

**GREENWICH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
February 17, 2010**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

2009 was a year in which the GCA began to face real challenges to its ongoing role in the community. The climate has changed significantly in terms of what the GCA can realistically hope to achieve. Changes in planning legislation, with the opportunity for input to development proposals now constrained by the exempt and complying development concept and the pressure on Councils to adhere to templates, has meant that there is often little the GCA can do to influence Council's decisions. This is not intended to be a critique of Council – Councillors and Council staff must also find that they face similar restrictions.

Having said that, the right to address Council in public meeting and to share our views with Council staff including Council's Strategic Planner, Stephanie Bashford, are valued – and it is hoped that the GCA will continue to take up the opportunities that are offered to speak on behalf of Greenwich residents. And, on that note, thank you again to our Councillors for being so generous with their time at our meetings – we really value your insights and advice.

It is easy to become despondent but we must look at the benefits of having an established organisational structure that can respond to major issues should the need arise. The GCA may sometimes be Council's bete noire but there is clearly a grudging respect for the commitment of the GCA to maintaining those features of Greenwich that make the suburb special to us. The newsletter and the band of deliverers are integral to this – thank you to those who trudge through rain and humidity to force newsletters through slots that are so appallingly designed for today's mail.

Whilst our lack of a significant voice in planning issues is disappointing, it is exciting to be part of the GCA's increasing focus on issues of environmental sustainability. We welcome some new members tonight who will work with the GCA to improve the communication between residents about initiatives to promote environmental sustainability in the community.

And to some thank yous.

Thank you to all members of the committee for their amazing support and for getting to meetings that are called at the last minute by a President who was even more disorganized than last year. Special thanks to our Treasurer, Peter Walton, who never fails to have the figures when we need them and to our secretary, Michael Coombs, who manages to translate the chaos of some meetings into very readable minutes!

And finally, best wishes to the incoming committee for what will undoubtedly be a challenging but personally fulfilling time!

Merri Southwood