



GREENWICH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

NEXT PUBLIC MEETING PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DATE

The next meeting is on **Wednesday, 23 August 2017**, in the Greenwich Community Centre, 46 Greenwich Road, at 7.30 pm.

The date of the meeting was changed because we thought it important to invite all nominees for Lane Cove Council elections on 9 September to come and present their platforms to the community.

See our reasons why in the following story. In the meantime, we extend a warm invitation to all members of the Greenwich community to attend and hear your candidates' views on what we consider important issues for our community, and have your say.

LANE COVE COUNCIL WILL STAND ALONE

Since October 2015, Lane Cove Council has had the threat of amalgamation hanging over its head. The Greenwich Community Association was clear in its opposition to forced amalgamation, as evidenced in its resolution of 17 February 2016.

The attitude of our Councillors was a little less clear, with some in support of amalgamation and others against. The Extraordinary Meeting of Council held on 20 May 2016 was a defining moment when a motion was passed 5-4 to commence legal action to challenge the NSW government decision to amalgamate Lane Cove with Hunters Hill and Ryde Councils.

This legal action was still in the pipeline but, presumably, now at an end, when the Premier announced on 27 June that she has scrapped mergers for councils that have either fought or have been caught up in the fight to stop amalgamation. So, Lane Cove Council will stand alone.

But how infuriating it is that precious financial resources and the technical expertise of our Council staff have been diverted from the core function of Council for so long. At least legal costs have been awarded in favour of Council.

THE COUNCIL ELECTIONS IN SEPTEMBER ARE THE REAL THING

Until 27 June we didn't know if the Councillors to be elected in September would hold office for one week, one month, or one year. But with the about-face on amalgamation, we know that the Council we elect will hold office for a full term of four years. These elections are very important after two years of uncertainty, and in many ways it will be an exciting time to be in local government.

This newsletter needs to go to press just before the closing date for Council nominations so we have no final details of candidates in this newsletter.

However, we think our community deserves the chance to hear from our candidates, hence the later date, in the hope that many of our candidates will join us and tell us why they are standing. And for us the community to tell them what we want from them.

THE GCA IS KEEN TO HEAR CANDIDATES' VIEWS ON THE FOLLOWING TOPICS

- **The high density development of our precinct and adjoining suburbs**

Greenwich has borne the brunt of massive increases in residential development in the St Leonards/Crows Nest area, with, up to now as far as we can see, little corresponding integrative development of facilities that constitute a liveable environment – features such as green spaces, new schools, bike paths, community halls etc. We have written extensively about this in previous newsletters. With the cancellation of amalgamation, St Leonards and Crows Nest will continue to fall under the control of three councils, and at first we feared that planning will continue to fall between the cracks of the three LGAs with little communication among them. However, there is some positive news for future development. We have received notification from the Department of Planning & Environment that they are working with Lane Cove, North Sydney and Willoughby councils in order to coordinate future development and infrastructure over the next twenty years.

So, we await with interest the views of the candidates on the scope of the St Leonards South Master Plan and the elements they would like to see in the LEP amendments drafted to give effect to this plan.

Perhaps the feedback from the various agencies about the capacity of infrastructure to cope with such increased density has not been what Council wanted to hear – we have been saying it for a long time!

- **How they can support the community to secure more transparency around the Viva Energy Petroleum Terminal**

This terminal has avoided assessment by the NSW Department of Planning by virtue of its age. It seems extraordinary

that a potentially hazardous facility that is apparently unique worldwide, in terms of its proximity to residential areas, should be able to use a quirk in legislation to avoid scrutiny against world's best practice.

Like it or not, Council has responsibility as consent authority for the terminal but we have seen little engagement with the community despite numerous pleas for Council's support. We need Council to help us bridge the gaps between the various authorities with their different agendas. We need to ensure we have more information and tighter controls over monitoring and reporting of emissions from the site, emergency responses to potential catastrophic incidents, the sixty year old pipeline under Council's own Greenwich Road,* and the story behind the marine fuel spill on 30 December last year. And this is just the tip of the iceberg!

**Residents will have noticed a large hole in Shell Park and wondered what is happening. When approached by the GCA, following enquiries from residents, Viva Energy advised us that they are*

undertaking scheduled maintenance works on the oil pipeline that takes product to its Clyde terminal. Lane Cove Council has confirmed that it approved the work and Viva has notified residents specified by Council. Work is expected to last two - three weeks. Unfortunately, the rather savage digging had to happen in order to gain full access round the whole diameter of the pipe.

We have recently been advised by Council that it holds no records of its own inspection of the pipeline, so we hope that this time Council officers have taken the opportunity to have a careful look at the exposed pipeline.

- **What they will do to ensure that our precious public spaces are retained, well -managed and well-maintained**

Some of our Greenwich recreational areas are looking the worse for wear. The demands on Bob Campbell Oval have increased greatly in the past few years and it shows. This is inevitable with the population increase that comes with high density living. The works associated with improvement to the toilet facilities

and clubhouse at Greenwich Baths have dragged in to their second year and we wonder if the Baths will be fully functional in time for the next swimming season.

We know these spaces need money to maintain them. We hope that Council will work closely with the community to develop management plans that offer good outcomes for all.

- **What they will do to ensure that bicycle routes are adequately resourced to foster safer active transport links**

Gridlocked traffic and inadequate parking spaces are an inevitable consequence of increased housing stock. High density development has been a glorious source of revenue for Council, supplemented by significant extra income through voluntary planning agreements. It is very disappointing that Council seems so ungenerous when it comes to funding cycling infrastructure and shortsighted when it comes to prioritising on and off road parking for Greenwich residents.

SOME GOOD NEWS ITEMS FROM OUR STATE MP

FIRST: Greenwich Public School is to receive a major upgrade with funding from this year's State Budget. The money is intended specifically to provide new permanent teaching spaces and upgrade ageing infrastructure in order to accommodate the projected increase in enrolments.

Work is anticipated to begin in 2018, subject to planning approval. Twenty-four new classrooms will replace existing demountables, the school's administration and staff spaces will be upgraded, the library and hall will be expanded and school amenities improved. The project has also engaged an educational consultant to work with staff to ensure that the

school will receive the most modern and up to date teaching tools.

SECOND: Readers will remember from previous newsletters our concern about the government's proposed biodiversity reforms, in particular the biodiversity offsets scheme where people wishing to clear native vegetation will be allowed to compensate for the impacts of such clearing on the habitat of our flora and fauna by offsetting it various ways. This appeared to be a great idea, but on closer examination we identified several flaws in the proposal (see June newsletter for details).

We outlined our concerns to the Minister and he did acknowledge our concerns and sought to allay them. He said that any proposed clearing of

vegetation that exceeds determined thresholds would require an impact evaluation before consent is given, and if the development has serious or irreversible biodiversity impacts then the development won't be allowed to proceed.

He also clarified how the offset scheme would work: impacts on vegetation offsets must be within the same area; for impacts on ecological communities the offset must be for the same communities; and for impacts on native vegetation that provides habitat for threatened communities the offset must be from the same vegetation class.

Further information can be obtained from Ms Kate Robinson at the DP&E on 9373 2805.

STAY IN TOUCH

We encourage all residents to stay in touch with regular visits to our website, www.greenwich.org.au, and that of Lane Cove Council, www.lanecove.nsw.gov.au If you register your address on the GCA website you will also receive newsletters and updates electronically.

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