness of a place strikingly close to Sydney's CBD. With the awareness granted me by my studies I become dedicated to defending our great natural asset.

My wife and I raised three children here and have always been involved in community life. I was a Scout Leader with



General Meeting June 24 / photo: James Cryer

Northbridge Scouts for thirty years, having a leadership role in all three sections, Cubs, Scouts and Venturers and served on the management committee. In my final years I also served as group leader and acted as lead-in-charge. I am still involved at an advisory and property maintenance level.

I trust my experience in those previous roles will hold me in good stead to work with the Committee and the community for the best social outcome for Castlecrag. I would like to extend an invitation to any interested residents to be involved in community issues and or activities. These can best be raised by contacting info@castlecrag.org.au or attending our General Meetings.

The next one is at 7.30pm on Wednesday November 20 at the Willoughby Bowling Club. Come for dinner beforehand!

Mark Crew

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Northbridge Baths Centenary Celebration

**Save the Date
12 October**

Many people who don't have their own pool greatly value the Council-owned public saltwater baths in nearby Sailors Bay, Northbridge. So much closer than the beaches, for generations it has been a great spot to cool off on a hot summer's day, for swimmers to do laps and for young families to meet and play on its sandy beach as the tide ebbs and flows. Many a family gathering and kid's birthday party has been held there and historically it's been a hot spot for local teenagers to get together. Swimmers come from all over Willoughby City and beyond to enjoy the saltwater and bush-fringed bay.

This year marks its 100th year and, as part of Willoughby's Emerge Festival, 12 October has been set to celebrate the Baths, between 1pm-5pm.

There are three overarching objectives proposed for this event:

1. To celebrate 100 years of community health and happiness from saltwater bathing.
2. To promote healthy outdoors living, exercising and socialising in a near-natural setting.
3. To establish a comprehensive planning process for the long term future of the Baths and these activities.

Our local Rotary and Scouts groups are developing ideas for fun events for all ages. Live bands are lining up. A competition for our artists-in-residence to paint pictures of aspects of the Baths in its last 100 years, and maybe its next 100. Local orienteering clubs have planned a lead-up event starting and ending at Warners Park Bowling Club. From there they plan to walk around the parks and byways of Castlecrag and Northbridge, possibly collecting one-page messages from locals and dignitaries to be delivered to the Mayor at the Baths to be interred in a 2050 Time Capsule at The Baths. Contact Tracey, tracbluemarsh@gmail.com.

FONB (Friends of Northbridge Baths) are compiling "The Baths 100: a forward-looking history". Working with Council's Local Studies Unit, Willoughby Historical Society, and local historian Pam Clifford, much new material has come to light. Permanent plaques telling the natural and cultural history are proposed.

Do you have any photos and/or short stories that help dry historical facts and figures come alive? Lara Crew, who was a young club member in the 70s, recently uncovered a trophy she won at her



The diver is believed to be Dick Eve, launching from 10m platform in 1938, 14 years after having won gold at the Paris Olympics in 1924

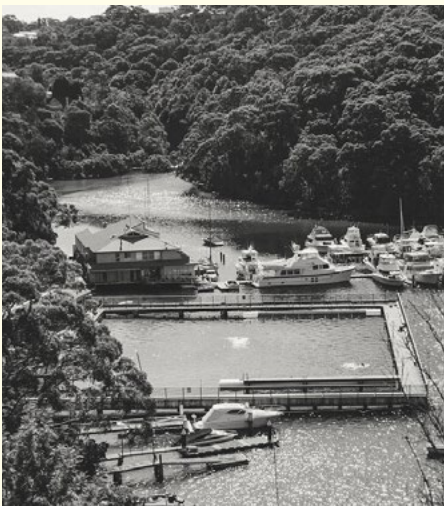


Saturday morning races, bringing back many happy memories.

Your visions of The Baths' future usage over the next fifty years are particularly welcome.

Bruce Wilson

Co-Convenor, Friends Of Northbridge Baths (and member, WCC Baths Centenary Committee)
BruceWilsonCastlecrag@gmail.com



Max Dupain



Northbridge Baths 1938 / Willoughby City Library PF005080

People in Glass Houses...



was a genuine partnership between the architect and the son of Bill Lucas, Peter – a skilled builder and master craftsman. Together, we co-designed and collaborated to determine the vision for the Glass House revival. The conservation work was all informed by original drawings, sketches, photos, and hand-written notes archived by Bill himself.

Since the completion of the restoration, the Glass House and the work of Cracknell & Lonergan Architects has been recognised with several awards, including the National Trust Built Conservation Award (small category) and NSW Institute of Architects Awards for Enduring Architecture and Heritage. The Glass House is also currently nominated for the National Institute of Architects Heritage Award which will be announced later this year.

**Written by Marika Perrow
with adapted text from Peter Lonergan**

The Glass House was originally designed by Bill and Ruth Lucas as a prototype for sustainable and economic housing. Now, 67 years later we have the privilege of raising three boys in this feather light home hovering above the earth, inviting the outside in: connecting us with the trees, neighbours and sky.

Completed in 1957 and designed by Bill and Ruth as their own family home, the Glass House has faithfully provided families with a connected way of living for over six decades. It is an example of the Sydney School of Modernism; not a picturesque or cosy cottage in the woods, but a structure that captures the essence of a home. What it lacks in substance it more than makes up for in gravitas. With its feather-weight structure, it floats miraculously about the

tree canopy, above the rocks, and above torrents.

In the words of Peter Lonergan, Heritage Architect of Cracknell & Lonergan Architects, *The Glass House has all the rooms that a house requires. It also has a courtyard, a veranda, clothes lines, a garden, and the setting that single family homes expect. But it has one other thing that so many of today's houses lack: it has an idea, and that idea is economy.*

Peter Lonergan has offered the most thoughtful and careful restoration of this once dilapidated structure. The painstaking restoration



Photos: Jamie Perrow



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Council Officer gets a Gold Star

Landscape Architect and long-serving Officer of WCC Jan Felton recently retired, leaving an indelible mark on Castlecrag. She had a passion for preserving and maintaining the Griffin legacy and felt strongly connected to their ethos, particularly Marion's.

Her first project in Castlecrag was well before she was employed by Council. In the early 70's Jan was studying Architecture at UNSW and worked with Lecturer Col James and other students on a traffic-calming plan for the straight part of Edinburgh Road, which was known as a bit of a dragstrip. Despite considerable community support, Council did not adopt that plan.

Jan was appointed Community Projects Officer at WCC in 2008. Her overarching role in Castlecrag was as Convenor of the Griffin Reserves Advisory Group. Jan worked closely with community representatives for many years to implement and update the Griffin Reserves Plan of Management.

These achievements have included improvements to reserves and walkways to make them more easily accessible such as

the path between Tower Reserve and The Citadel; vegetation design and management, including the removal of exotic weeds and the planting of local indigenous species; and the placement of seating allowing users to appreciate spaces and existing views. Jan co-ordinated many biennial Griffin Reserves Open Days to connect community members, encourage residents to take an active interest in their neighbouring reserves, and to raise awareness of and participation in the council's Bushcare volunteer program.

Jan has been responsible for the site design of a number of parks and reserves in the Crag, including the Stoker Playground with its focus on natural materials. She also designed the landscape plan for the Haven Amphitheatre after the stage was demolished, creating ledges, steps and a lower performance ring which enabled the theatre troupe *Come You Spirits* to utilise so brilliantly during their performances over the last couple of years.



(L to R) Jan Felton, Jutta, Bronwyn & Garth at Jan's MGP's farewell lunch

Jan also developed the Willoughby Walks program with maps and an audio version, and designed the QR code plate and illustrated it with a hand-sketched Angophora, which give interpretive information at various locations around the suburb, showing she is quite the artist! She also worked with the Community Gardens in Willoughby City. Her handprints are all over the place!

Jan's dedication to her work has enriched the local environment and our quality of life. She has left very big shoes to fill. We wish her a well-deserved, healthful, long and fulfilling retirement.

Vandalism at Tower Reserve

Casuarinas, kunzeas and homelanthus snapped or broken; bark stripped from a melaleuca; branches we had placed to protect tree saplings dragged about; deep scratches in the bark of an angophora – this is some of the damage to the bush in Tower Reserve found by the Bushcare group and reported to Council.

The Reserve is a splendid place for children to play and we welcome this, but hope they will respect the plants, animals and birds. On a recent weekend some boys set up a zip line from the rocks of the Tower and erected a tent in a kunzea grove. Passing by on my daily walk through the Reserve, I pointed out places where branches had been placed to protect some seedlings and asked them to take care not to damage them, also to pick up plastic



that was strewn about and tidy up before they left. The next day I found they had not done this. I also discovered damage to some trees and reported everything to Council.

The tent and ropes were confiscated by Council. The boys returned to find everything had been cleared up. They left a notice taped to the angophora - "Return Our Materials". They should put this request to Willoughby Council.

The Tower Reserve Bushcare Group has been in action for more than ten years. Before

it began work, this part of the Reserve was impenetrable due to jasmine and honeysuckle vines. Having cleared fishbone fern and trad from the area, we have made space for lots of trees to regenerate including Angophoras and Callitris. Tiny orchids flower on the rocks. Bandicoots are everywhere. Occasionally the Reserve is visited by wallabies and a lyrebird.

From the highest point of the Tower, you can look out past the Heads to the ocean or watch the New Year fireworks. Children can climb and jump happily. We simply ask them to respect all plants and animals.

Jocelyn Chey



The Romance of Letterpress

When local resident, James Cryer, discovered his grandfather's handwritten journal, he had no idea he had an historical record of the printing industry in his hands. Being in the industry himself, he was fascinated to read the journal. Naturally, James was then driven to get the story out in the form of a beautiful book!

The Romance of Letterpress gives an account of life in Australia and America within the Printing Industry at the turn of the 20th Century.

It is the story of Wal Cryer, a freshly-minted letterpress printer from Sydney. In November 1913, at the tender age of 21, he packed his bags and jumped on board a steamer to try his luck working his way across America as a printer.

The Romance of Letterpress is a story about what society looked like at that time: that uniquely fragile era just before the Great War, which hovered tentatively on the brink of modernity, when, if you ventured out onto the road you could be trampled to death by a horse, or run over by a car. It's a story of how printing at that time was beginning to penetrate into the nooks and crannies of people's everyday lives, in ways both amusing and pervasive, that we now take for granted today.

It is also a story with a romantic undercurrent, as he left behind a fiancé in Sydney, to whom he sent a veritable treasure-trove of postcards as he wended his way across the Mid-west, facing both unemployment queues and tough bosses – and getting work in Chicago before heading to New York and then via several ships back to Australia when the war broke out.

None of this would have been brought to light, however, if it wasn't for a remarkable discovery – not only the diary itself, tucked away in a long-forgotten cupboard, but also a much-battered album bulging with post-cards.

There is, however, yet another deeper theme underpinning all this – what is the nature of the relationship we have with our grandparents?

"With ink flowing through his veins, James Cryer has produced a book that is not just a record of how the printing industry was pre-WW1, but an important historical document of life, travel, societies and adventure in a bygone era. It's a delight to read, look at and hold. Walter J (Wal) Cryer's narrative, immortalised in his diary is engaging, and informs us how a young Australian viewed working life – and the world – in 1913. We wholeheartedly endorse James Cryer's 'magnum opus'



– it represents far more than a walk down memory lane for Letterpress – it's a historical tapestry, pre-TV, pre-commercial radio, pre-internet, pre-jet travel; woven into a beautifully designed book."

Andy McCourt, Australia's leading print industry commentator

The book can be viewed at the Castlecrag Library and purchased online:

<https://booksonlineaustralia.com.au/shop/the-romance-of-letterpress/>

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From the Mayor



In my first term as Mayor, I have been committed to the community, focussing on making Willoughby connected, sustainable and vibrant. Some decisions have been challenging, but I've always made them with the broader community's best interests at heart.

As I reflect on the past term of Council, I wanted to highlight some of the achievements that have been made to enhance the quality of life in Castlecrag. I have been committed to preserving the unique character of this community while

addressing modern needs. I've also prided myself on actioning requests from residents efficiently and effectively – be it concerns over tree destruction, development compliance, footpath fixes or the filling of a pothole.

Our Local Environment Plan (gazetted in June 2023) ensures new developments align with Castlecrag's heritage and environmental values. Planning controls have been introduced to guide development in a way that preserves the aesthetic and cultural significance of Castlecrag. We've also spent some time developing, consulting and recently finalising the Griffin Reserve Action Plans, to preserve and enhance the reserves, road islands and walkways of the Griffin Reserve and the character of Castlecrag.

The loss of the Quadrangle as a community hub has been felt sharply by the Castlecrag community, and I've worked hard in requesting that Council prioritise working through the development application so that progress can be made. I've also been working to ensure that local Castlecrag businesses are not impacted any further by this. Assisting with the relocation of Castlecrag's Australia Post outlet was an

important achievement. It was essential to get this vital community service up and running at a new location, with minimal disruption. I'm grateful that Cr Eriksson and I were able to assist when Jason and Leanne put in a mayday call to us.

Through requests by the community to myself and local Councillors, Council staff are now considering an alternative location for the sculpture commissioned by the Walter Burley Griffin Society to commemorate Marion Mahony Griffin. We must retain crucial parking spaces whilst balancing heritage appreciation with practical needs.

The beautiful foreshores of Castlecrag will benefit by a review of the way that watercraft is stored on public land, thanks to a strategy that is being developed through my advocacy.

As we move forward, I remain committed to addressing the needs of Castlecrag residents, ensuring that this beautiful suburb continues to thrive while preserving its unique charm. I look forward to building on these achievements and working together to create an even better future for Castlecrag.

Tanya Taylor

From the Councillors



Roy McCullagh

It has been my pleasure representing you over the past 3 years and 9 months and whilst I am a ring-in from next door, I feel very much part of your community. I have

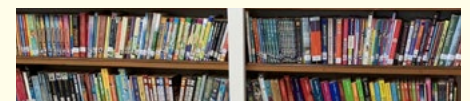
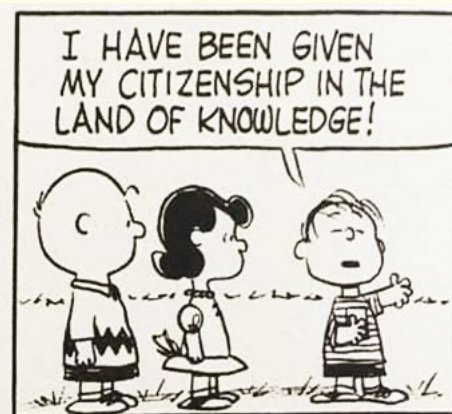
been asked to summarise my achievements for the residents of Castlecrag and the broader community throughout my first term as Councillor.

As a new Councillor who came to this role with no previous Council or local community based organisation experience, I decided from the outset that my strategy would be to: Acknowledge, Respond, Listen and Act, and I hope I have demonstrated that with assisting in key local issues ranging from the Haven Amphitheatre to installation of road signs. You may be surprised to read that I like

data and here are some fun figures relating to my primary Castlecrag actions:

- Number of residential issues actioned on behalf of residents: 47
- Number of coffee meetings with residents: 49
- Number of introductions on behalf of residents to the appropriate Council team member: 16
- Number of meetings with local businesses 14

Most recently I was the instigator of retaining car parking at Castlecrag Village.



Castlecrag Library Opening Hours

Tuesday,	3pm - 4.30pm
Thursday:	3pm - 4.30pm
Saturday:	10am - 12 noon

Location: Community Centre, bottom of The Postern next to KU

From the Councillors continued from page 8

Outside of Castlecrag significant issues that I have worked across our LGA include:

- Fighting to keep the award-winning Devonshire Street child care centre as a Council operated business.
- Ensuring the OOSH after school child care in Chatswood can return to operating in the near future in a suitable venue
- Opposing any non- hospital related development at RNSH
- Northbridge Baths enhancements
- Getting Council, AMP and Woolworths together to find a solution to the abandoned trolleys issue and a loop (wheel locking system) is now being investigated.
- Addressing pedestrian safety issues on Strathallen Avenue.
- Stopping the beaches tunnel link
- Secured greater improved Sunday access to our council run sports pitches for all codes.
- Instigating the change of the Councils CEO job title back to GM and working hard to bring values such as honesty, integrity and respect back to how things are done internally.

Moving forward, if I am given the opportunity to return as your Councillor or Mayor, two of the issues that I will be putting front and centre are the Quadrangle and Northbridge Plaza.

Thank you all again and it has been a pleasure representing you.



Hugh Eriksson

It has again been my privilege to represent the suburb my family and I have lived in since 1959 when my grandparents and my late mum and her sisters moved here from Adelaide.

Today my wife Victoria and our daughter Adelaide and I live in the family home which we are so lucky to be able to enjoy.

Over the past term I have worked towards a back to basics service approach for us, I truly believe that is our core role as Councillors.

This has included updates to footpaths along Edinburgh Rd as well as new curb and gutters. Changes to parking near the butchers shop providing at least two more parking spaces. Enhancements to line marking along Edinburgh Road to make parking easier.

Most importantly I have advocated strongly for a redevelopment of the Quadrangle that we can all be proud of - once completed.

I will continue to be a commonsense Councillor if I am fortunate to be re-elected in September.



John Moratelli

In 2021, after a long career as a consumer lawyer with Legal Aid, I stood successfully for election to council. It's been a truncated term due to COVID, and a steep learning curve. I've not been able to achieve some of my aims due to the makeup of council, but proud of what I have achieved.

I stood on an environmental platform when the threat of the Beaches Link loomed. Although failing to get council to spend \$5000 to investigate a legal challenge, I was later successful in getting council to agree to advocate for a rapid public transport link between the Chatswood interchange and Frenchs Forest. If such a link was built it would eliminate the risk of the tollway project being revived.

Being a keen bush care volunteer, I was shocked to discover council's plans to plant species identified as threats to bushland in the Artarmon streetscape upgrade. Although my support of Cr Greco's motion for alternative plantings didn't secure its passage, I was later successful in getting council to request a report on council's intended use of such species specifying the circumstances and justification for

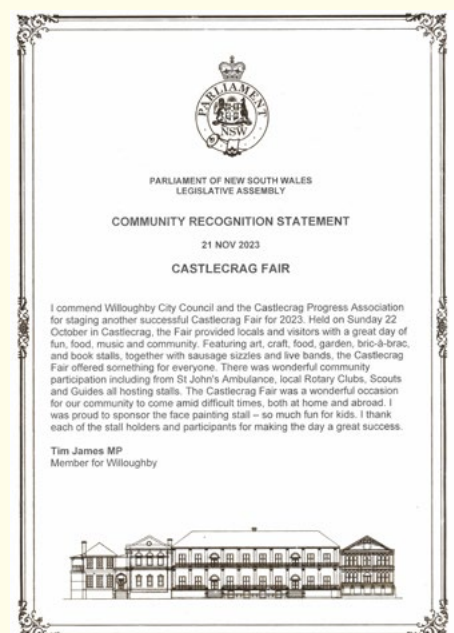
their use. I expect the exposure to limit the planting of weeds in future.

Via a question on notice, I put on record that council's Albert Street carpark is 13,346m², zoned for 90m, and managed by Scentre Group under an agreement expiring in 2029, for which council received \$424,320 for FYE 30/6/23. It's worth over \$200m.

I opposed the outsourcing of council's Devonshire Street childcare centre to a for-profit provider both on the basis that council's gain would be at the cost of higher fees and/or lower quality, and because the lease was too long. The site is part of a very large and valuable council landholding which includes the carpark, and land to the west and south, all of which should be looked at in 2029, given the possibility of undergrounding.

Council was fortunate that the proposed tenant didn't take up the 10+10 year lease offered, and I was pleased to see that my argument achieved some traction with the next private operator only offered a 10 year lease (which I also oppose).

My proudest achievement, however, has been getting the Advisory Committees up and running effectively. These committees allow council to use the skills, knowledge and experience of community volunteers to achieve better outcomes in key areas. They have made important recommendations to improve tree protection, active transport, and sustainability which I have been able to successfully champion in council.



A Wrap on the RAP

Earlier this year Willoughby Council published their Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The plan serves as a strategic document to guide the Council's reconciliation initiatives, with a range of proposed actions including:

- Establishing a Yarning Circle at an appropriate location as a way to build respectful relationships and preserve and pass on cultural knowledge
- The inclusion of Aboriginal cultural awareness training in the induction process for all Council staff and Councillors, with recruitment processes overhauled to increase the diversity of the applicant pool
- The inclusion of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags on the Council website, email signatures and other materials including official documents
- An assessment of opportunities to increase procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses

The beautiful artwork for the RAP (right) was created by Indigenous artist Dr Emma Hicks.

Emma tells its story:

This artwork acknowledges and celebrates Cammeraygal Country and culture.

I am grateful to have been held by this Country, having lived here for the past 20 years.

The design highlights the topography of Country, mapping the waterways before colonisation.

The centre of the design reflects a Sydney red gum (angophora costata) that is located in the heart of what is now called Chatswood. Blue gum nuts (eucalyptus saligna) are scattered across the design remembering the blue gum forests that once stretched across this section of Country.

The western side of Willoughby and Chatswood contained creeks lined by River Mangroves (aegiceras corniculatum) and sweet sarsaparilla (similax glycyphylla); and the sandstone ridges of Middle Harbour with eastern scribbly gum (eucalyptus racemosa) and lomandra (lomandra longifolia).

Oysters, hairy mussels, Sydney cockles and mud oysters bring awareness to what were once a staple food source; and their role in cleansing and filtering waterways.

A school of salmon swim upstream remembering women's stories and the

Castlecrag lies on Gaimariagal/Cammeraigal/Gameraygal¹ Country

Their handprints, middens, artefacts and rock engravings in the bushland around us are evidence that this was their home for many, many years.

We acknowledge and pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging.



casuarina (allocasuarina littoralis) offer shade and shelter as the Brush Turkey digs, aerating and enriching the soil.

Native Fuchsia (epacris longiflora), Christmas bells (blandfordia grandiflora) and Graceful pea bush (pultenaea flexilis) bloom with the changing of seasons.

A few local words and a song

John Frederick Mann was an English Surveyor who came to the colony in 1842. He developed a great interest in colonial and Indigenous history and culture, and corresponded on these subjects with the press. In his retirement, he lived in nearby Neutral Bay.

Between 1884 – 1907 Mann documented words and phrases from a man named Long Dick, whom he described as "an influential native of the Cammeray Tribe, son of Bungaree (who circumnavigated

Australia with Matthew Flinders) and Cora Gooseberry."

However, Bungaree and Gooseberry, who were given the title of "King" and "Queen" by Governor Macquarie, were from Broken Bay and South Head, so Long Dick couldn't have been Gaimariagal. People were known to be multi-lingual, so perhaps he spoke the language which Mann interpreted as being from this Country.

Here are a few words from that list:

Currynine	North Wind
Currying	South Wind
Broo-moi	West Wind
Tuggerora Nallanine	East Wind
Bunyell	Sun
Yellowna	Moon
Goowindia	Stars
Koora	Dark night

And a song to the tune of *Playschool* favourite: **Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes:**

Wallering Head	Merong Shoulders	Beeyang Knees	Jena² and Feet	Beeyang Knees	Jena and Feet	(repeat)
Nickering and Eyes	Mooraine and Ears	Kuraka and Mouth	Nuko and Nose			
Wallering Head	Merong Shoulders	Beeyang Knees	Jena and Feet	Beeyang Knees	Jena and Feet	

¹ Various spellings ² No translation for toes!

Corner Butcher becomes Corner Store

The demise of the Quadrangle as a shopping destination, including the closure of the IGA supermarket and fruit and vegetable retailer, has frustrated the Castlecrag community, with the loss of shopping convenience being widely lamented. In touch with his customers' feelings, proprietor of Castlecrag Meats Phil Mitchell has actively responded by seeking to fill the gap, extending the range of products he offers. The butcher shop is now something of a convenience store.

Acting on customer feedback and research, Phil now stocks additional items, including fresh vegetables, pasta, canned tomatoes, sauces and seasonings, coconut milk ... even chocolate.

"We're happy with how the initiative has been received", notes Phil. "People are prompted to pick up a few extras that they may have missed on their bulk shop or perhaps they just need a few ingredients for that evening's dinner."

The number of items offered has increased from about 50 to in excess of 200, with potatoes the most popular. Customer reaction has been positive, as awareness grows, with Phil happy with the uptick in turnover. "There's now usually no stock left at the end of the week for the staff to take home", Phil advises with a laugh.



Not surprisingly, premium meat remains the business' major focus, and sales there have increased as well, with people prompted to purchase some sausages or schnitzel in addition to their groceries. The challenges Phil overcame to find suppliers of quality products willing to deal with him as a small retailer, at the right price, are now paying off, with most customers appreciative of the wider variety available.

In keeping with the community ethos, Phil has also installed two tables and

chairs outside the shop for customers to use whenever they wish. "They've also prompted some interest and we've noticed increased usage", Phil observes. "They're great question starters and if they help bring people back to the shopping strip, that's a good thing."

Tim Donahoo



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The Turf Wars

Recently WEPA (Willoughby Environment Protection Association) hosted an informative talk in Castlecrag by Natural Turf Alliance (NTA) President and Co-founder Catriona Carver, about the environmental problems arising from the use of synthetic turf in our public open space and childcare centres.

Some of the environmental concerns identified in a growing body of evidence include:

- Synthetic turf and rubber crumb infill shedding microplastics into our waterways
- Increased urban heat affecting humans, wildlife and adjacent tree canopy
- Higher incidence of injury including "turf burn" and possibility of microplastics entering the body via the skin.
- Devastation of soil biome, the foundation of a healthy ecosystem, impacting resilience to climate change and denying wildlife the opportunity to forage
- Increasing the carbon emissions burden
- Extremely high flammability, producing toxic fumes when burnt
- No established recycling process, with materials currently adding to landfill at the end of their 8-10 year lifecycle. There is a new recycling plant in Victoria, however there is no established market for the product.

Willoughby Council's Sustainability Advisory Committee (SAC) conducted a review of Council's use of synthetic turf. There are currently four playing fields with synthetic turf and has also been installed widely in other public locations, some of which are adjacent to our waterways, as well as aged and childcare centres. This include the Castlecrag Community Centre/ Kindergarten grounds, which backs onto and drains into the Reserve. Last summer



Synthetic turf at Northbridge Oval.

a toddler burnt her feet on the synthetic grass installed at Northbridge Baths.

SAC have released a comprehensive report on the practice locally. It made the following recommendation:

WCC has an obligation to practise the 'precautionary principle' with regard to synthetic turf use, given the known harmful impacts of synthetic turf materials to human and environmental health. Synthetic turf and associated materials are not adequately researched or regulated in NSW, putting our community and nature at risk and leaving council open to potential litigation. Until a proven safe synthetic surface can be guaranteed we request WCC commit to a moratorium on any further installation and natural turf be thoroughly considered where synthetic is being replaced.

Specifically, we advise -

1. Inclusion of strategic sustainable 'City that is green' objectives in the assessment and management plan of all Open Space projects.
2. Natural turf be the starting point and integrated throughout the full turf decision making process – new and replacement projects.
3. The current REF assessment is inadequate for synthetic turf proposals

and should be replaced by an independently prepared EIS, and subject to public consultation.

4. Community consultation at the broadest level to capture all types of recreational users.
5. Instigate a community education campaign to inform the public of synthetic turf risks and impacts in open space or home use.
6. Thorough assessment by council of the synthetic turf recycling process, emissions and outputs before any works commence.
7. If synthetic is used or replaced there must be mandatory use best practice drainage and filtration to capture microplastics and other pollution mitigating mechanisms eg shoe cleaning. Some of these appear to be integrated into Thomson Oval planning.

The incoming Council will need to look carefully at this report and consider adopting the Advisory Committee's recommendations.

Sources: *Synthetic Turf Review and Recommendations* Willoughby Sustainability Advisory Committee Working Party. Final report June 11 2024.

WEPA Bulletin 13 June 2024

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22 Years and Counting



Baby Eastern Water Dragon

We've lived on Keep Reserve, the reserve between The Rampart and Warners Park Northbridge, for over 22 years. The house descends into the valley and provides us with a unique position of observing wildlife in this bushland over a couple of decades. And we've volunteered as bushcarers for every month of those 22 years, also helping us stay in touch with what is going on.

Over the years we've seen wildlife appear and disappear, like the Lyrebird, it was always around a year or two ago and now seems to be a memory. The Brush Turkeys now prevalent but never present a while back. I've seen snakes appear in the garden or sometimes in the house, Red Belly Blacks were once common but don't appear to be around now. The Green Tree and Golden Crowned Snakes are by far the most common. Blue Tongues were also common here but now the Eastern Water Dragons are by far the most common, providing much merriment, as they like the habitat, ponds and the like around our house. It is an important word, habitat. It is the places that provide refuge for the fauna and flora that we share our lives with.

Lantana was common here when we first moved in. It was impenetrable. But Variegated Fairy Wrens were also common. We removed the lantana and their habitat. It has taken a while for them to return, and they don't seem to be as common as they were once. Last summer we found a nest of Spotted Pardalotes under our house in



Lyrebird - 2022



Billy posing

We've had White-faced Herons in the yard or on our roof. Lyrebirds in all manner of places. Rainforest pigeons in the trees surrounding us. Small birds are now common – often only for a period as they migrate north or south, like the Silver Eyes, Black Faced Monarchs, Grey Fantails, Rufous Fantail and the ones that live here year round, the Variegated Fairy wrens, White Browed Scrub Wrens and Brown Thornbills are daily visitors. Of particular joy is finding new birds to our list, like the Eastern Spinebill or Lewins Honey Eater.

So, after 20 years of bushcare have we made a difference? I think so – I see an improvement in native plant population and the fauna we take note of is an indicator. But, we've made a difference to our lives, we have a shared interest with plenty of others in our bushcare group, across Castlecrag, across Willoughby and across Sydney.

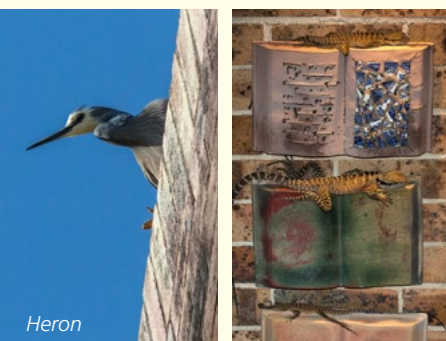
The other morning I woke up and looked out the window and there was a Swamp Wallaby making his way through our garden. A young Japanese tourist Youki is staying in the area and joined our Bushcare group. It was one of those mornings that the sun is shining and everything looks radiant. A couple of wallabies were also around and provided her first look at a wallaby and a great thrill. The wallabies are now permanent residents.

Our Bushcare Group meets the 2nd Sunday of the month from 9 – 11 am. Send me a note for more info: matthew.keighery@gmail.com.

Matthew Keighery
Words and pictures



Topknot



Heron

Three Eastern Water Dragons

some old drawers we had stored there. Metres from our house is a beautiful Old Angophora with a number of hollows that is now providing a nesting place each year for Powerful Owls and last year they had twins. One year we had some Wood Ducks perch on our verandah, they also need hollows for breeding and if you look there is great footage on the internet of young ducks falling out of their nest hollow to begin life on the ground.

Community Gardens: Warners Park



Then ...



Now ...

The new garden is now one year old and what a transformation! From bare earth there is now a verdant, highly productive garden tended by our many hardworking and enthusiastic members. There is never a garden day when we are not sharing produce.

It has brought together many members of the local community. Our members range in age from five to eighty-five.

In summer we had abundant zucchini, tomatoes, herbs, salad vegetables, beans, kangkung, pumpkin, chilli, turnip and artichokes.

Winter crops include broccoli, cabbage, kale, cauliflower, peas, parsnip, broad beans and spinach.

Unfortunately, in June, the local creek flooded causing considerable damage to the sandstone walls and spreading debris and water throughout the garden and buildings. The garden damage was promptly dealt with by the hard-working gardeners helped by some of the kind local residents. Over time the council rebuilt the walls.

The pergola has been planted with climbing vines and roses which are growing well.

The Mens Shed have been very supportive of the garden and invited us to share their



A fine crop



Squash in Summer

open day. Losurdos are supplying us with vegetables for compost twice weekly and this is much appreciated. Bunnings have been very generous in their support of the garden as have the Rossi family.

We have several excellent cooks among our members and our morning teas have become gourmet affairs. Good company and good food to reward pleasurable work. What more could one ask?

We meet on Wednesdays and Sundays at 10am and welcome new members, or you can contact Hilary on 0414 502 771.

Hilary McDonald

Words and pictures

Community Gardens: Market Garden Park



All sorts of weather!



Now that's a tromboncino!

A wet winter this year may have had something to do with our super harvests, most notably our best ever haul of pumpkins. We also had an abundance of Jerusalem artichokes, yacon and loads of turmeric. Great eggplant, daikon, red radishes, radicchio, mizuna and mustard greens. It was a less productive year for our silverbeet, snow peas and snap

peas. Although few, our tromboncinos were stunning.

Early cabbages did really well but we remain baffled by the loss of almost all other brassicas including several initially promising crops such as our cauliflowers, kale, broccoli, broad beans and carrots. The healthy hearts of every cauli were taken out by a &##*%@ creature unknown who thwarted our netting. Gardeners will recognise that sinking feeling when you turn up to find the promised rewards of your nurture and care have unexpectedly vanished. MGP gardeners have turned up in some serious weather this year!

Our compost bins remain a popular recycling point for organic matter from the public. It's demanding tending to the compost bins but, led by Bronwyn, we've produced some beautifully wormy results to slather into our soil.

Community Gardens: Market Garden Park



Mary Anne harvesting matured compost

MGP Duke of Edinburgh students, Nora and Nina, continue to garden with us on Saturday mornings. Marcus, who arrived as a D of E student at the beginning of the year, has this to say,

“Each Saturday morning for the last four months I’ve descended onto the aesthetically pleasing Market Garden Park Community Garden. At first, I came as a Duke of Edinburgh student to complete my Silver Award. Having done my hours, I stayed on becoming a member. I’ve formed far too many attachments to some beautiful plants and cooked eggplant grown at the garden. This connects me to my father’s family from the great Indian state of West Bengal. I write to encourage, nay to implore you, to join our great garden. We would love to have you. Be sure to pass this on to any prospective Duke of Edinburgh students .. it really is the best activity.”



Richard loves the garden this much



Jutta with daikon radish

In May MGP gardeners farewelled Jan Felton from Willoughby Council. Her thoughtful resourcing and advocacy has contributed much to community gardens over many years. Jan endeared herself to all of us, sprinkling her unique brand



Bernee happily unearthing gorgeous turmeric



Zoe and Doan with tumbocino



Nora and Nina with the pumpkin they fertilised on their first day



Marcus cleaning sooty mould

of kindness widely in her interactions with garden members and adjoining communities.

Market Garden Park Community Gardeners meet on Wed and Sat mornings. We have some raised wheelchair-accessible garden beds and we welcome people at all levels of garden experience. For more info about us, or to make contact, visit <https://mgpcommunitygarden.com>

Mary Anne Veliscek
Words and pictures

Retreat Bushcare Group Farewells Long-term Trainer

Recently, twenty past and present members of the Retreat Bushcare Group, met for a sumptuous pot-luck dinner, at the home of Lorraine and Peter. Our reason for meeting was to farewell our dedicated Bushcare Trainer, Helen Haigh.

Helen guided the group from its establishment in early 2006, through to August 2022. Every month, whether in rain or blazing sun, she was there before our arrival, so that she could see what had happened in the intervening weeks. Her pre-work meant she could direct our efforts most productively. We all greatly appreciated Helen's advice in this regard and her willingness to share with us, all that she could, about regenerating our beautiful patch of Castlecrag. Helen moved from Willoughby Council to North Sydney, but she was such an integral part of our team, that Willoughby Council continued to engage her as our Trainer for the next decade.

Helen's approach as our Bushcare Trainer, was to encourage us to start clearing the weeds from a small circle of land and then work outwards, enlarging that circle. We have been thrilled to see the results of Helen's guidance, as those small circles have expanded beyond our dreams, endemic plants replacing trad and other garden escapes in the Retreat.

While working in Willoughby Council, Helen initiated the formation of Council's native plant propagation group at Warners Park, which has been operating since 2012 to provide local native plants for bushcare groups and other Council needs. Establishing the Plant Propagation Group for Willoughby Council was a wonderful

addition to caring for and improving our amazing part of Sydney and reflected Helen's keen interest in, and knowledge about, landscape design using plants endemic to the area.

Helen has always been ready and willing to share her knowledge about the land and sustainable land management. We learned that she was adding to this already considerable knowledge base by taking courses in sustainable ecological practices for land management, and many of us were not surprised to hear that she and her partner, Julia, had bought some land and were going to put this knowledge to practical use. Unfortunately for us, the land they chose is moving to is in Helen's beloved homeland, New Zealand. Nevertheless, we are of course thrilled for Helen that she is moving on to fulfil her dreams. We all wish her and Julia, all the best for their new venture. Our dinner closed with promises to keep in touch and call by whenever any one of us happens to be in New Zealand.

Any residents wishing to join us in caring for the Retreat bushland is very welcome to contact our wonderful Convenor Jill on 0428 880 002

We will continue to meet on the dates advertised in The Crag, under the guidance of our new Bushcare Trainer Phil Sarkies. We are indeed fortunate that Willoughby Council has such amazing people working for them. Do join us if you can!

Fiona Burman.



Retreat Bushcare Group dinner / Peter Moffit

CASTLECRAG BUSHCARE Meeting Dates

First Monday of the Month

- Tower Reserve 8.30 -11.30 am
Contact: Jocelyn – 0402 158 518
or Lisa – 0404 806 406

Second Wednesday of the Month

- Turret Bushcare 9-12 noon
Contact: Monique – 9777 7875

Second Saturday of the Month

- Sunnyside Brushturkeys 9-12 noon
Contact: Scott – 0431 462 588

Second Sunday of the Month

- Gargoyle Bushcare 9-12noon
Contact: Roger – 0407 035 171
- Keep Reserve 9-12noon
Contact: Matthew – 0408 203 511

Third Sunday of the Month

- Casement Reserve 8.30-11.30am
Contact: Vicki – 0402 325 531
- Torquay Estate 9-12noon
Contact: Jo – 0419 234 235
- Lookout Reserve 9-12 noon
Contact: Adrienne – 0409 997 076

Fourth Sunday of the Month

- Retreat Reserve 9-12 noon
Contact: Jill – 0428 880 002

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