

Fairy Bower Precinct

SEPTEMBER 2017 NEWSLETTER

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13TH SEPTEMBER

NEXT FAIRY BOWER COMMUNITY FORUM MEETING:

Wednesday 13th September 2017, 7pm, St. Patricks College.



Former Manly Mayor Jean Hay AM at her Mayoral desk for the last time. Jean was first elected to council in 1987, and was the longest serving Councillor on the 2012-6 Manly Council. Her official farewell was held on the 16th August. This memorable event at the Council Chambers was very well attended. Jean followed in the footsteps of her husband David Hay, who was on Manly Council for 23 years.

Welcome to All Fairy Bower Residents

NEWS

Council Elections This Saturday

I think everyone would be well aware that the first election for the new Northern Beaches Council will be held this Saturday 9th September. If you can't vote on the day you can pre-poll at Manly Library (2 Market Place Manly) up until Friday the 8th September.

If I could make just one point to everyone via this newsletter, I would respectfully request *that regardless of who you vote for* that you carefully consider your preferential voting. I.e. due to only three councillor positions in the Manly Ward, the number of votes needed for successful election is very high and thus it is possible your first and even second candidate preferences may not get elected.

Without intending any bias, based on historical voting patterns, this would particularly apply to first preference

The September Meeting will include:-

- ◆ Election Result Implications - for Manly, and Fairy Bower
- ◆ Manly Identity
- ◆ Tunnel News Update
- ◆ General Business

Greens and Labor voters. I would expect the major battle will be over the middle Councillor position, with preferences critical to the final outcome.

Note Next FBP Meeting is the 13th September

Given some apologies from our usual attendees and the Council Elections this Saturday, we have

deferred the next Fairy Bower Precinct meeting for one week to be able to review the implications of the election result and its possible impact on Manly.

New *Oceanides* Installation

This project is heading to completion, and all of us involved are very proud of what has been achieved. Many of you would have noticed the old damaged statues were removed by Council staff a few weeks ago in preparation for the installation of the new replica work.

The old damaged sculptures have been returned to the artist, Helen Leete. As at Friday last, it is anticipated the new re-created *Oceanides* will be installed this week. The installation involves drilling four holes into the rock to take the substantial stainless steel mounts from each leg, which are concreted into the rock. These mounts have been designed to be able to withstand the most extreme seas and weather events and not be corroded by the salt water.

We hope everyone will be able to admire the new work for many years to come.



Sculptor Helen Leete and Foundry Director Clive Calder attend the side of the Fairy Bower pool to set out and plan the installation of the new *Oceanides* on the 1st September. The new sculpture is a close replica of the original but is not identical. This means the new mountings have to be set out from scratch.

Former Councillors Retired On 31st August

All former 2012 elected Councillors continued to be paid their Councillor and Mayoral allowances between the 12th May 2016 (day of amalgamation) and 31st August 2017. This was to enable us to continue to represent and inform the community by being part of the two advisory transition committees - the (senior) Implementation Advisory Group (IAG) and (junior) Local Representation Committee (LRC).

Manly Councillors, Barbara Aird, Candy Bingham, Cathy Griffin, Jean hay, Alan LeSurf, Steve Pickering and myself served on these committees until the end.

While it has certainly enabled us to keep the community informed and gave some limited opportunity for lobbying, it was also somewhat strategic in keeping participating councillors "on-leash" to be fair in terms of their public comments about the amalgamation, regardless of their personal views about it.



The reconstruction of the Fairy Bower Pool Amenities block continues. Here progress up to 1st of September is shown. Reflecting the leisurely speed of many modern construction projects, it appeared the builders were not in attendance that day.

Special mention also needs to be made concerning the service of the three most long standing Manly Councillors of the 2012-6 Council, who have all decided to retire. These are Councillor (Mayor) Jean Hay AM elected in 1987, Cllr Barbera Aird, elected in 1995 and Cllr Adele Heasman elected in 1999. Between them, these three Councillors have been on Manly Council for around 70 years! Regardless of politics, I think all of us should be proud of the long period of community service given by these three former Manly elected officials.

All Change For The Council Web Site

As many residents may have noticed, following the launch of the new *Northern Beaches Council* logo, the NBC has now moved to a new look *Northern beaches Council* web-site (about a week ago). Previously at an LRC meeting the "new branding" consultants had proposed to remove all Council sub-brands and web-sites, to be replaced by one "Northern Beaches Council" corporate identity.

I was one of those who led the push for this to be reconsidered to allow high profile Council sub-brands (mainly a *Manly Council* thing) and Council's external (non-corporate) web-sites to continue in operation. So it was pleasing to note the *Manly Art Gallery and Museum (MAGAM)* and *The Manly Environment Centre (MEC)* have currently survived the initial mono-branding, one web-site push.

The new Northern Beaches web-site appears visually attractive and works with mobile devices, However currently it can be cumbersome to use (particularly when it thinks Netbook PCs are touch screen tablets) and there is only a limited amount of detailed content and information actually present, compared to what was included on the previous three former Council web sites.

While it is still early days, the new web-site is clearly unfinished (e.g. some internal links don't work), and yet all the former Council web-sites have already been deleted, so unless you know a bit about internet tools, you can not just fall back to the old web sites while the new one continues to be developed. For example, currently the *Manly car park parking availability indicator* is not available. (To be fixed.)

I also find it personally very disappointing that gigabytes of on-line historic information from a 20 year period has simply been deleted, rather than being just left available for historical reference. For heritage interests, and following some non-IT Council staff requests, archival static backup copies of all three former Council web-sites were taken.

The *Fairy Bower Precinct* web-site was intermeshed with *Manly Council's* web site structure, but most links have had to be adjusted to the new Council web-site, or mirrored content from the old web-site. The only issue left to work around is that the *Manly Council YouTube* account content has also all been deleted. This is strange as the Warringah and Pittwater *YouTube* accounts are still working normally. Again, luckily, back up copies were downloaded before this was deleted.

We will continue to monitor the development progress on

the new *Northern Beaches Council* web-site. Meanwhile if residents can not find some information on the new Northern Beaches web site that was on the old Manly site, or want to access a page on the old Manly web-site that they used regularly, please contact us as we may be able to assist.

Frenchs Forest Hospital Precinct Structure Plan Controversy

In simple terms this is the *Northern Beaches Council* beginning the planning process to rezone and change the use of land around the new hospital site. On the 1st of August a fairly well attended and lively extraordinary meeting of Council was held at the *Glen Street Theatre* to consider and adopt the proposed planning changes. The whole way the matter was handled has raised many issues, including could such a radical planning outcome be attempted elsewhere in the Northern Beaches?

At this meeting the Administrator Dick Person self-disclosed to the crowd that there were originally no plans by the State to change the operation of the *Frenchs Forest High School* on its existing site, but that he had initiated a proposal to create a new high density Frenchs Forest town centre by taking over the whole of the existing school and oval site. He proposed to move the high school to the *Warringah Aquatic Centre* site, which was originally to be demolished with a new aquatic centre to be built in the new town centre.

The trouble was he announced this far-reaching proposal without talking to the local Frenchs Forest community first. Not surprisingly there is widespread opposition to this scheme in this community in terms of any disruption to the operation to the existing *Warringah Aquatic Centre*, objection to the high rise buildings up against streets of bungalows and concern at the disruption and loss of school facilities and space by moving the public high school from its generous grounds with oval to a small high-density new site. Additionally the residents raised concerns about transport and the loss of playing fields near the Aquatic reserve.

Following the selection of the location of the new regional hospital, Frenchs Forest was declared a “strategic centre” in Sydney planning in 2014 and was subsequently upgraded to one of the 15 “priority precincts” in the metropolitan strategy. The trouble is that the normal processes of democracy are being forgotten in all of this - no one asked the Frenchs Forest residents what their views on this were **before** it was announced, and nor was the outcome for the existing community, from such planning reclassifications, made clear.

Notwithstanding the State making such determinations, Warringah (and then new Northern Beaches) Council simply acted to facilitate the State’s planning changes and not to defend the Frenchs Forest community, nor seek to have their concerns addressed. (Like Manly Council did with *Seaforth TAFE*.)

The frequently asked question is why is this the case? Is it because the Council is inwards focussed and does not really engage with its community, or is it that Council is simply pro-development believing its for the greater good, or is it because section 94 (developer) contributions are a good



An aerial view showing the new high-rise Frenchs Forest Hospital under construction on the top centre-right. The existing *Forest High School* is the low-rise collection of buildings next to this and includes the extensive green grounds with oval which can be seen to the lower-left of these buildings. Rezoning of the school lands for mixed commercial and residential high-rise use comprises much of Stage 1 of the Hospital Precinct Structure Plan.

source of funds for Council finances when the rate increases are pegged?

The Structure Plan announcement strategy was also carefully stage managed. Firstly there was the obvious attempt to use self-interest to try to divide or mute any resident opposition, by promising a limited number of residents upzoning (increasing heights and floor space ratios limits) in the draft proposal, so they could sell out for a profit. Secondly the fact that the whole public Forest High



Legend

B1. Neighbourhood Centre	R2+ Low Density Residential plus additional land uses	R3+ Medium Density Residential plus additional land uses
B4. Mixed Use	R3. Medium Density Residential	SP2. Infrastructure
Phase 1 (Immediately)	Phase 2 (10 years)	Phase 3 (10 years +)
Proposed new road		

The Hospital Precinct Structure Plan Stage 1 is the area bounded by the black line including the hospital, high school and outlined building blocks on Frenchs Forest Road and Warringah Road. Stage two is the triangle from line of the school boundary to Forest Way including sites straddling Frenchs Forest Road. Stage 3 is largely the existing shopping centre and primary school sites. (Both images this page Northern Beaches Council)

was to be closed and its land sold off was not really mentioned - the whole focus was on creation of the "exciting new town centre". Thirdly any attempt by residents to question the declaration of Frenchs Forest as a *strategic centre* or *priority precinct* (and seek this to be reviewed) was simply blocked, as though its a "fait accompli" (even though these changes are fairly recent from 2014).

However on close examination, when overlaid with the timings, it appears the Frenchs Forest community could be being offered a Trojan-horse scheme, that other than redevelopment of the high school and its oval with initial sites (see the staging plan illustration), won't happen for another 10 years. So the residents, particularly within Stage 2, will see their suburb changed by increased population, traffic congestion and intensification with high-rise buildings, but will not be able to sell-up and exit with any upzoning profit for 10 years.

In fact it is worse that this, as if there is no east-west rapid transit-way (due to limited capacity to terminate buses at Chatswood), nor the middle-harbour road tunnel, stages 2 and 3 will never occur, as according to the RMS, without these the local road system can't cope with any more traffic.

Given the apparent local street traffic capacity constraints, there must also be a question of why the number of dwellings in Stage 1 has been increased to the maximum 3000 between the draft and final Council plans (with raised height limits and floor space ratios). Yet the boundaries of the stages have generally not been changed. At the meeting many residents considered these rezonings inequitable.

Then we head to the finances of actually moving the *Forest High School*. There is no published valuation for the land the school sits on. Given it will have 40 metre mixed commercial-residential development height controls, this must see the State government receive a substantial windfall financial gain from its rezoning. It is thus clear the State (and Treasury) has a pecuniary (vested financial) interest in the planning assessment of this whole scheme. There are no plans to buy any replacement land, but now just use the airspace of the Council's Aquatic Centre car park. Of course the costs of reconstructing the school are not disclosed.

Buried in the agenda report is that the Aquatic Reserve Site is considered a very high bush-fire risk (p59). In fact the Aquatic reserve is land separated off the original Manly Dam/War Memorial Park reserve. So the State sells the



Is the Northern Beaches Council set to return to 1970s tower block planning? The 16-storey "Pembroke" building on North Steyne (viewed from Bonner Avenue) was completed circa 1973, and was controversial due to its sheer scale. The public backlash from this height of building lead to Manly Council's planning rules being changed to prevent any more. So after 40 years, is it appropriate for Frenchs Forest get such towers? (McGrath Manly)

existing school land to developers and moves into a public park! Many think the Administrator made a serious error of judgement in proposing and adopting this plan, which is opposed by a large number of residents within the Frenchs Forest Community. (Of the 900-odd submissions to Council 28.1% focused on this point - this was only exceeded by the 39.8% who objected to moving the Aquatic Centre.)

So lets see the election results. If a pro-development block of Councillors gains control of the Northern Beaches Council, this sort of mega-development without regard for the community could happen anywhere. The Administrator has already announced the intensification of Pittwater Road through Brookvale. The Mona Vale Place Plan remains parked. Mona Vale will probably be the next battle ground.

Come and join us 13th September 7:00pm at the ICMS (St Patricks College).

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Need Help?

Council Rangers: 9976 1633
Manly Police: 9976 8099



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