

Fairy Bower Precinct

AUGUST 2017 NEWSLETTER

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2ND AUGUST >

NEXT FAIRY BOWER COMMUNITY FORUM MEETING:

Wednesday 2nd August 2017, 7pm, St. Patricks College.



61 Bower Street is a 1930s house in the Tudor-revival style, which is fairly rare in Manly. With changes to planning staff what will be the future for Manly's heritage buildings? Senior planner *Nayeem Islam* became the latest Manly Council Manager to depart when he took voluntary redundancy. However he noted at his farewell luncheon he is retiring and not joining the 14 Manly staff now at *Strathfield Council*.

The August Meeting will include:-

- ◆ Amalgamation Feedback
- ◆ Spit Tunnel Issues - Or Consider A Railway?
- ◆ General Business
- ◆ Discussion On Changing Fairy Bower Precinct Meeting Day

contained in this report.

A major focus of the report is on leaks, which currently sum to about a garden tap flows worth - hardly significant. One issue is that the report does not refer to the heritage significance of the structure, as regards ensuring the remedial works are carried out sympathetically to our 1929 heritage pool.

Welcome to All Fairy Bower Residents

NEWS

Oceanides Assembly

I visited the foundry to inspect the statues on Friday and found assembly is well advanced, including installation of the mounts. We are currently arranging for Council and foundry staff to install them in their familiar setting, next to the pool during August.

Fairy Bower Pool

Courtesy of *General Manager Ben Taylor*, I have now received the NB Council commissioned report entitled *Fairy Bower Ocean Pool Investigation and Development of Remedial/Upgrade Work Options* written by consultants *Royal HaskoningDHV*.

On Thursday evening I sent a response supporting the approximate 50m2 of bottom replacement recommendation

I have again requested an on-site meeting between staff and interested residents. I also formally noted that the current new pump installation appears unsatisfactory if it can only run 4 hours a day.

The Spit Tunnel

It appears the State government is seriously looking to proceed with this project, as they are considering a third harbour crossing to now link Allambie Heights to Rozelle. The initial \$3 billion estimated tunnel to the Warringah Expressway is now to become part of a \$14 billion project, that will also see tolls on the harbour bridge increased.

Residents living in Seaforth and North Balgowlah are starting to raise concerns. I have spoken to the Clontarf Precinct about arranging a public meeting - please email the FB chair if you wish to be part of this.

Fairy Bower Amenities Block

I inspected the site on Thursday and can confirm construction is now finally underway. Hopefully the works



The reconstruction of the Fairy Bower Pool Amenities block is finally underway. The replacement structure has been designed by Manly Council's talented in house architect *Michael Biddulph*. The structure has been designed to be more storm resistant than its predecessor. Of course only time will tell. The delay in the reconstruction has not pleased some residents. Here we see the site with the design carefully marked out on the 27th July 2017.

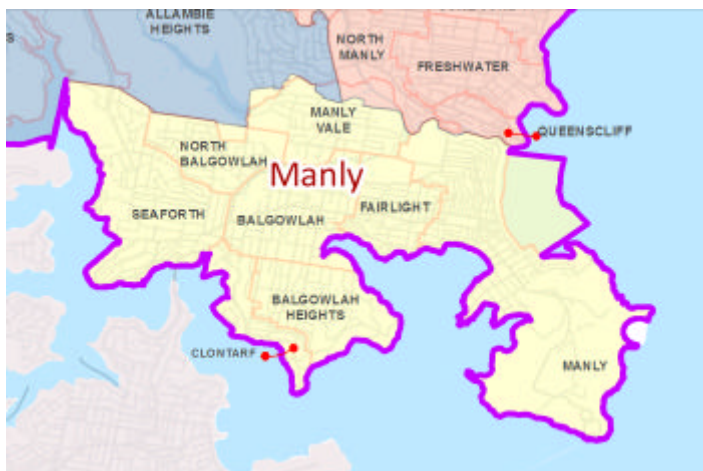
will be complete for the summer season.

September Council Elections

Manly residents won't see many familiar names on the ballot paper when they vote for the three Manly Ward councillors at the Council elections in September. The new whole of Northern Beaches Council will have only 15 Councillors, when in comparison our last Manly Council had 9 Councillors just for Manly.

Currently the only previous Manly Councillor standing for election to the Northern Beaches Council in 2017 is Candy Bingham. Candy was a member of the Liberal party until she resigned and stood for Manly Council as an independent at the 2012 elections.

The enormity of the task to get elected to one of the three Manly Ward positions should not be underestimated. To get



Above: The Manly Ward of the Northern Beaches Council for the 2017 Council Elections. Notice the area is larger than the original boundaries of Manly Council. Particularly note it now includes additional areas of North Balgowlah and Manly Vale. (*NSW Land and Property Information*)

elected you would need sufficient votes to get the equivalent of 3 Councillors onto Manly Council at the 2012 election (when we had 9 councillors) or 4 councillors at the 2008 election (when we had 12 councillors).

The only party that exceeded these numbers without having to rely on preferences was the Liberal Party. As a comparison, at the 2008 Manly Council elections, the Greens got one councillor (nearly two), the Labour party got one, the Manly Independents got three and Mark Norak as an independent got one position. At the 2012 elections, the Greens got one, the Manly Independents just got two and Candy Bingham as an independent got one position.

So it can be seen if you want your vote to count in September it will be vital to give preferences beyond your first choice. This will be particularly important if you do not vote Liberal. Greens supporters will have to preference vote for other candidates to make their vote count.

Amalgamation or De-amalgamation?

On Thursday it was announced the State Government was abandoning forced Council mergers. However this does not mean they plan to undo those Councils that have already been amalgamated - such as ours. The announcement has led to a flurry of activity in the Pittwater community, where a Pittwater Council poll previously showed 89% of the community were against amalgamation.

The question many residents are asking is what does this decision mean for the Northern Beaches as regards possible de-amalgamation?

Last year when I attended a Northern Beaches Council meeting held at Manly I made a "not on the agenda" speech that called on the Administrator to organise a poll to test public opinion on what had been done. As a former Councillor retained in an advisory role, I have to be seen as being neutral, so I approached it on the basis that if the public supported the amalgamation we could all move forward with confidence and if they didn't support it we could stop and reverse the process before we went too far.

The administrator declined this at that time but was still mindful of my request when he advised an LRC (ex Councillor) meeting before the cut-off deadline that he would decline to hold the poll on this issue at the September Council elections.

So it's probably not a surprise that he is reported in Friday's Manly Daily again similarly declining a poll, on the basis it is now too late to include it at the September 2017 Council Elections. In this situation the obvious response is that we should now delay the elections for our Council until March 2018 to include this poll. The elections for our Council are a year late already and a further 6 months won't make a great deal of difference.

In Manly and Warringah areas I have heard many people say that they are against the amalgamation. A key issue for many is the perceived lack of performance of the Northern Beaches Council over the last 14 months. For example in Fairy Bower many residents note the apparent tardiness in

the repairs to Marine Parade, the Fairy Bower Pool and the Pool Amenities block (now started). Also many people across the political spectrum noted and commented on the decline in cleanliness of public spaces in the Manly CBD following amalgamation.

To be fair one must note the Northern Beaches Council is an organization under duress from restructuring, which makes it currently rather more inwards than resident focussed. *However the question to be asked is will things improve or is what we now see the new norm?*

When I talk to the Manly Council staff in the Manly Council Chambers they tell me openly that its been a take-over by Warringah, not a merger. So the new NBC corporate culture will largely be from Warringah Council, not a combination of all three. (Although in one area - records - staff noted best practices were being taken from all three Councils.)

It also appears that most of the amalgamation savings in Manly are being sent North (as detailed in last month's FBN). I suspect this is because the administration is trying to soften the clear public opposition to amalgamation in Pittwater by giving their community more works projects. I suspect that if the Manly community were more openly discontented our residents would be getting similar attention.

It seems the central issue we have in Manly is that a good proportion of the Manly Community were fairly angry at Manly Council (both at the General manager and the Councillor majority) over the Manly CBD car park projects. Particularly, the progressives who would have led the battle against amalgamation were the ones disenchanted by the way that Manly Council seemed to ignore its residents on the controversial and unpopular oval car park.

The result was that support of our Manly Council and Manly resident protests against amalgamation of our Council were rather muted. The administrator was reportedly given access to Liberal Party polling for the Manly by-election that claimed to show voter indifference on this issue. From discussions, it appears many Manly residents optimistically believe that the new Northern Beaches Council could be better than what they had experienced in Manly.

The trouble is Manly Council alienated many residents because it was seen by the progressives as not listening to residents as it was too pro-development. Yet many of the same residents have now placed their faith in a less-known Council administration that has revealed itself as highly pro-development.

As examples, look at the scale of the Dee Why town centre and the attempted expansion into Brookvale (which was declined by Dept of Planning), the attempted introduction of more high-rise to Mona Vale in the form of the Place Plan (plan withdrawn but only parked), and Frenchs Forest where the Council supports the local high school and its oval being sold by the State Government for a 14 storey high-rise town centre - that is opposed by many Frenchs Forest residents and businesses. (Another oval battle?)

As regards Frenchs Forest, I would contrast the input that



Above: The two storey section at rear of the Council Chambers in Belgrave Street was originally Manly Council's Electricity Administration and Showroom Building. This was built in 1930 ahead of the rest of the building further along Belgrave Street (with the iconic columned facade) that was built in 1937. A new awning was refitted early in 2016 after I successfully lobbied Henry Wong for its replacement. This awning covered the original shop front to the showroom, which in the 1930s would have displayed the latest electric home appliances and offered electric cooking demonstrations and classes. Following the formation of Mackellar County Council in 1952, when Manly and Warringah merged their electricity departments, the administration and showroom building was eventually moved to Sydney Road and the original building just became part of the Manly Council Chambers.

Manly Council sought from the Seaforth community between 2004-8 on Departmental plans to put 11 storey buildings on the former TAFE site at Seaforth. Ultimately I solved this matter when I proposed, via a Councillor Notice of Motion, that Manly Council buy the whole site to end the high-rise proposals. This received cross-party support in Council and Manly Council eventually acquired the site at half its market price and Seaforth was kept free of high-rise.

So for the Manly community the key questions are:-

- Will the Northern Beaches Council seek to intensify Manly with more high rise development?
- Will the new Council continue to adequately resource and support tourism in Manly?
- Will Manly residents have sufficient say in the new Council when the Manly ward has only 3 councillors out of a total of 15 Councillors?

I would encourage everyone to think about these issues. It may be appropriate to hold a public meeting on the amalgamation issue, as we need to find out what the majority in Manly would support.

Suffering Electricity Bill Shock?

Has everyone recently read their latest electricity account?. Maybe some residents are too busy to read it closely or just decide to pay what is demanded on every bill without issue. But to a number of residents something is wrong, when the unit price of an essential service is increased by 6 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) - i.e. 25.8% - in one step.

If you are a customer of retailer Energy Australia on the Basic tariff, this increase is what you would have noticed if you checked the kilowatt-hour (kWh) rate on the third page of your last account - effective from the 3rd July 2017! Other retailers have issued similar price increases at the beginning of July.

As a bit of background, electricity came to Manly in 1906 with a private firm supplying power from premises in Whistler Street. However many residents may not be aware that electricity distribution and "retailing" became a local government function when Manly Municipal Council took over this electricity operation, due to the need for capital to expand the distribution network. Thus from the 1920s to the 1970s, electricity was part of our local government sphere, and would have been operated on a not-for-profit cost-recovery basis.

Due to space limitations the full briefing covering the history of the NSW electricity industry will be published in a later FBN edition.

So why the recent price rise? As everyone knows gas prices to residents and businesses have recently dramatically increased due to the gas export industry in Eastern Australia. Unlike in the past with the State owning both coal generation plant and coal mines, the gas power plant operators have not bought into gas fields to secure cheap fuel sources for their generators.

However Australia has also failed to adopt something like the American Natural Gas Act "public interest" Dept Of Energy test on gas exports (or introducing another mechanism such as a resource extraction tax) to ensure sufficient gas is available at reasonable cost for local needs.

The end result is that spot market electricity prices have increased to heavily reflect this rise in gas prices (which fuels the equipment that often comes on last). In 2016-7 retail prices were largely based on wholesale electricity prices of around 4-5 cents per kWh.

With anticipated wholesale prices of 10-12 cents per kWh over the next few years, retail prices would be expected to increase around 6 cents per kWh. So with this information the new numbers on your bill are at least explained!



Sketch Of The Manly Ocean Beach Pier that was proposed in June 1910, from a rare promotional postcard. It was never built. This proposal is why the Manly LGA boundary (even on the Ward map on page 2) is unusually about 1km off the Ocean Beach. (J. & A. Mayoh - Engineers)

Vale Jack Newton

I regret to advise that Fairy Bower Precinct stalwart *Mr Jack Newton* has died at the age of 85 years, following a battle with Mesothelioma. Jack was a well known figure in the Fairy Bower Community, and was heavily involved with our precinct over many years. His most recent role was as our newsletter editor until 2006.

On behalf of the precinct I wish to express our sympathies to his widow Sheila and family. Thanks to Jenny McDermott for providing the details.

See our web-site for further background reading!

So want to meet new people and get involved in community matters? Come and join us 2nd August 7:00pm at the ICMS (St Patricks College).

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Need Help?

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