



NEWSLETTER OF THE CASTLECRAG PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

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GLENAEON'S DREAM IS CASTLECRAG'S NIGHTMARE

The future of the proposed **Castlecrag Freeway** will be decided after due consultation with representative groups. In addition to financial considerations, private enterprise will need to consider the effects of their proposals on community aspects including the major issue of the environment. It is now a visible process under the control of the Minister for Transport, Bruce Baird.

By contrast, the process for deciding the fate of the **Castlecrag Infants School** site has been carried out behind closed doors without public consultation. From the day the site was offered as a sacrificial lamb in the unsuccessful attempt to wrest the seat of North Sydney from the Independents, to the recent offer to Glenaeon, ministers, and bureaucrats have resisted all attempts to have the facts exposed.

The hard facts of demographics are at the heart of this issue, particularly as the Department has refused to discuss the ancilliary matters of traffic and other community concerns. The Department's internal memorandum, released in January 1992, predicted a 5.1% decrease in enrolments to date. The reality, based on phone calls to Willoughby, Northbridge and Castlecove Primary Schools, is an increase of 5.9%. The census conducted by the Castlecrag Progress Association on 13th March 1993 disclosed a 19% increase in 0-5's between December 1990 and December 1992.

The evidence indicates an increasing infant population, due to younger families replacing Castlecrag's pioneer residents and the advent of dual occupancy/medium density. In addition, the recession has refocussed many families on public

education and parents are seeking early infant enrolments as a cheaper option to child care.

Despite the suggestion on 19th March 1993, by David Rowlands (Director of Properties - Dept of School Education), that a comprehensive census be carried out in light of the findings of the Castlecrag Progress Association's census, the fate of the school site has been decided without any discernible attempt by the Department to determine infant population trends in Castlecrag.

Infant child education has been the focal point of SOS*Crag's efforts to date and whilst we have enjoyed overwhelming support in Castlecrag we recognize that the majority of residents have not been involved in our campaign.

Well I have news for the silent majority in Castlecrag.

Residents of Glenroy and Greenfield Avenues Middle Cove are rubbing their hands with glee. Their traffic problem, caused by cars associated with Glenaeon School, is to be exported to neighbouring Castlecrag. A twice daily influx of 150 vehicles will paralyse Edinburgh Road with queues stretching from the Eastern Valley Way lights back past the school.

Castlecrag Infants School is to be SOLD to Glenaeon for the purpose of transferring the high car ratio dependent junior school from Middle Cove. As an indication of Glenaeon's intentions for the site, initial children numbers are to be 90-130 which is double the number attending the public school at the time of closure. >>>>>

The next meeting of the **Castlecrag Progress Association** will be held at the **Community Centre**, corner The Postern and The Rampart, **Tuesday 22 June at 8pm**. All welcome!

The **Castlecrag Conservation Society** will hold its next meeting on **Wednesday 21st July at 8pm** at the **Infants School, Edinburgh Road**. For details ring **Harold Spies, President, 958 8569**.

The transfer will allow Glenaeon to expand its senior school which of course will necessitate a further expansion of the junior school to maintain compatibility between the centres.

To be fair to Glenaeon, representatives of the school have sought consultation with SOS*Crag to assess the Castlecrag community's needs for the site; not to include public education. Needless to say, as the 2nd June meeting was the first indication to SOS*Crag that the site had been offered for sale to Glenaeon, that meeting was little more than an introduction. Glenaeon has offered to address a public meeting of Castlecrag residents, an offer which SOS*Crag recommends to the community. Glenaeon also spoke in sketchy terms of a community hall on the site.

At the initial meeting, a representative of Glenaeon stated that they have no interest in entering our dispute with the Department of School Education over meeting the education needs of the increasing numbers of Castlecrag children. In addition he confirmed that whilst they had invested heavily in seeking solutions to their traffic problems at Middle Cove, they have not examined the impact of their move on Castlecrag.

SOS*Crag has maintained throughout its epic campaign that the site's significance extends beyond the public education of infants. The current use of the site as a community and learning centre would be restricted by any private ownership. Similarly the myriad of passive community and recreational uses would cease.

The only space available in Castlecrag for family recreation will disappear forever behind a wall of public risk etc related regulations. All this at the time the Department is promoting extra curricular activities on school properties and is supposedly considering a request by Castlecrag Progress Association for a formalisation of the current activities of the community on the site.

One can only agree with Ted Mack that the Castlecrag of to-morrow will be significantly different from that of to-day. The trend towards dual occupancy/medium density will not generate open space. On the contrary as private space is consumed in expanding accommodation facilities, the demand for alternative open space will grow. Remember, this is the only parcel of flat, open, accessible land in Castlecrag.

Consider the following extracts from the SMH 26th February 1993 advertisement for future use of the school:

...future use of this site which will be acceptable in the community...

...provided that they (proposals) are satisfactory in other aspects...

...satisfy the general principles involved in the use of government assets for the overall good of the State...

...due regard given to those which take account of local expectations...

At the time of placing the advertisement, the Minister was aware that the unanimous resolution of the Castlecrag Community, passed at a widely publicised meeting in August 1992 and adopted by Willoughby City Council, was "that the school be re-opened as a public school". How can any of these conditions be satisfied by a proposal which ignores trends in children numbers, restricts public access, ignores traffic and environmental factors and seeks no consultation with the community concerned?

Notes issued by the Department to assist applicants include "Indicate whether interest is for purchase or lease, purchase price and if any terms apply; conditions and terms of lease if applicable". A representative of Glenaeon School advised SOS*Crag that his committee was "not interested in a lease and in any case a lease was not being offered by the Department".

SOS*Crag is continuing its campaign to maintain the site in public ownership. The terms of the meeting with Glenaeon representatives preclude direct contact with the media, until our next meeting. They are aware that we will be communicating our findings within our community. We will of course be contacting state and federal politicians to whom we believe we can put our case.

Andrew Frazer for SOS*Crag
Sunday 6th June

STOP PRESS: On 8 June a representative from Glenaeon School advised that subsequent to the meeting with SOS*Crag, a new traffic study had been commissioned.

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The existing transport facilities, at peak hours, between Manly/Warringah and the Central Business District (CBD) of Sydney are unacceptable. That this deficiency can best be met by additional freeway facilities, encouraging as it will increased private car usage, is a fallacy. Experience from similar-sized cities in the USA and Europe indicate conclusively that peak hour traffic problems are only satisfactorily overcome by efficient public transport systems. The Castlecrag Progress Association for more than 40 years has consistently opposed construction of a freeway in what is now called the Warringah Transport Corridor, because in our view it would ruin forever the beautiful Sugarloaf Bay escarpment at Castlecrag and make worse the existing traffic problems of the lower North Shore. A brief survey of files held by the Association relating to this matter may be of interest:

- 1934 A request was made to the Main Roads Board by the Councils of Willoughby, Manly, Warringah and North Sydney for design to be started on an "Express Route" from Manly to the city.
- 1939 - Work on the plan was deferred because of
- 1945 Australia's involvement in World War 2.
- 1946 The Cumberland County Council (CCC) was formed and assumed responsibility for the planning of major roads. Planning of the Express Route recommenced and in accordance with the conventional thinking of the time, it was assumed that existing roads would be upgraded and used where possible. The Councils of Willoughby, Manly and North Sydney recommended a route along Strathallen Avenue, Eastern Valley Way, Edinburgh Road, with a bridge from Sugarloaf Point to Seaforth. The CCC favoured a route from Cammeray Park, Folly Point, along the foreshores of Northbridge and across the bluff at Seaforth.
- 1948 A public exhibition of the plans was held in March inviting comments and objections. Willoughby Council objected to the Northbridge Route and on June 7 requested that the Castlecrag route be adopted.
- 1949 The Minister for Local Government requested that the CCC adopt a single route. The route through Northbridge was dropped (June). Since that day our Association has actively opposed the plan. Our records show meetings with 200 irate ratepayers attending Willoughby Council. Our president then was Eric Nicholls.
- 1952 All landowners in what is now known as the Warringah Transport Corridor were advised that their properties were in whole or part "affected by the road proposal". Since that time the majority of owners have

sold their affected land to the appropriate authorities.

1974 Those landowners who had not already sold their land to the Department of Main Roads (as it was then known) received a brief letter stating "The Department's proposals for the construction of the Warringah Freeway at this location necessitates the acquisition of your property". Widespread concern at this was expressed by the majority of residents, our Association met this challenge by setting up a committee of approximately 20 residents, some with technical qualifications. Financial support came from the community and from the Australian Government, none from the State Government. The Committee prepared four comprehensive reports:

- (a) Traffic Impact Report
- (b) Survey of Social Effects
- (c) Acoustical Investigation
- (d) Environmental Impact Study

In 1977 the incoming State Government headed by Mr Neville Wran abandoned this and other radial freeway corridors and in 1980 set up a *Commission of Inquiry into the Warringah Transport Corridor* headed by Mr D S Kirby. The Terms of Reference of this Inquiry were as follows:

To enquire into and make recommendations on possible future and alternative uses of the Warringah Freeway Corridor with particular reference to the proposal made by the Northside Councils ... to retain the reservation as a transport corridor.

Our Committee was reconvened to make representation to this Inquiry. In addition to the reports already submitted, two additional reports were prepared; an Ecological Survey prepared by Judy Messer, defining factors justifying conservation of the Escarpment as natural bushland and protected public open space, and a Sound Survey complying with Australian Standard 1055/73 defining the estimated public reaction to the noise which would be generated by the proposed freeway. These reports and other data were incorporated in a comprehensive document presented to the Inquiry in July 1981. >>>>

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Mr Kirby carried out a most competent and extensive investigation to which no less than 841 written and oral submissions were received. Many of these were from members of this Association, the Conservation Society, WEPA, and Castlecrag residents. Our members attended the hearings on at least 30 days.

In April 1983 Mr Kirby concluded: *"We have taken the view that Middle Harbour and the escarpment are simply too precious to sacrifice. If we were called upon to recommend for or against construction within the corridor we would be obliged to recommend against construction."*

What of the future? The position is far from clear. In April this year the then Minister for Roads, Mr Murray, called for expressions of interest from the private sector to build a freeway or a mass transit system to solve the traffic problems in the lower North Shore. In May this year when Mr Baird became Minister for Roads and Transport, he announced that, in his opinion, the area would be better served by a light rail system.

Our Committee will keep a close watch on these matters and advise in future issues of *The Crag*.

The Edgar Deans Memorial

A very successful and enjoyable community event took place on Saturday 5th June with the memorial planting of one of the "islands" of Castlecrag for distinguished Castlecrag resident, the late Edgar Deans. Edgar Deans was the Secretary of Griffin's company, the Greater Sydney Development Association, and an Alderman and Mayor of Willoughby Council. Over 150 people, members and friends of the Deans family, and former and present residents of Castlecrag, attended the ceremony where the Mayor of Willoughby Ald. Greg Bartels planted the final tree and officially unveiled the plaque. The speech by Joyce Batterham in memory of her brother Edgar, will be reproduced in the next issue of The Crag for those residents with an interest in the history of Castlecrag.

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The Fun-gi Night

A big Thank You to Harold Spies for the fabulous fungi night *Tiptoe through the Toadstools* at Castlecrag School on 19th May last. Harold is a member of the Sydney Fungal Studies Group and he treated us to many magnificent slides and a wonderful collection of specimens.

All the specimens were from the Castlecrag area and there was a stunning and very wide range. They included the orange velvet-like *Lactarius*; delicate little Fairy Parasols; the Ghost Fungus *Omphalotus* (illustrated here) which glow with a blue-green luminescence in the dark; Puff Balls which when rain hits them puff clouds of spores from their caps; Earth Stars with their star-like form that push up through the earth; delicate fingers of bright red Coral Fungi; the jelly-like Wood Ears which are often found on the bark of dead Coral Trees - to name just a few.

We learned that Autumn (when the weather is damp but not too cold) is the time for fungi, or more correctly the fungal fruiting bodies or toadstools. The thread-like feeding tubes of fungi (known as *mycelium*) live in the soil all through the year but in Autumn they produce their reproductive forms which are often called toadstools, which reveal themselves above the soil's surface to spread their spores. Fungi are an important part of recycling in the environment and many are reliant on dead or decaying wood to germinate and grow. So spare a thought for the fairies at the bottom of your garden and leave that dead branch lying there - you never know maybe next Autumn there will be Fairy Parasols there!

Adrienne Kabos



OMPHALOTUS OR
GHOST FUNGUS

A Montessori Under Three Group has commenced at the pre-school/St James Church premises at 184 Edinburgh Road. The group follows the Montessori philosophy with assistant Tineke van Gasselt guiding us. A morning and afternoon session is available to eight children and their parent/carer. Enquiries: Diana Leech 958 6460

The New Broom

The new Local Government Act passed in Parliament on 27th May last is the first reform to local government legislation in 72 years. At the conference *Structuring Local Government to meet the Environmental Challenge* held by the Total Environment Centre on 29th May, speaker John Connor, State Environmental Liaison Officer, stated that this new legislation offers the opportunity for councils to start anew and dispense with the old, often inefficient bureaucracies.

The old Act of 1919 was based on the old English principles of developing the vast open spaces of this country without the need to take environmental consequences into account. The new Act however requires Councils to have regard for their environmental responsibilities and requires them to produce a State of the Environment Report each year. These environmental audits will have to include details of unique vegetation, landscape and vegetation cover, waste management policy, polluted areas and areas of toxic chemicals storage.

These significant environmental aspects of the Act were only achieved by the hard work and tenacity of the environmental groups and the support of Independents Peter MacDonald and Clover Moore in the Lower House and Richard Jones in the Upper House, and the Labor Party.

The new Act redefines the roles of Councils. Speaker Murray Kidnie, Secretary of the Local Government Association, said that as of 1st July, there will be a 2 year period within which all senior staff positions will be declared vacant and future employment done on a contract basis with a minimum 12 month contract and a maximum of 5 years. Six training seminars on the new Act designed for Councillors and Council staff are being organised by the Local Government Association and will begin in August.

The potential for wiping the slate clean and starting anew was repeated and emphasised by another conference speaker, Danny Wiggins who is a Town Planning Consultant specialising in local government improvements. Mr Wiggins said that the spirit of the new Local Government Act is to make a new opportunity to improve things. He stated emphatically that Council departments should be reorganised to be multi-disciplinary. He believes that current Council structures of fragmented administration with professional demarcation between Council departments was distorting, so that no-one took responsibility for whole environments. Thus for efficiency there is a definite need for multi-disciplinary teams. For example such a team, as well as having Health and Building, Town Planning and Engineering representatives, might include an ecologist and an

economist so that it became a functional division, and reorganised into a distinct team for a defined area so that they became "Geographic Divisions". He said that "reorganising will be a fight" but have undoubted benefits. In the past, the input orientation of Councils had handicapped efficiency by fragmenting needs. There are definite gains to be made by changing to an output orientation, where multidisciplinary teams monitor and have a policy role. Mr Wiggins said that "at the moment all information received at the front counter goes off into the ether" without any monitoring. He said that Environment Officers should have input into all Council departments and should not be placed in a separate unit, and that such a wholistic approach would increase responsibility and accountability; encourage staff to be supportive of each other; improve client servicing and simplify procedures for application assessment.

Another speaker, Dr Garry Smith from Sutherland Municipal Council, pointed out that Economically Sustainable Development (ESD) can only be achieved with a working interrelationship and that because every environment (both natural and man-made), is interrelated, then "prioritization is death". At present, ESD goals are at the federal level only but for ESD to be achieved they had to be taken up at the Local Government level. Dr Smith said that the State of the Environment Report required by the new Act should ideally be recorded on a day to day basis by Council staff generally and not just one staff member, to be disregarded by the other Council employees.

Other speakers included Sue Sacker, a Councillor from Manly Municipal Council, who said that the Manly Environment Centre's shopfront at The Corso, in the heart of Manly, has facilitated a rapidly increasing environmental awareness amongst residents, and Genevieve Rankin, Councillor from Sutherland Shire Council who said that "it doesn't matter how good the laws are at state and federal levels unless they are implemented at the local level they are useless". Additionally she said that the development of strategic environmental plans is impeded by the traditional bureaucratic structure of councils and that an integrated pro-active approach, that brought the economy, environment and community together, was needed.

Next WEPA Meeting

Monday 12th July 8pm Artarmon Library

Topic: Survey of Urban Runoff in Willoughby and its Effect on Bushland. The guest speaker is Rick Morse (of Morse McKey) who is conducting the survey on behalf of Willoughby City Council.

CASTLECRAG LIBRARY

The Community Centre, The Rampart

TUESDAYS 3.30 - 4.30pm

THURSDAYS 1 - 5pm

SATURDAYS 10am - Noon

NEW BOOKS LIST:

KROSS, J	The Czar's Madman
SETH, V	A Suitable Boy
PATTERSON, R	Degree of Guilt
GRISHAN, J	The Client
PIKE, G	The Second Sunrise
LUDNUM, R	The Scorpio Illusion
ARMSTRONG, C	Concert of Ghosts
MALOUF, D	To the Ends of the Earth
MARTIN, A	Menzies, a Life Vol. 1
READERS' DIGEST	Australia's Dangerous Creatures
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Local News

Castlecrag Residents are advised that the **Quadrangle Shopping Centre** has been required by Council to comply with the requirements of Ordinance 70 of the Local Government Act for fire regulations. This includes an additional exit door on the eastern and/or northern (Edinburgh Road) wall of the building, fire hydrants, emergency lighting and illuminated exit signs.

Post Office For Sale

Did you see the *SMH* advertisement calling for bids to purchase the Castlecrag Post Office? Tenders closed on 4 June. If no acceptable offer was received by Australia Post, the Progress Association will be seeking advice on future options, as we are concerned at the possibility of losing this service to our community.

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Peter McNeil
Director

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Please send to the Treasurer, Diana Jones, Box 6/77, Castlecrag.

The Crag is edited on behalf of the Castlecrag Progress Association (Box 6/77 Castlecrag) by Kerry McKillop (958 4516). Contributions and letters are most welcome. Deliveries: Donna Sife (958 1841).