

## New Castlecrag Shopping Centre Project Finally Underway

Redevelopment of the old Quadrangle Shopping Centre - to be known as Queensbridge - is underway, with demolition finalised and the \$250 million project due for completion by mid-to-late 2027.

The project's developer, Conquest, has signed up Coles to operate the centre's supermarket under its boutique Coles Local brand and will retain management rights for the entire shopping precinct under the Queensbridge name. The "luxury" 83 apartments within the project will be known as 100 Edinburgh (the actual street address) and range in price from \$3.7 million to \$10 million for the four-bedroom penthouses on the north-facing top level fronting Edinburgh Road.



A display unit featuring apartment interiors will shortly open in a leased shop space at 87 Edinburgh Road, opposite the Queensbridge site. The display will include examples of finishes and fittings and the high-end kitchen and laundry appliances and bath ware to be installed in the apartments.

The project has already had a tumultuous start affected by exhaustive community consultation and state-wide rezoning law changes leading to redesigns, resubmitted plans and three changes of ownership rights during the past six years.

In a media release from Conquest, the ultimate owner and now developer of Queensbridge, company Chief Executive Officer Michael Akkawi claimed it will "redefine Sydney's north shore for decades and comes with a promise to uphold and enhance what previous owner, Dr Stanley Quek, envisioned for this land".

Dr Quek worked with Willoughby Council and the Castlecrag Progress Association to conduct a design competition for the Quadrangle's redevelopment but it's believed that the winning submission by FJMT architects was significantly changed throughout the planning process. In a property industry newsletter, Green Street News, Dr Quek is quoted as saying that he hadn't "abandoned" the "high standards he wanted" for the redevelopment project and was confident that Conquest had the credentials to see it through. The same article claimed construction costs were budgeted at \$70 million.

The Conquest media release acknowledged Castlecrag's architectural significance and its reputation for "its deep respect for nature and the community". "Conquest's plans aim to preserve that spirit while ushering in a new era of design and sophistication for future living," the release added.

The mixed-use redevelopment will be a contemporary retail and dining destination attracting premium food and beverage operators, wellness brands and boutique retail. 100 Edinburgh will comprise "architecturally opulent residences that promise glamour, greenery and grace". David Butt, Executive Director of Dr Quek's Greycliff, said that through discussions with Conquest during sale negotiations, "I can confirm we will be able to honour our commitment to bring a pre-market opportunity to Castlecrag residents who have expressed interest in the apartments."

It is believed 27 apartments have been "reserved" – some, if not all, of which represent that commitment.

Conquest is a private equity real estate firm with holdings in Sydney and London. Its Sydney offices are located within its Crowne Plaza development in Burwood and the company has plans to develop other Queensbridge centres across Sydney in Eastlakes, Caringbah and Turrumurra.

**Craig McCarthy**

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## THE CRAG

is the community magazine of the  
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## From the Editor

Thank you to all those who provided positive feedback on my first edition as Editor of *The Crag*. It was very much a learning process and I need to thank previous Editor Lindy Batterham for assisting me when I needed it. I'm becoming more knowledgeable and efficient as I go along, so I hope this edition meets expectations.

We finally are seeing substantive progress on the construction of our new shopping centre and residential development, as Conquest has acquired ownership and is proceeding under the Queensbridge brand for the commercial space. The CPA is investigating the possibility of adopting a name more aligned to the Castlecrag identity, given our unique locality characteristics.

Along those lines, our man of flags and history, John Vaughan OAM has again embraced the proposal of greater visible recognition of the origins of our suburb's

name and a plan for this has been endorsed by the CPA. This is covered in more detail on the following pages.

Our feature article is a profile of State member for Willoughby, Tim James. It provides revealing insight into the life of an MP, Tim's background and political inspirations and the guiding principles that drive his commitment to the role. Also highlighted is the hidden gem that is Castlecrag Library, a much loved community resource for over 70 years that deserves our support.

Regular articles on another notable house, the community market gardens, news from the Mayor and an update from WEPA also appear. I certainly welcome submissions from any residents, so don't be reluctant to send in material or photos. The more local content, the better!

**Tim Donahoo**



A perfect example of a Middle Harbour pine at Edinburgh Castle Rock

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## From the President



The big and highly visible news, of course, is the demolition of the old Quadrangle, setting the stage for the long awaited commencement of its replacement. With the sale of the site from Greencliff to Conquest, things are proceeding with earnest. Conquest's press release is published in this edition. The delayed and protracted redevelopment has been plagued with redesign issues and the Northern Planning Panel approval process.

I was recently able to speak with a Conquest representative, who showed great interest in Castlecrag and its residents. There are plans to promote the residential side of the development to the community and engage with our many interests, including the upcoming Fair. Furthermore, he was well aware of the CPA's campaign to preserve the historically significant sandstone that

made up the planter beds at the entrance to the Quadrangle. They have dismantled it with care, are storing it on pallets and will assist with transport to a Council storage facility in due course.

This stone came from the site where the Quadrangle now stands. It was the remnants of the Greater Sydney Development Company sales office. It was a pile of rubble when I was a boy, but historical knowledge made sure that it was put to good use. Similarly, the stone is destined for either the extension of the garden bed outside the Griffin Centre or re-use on the 100 Edinburgh Road site.

The Committee is currently reviewing our Constitution, with a view to updating the document. Thanks largely to the tireless efforts of our Secretary, Tim Donahoo, the proposed changes will be presented to all members for consideration prior to the next General Meeting. Tim's first edition as editor of The Crag was well received. A few teething problems were overcome and we collectively hope to maintain the high standard set by previous editors.

The Fair planning Committee is meeting more regularly and setting a high expectation, as this is the 100th year since the establishment of the CPA. With a larger stage, they are planning as much entertainment and as many stalls and activities as we can fit in. It is intended this year to focus on the vast artistic and

creative expressions of our residents. Let's hope for good weather and lots of interest.

Recently, on one of these crisp mornings, I took a stroll around just some of the 40 hectares of Harold Reid Reserve and ended up looking out across Middle Harbour from its 100m high vantage point. The preservation of this landscape, by good fortune and long community campaigning, has left us with a magnificent legacy; not just for the people in the immediate vicinity, but for all of this great city's residents.

The Northern Escarpment of Castlecrag was for a long time under the threat of the Warringah Expressway extension. Following the Kirby Report, the corridor was finally abandoned. Harold Reid Reserve, previously named Sugarloaf Reserve, was transferred to WCC from the County of Cumberland in 1960. To the north lies the heavily wooded slopes of Castle Cove, all surrounding Sugarloaf Bay with two estuarine arms reaching up into mangroves and salt marsh. At its deepest point the bay is just shy of 40m.

We are forever indebted to all those before us who recognised the significance of this place. We, and those who follow us, must be prepared and work hard to protect it.

**Mark Crew**




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## From our Mayor

Thank you for the opportunity to provide an update from Council in this edition of the newsletter.

As we step into winter, I'm pleased to share progress on some exciting initiatives around Castlecrag and across the wider Willoughby area that reflect our commitment to building a safer, more connected, and vibrant community.

One of the most significant projects currently underway is the redevelopment of the Willoughby Leisure Centre. Construction is progressing well, with the primary structure of the new pool hall now in place - a major milestone. While the scope of the project has evolved due to unexpected underground site conditions, Council remains committed to delivering a modern, accessible, and energy-efficient facility that meets the needs of our growing community. Completion is expected in February 2026, subject to the usual construction risks. We appreciate your patience and look forward to welcoming you back to a centre that's fit for the future.

While we look forward to new facilities, we're also focused on protecting what we already treasure: our natural environment. I know many Castlecrag residents are concerned about the illegal clearing of bushland and mature trees. Council takes this issue extremely seriously. Our planning, environment, and compliance teams work together to investigate reports, issue fines where possible, and pursue legal action when supported by evidence. However, investigations often rely on community reports and eyewitness accounts. If you see suspicious activity, please report it; your vigilance can make a real difference. I'm also pleased to share that the NSW Government is proposing tougher penalties for tree vandalism, a welcome step forward in our shared efforts to protect the green spaces that make Castlecrag so special.

In terms of local development, the Northbridge Plaza rezoning continues to move forward. Council received a Gateway Determination from the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure on 3 June 2025, so we will be seeking to proceed with community consultation as soon as is practicable.

Another important initiative is the proposed High Pedestrian Activity Area (HPAA) along Edinburgh Road in the Castlecrag Local Centre. In 2023, Council secured a \$150,000 grant to support the design and construction of a new pedestrian crossing and the implementation of a 40 km/h zone to improve safety for all road users. Community consultation revealed strong support for the proposal, with 72% of respondents in favour and a preference for a centre median with planting. However, many residents expressed concerns about the timing, given the temporary closure of the Quadrangle shopping precinct. In response, Council sought and received approval from Transport for NSW to defer the project until the redevelopment is underway. We plan to reapply for funding at that time to ensure the works are well-coordinated and minimally disruptive.



Finally, I'd like to highlight some exciting developments in community engagement. As part of our renewed Community Engagement Strategy, Council has established four new Advisory Committees, focused on Access and Inclusion, Active and Integrated Transport, Bushland and Natural Heritage, and Sustainability. These committees will provide valuable input into Council's planning and decision-making processes.

We're also inviting expressions of interest for our new Community Voice Panel. This panel will serve as a sounding board for Council projects and initiatives. Whether you rent or own, speak another language at home, run a business, or commute daily, your voice matters. This is your opportunity to help shape the future of our community.

As always, please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any feedback or issues you'd like to raise with me.

Yours in community,

**Cr Tanya Taylor**  
**Mayor of Willoughby**  
[Tanya.Taylor@Willoughby.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Tanya.Taylor@Willoughby.nsw.gov.au)



Two of the pools under construction at Willoughby Leisure Centre





View from the top of Edinburgh Castle Rock today, looking toward The Spit



The Rock was a popular destination in the 1920s and 1930s

## John rocks the Castle

The story of our unique suburb is incomplete without consideration of how its name was derived, with origins firmly rooted a world away. As we walk through and enjoy the views over the local bushland, thoughts of the mists and landscapes of Scotland do not readily arise, yet the connections are clear, once the story is known. Renowned vexillographer, historian and lifetime Castlecrag resident, John Vaughan OAM is on a mission to bring this history to a wider appreciation.

Let us go back to the relatively early days of the colony of New South Wales, when Port Jackson, including Middle Harbour, was being charted and officially documented. Prominent landmarks, being key aspects for the undertaking of surveys, typically featured on maps of the day. Drawings of our area from 1857 identify two large rocky outcrops as Edinburgh Castle Rocks, dominating the Sugarloaf Peninsula. The surveyor's mark of a broad arrow is still clearly visible at the summit of the rock and this lines up with other markers in Northbridge to the south and Middle Cove (Harold Reid Reserve) to the north.

The inspiration derived from the famous castle in Scotland, rising as it does high above the surrounding land on a stark, volcanic outcrop, is not difficult to understand, albeit with sandstone being the dominant local variety of rock. Such influence extended through to 1907, when what was known as Mowbray Road East was designated as Edinburgh Road, the name inspired by Edinburgh Castle Rocks. You will note Rocks, as distinct from Rock, as there were two. Only one exists today, as the second, which sloped down from the higher of the two towards White Hill, was progressively removed as Edinburgh Road was extended and surfaced and the suburb was developed. In case you are not aware, White Hill is the name of the rise that peaks just east of The Citadel, the name originating most likely from the white clay found in the vicinity, although this is speculation rather than fact.

When the Griffins arrived in 1920 and sought to realise the potential of the area, early promotional material for the estate used the name Edinburgh Castle in the district description, as it was a known feature and a relatively popular sightseeing and picnic spot, recognised for its panoramic views. The area immediately below the castle in Edinburgh is called the castle crag, so it would seem clear from where the Griffins sourced the name of the estate. This was later confirmed in the 1930s by the local Post Office, which used Castle Crag as the area name, with Willoughby Council adopting the name Castlecrag when it was created as a distinct locality separate from North Willoughby. Walter and Marion, as we well know, perpetuated the castle theme in the allocation of street names throughout the suburb.

John Vaughan is keen to have this story more widely known, indeed, to have the location of Edinburgh Castle Rock more visible, hidden away as it is in Tower Reserve off Edinburgh Road, surrounded by houses. He is proposing the creation of an additional appropriate plaque, which details the origins of the Castlecrag name and the significance of the Rock, which would be affixed in a visible place at the entrance to the reserve. "It's a story that's not widely known and it should have greater recognition," John contends. "We have the opportunity to make the story obvious to people who are on walking tours of Castlecrag or to those who are curious about the Rock's story, having enjoyed the views."

Allied to the plaque concept is the suggestion of directional signage on Edinburgh Road that points out the Rock's location. As things currently stand, there's no indicator to show visitors how to get there.

Support for the plaque idea has received informal support within Willoughby Council and the CPA is keen to progress this by way of more formal proposals. These are currently being pursued as we aim to further recognise our special heritage.



A 1920s view of The Parapet, with Edinburgh Castle Rock in the background



John points out the proposed plaque location



The existing plaque

## 341 Edinburgh Road Castlecrag



Edinburgh Road is the spine in the suburb of Castlecrag. Quite often it can be assumed this road finishes at the bus terminal at the intersection with Linden Way. However, this is not the case. Edinburgh Road continues as a one-way road past The High Tor, The Tor Walk and then a small car park. It then turns back on itself like a hook. At the very end of this “hook” is the last house, 341 Edinburgh Road.

This is a lovely family home. It was designed by the architectural firm of Symth & Symth Pty Ltd and was completed in 2006. The architects’ premise was to create a timeless design, to have longevity, functionality and be unique.

Like many houses at this end of Edinburgh Road, the house has land to the water and views to Sugarloaf Bay. The previous house on the site did not maximise these amazing views. 341 does that now by making the most of the site and featuring the view from as many rooms as possible.

On approach to the house, you are met with a series of horizontal planes with one forming the roof to the carport. The roof over the carport appears to be an engineering feat, as it hovers over the cars with very little obvious structure to support it. These roof planes are edged in copper and their undersides are clad in hardwood.

The stone wall at the back of the carport is not full height and encloses a small room, which opens onto a garden courtyard. The courtyard is a tool to bring in light, sun, sky and greenery while minimising the house’s bulk.

Behind the other stone wall of the carport is an oversized copper front door, sheltered by another horizontal roof plane. The entry is at the top of the site which allows a view beyond from the sky to the bay. The stairs feed you down towards this view.



The architects used natural materials, as a nod back to the works of Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony. These materials are stone, hardwood, concrete, glass and copper.

Along with Griffin’s and Mahony’s principles, the architects endeavoured to maximise the views of bushland and water and to be sensitive to natural features, like trees and rock outcrops. Overall, they have tried to design the house to integrate it with the landscape and not just to perch the house on the site or dominate the site.

The design of the house is broken into pavilions, linked by a glass hallway or spine being the stairs. The front of the house is a single storey, while the rear pavilion is two storeys. The upper level of this pavilion has private spaces of bedrooms and bathrooms. It cantilevers over the terrace below and provides shade. This level is clad in dark stained timber.

The lower level of the rear pavilion houses the formal living and dining areas, as well as the kitchen and family spaces. All these have wall-to-ceiling operable glass sliding doors, which open onto the covered terrace and lawn. Beyond the lawn are steps down to a swimming pool.

Overall, the architects have achieved a contemporary design without it being overtly modern or minimal. While primarily it is an open plan design, there are contained spaces for privacy which are still connected to the rest of the house. This is a wonderful house, meeting the client’s brief and aspirations.

### Ben Gerstel

Ben Gerstel is a volunteer tour guide who leads walking tours in Castlecrag for the Australian Architecture Association.



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### Nominated architect: Ben Gerstel

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## Market Garden Park



During Autumn 2025, Market Garden Park Community Gardeners harvested and enjoyed many garden-grown pumpkins and passionfruit.

Recently, we've been harvesting rocket, sweet potato and yacon. Yacon is a tuberous root vegetable with a crisp, sweet, juicy texture that's been compared to a combination of cucumber, watermelon and celery and generally eaten raw or in salads.

We're presently watching out for our winter plantings like onions, lettuce, radishes, snow peas, snap peas, kohlrabi, garlic, broccoli and cauliflower.

Ratty visitors have been causing some mischief in the garden, which has been treated as an opportunity to learn and led to our compost bins receiving an overhaul. It's exciting to see that covering our bananas has so far saved them from unwanted munchers.

In the native edibles area, a currant tree has been planted.

Our friendly gardeners enjoy catching up at garden meetings on Wednesday and Saturday mornings from 9:30am ... unless the weather is seriously uninviting.

We enjoy welcoming new faces and helping hands at any or all levels of gardening ability. Recent joiner young Baxter is a true garden-lover at the ripe age of 5 years. His enthusiasm is pure joy. Age is no barrier at any end of the spectrum.

For more information or to contact us, visit:  
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**Mary Anne Veliscek**



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## The Fair is not far away

The date for the Castlecrag Community Fair is fast approaching – Sunday 2 November should be marked in your calendar! The theme for the Fair will be a celebration of the CPA's centenary, focussing on the artistic and creative heritage of our community. The talents and creativity of our local artists and artisans will be featured as we reflect on the legacy created by the Griffins that we all enjoy today.

Popular Fair favourites like the pre-loved Book Stall, Classic Car display and delicious food outlets will be major attractions and a farmyard animals petting zoo is sure to be a major hit with the kids. Donations of pre-loved items for the bric-a-brac stall are most welcome.

Opportunities are still available for interested individuals or businesses who would like to take a stall at the Fair. The greater the number and variety the better! Contact Fair Co-ordinator Lisa Andrews at [lisaandrews20@gmail.com](mailto:lisaandrews20@gmail.com) for more information and to book a stall. We'd love to see you.



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## Castlecrag Local Plant Guide

### Sources for Native Plants






**Harvest Seeds and Native Plants**  
Lot 22, Mona Vale Road,  
Terrey Hills, just past Hills  
Flower Market  
Phone: (02) 9450 2699

**Ku-ring-gai Native Plant Nursery**  
Run by Ku-ring-gai Council,  
430 Mona Vale Road, St Ives  
Phone: (02) 9424 0825

**Tharwa Propagation Nursery**  
21 Myoora Road, Terrey Hills  
Phone: (02) 9450 1967

At present only a few local plants are sourced from local material, although some nurseries will grow to order. Asking for locally indigenous plants, or for particular species, will encourage nurseries to grow them.

If your garden abuts or includes bushland any planting should use plants of local provenance. Consider bush regeneration and/or pile burns to stimulate dormant seed (talk to Council about this).

## Castlecrag Plant Guide

Willoughby Council has recently asked the Castlecrag Progress Association for permission to publish our Plant Guide on its website. The Guide was first produced in 2009 and reviewed and reprinted in 2015. Plant selection was provided by current CPA Committee member Gay Spies, representing the Willoughby Environmental Protection Association, and Adrienne Kabos from the Walter Burley Griffin Society. The reprint was funded by WCC.

This will be an honoured acknowledgement of the CPA's efforts in promoting indigenous plant selection for the home gardener. Native plants are the most appropriate selection, given their preference for the environment in which they evolved. This means their maintenance needs are low in terms of water demand or fertiliser consumption. While being attractive, these plants also provide refuge for native species, birds, reptiles and mammals.

Although the list of suppliers of native plants has changed, it has certainly grown. Perhaps its publication on this platform will give them a much broader audience. Willoughby City covers a range of soil types and micro-climates, so it's always best to carry out your research or seek professional advice when making plant selections. A degree of care up front can result in many years of wonderful garden pleasure, both for you and the creatures that also enjoy it.

The new edition of the Guide is now on our website – <https://castlecrag.org.au>

The Guide provides suggestions for native plants suitable for local gardens, especially those on sandstone derived soils in Castlecrag, Middle Cove, Castle Cove and Northbridge. While the listed plants remain the same, the information, especially on

sourcing these plants, has been updated.

You are also able to use the Guide on your phone while you are at a nursery.

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## Our hidden treasure, with an extended shelf life

Since 1951, the Crag community has been well served by our "secret" library. It's no secret that it exists but its presence is not exactly obvious. But once you know where it is and when its open, the library is well worth a visit.

Tucked away on the side of the Community Centre in The Postern, behind the KU Kindergarten, the library is cosy, but functional. Looking very schmick after a recent paint job, a warm welcome is assured from the wonderful volunteer staff who are always delighted to greet new members and those keen to borrow again.



As a community library, as distinct from a branch library, and with limited space available, the range of books in stock is generally limited to recreational reading. Fiction abounds, with an especially strong crime section, as Castlecrag readers apparently love a good murder! There's also an abundance of titles for our very junior readers, with the bi-weekly visits from the kindy classes a highlight of activities. A number of volumes relating to Castlecrag history are also available.

The library looks to keep the range of works current, with bestsellers regularly purchased using funds from the grant provided by Willoughby City Council. Many surplus books are sent to Papua New Guinea to continue their life.

Borrowers are taken back into "old school" library days, with a manual card system still used; no digitisation here! Borrowed books are expected to be returned after three weeks and there is no maximum limit on the number of books borrowed at the one time (within reason!). A drop box is available for after-hours returns and items borrowed from Chatswood Library can also be returned through Castlecrag Library, courtesy of the weekly courier service.



Volunteers Dorothy Fraser (right) and Kathleen Murray

The great news is that library membership is open to anyone and at no cost. Why not join one of the longest continuously operating community libraries in NSW and extend your reading enjoyment options? Opening hours are 3:00-4:30pm Tuesdays and Thursdays, while Saturdays are 10:00-12:00 noon. Additional volunteer staff are always sought; contact Dorothy Fraser at [cdmfraser@hotmail.com](mailto:cdmfraser@hotmail.com) if you are interested in joining the team.

So, now you know the Castlecrag Library tale, why not check it out for yourself?



## Our man in Macquarie Street

It's fair to say that our State member for Willoughby, Tim James, was always destined for a political career. His high school economics teacher (Tim's favourite subject) at Barker College suggested to him in Year 12 that he may wish to consider politics as a vocation – and he was prophetically right! Having grown up on Penshurst Street, Roseville, it was not until his family moved to Artarmon that he took an active interest in community affairs. Although aged only 21 and still studying business and law at UTS, Tim became aware of various local issues and joined the Artarmon Progress Association. It was not long before he took on the Secretary's role and the political journey commenced.

He wrote to all parties, seeking information on their policies and membership requirements, but settled on his initial preference when he joined the Young Liberals in 1993. Active involvement with Joe Hockey's successful election campaign for the Federal seat of North Sydney in 1996 resulted in a part-time role within Joe's office, before Prime Minister John Howard provided an opportunity working within his electoral office as a junior staffer, a position Tim held for nearly five years.

The examples set by these two prominent identities strongly influenced Tim's approach to his responsibilities as an MP. "I received a great grounding. I learned much about how to handle the role, how to be responsive to a community, how to care for people, how to find the balance between the demands of the job and family life", Tim observes. "What impressed me most about Mr Howard was the importance he placed on his own electorate and constituents, even when he was PM. He would regularly keep in touch with the electoral office, even while dealing with major national and international issues. His constant attention to those who elected him always impressed me."

Tim credits his parents' examples as strong influencers of his working philosophy. "Mum was a nurse, including at Castlecrag Hospital and Dad worked in human resources so my whole upbringing was about working with people and being interested in them. The opportunity to represent, support and help people resonated with me and was a large factor in deciding to pursue a political career," he reflects. It was no rushed decision, however, as his career path after leaving John Howard's staff saw him practise law, spend time in the global health care industry, take the role of Chief of Staff in the O'Farrell State government, then run a think tank and an industry body before ultimately being elected to State Parliament in 2022.



Succeeding popular and, with some voters, much loved former Member for Willoughby and Premier Gladys Berejiklian was challenging, especially with only one month's notice for a campaign prior to the by-election following Gladys' resignation. "Following Gladys was a huge honour," Tim confirms. "She has been very helpful to me over the 20 years that we've known each other. Many people held strong feelings and a sense of loss when she stood aside. But she encouraged me to be myself and follow my own course. I hope she's proud of me."

So what are the realities of a parliamentarian's life? When parliament is sitting, that means usually three days in the chamber – Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. Noon starts on Tuesday and 10:00am on other days are preceded by party room and committee meetings and preparation and reading time for the sitting ahead. The days rarely end before 7:00pm and are often followed by attendance at functions within Parliament House, so a 9:00pm departure for home is the norm. A sore point with Tim is the relatively low number of sitting weeks – only 16 are scheduled for this year. "In my view, that's not enough," he asserts. "Parliament could be more productive and effective if it was run more efficiently."

Non-sitting days involve meeting with local people, community groups, business groups, schools and dealing with the constant administrative duties within the electoral office at Northbridge. Added to those activities are Tim's responsibilities holding the shadow portfolios of Small Business, Workplace Health and Safety, Building and Fair Trading. Noting that there are about 850,000 small businesses in NSW, Tim ponders the perennial question of how to get to understand as many of these as possible. Attendance at various business chamber meetings, networks, conferences and other events, which present numerous opportunities to meet and talk with business owners, are a regular part of his calendar.

All of this means that life for the James family – wife Nikki and their three young children – is typically hectic but, as Tim notes, "It's our choice to be busy." He tries to get to the gym twice per week and also be out and about in the electorate to meet the community at listening posts, bus stops, train stations, which he considers a very important part of his activities.



As a 32 year member of the Liberal Party, it's relevant to discuss the various challenges the party has faced in recent years, as it struggles to retain prominence in the political landscape. Tim's views on this topic are clear. "A party is only as good as its members make it and the Liberal Party has, for some time, not been representative enough, has not kept in touch with the grass roots adequately. It needs to be more diverse, community based and more reflective of society."

He notes that while the NSW population is close to eight million people, fewer than 10,000 are Liberal Party members. While Tim is firm in his conviction that the party's core principles and beliefs best represent the interests of our community, locally and nationally, the party needs to lift its game. "It's about how we, as a party, are in touch, how we select candidates, how we develop and implement policies. We need to be more democratic, with more people having more say in more decisions. I'm the member for everyone in Willoughby, not just Liberal voters, so I need to serve the entire community and be prepared to listen to and respect a wide range of views."

This driving sense of service is very evident in Tim's conversation and it's clear that he values his position highly. "To be the elected representative of 100,000 people is a great privilege and a weighty responsibility", he confirms. "It spurs you on and it energises and inspires me every day. I'm grateful for the opportunity and I don't take it for granted." His core beliefs are straightforward:

- Work hard
- Treat everyone well, with respect and dignity
- Build a good team around you
- Take nothing for granted
- Enjoy what I do, no matter how difficult it may be

Despite forming these views, Tim readily acknowledges that he still has much to learn and much to do. He is a great advocate for the concept of always asking how things can be done better and will always welcome feedback. He regards the real substance of an MP's work as meeting people and understanding their lives and circumstances, so that he can assist in dealing with whatever problems they may have. "Sometimes government has let them down and I have a role to play in helping. This aspect of my work is probably the most meaningful." He has come to realise that there is rarely a quick and instantaneous response; core outcomes come from a build-up, over time, of goodwill, hard work, good ideas and results that are good for the whole community and the State.

To those ends, Tim regards leadership as vital. "I try to practise servant leadership – service above oneself – which is more about considering others and less about politics, factions, parties and politicians. A true leader rises above all the party machinations and leads for all. Trust, respect, authority needs to be earned and these things can't be manufactured – they come with hard work and service over time."

Tim is unequivocal in his stated purpose, in that he wants to make Willoughby an even better place to be – a future that is prosperous, cohesive, assured, generous and respectful. He encapsulates these ambitions when he states, "I have a responsibility to help the people of Willoughby lead their very best life, for themselves and their children. That's very important to me." It's difficult to argue against such sentiment, whomever received your vote.



## 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



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**5 MAY 2025**

## Conquest to develop a \$250 million mixed use destination.

In a landmark move reshaping Sydney's North Shore, private equity real estate firm Conquest has acquired the Quadrangle Shopping Centre in Castlecrag for \$68.8 million, announcing today a visionary \$250 million redevelopment that will see the site reborn as Queensbridge, a vibrant lifestyle and retail precinct.

Queensbridge will reimagine the tired village into a modern retail dining and lifestyle hub, paired with a collection of luxury residences above, to be called 100 Edinburgh.

The project is one of the most intriguing urban renewal stories in recent memory, not just for its scale, but for the legacy it builds upon.

For decades, the site was owned by the founder of Greycliff, Dr Stanley Quek, a medical doctor turned property developer and philanthropist, widely respected for his deep-rooted connection to Castlecrag and commitment to architectural integrity. Dr Quek's decision to sell the Quadrangle Shopping Centre wasn't just transactional, it was personal.

Greycliff acquired the 5,200 sqm Castlecrag site in 2016. Following extensive community consultation, development approval was granted in December last year. The approved redevelopment will replace the existing shopping centre with a new supermarket, premium retail offerings, and a collection of high-end apartments. This redevelopment will bring much-needed renewal to the area while maintaining the village character Castlecrag is known for.

"By Wednesday we were introduced to the deal to buy the site, on Thursday it passed our investment committee and by Friday, we shook hands with Dr Quek and secured it unconditionally," said Michael Akkawi, CEO of Conquest.

"For Conquest, this acquisition is a generational investment that will redefine Sydney's north shore for decades to come with a promise to uphold and enhance what Dr Quek envisioned for this land," added Akkawi.

Set in one of Sydney's most architecturally significant suburbs Castlecrag is known for its deep respect for nature and community. Conquest's plans aim to preserve that spirit while ushering in a new era of design and sophistication for future living.

The mixed-use redevelopment will be a contemporary retail and dining destination attracting premium food and beverage operators, wellness brands, and boutique retail. 100 Edinburgh will comprise architecturally opulent residences that promise "glamour, greenery, and grace."

Construction is expected to commence in the coming weeks, with an on-site experience centre opening soon to the public.

In a property market increasingly driven by short-term wins and rapid turnovers, Conquest's bold move in Castlecrag stands out for its long-game philosophy a rare blend of patience, place-making, and vision.

### About Conquest

Conquest is a private equity real estate firm with holdings in both Sydney, Australia and London, UK.

With 21 years of experience delivering institutional real estate across three core sectors, residential, retail and hotels, the firm is strategically positioned to capitalise on opportunities in both markets. Having grown to \$1.8 billion in AUM by operating through its balance sheet over the past two decades, Conquest is now collaborating with institutional capital to unlock opportunities within its core markets.

By leveraging the expertise of its portfolio companies, Conquest achieved seamless project execution, controlling key aspects of investment lifecycle to enhance efficiency and maximise long-term performance. Portfolio 2.5 billion completed or under construction, real estate 5 billion, residential apartments and commercial spaces.

At Conquest we focus on creating long-term value. Our strength lies in our strategic investment model, which seamlessly integrates capital deployment, asset optimization, and risk mitigated execution to generate sustainable high yield returns. At Conquest, we focus not only on acquisition but on creating value. We aim to transform the assets we manage into high-performing institutional investments that benefit our investors, community and the wider economy.

### About Greycliff

located in the Sydney CBD.

Established in 1993 by Executive Chairman Dr Stanley Quek, the property company offers a wide range of services with a focus on development, property investment, general agency sales and leasing and project marketing, with skills particularly in the strata titled apartment market and high-end residential market in Sydney.

Historically, the company has had close links with Frasers Property Australia, with Dr Quek as the CEO and later Chairman of the company, and for many years functioned as the developer's preferred selling agent to the Sydney market.



## Ballet school pirouettes into a new home

After eight years living a nomadic existence around the lower North Shore, including a period at the old Uniting Church hall in Charles Street, ballet school Le Petit Ballet has found a permanent home. With a new studio opening on 27 April at Shop 5, 128 Sailors Bay Road, Northbridge, a fresh and exciting era for the school has commenced. Local State member Tim James was in attendance as he and school Principal Miss Laura Parrot cut the ribbon to the cheers of an excited crowd of young students, parents and friends.



Miss Laura could not hide her pride and pleasure as she greeted the many visitors. "We're so pleased that we now have our own home, which will help make our community stronger and give our students a clearer view for their future," she happily observed. "Every step we've taken during the past eight years has been about not building just a studio but a community and it's wonderful that we now have a space that we can genuinely call home."

Even as a young dancer in Canberra, Miss Laura knew she wanted to teach, taking classes on her own when she was 16 years old. On completing her studies to become an accredited Royal Academy of Dance teacher in 2009, she moved to Sydney, freelancing at various studios. This experience gave her valuable insights into how various schools operated and her own teaching philosophy emerged. "I knew I could create a space integrating dance technique and sound foundations but also bring an element of story play into classes and Le Petit Ballet was launched," she reflects.

Her views on what makes a good teacher provide a clear insight into the values of the school. "A good teacher is one who can see everyone in the room and help each child reach their potential. It's important to understand how each individual child responds, which can be quite different." The joy that Miss Laura and her team gain from seeing their students' excitement

when they enter the studio and the satisfaction derived as the students progress into skilled and confident performers is very rewarding. "The confidence goes beyond simply being on stage; it's how they present themselves to the world, so we're helping to build valuable life skills in our young people", Ms Laura proudly states.

The new studio has been a labour of love, with Miss Laura, her husband and two best friends taking on the renovation work themselves, laying floors, painting ceilings and walls, installing lights and fixtures. "It was hard work over about three months, but it's been hugely satisfying and we shed lots of happy tears." While very functional, the studio is warm and inviting, providing a space that's welcoming to all students.



Classes start for 2 year olds, progressing to 14 years, with plans to extend up to 18 years. Currently about 200 students are enrolled, with classes held Monday-Saturday, open to both sexes and all experience levels. Even adult classes are available (although some students may need extra work, as the photo below makes clear!). "I love sharing the joy of movement", Miss Laura enthuses. "Everyone should experience this joy." The passionate and dedicated team at Le Petit Ballet are eagerly waiting to share that joy with all local residents.



[lepetitballet.com.au](http://lepetitballet.com.au)

0423 406 572

[admin@lepetitballet.com.au](mailto:admin@lepetitballet.com.au)



## Vale Gijsbertus (Ben) Henricus and Anna Marie Visser

Our loving parents and cherished Oma and Opa passed away recently; Ben on 30 October 2024, preceded by Anna almost a year earlier on 27 November 2023.

Both born in The Netherlands and seeking adventure and opportunity, they moved to Australia, settling in Castlecrag in 1969. They worked hard and were proud to become Australians, celebrating 55 years of marriage together.

Anna was an active member of the Castlecrag Tennis Club and took pleasure in helping others, working for various medical practices and hospitals. Ben excelled as Manager in Operations and Industrial Relations in Australian Telecommunications, and also enjoyed teaching at TAFE and u3a.

In their true altruist nature, both Anna and Ben bequeathed themselves to local universities for medical research and education.

Thank you to all friends and neighbours for their care and support.

**Peter and Julia Visser**



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## Are you concerned about what is happening to our environment?



Your local environmental group, WEPA (Willoughby Environmental Protection Association), is a non-party political community group, whose members have been active in Willoughby for over 40 years. Our aim is to preserve natural heritage, protect local bushland and wildlife and mitigate the impacts of pollution in our locality. Our members are involved in environmental matters at local, state and national levels.

Many of our members volunteer with bushcare groups and have participated in Willoughby Council advisory committees. Members regularly receive our newsletters and bulletins and we take part in Willoughby community activities such as National Tree Day, Fauna Fair, Tastes of Naremburn and the Castlecrag Community Fair. We also hold public meetings with speakers or films relevant to the environment, and run pre-election Meet the Candidate events. We were very active in the campaign against the Beaches Link Tunnel and continue to write submissions on environmental issues.

If you are interested in helping to preserve the environment of Willoughby and beyond, please consider joining as our membership numbers are part of our strength. Go to the WEPA website [wepa.org.au](http://wepa.org.au), read more about WEPA's activities, and click Join WEPA Now You are very welcome to join us at our next public meeting on August 19, to hear about Willoughby Council's Urban Forest Program from Council's Tree Compliance Officer, Alastair Quek and Resilience Officer, Dr Nick Chapman. Venue is Dougherty Centre, Victor Street, Chatswood, time to be confirmed.

Please see our website for details closer to the date.

### Hands-On Fun These Holidays!

Join our exciting kids craft workshops and birthday parties, where kids **hammer, build, paint and create** their own masterpieces to take home!



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