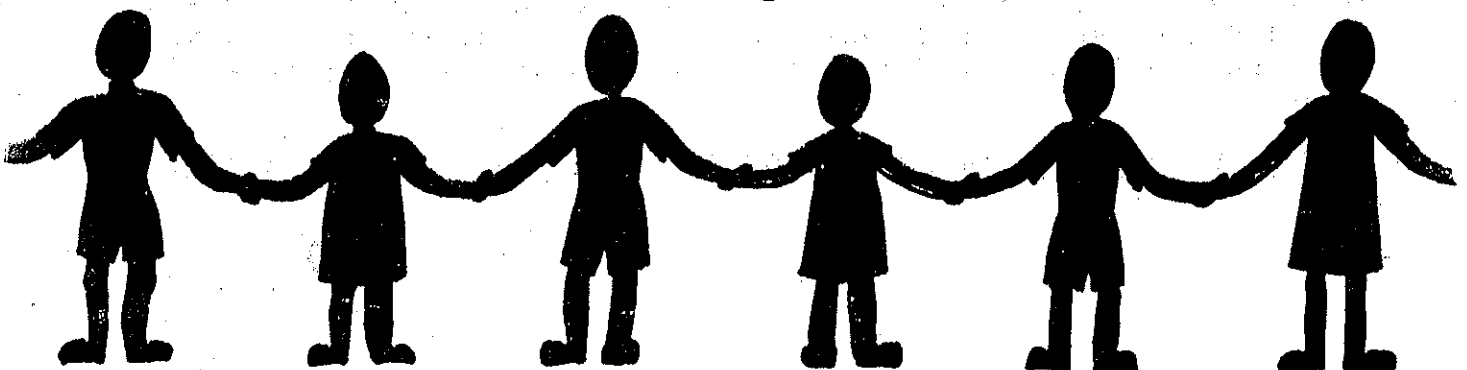


**SAVE
OUR
SCHOOL**



**WRITE TO, OR PHONE:
MR PETER COLLINS (958 4192)
MR NICK GREINER (228 5555)
DR TERRY METHERELL (230 2111)**



CASTLECRAG INFANTS SCHOOL
SAVE OUR SCHOOL

We have been informed by the Education Department that Castlecrag Infants School is to be closed at the end of 1989. This decision was imparted to us two days prior to the government's Media Release and contrary to an assurance made by the Education Department that we would be consulted prior to any such decision being made.

According to the Media Release the government has 'decided to close the school in the best educational interests of students in the area.' Parents of children who have attended Castlecrag Infants School will I am sure, disagree with this statement. Our children receive an admirable education at Castlecrag Infants School and have the advantage of attending a small community school within walking distance of their homes.

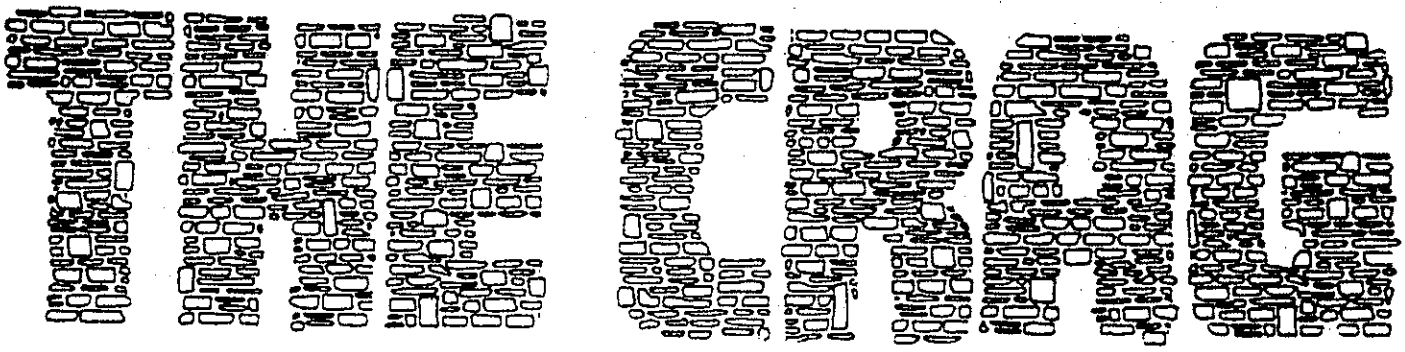
The government has proposed that a local consultative committee, chaired by the Regional Director of Education, Mr. R. G. Nicholls, be formed to oversee the arrangements for the closure of the school. Staff, parents and the local education community will be represented. We are surprised that this "consultative" committee is being formed after a decision has been taken and not before. It appears to typify decision making procedures of the new government.

The government's Media Release states that 'the number of students at the school is currently only 71 and is not expected to increase.' This is not true. We currently have 73 students at the school and an enrolment of 78 for 1989. We also have information from our local real estate agents which indicates there are more young families moving into the area. The truth is that there is a falling enrolment at Willoughby Public School and Castlecrag is being closed to fill that gap at Willoughby.

There is widespread community opposition to the closure of the Castlecrag Infants School. Apart from its proven educational contributions to the lives of the children in the area over many generations, the school has also acted as a generator of community, social and inter personal networks for each generation of families whose children attend the school. This action by the government is perceived as a direct attack on the educational and social spirit of Castlecrag.

The Castlecrag Progress Association is opposed to the sale of the land of Castlecrag Infants School for private entrepreneurial development. We want this land preserved for the amenity of the whole community. It is vital for you to attend the next Castlecrag Infants School P&C Association meeting in order to support the Committee's actions to prevent the closure of your community school.

ATTEND THE P&C MEETING AT THE SCHOOL, 8PM, MONDAY 17TH OCTOBER.



CASTLECRAG INFANTS SCHOOL

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

MAIL OR DROP INTO

CARAVAN OR C CRAG

NEWSAGENCY

The NSW Government plans to sell Castlecrag Infants School to allow the site to be developed as medium density housing with as many as 70 TOWNHOUSES on the site.

To do this the Government is attempting to change the local planning law to allow the site to be sold as "surplus government land" through what is called a Regional Environment Plan (REP No. 7-Amendment No.4).

~~As notification of this action, and advertisement appeared in the local press recently, inviting comments on the plan to be submitted to the Department of Environment and Planning by February 5th 1990.~~

WE MUST ALL ACT NOW

To counter this move, and to exercise our democratic right to have a say in our community affairs, all residents of Castlecrag and Willoughby are urged to:

1. ATTEND A PUBLIC MEETING AT CASTLECRAG INFANTS SCHOOL ON WEDNESDAY 24TH JANUARY AT 8.00PM.
2. WRITE TO THE HON. DAVID HAY, MINISTER FOR PLANNING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, SYDNEY, NSW, TO REGISTER YOUR OBJECTION TO THIS ABUSE OF LOCAL PLANNING LAW.
3. DONATE MONEY TO THE FIGHTING FUND BY CASH OR CHEQUE DRAWN IN FAVOUR OF "THE TRUSTEES, S.O.S. CRAG".



TOGETHER WE GROW : SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

SOME POINTS YOU MAY CARE TO CONSIDER INCLUDING IN YOUR LETTER TO THE MINISTER.

1. The Castlecrag Infants School land is not "surplus" land and should not be included in the Government's asset sale program by deviously changing the planning laws to include it in this program.
2. At a public meeting at the school last year, Willoughby Council resolved not to rezone the land to allow medium density housing and this was supported unanimously by over 200 residents and parents who attended this meeting.
3. The closure of Castlecrag Infants School is not supported by the community. The Education Department's reasons for closing the school have been shown to be based on incorrect information. Contrary to the Department's demographic figures which they said indicated declining enrolments, independent local demographic studies reveal that enrolments are in fact rising.
4. The existence of Castlecrag Infants School as a local, small centre for excellence in education strengthens the community fabric and assists in the development of important community relationships such as child care and Neighbourhood Watch. The site itself is an invaluable community asset providing much needed accessible open space for community activities such as fetes, dances, meetings and entertainment.
5. Many people accept the need for the establishment of areas for medium density housing, however Castlecrag Infants School is not suitable for such intensification of development with the attendant traffic problems, pollution and so on, and there are many vacant sites in Castlecrag which are owned by the Government which would be far more appropriate (eg DMR land held for the proposed freeway over Middle Harbour).

Eric Kaye President Castlecrag Progress Association.

Lindy Batterham Convener Save Our School Committee

Bruce Wilson President Castlecrag Parents and Citizens Association..

Together We Grow

Newsletter of the Castlecrag Save Our Schools Committee

Volume 1 Number 1 February 1990

Coming Events

Monster Garage Sale/ Family Day/ Bazaar

This will be held at the school on Saturday 24th February 9am- 3pm. Features include a huge white elephant stall, plants, clothes, food, face painting and live music.

Do you have a garage full of old chairs that don't quite match the new kitchen? You might be denying someone that essential ingredient in their own garage disaster area. Please drop any garage junk into the school after 16th February. If you can't fit the elephant into the room then we will pick up.

Questions? Can you sell my collection of 1952 Royal Visit Memorabilia? Ring Kathy Burgess on 958 5103.

The arts and crafts of locals are also welcome. If you want to sell your work, Kathy will arrange for you to have your own stall. Please give her a call as soon as possible.

Practicalities

Saturday 17th Feb Radio National, 2FC (repeat Tuesday 20th 3.03pm) "The Practicalities of Stopping the Government Closing Your School" featuring SOS CRAG.

Who Are SOS?

The Save Our School Community Residents Action Group (SOSCRAG) is a loose-knit organisation working for the re-establishment of Castlecrag Infants' School and the retention of the site as public land. The activities of the group serve to explain its purpose and the problems we face protecting the school.

- The SOS focal point is now the picket caravan, open 24 hours, 365 days a year, in the playground near the corner of Edith Street and Edinburgh Road. It is necessary to have a full-time picket guarding the caravan to stop theft of the buildings or their contents, which will remain public property. There is always a space in the picket roster, if you would like to join in, come up to the caravan and put your name and telephone number on the roster sheet.

- The school itself is the centre of attention for the morning playgroup, after-school care, community meetings, banner painting sessions and the occasional fund-raising event. The grounds and buildings are maintained in better condition than the Department of Education ever managed by a small band of SOS diehards.

- In the legal department, the Ombudsman, I.C.A.C. and Land and Environment court are being tackled and we hope convinced that the actions of the N.S.W government in closing and rezoning the school have been illegal.

- SOS lobbies government on all three levels. At the local level, Willoughby Council has been a great support, they are being encouraged to maintain this support as the fight heats up. The State Department of Planning is attracting most of SOS's attention, as its zoning powers can prevent the destruction of the school for medium density redevelopment. SOS is also lobbying the Federal Government to mount an inquiry into the N.S.W. Schools Rationalisation Programme.

- S.O.S has approached several Unions and has convinced them to place 'green bans' on the school site. The green bans guarantee that union labour will not cross the SOS picket line. Their support is conditional upon SOS maintaining the picket and upon the continued support of the local community.

- The historic and environmental qualities of the school have been documented by SOS. We have the support of conservation groups, the W.E.P.A and the National Trust for our efforts to save the school and site as the heritage of the next generation of children, parents and residents.

SOS Mascot

The caravan has adopted a very young black and white cat, christened first 'Sos' and later 'Picket'. After somewhat closer examination, the name has been revised to 'Pickette'. The problem of finding its original and/or new home has been addressed at some length, although Pickette seems to have made up her mind already.

From the Caravan Art Gallery

So we have come to save
castlecrag
school.
With Picket the cat to help
us.
We don't care what Greiner
wants,
And we're here to defend
the school. *Toni Stone-Herbert*

Picket Logbook Extracts

The people who inhabit the caravan are a varied bunch, old, young, sane and otherwise. They complete a logbook entry for every stretch at the caravan, some of the more interesting or creative efforts will be printed each month in *Together We Grow*.

Saturday 16th December. Sometimes during the first night the van tilted at one end, so I put some chocks of wood underneath. It now inclines neither to the right nor the left and provides a stable base of operations. (Nick Hughes)

Sunday/Monday 17th/18th December. What the hell was that!!! 7.15am the T.V. crew had arrived. Bleary eyed after a heavy night of kids and Gin Rummy we rolled out of bed. The day before had been busy with visits from Mr and Mrs Rodgee, Mrs Brophy, Miss

Constable and many more interesting people lots of champagne & cups of tea: The kids decorated the Christmas tree & painted, rode bikes and played games. A lovely barbecue of sausages & salad cooked by yours truly (no mean feat) was devoured by all & I think enjoyed (no one seemed to suffer). Had a long chat with Bob (security) when he came and thoroughly enjoyed my day, looking forward to my next stint! (Madryn Durisic)

Monday 25th December. Security guard called ... commented that we were the only school threatened with closure that had a 24hr picket. (Madge and Neville Milston)...HAPPY HANAKAH.

Tuesday 26th December.... mended some information sheets and tied some fallen children to the fence.[cardboard cut-outs!] ... (Sylvia Taylor)

Wednesday/Thursday 3rd/4th January. The McKillop family has arrived in force, watch out school nappers.

Saturday 20th January. We will have to DRAG mum away, she loves it! ... A home away from home. (Adriana Stephens)

Sunday 28th January. 11.14pm Event of the night! After a banging and crashing noise coming from what could only be a large bulldozer-type vehicle. Jane jumped off the loo, weapon in hand ready to do battle with the would-be school nappers. ... What a shame ... innocent garbage collectors.

Want To Join In?

The caravan is staffed by concerned members of the local community, why not come up sometime and have a chat and a cup of industrial grade coffee? Become part of this historic community action.

Where Will We Vote?

Last Monday (12th Feb) Electoral Officers arrived in Castlecrag to investigate the future venue for out polling booth. The Dept. of Education has denied them/us the use of the school even though it still exists. The officers looked at St James Church hall and immediately dismissed it because the stairs make it too difficult for elderly or disabled voters. The Community Centre Committee were then approached, but they are rightly concerned (as are the Electoral Officers) about parking and access problems. Just as the Electoral Officers were about to pursue the use of the school again, Mr. Peter Collins politically intervened by informing them that on no account can the school be used as a polling booth. Surely Peter Collins has no authority to direct the activities of the Electoral Office, an independent federal body.

From the Caravan Art Gallery

PETER.....
CASTLE CRAG SCHOOL
IS A GOOD SCHOOL.
I AM UNHAPPY
BECAUSE OF GREINER
OUR LAND IS NOT FOR
SALE
AND PICK IT THE CAT
WILL MISS US A LOT

FROM PETER

Letters

A personal letter is the easiest, most effective way to change the attitudes of politicians and bureaucrats. Your letter will be one of many, in their minds one letter indicates 100 concerned voters. If you feel the urge to apply pen to paper then the following Government bodies and identities should be your targets:

N.S.W. Minister of Administrative Services Robert Webster
Issue: Sale of non- surplus land. The school site is not surplus land, but a much needed community asset. His department would be acting negligently and mismanaging N.S.W. assets if it proceeded with the sale.

Peter Collins, your local MLA.
128A Penshurst St. Willoughby 2068.

Issue: All of the above, disinterest in local affairs, unwillingness to meet members of his electorate for personal consultation.

Willoughby Council

Aldermen E K Navin, J W Donnelly, H Cislowski.

Issues: These Aldermen did not support a recent motion to investigate possible legal avenues for the defence of the school. They expressed the opinion that the State Government should be allowed to do as it likes on local planning issues.

They should be encouraging the council to support other local councils in their legal action against forceful rezoning of land. Would you vote for an alderman who intends to bow to the wishes of Macquarie Street on all planning matters?

Aldermen J M Squire, P T Reilly, N Reidy.

Issues: Thanks for the vocal support they have given through the media, local government association and council meetings.

Playgroup and After School Care

Penny Curry has organised after school care (4-6pm) at the school for 3+ year old children. Interested parents should write their name and telephone number on the list in the caravan. Penny will ring you back.

A playgroup operates at the school daily between 9am - 12.30pm, children and parents are welcome. Ring Tracy Gilling for details.

The Castlecrag Book

SOS is hoping to reprint and update the popular 'Castlecrag' book. We need to hear from people who would like to help with this edition. Advice from any professional printers or publishers resident in the 'Crag would also be a great help. The original printer claims he gave the plates to "a Castlecrag resident" some years ago. Please come forward!

Contributions

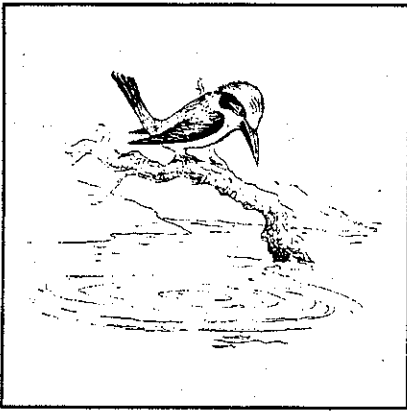
Would you like to contribute to *Together We Grow*? The place for all letters, suggestions, cartoons and articles is in the Contribution Box in the caravan. Anything accepted!

Community Courses

SOS is setting up a series of community courses. Topics such as astronomy, bush regeneration, yoga and painting have been suggested. If you are interested in attending or presenting a course then phone Marcella Cerna. Full details are on the back page of this month's *Crag*.

Contact Numbers

Picket Caravan	958 5534
SOS Co-ordinator (Lindy Batterham)	958 2127
Playgroup Organiser (Tracy Gilling)	958 4884
Community Classes (Marcella Cerna)	958 6936
Newsletter Co-ordinator (Sam Lander)	958 5384



Together We Grow

Newsletter of the Castlecrag Save Our School and Site Committee

Volume 1 Number 2 March 1990



This Tuesday: Keep The Spirit Alive Bridge Street Vigil

Come light a candle for our school. Join with teachers, parents and pupils from around Sydney in a candlelight vigil at 5.30 pm outside the soon to be sold Dept. of Education's headquarters in Bridge Street. This Building, along with all the schools closed to date, is part of the rush through, no consultation sale of public assets that people all over NSW are rightly concerned about.

This is a good chance to join forces with other communities and groups to protest the closure of our school. A bus is booked to leave Castlecrag School at 4.30 pm. It will leave the city at 6.30 pm returning home by about 7 pm. A difficult time with kids but it is sure to be a worthwhile effort and experience. Bring a candle and wear black.

Election Day

Despite written objections by SOS*CRAG, the Progress Association and the Community Centre's 530^A committee the polling place will be at the Kindergarten/ Library/Community Centre in The Postern. A major concern is that some elderly voters are going to find it very difficult to walk down and up the steep road to the hall. Parking close to the hall will be a problem. SOS*CRAG would like to offer its services to any resident who needs assistance in transportation. We will send the bill to Peter Collins who, in a further bid to make himself unpopular in the electorate, worked to stop the Electoral Office from using the school as the polling place. Ring Sue Randle on 958 6344 before Saturday to arrange a pick-up time.

MP Joins Development Fight

Not all groups fighting the State Regional Environment Plans have had quite the same responses from the State Government. One case in point was reported by the Wentworth Courier on 14 February.

The 'surplus' land here was not a school but the site of the abandoned Woollahra railway station. When it became clear that the station would never be built, a park was planted and the area opened to the public. A recent planning department decision to rezone the site for medium density housing prompted a meeting of 50 residents at the site. Michael Yabsley, their state MP also attended.

Mr Yabsley agreed to

...inform relevant ministers of unanimous opposition to medium density housing on the land and their hope that the park ... be retained as open space.

It appears that these representations prompted an extension of submission deadlines by up to three weeks, a most unusual concession to public opinion.

In contrast, our local MP, Peter Collins has never appeared at a public meeting at Castlecrag and has not offered support of any kind for the clearly expressed concerns of residents. The Department of Planning, despite a deluge of letters, has remained silent.

The case raises many questions about the competency of Peter Collins to represent his electorate. His attitude from the beginning has been to shirk his primary responsibility to his electors and to unashamedly grovel to party bigwigs for a soft, safe portfolio and to the party line.

The Future of The School

The NSW opposition has recently announced guidelines on school closures which they would adopt on attaining government.

- Establish an independent committee consisting of representatives from the Dept. of Education, Local Government, Parents and Teachers which would advise the Minister on the future of schools identified for possible closure.
- The terms of reference will stipulate that the *first consideration* must be the educational needs of the local community.
- No school would be closed unless the committee recommends it. Twelve months notice would have to be given.
- If the committee believes that a school should be closed, public submissions on the future of the land will be called for.
- First priority will be the use of the school for other needed educational purposes such as a child care centre, community education centre or TAFE.
- All income earned will be used for the maintenance and/or construction of new buildings.

On March 16 the leader of the Opposition, Mr Bob Carr personally gave SOS*CRAG Co-ordinator Lindy Batterham this commitment:

If our site is not sold and developed and there is a need for the school, they will re-open the public school when (if) Labor comes to power. Don't worry, she asked for it in writing!

This must surely strengthen the resolve of the community to continue to make the site unattractive to potential buyers. Who in their right mind would choose to develop a site occupied by the community and covered with green bans from the building trades group of the Labor Council?

With *your* help we will be able to save the land and school for the community and for the future children of Castlecrag.



School Closure Protest Spreads

One of the twelve schools slated for closure in 1990 is Windsor South Public School. On February 19, a public meeting of over 300 people was addressed by their local member, the shadow minister for education, the Windsor P&C and members of SOS*CRAG.

The meeting was told of the many actions of SOS*CRAG and expressed great interest in adopting some of our methods. Kevin Rizzoli, The member for Windsor and speaker of the Legislative Assembly, expressed support for the parents in their stand. Afterwards, Mr Rizzoli spoke privately to the 'Castlecrag contingent'. He conceded 'who would want the minister for Education's Job' and admitted that there were serious problems in Education generally.

That Windsor school (284 enrollments) is threatened with closure indicates the government's true aim: it is not to 'Move the desks out West' but simply to 'move the desks out' and to destroy public education in NSW.

The Monster Garage Sale

The Garage Sale, held at the school on February 24, was a great success. It raised approximately \$3500 for SOS*CRAG. Thank you all. In particular, thanks to Kathy Burgess, who organised the garage sale proper and spent many late nights and early mornings sorting and pricing at the school.

Picket Duty

The picket roster sometimes develops holes. These are filled at the last moment from a short list of families who put their names down for 'emergencies'. Once again the call goes out to you to keep the presence at the school. Please remember that *any* time you can spare is helpful, be it a whole night or just a couple of hours. We will change the time slots to fit your schedule. It seems that the community must be prepared to develop an eighteen month time frame for the picket. From April 1 monthly bookings are being sought so that we can get stability in the roster. Just commit yourself to one (or two) time slots a month. Together we can do it. If we leave the school unguarded, the Dept. will remove and redistribute the resources and equipment, the buildings will go and that will be the end of the fight for the school and for the site.

Although we sometimes take a light-hearted approach to the work of preserving the school, the removal of two buildings from Hurlstone Park School on February 23 has highlighted the seriousness of our action. Only with *your* help will the school be saved.

After School Care

Few experiences in life match that of dragging (by a sticky chocolate covered hand) a screaming three year old round a supermarket. If you consider this not to be one of the joys of parenthood then you should be leaving your little darling(s) with Penny Curry's After School Care. This service is available for 3+ year old children each weekday afternoon from 4 to 6 pm at the school. You can arrange to have your child met at the school bus. Leave your name and number at the caravan, Penny will ring you back that night. You may also meet her at the caravan during the After School Care sessions.

Community Classes

This is a big week for SOS*CRAG with the launch of two exciting classes. These will be held at the school, which is acting as ever as a community centre. Commencing in the near future is a series of classes in Stress Management and another in Weed Identification and Removal - a must for people close to the bush. But for now:

Voice Classes

Commencing Thursday, March 22.

Sing at last! For those who never thought they could. A six week intensive singing course. Learn to use your voice with versatility,

Our School

Poor little children don't have a school.
In all things that Greiner has could he spare
Castlecrag school. If we had Castlecrag School we wouldn't
Kick Greiner out
Even my little sister thinks that the government is a
Terrible monster. If she hears the word government she says the
Terrible monster is going to bash down our school so
Everyone help Save Our School!!!

Emma Crew (9 years)

freedom, ease and endurance. Whether belting out Broadway show tunes or singing blues, jazz or folk - longevity and power for the voice is guaranteed.

Yoga Classes

Commencing Saturday, March 24 3-4 pm.
Experience the healing qualities of Yoga. For all ages. The classes are run by Tana Edey. Child care available. Cost is \$30.00 for the six week course to be paid at the first lesson, come at 2.45 pm to register. Bring a mat or rug to lie on.

Freedom From Information?

One of the first actions of SOS*CRAG was to request details of the decision making process that lead to the closure of the school. Mr Greiner's stated policy of open government was shown to be empty rhetoric when the request was dismissed. Not easily discouraged, the matter was followed up with an appeal to the courts and to the Ombudsman. At this point, a regulation was passed denying the public FOI access to key documents held by the Ombudsman. SOS CRAG is now approaching the NSW Upper House in an effort to disallow this regulation.

In spite of this legal morass, the following facts have come to light:

- Dr Metherell personally altered the Dept. of Education's Schools Sales List for simple political gain during the North Shore by-election in 1989.
- Cabinet sought to hide that action by passing a regulation constraining FOI in relation to items held by the Ombudsman.
- The passage of that regulation was rushed through in 24 hours, after being refused personally by Mr Greiner 14 months before. This regulation stopped publication of the ombudsman's documents by a margin of a few hours.

Obituary

One of the scribbly gums at the school was blown down during the recent storms. The tree will be mourned by all those who remember using it as stumps, goal posts, play house, chasings 'bar', climbing frame, cicada farm or whatever else their imaginations came up with. Let's not allow it to be the first of many to go. Townhouses and trees don't mix, we must Save Our School.

Playgroup

A playgroup operates at the school between 9 am and 12.30. Both children(0 to 5yrs) and parents are very welcome. We have painting, sand play, play-doh, water play and music session. (Many activities for the children as well.) Come up and enjoy the informal yet educational atmosphere of the playgroup. Ring Tracy Gilling on 958 4884 for more details.

Donations

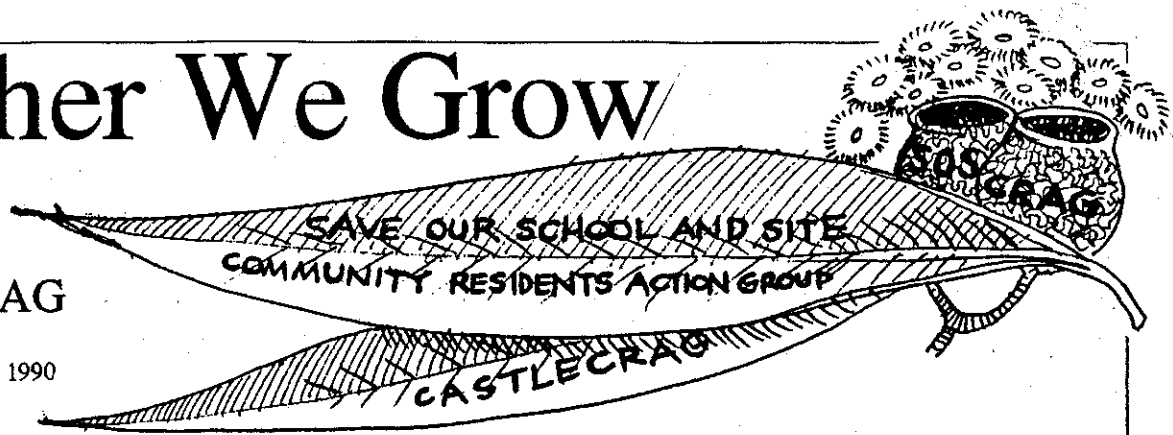
As ever, SOS CRAG is on the lookout for donations to help Save Our School. Donations should be taken to the caravan, where you will be given a receipt. Please make cheques payable to the "Public Education Association, Castlecrag".



Together We Grow

The SOS*CRAG Newsletter

Volume 1 Number 3 May 1990



Coming Events

Sunday May 6 10am: The SOS*CRAG Picnic, Working Bee, Family Day Community Gathering

The SOS*CRAG picnic and working bee day will begin at 10 am and continue through the afternoon. The idea is to meet people, have a good time, eat, drink and for diversion help to maintain the school buildings and grounds.

BYO picnic. Children, pets, Grandparents, friends are all welcome, the more people we have the sooner we can put down the rakes and brooms and get on with the real business of the afternoon, a huge picnic among the beautiful trees at OUR school. Add the First Sunday of every month to your diary, this will be a regular monthly event.

May 15 9am: Campsie Court. Trial of Hurlstone Park parents.

Several months ago two parents were arrested at Hurlstone Park. They were protecting their school from demolishers after it had been officially closed by the Dept. Of School Education. Two buildings at their school were removed once the picket had been broken. They are charged with Obstruction of Traffic. A strong community support base will stop the same happening at Castlecrag. Help us to Save Our School and Site.

Milsons Point Public School Seized

A meeting of parents and concerned citizens from Milsons Point Public School was held during April.

The meeting was addressed by Ms. Robyn Read, State MP for North Sydney. At the invitation of Dr Metherell, Ms Read sent a detailed submission outlining the need to retain the school. She has as yet received no constructive response.

The treatment of Milsons Point by the State Government has been as ugly as that accorded to Castlecrag. Ms Read found that

A rational approach based on facts and submissions just doesn't work - the State Government just doesn't seem to listen.

Milsons Point is beginning the same fight that SOS*CRAG has been running for the past 20 months.

As schools across Sydney close, the protest spreads. Castlecrag is the inspiration for many other communities. SOS*CRAG (through the Public Education Association) is working with the many other schools threatened with closure to keep these issues alive.

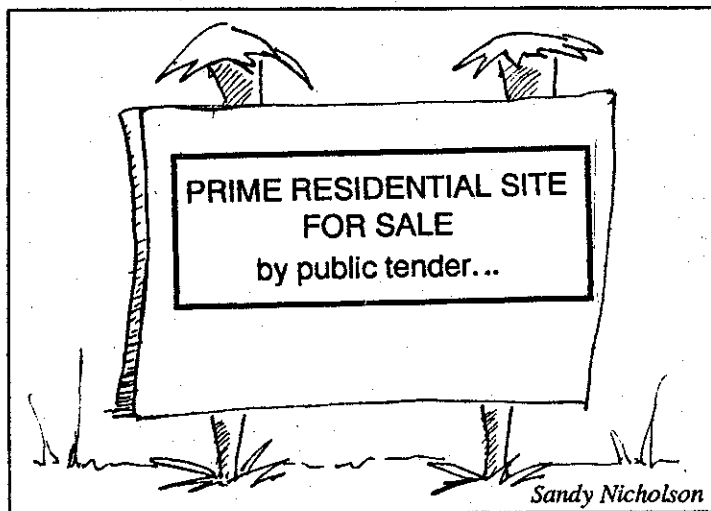
Louise Weingarth represented SOS*CRAG at the meeting. She shared ideas and encouraged them keep up the fight.

Communities and Schools

The NSW Dept. of Education has published a pamphlet designed to explain their policy on communities and schools titled *Community Involvement in Schools* :

A school should not be seen as separate from the community in which it operates. It provides a service for both local children, their parents and other citizens and for the wider community of this State and Australia. In the provision of this service the two-way communication process is vital.

Castlecrag has involved local community in the school for 40 years. Lets make it continue together.

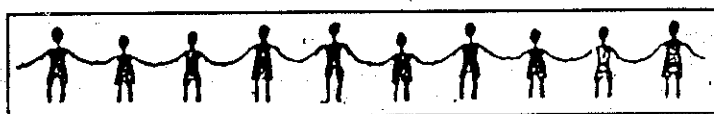


Heritage Under the Hammer

Signs like these have appeared at several closed schools around Sydney. The same could happen to Castlecrag Infants' at any time.

Without our picket and continual pressure applied by SOS*CRAG there is little doubt that the school would already have been sold.

This is the reality of the Government's school closure programme, the threat is real and immediate. It is time to contribute your time and energy to help Save Our School and Site. Call in at the caravan to offer your help or to take a time slot on the picket. The only way this will be stopped is by solid community action.



Community Classes

The SOSCRAG community class series is continuing. We have already had a great response to our classes. Many new ones are being offered and repeats and second terms of current classes will soon be underway.

The Voice classes have been very popular, a group of about 18 people meet at the school each Thursday night and have a fabulous time exercising their diaphragms.

A growing group has been meeting at the school to stretch and heal their bodies and minds with Yoga. Second term will begin on Saturday, June 2.

Yogarobics (Yoga in motion to music)

Tana Edye will be teaching a course in yogarobics. Give her a call on 958 4805 for details and bookings.

Astronomy

Tony Edye has a keen interest in astronomy and is organising a class for stargazers. Observations will be made from the picket of the moon, planets and constellations. A visit to Sydney Observatory is planned to start the course. Why not spend one night a week looking out instead of in? Turn off the television, bring the kids and a rug for those chilly nights and expand your horizons. Classes start on Tuesday, May 8.

Contact Tony (958 4805) for details.

Stress Management Classes

Feeling frazzled? Take one Stress Management Class at night after food... The Stress Management sessions will be held at 8pm on Monday nights and will begin in May. Put your name down for them using the form in the 'Crag'.

Other Classes

Childrens/Youth Group, Drawing, Nutrition, Fibre Crafts, Yoga, Youth and Young Adult Group, Home Garden Design and Renovation, Creative Writing, Playreading Group, Dance, Music Lessons, Patchwork Quilting. Please fill out the form in this month's Crag or ring Marcella Cerna (958 6936) for more details.

From the Picket Logbook - Easter Sunday 1990

I looked everywhere in the playground but couldn't find any easter eggs - not at all like the days of Mrs Barlow. Bring back the good 'ole days!

Draft Local Environment Plan

SOS*CRAG has worked since the school closed to retain the school and its site in exactly the state that the children left it. The closure and rezoning of the school have raised a great deal of discussion about the future of site.

SOS*CRAG's position is and will be that a school must exist on the site. We recognise that there have been many calls for community access to the site and its resources to be improved. To this end, we have initiated work on a Draft Local Environment Plan for the site. This is in response to the State government's SREP which overrides local council planning powers.

Discussions on the form and content of the Draft LEP have proceeded only to an informal stage so far and are very open ended.

For the Draft LEP to be powerful and successful, it needs to be a community effort. This is your land, you must help decide what happens to it.

Expressions of interest and contributions should be directed to the letterbox in the picket caravan at the school.

School Land Rezoned

The rezoning of Castlecrag Infants' School was gazetted on March 16. This means that the site is now zoned "Medium Density Housing". It clears the way for the sale of the school site and redevelopment into an urban disaster area.

This rezoning came during the same week that Peter Collins announced the exemption of Willoughby Municipality from SEP28 (which allows medium density housing throughout the Municipality). SOS*CRAG was not informed directly of the action in spite of assurances that we would be involved in any action concerning the school.

Although Peter Collins saw fit to announce Willoughby's 'exemption' through local newspaper releases, the rezoning of the school was buried in the gazette published two weeks after the event. Mr Collins has ignored our requests for a meeting, has not replied to our letters and will not represent his electorate.

SOSCRAG will not be letting this matter rest. We will challenge the validity of the rezoning in the courts and are enlisting the support of Willoughby City Council.

Pickette

The caravan cat "Pickette" has had a last minute reprieve. Her fate was to be given away to one of the many families happy to give her a new and quieter home. She has become a permanent fixture at the van. Send the children up to say hello. Thankyou to the Milstons for organising veterinary care for Pickette.

Bridge Street Vigil

This was held outside the Education Department's Bridge Street building in March. A star performance was delivered by SOS*CRAG poet laureate Emma Crew, whose work appeared here last month. The meeting was told of a last minute backdown by the Greiner government- the building will now not be sold, but leased.

The building will now be available to future generations. The government has recognised the need for flexible planning in this case. Surely it is time to recognise the same in Castlecrag.

The Picket Line

This is the fifth month of the SOSCRAG picket line. There is no doubt that the presence of a permanent picket has stopped the destruction of our school.

We need more people to share the considerable load of a 24hr picket.

For those who feel a little uneasy, we always have an experienced picketer on hand for first timers to help you learn the ropes.

The picket line is held by grandchildren, grandmothers, dogs, a cat, a playgroup and children's parties. There is no excuse for not coming up to sign on for a stint.

You can also ring the van (958 5534) to book a time on the roster.

For those who have become lapsed picketers, could you seriously consider making a monthly booking please? Every little bit helps.

Contact Numbers

SOS*CRAG Co-ordinator	(Lindy Batterham)	958 2127
Newsletter Co-ordinator	(Sam Lander)	958 5384
Playgroup Organiser	(Tracy Gilling)	958 4884
Picket Caravan		958 5534
Community Classes	(Marcella Cerna)	958 6936

