



VILLAGE VOICE

QUEEN STREET & WEST WOOLLAHRA ASSOCIATION NEWS BULLETIN

MAY, 1983

The year of the terrier and watchdog

The following is the annual report on the Association's work in 1981-82 to be presented at the annual meeting on May 19 by the president, Robin Brampton:

IN 1982, the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association celebrated its tenth anniversary and the year was again one of strong activity.

However, the results were not always spectacularly apparent.

At this stage in our life, we often appear to be playing two canine roles – as a terrier constantly yapping at the heels of officialdom over matters which should be progressing faster and as a watchdog, ever alert to counter moves which might threaten our environment and way of life.

Nevertheless, I am happy to report that in one important area, the adoption of the West Woollahra Action Plan, matters are now moving to what we hope will be an early and satisfactory conclusion.

Our other great concern is to persuade the authorities to take measures to reduce the intolerable level of traffic in Ocean Street.

Although no improvement was achieved during the year, a great deal has been happening in the background to evolve proposals which may secure the desired end.

West Woollahra Plan

As I remarked last year, when the Association was formed in 1972, its main purpose was to secure a planning scheme which would preserve the character of our area and prevent

OUR SPEAKER

Alderman Judith May holds the post of Mayor of Woollahra in a particularly difficult year as Woollahra Council is fighting a very hard battle to preserve its independence in the face of threats of amalgamation. Alderman May has represented Vaucluse Ward on the Council since 1977. In 1980 she was elected to the executive of the Local Government Association and is its member on the Geographical Names Board, the Keep Australia Beautiful Council and the Action Committee on Local Government Records. Mother of two, she is married to Professor James May, Professor of Surgery at Sydney University.



All local residents are cordially invited to the
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
of The Queen Street and West Woollahra Association

HOLDSWORTH STREET CENTRE
Morrell Street, Woollahra
THURSDAY, MAY 19th, 1983, at 7.30 p.m.

GUEST SPEAKER

The Mayor of Woollahra, Alderman Judith May
on

“Local Government and Our Area's Future”

Followed by free tasting of the White Bordeaux wine
from Richmond Grove and refreshments

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ANNUAL REPORT cont

out- of-scale and unsightly development.

Since then we have had a long and hard struggle to obtain the type of action plan adopted by Woollahra Council in 1980 which generally reflects the wishes of residents for the area.

The plan places great emphasis on conservation of the existing architecture and limits new building to three stories to preserve the present scale of development.

Unfortunately, some details of the plan found disfavour with the State Department of Planning and Environment and this has considerably delayed gazettal.

To try and break the deadlock, Woollahra Council last year formed a task force, headed by our senior ward alderman, Jock MacCallum.

Our Association held discussions with Alderman MacCallum and offered the Council every help and encouragement, including the services of our planning advisor, Mr Jack Devery, who is an expert on the area.

As a result of the work of the task force, the Mayor of Woollahra, Alderman Judy May, together with Alderman MacCallum, held a meeting early this year with the head of the Department of Planning and Environment, Mr Dick Smythe.

They were accompanied by the Town Clerk, Mr Michael Regnis, and the Council's Architect and Town Planner, Mr Peter Jensen.

The meeting proved very satisfactory as we were told afterwards that there had been a "shifting of attitude" by the Department.

The deputation found that a lot of problems which existed in the eyes of the Department could be straightened out without compromising the general stance of the plan.

Mr Smythe arranged for a party of Department officials to inspect the area with Council officers and set out a programme for getting the plan approved by ordinance before the end of the year.

This will involve a further exhibition of the plan, at which local residents will again be invited to comment, probably in July or August.

We would ask residents to take an interest in this exhibition and give the Council every encouragement to en-

Queen Street Fair on November 26

Subject to the consent of Woollahra Council, the 1983 Queen Street Fair will be held on Saturday, November 26, from 9 am to 5 pm.

Already the organisation work is in full swing and the joint committee of the Association and Woollahra Council has met to start planning the many details which go to making the fair a success.

If you are interested in having a stall, drop a line to the Fair Secretary, Pixie Nolan, at PO Box 16, Woollahra, NSW 2025. You will be sent details and an application form when they go out, probably in August.

sure the plan is approved as quickly as possible so that we will have a firm charter for future planning in the area.

Ocean Street traffic

In 1980 the Association evolved a number of practical proposals for reducing traffic in Ocean Street, while acknowledging that the street should still carry a fair burden of traffic.

At the time, Woollahra Council supported our ideas and our work since has been directed to achieving some degree of implementation.

Woollahra Council's sympathetic approach was shown by the fact that it excluded Ocean Street from the classification schedule of its recent road hierarchy plan so that the situation could be examined further.

This examination took the form of a full scale report on Ocean Street traffic prepared by the consultants Colston and Budd. This was presented to the Council last year.

The Council's Engineer and Town Planner have since prepared separate reports, with recommendations, and

the next stage will be a comprehensive exhibition of the data.

This will give residents a chance to understand the factors contained in the study and express their views.

Although delayed by the Council's work on the question of local government amalgamations, the Ocean Street exhibition is now due to be held in June.

It is the intention of the retiring committee that the Association should use the opportunity given by the exhibition to again press our viewpoint strongly.

At State Government level, we have been somewhat disappointed that our local member has not taken stronger action on our behalf.

Recently we have received a sympathetic approach from the State Electorate Conference of the Liberal Party and although our Association is non-political, we welcome any help they may be able to give us on this important matter.

Waimea House

The Association has always been in the forefront of efforts to preserve Waimea House, the lovely Georgian style home in Waimea Avenue which was almost demolished by the Royal Blind Society in 1973.

The Heritage Council and National Trust have also taken a deep interest, and last year the Heritage Council sought to place a permanent conservation order on the building.

The new owners of Waimea House have always assured us that they intend to restore it to its former glory, so we were very surprised when they lodged an objection to the order, resulting in an inquiry which opened on December 20.

Together with the chairman of our architectural sub-committee, Douglas Gordon, I appeared before the inquiry and presented both verbal and written evidence.

The curtain falls at Shakespeare's

QUEEN STREET is saying goodbye to one of its notable retailing identities. After 23 years in Queen Street, Marie Shakespeare is giving up her Shakespeare's House antiques shop at number 86 and going into retirement.

Mrs Shakespeare will be remembered for her very colourful contribution to an early Queen Street Fair when

she ran a stall with all the workers dressed as characters from Shakespeare's plays.

We wish her well in her retirement.

At the same time we welcome Robert Morrison whose antique business has moved into number 84, the former home of Smoked Salmon.

Detailed submissions were given on behalf of the Heritage Council, National Trust and Woollahra Council. Also we had the excellent support of a local resident, Mr Douglas Small, who is an architect.

Mr Small produced a well-supported petition from residents in the immediate neighbourhood.

No evidence was given on behalf of the objectors and before the inquiry resumed on February 28, they wrote to the Commissioner of Inquiry, stating that they were now prepared to support the order.

They did, however, seek changes in the curtilages proposed as part of the order. The curtilage is the area around a building which is specified to be kept clear of further construction.

It appeared that the purpose of seeking the change was to build more town houses on the site, in addition to those which have already been permitted.

The Heritage Council has opposed this move and at the time of writing, the Commissioner had not given his decision.

Local Government

Although differences of opinion do arise, the Association has excellent relations with Woollahra Municipal Council.

We were therefore very sympathetic when the Local Government Boundaries Commission suddenly put the Council on the defensive in such a precipitous manner in January by throwing the boundaries question in the melting pot.

The Association wrote to the Commission protesting at the action and stating that we saw no advantage in any amalgamations or extensions of boundaries involving the existing Woollahra Council area.

We also objected to the proposal of Waverley Council to extend its boundaries across Oxford Street into the Woollahra Council area.

The Council has received overwhelming support in its resistance to amalgamation and I would like to congratulate the Council on the quality and strength of its campaign.

This year we will also be having a local government election, and the Association plans again to hold an "election forum" at which all candidates will be given an equal opportunity to meet local residents and lay their policies before them.



End in sight at "Chaos Corner"

Queen Street has been fuming in the past 10 weeks over the disruption caused by major road reconstruction at the junction of Moncur Street.

Retailers opposite the spot tell us they have lost up to 50 per cent of their regular takings because customers were so discouraged.

Why were the roadworks needed? And why did they take so long?

When we put these questions to Woollahra Council's engineer, Dennis Cafe, he explained that there had been a complete failure of the road structure at the junction. It was so bad that the whole road was in danger of tilting.

The repair work needed was so extensive that at first the Council considered closing the area completely to traffic while the new road pavement was laid.

However, despite the added time and money cost, the Council decided local residents and shopkeepers would

prefer that traffic should keep flowing at the junction while the work continued.

Mr Cafe told us that the failure of the road had been caused by erosion from underneath. When work was begun, the trouble was found to be so extensive that some old stone culverts had to be replaced.

This was one reason the work took so long. Another was the complications caused by the number of underground services at the junction – Telecom installations, electricity, water and drainage.

A new concrete pavement is being laid – which should be maintenance free for many years – and Mr Cafe was optimistic that the disruption would end well before the end of May.

Incidentally the work is estimated to cost \$52,000. Wouldn't it have been nice if the same money could have been spent on trees?

Queen Street trees

In my previous report, I expressed disappointment at the apparent abandonment of the cohesive tree-planting scheme for Queen Street, initiated in 1977, and its replacement with an ad hoc approach to tree planting.

We are continuing to discuss the matter with Council staff in an endeavour to improve matters.

As a result, recent replantings have been of plane trees which fit in with the original plan.

We have also been working with the Council to suggest a central feature for Davies Reserve which is being redeveloped as a purely decorative area.

A few days before this report was written, a resident of the area approached us with the offer of a magnificent decorative fountain which has an interesting history.

We are following this up strongly and putting the offer to Woollahra Council who are responsible for maintenance of the reserve.

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ANNUAL REPORT cont

Queen Street Fair

Queen Street Fair on November 27 again proved highly successful both financially and as a lively community event.

It was opened by TV personality Jeannie Little and a new feature was a busking competition, won by Dan Menendez, a highly entertaining street juggler from San Francisco.

As 1982 was the Year of the Tree, stallholders were invited to reflect a theme of "trees in all their glory". The results were rather better than when we have previously invited stallholders to adopt a theme for their displays.

Total revenue from the Fair was \$37,140, while expenditure was \$31,158, leaving a surplus of \$5982 - a better figure than we have achieved for some years.

I would like to thank the Fair secretary, Pixie Nolan, for her excellent work in handling the administration arrangements, and also acknowledge the fine cooperation of Woollahra Council and its officers.

Other activities

In the week before Christmas, the Association arranged a well attended open air concert of Christmas songs and carols for members in the garden of Kaleidoscope.

Sandy Newman and the Taverner Consort group were in fine voice and among the guests we were very pleased to welcome the Mayor of Woollahra, Alderman Judy May.

Earlier in the year, the committee arranged a lunch to celebrate the Association's 10th anniversary at which it was a pleasure to entertain a number of people whose efforts and support over the years have brought the Association to the standing it has today.

Our senior ward alderman, Jock MacCallum, proposed a "birthday" toast to the Association, and the response was given by our founder president, Leo Schofield.

During the year, the Association accepted an invitation to become a community organisation member of Radio Eastern Sydney which will begin broadcasting this year from Paddington Town Hall.

We wish the venture well, and look forward to having a very practical relationship with it.

The Association has also been invited to provide representatives on the special community committee formed by Woollahra Council to make plans for the Bicentenary Celebrations in 1988.

Mrs Pixie Nolan and myself are sitting on the committee which has already got down to work.

Finance

Again our activities during the year resulted in an excess of income over expenditure, this time amounting to \$4519.

I would again like to congratulate our Treasurer, Mollie Lenthall, on controlling our finances so prudently and diligently.

Full accounts will be given to members at the annual meeting.

Committee

No organisation could be as vigorous as ours without the work of a devoted committee, and the Association has always had the benefit of enthusiastic committee members.

I would particularly like to acknowledge the work of our vice president, Norman Prescott, who is always ready with help and advice, and Monica McDonald who handles our secretarial work.

Monica is at present spending a few months in Europe, and I wish to thank Winifred von Heizen for helping out in her absence.

Robin Brampton

QUEEN STREET & WEST WOOLLAHRA ASSOCIATION

A residents' action association covering the area bounded by Jersey Road, Edgecliff Road and Oxford Street, West Woollahra, N.S.W. Affiliated to the National Trust.

Address: Box 16, P.O. Woollahra, N.S.W. 2025.

Subscription: Individual \$5 a year; Family \$8; Corporate \$10; Life \$50.

Patron: Dame Joan Sutherland.

President: Robin Brampton.

Vice-President: Norman Prescott.

Treasurer: Mollie Lenthall.

Committee: Douglas Gordon, Howard Hilton, Monica McDonald, Pixie Nolan, Grant Roberts, Tom Wilhelm.

Honorary Committee Member: Leo Schofield.

Chairman of the Architectural Committee: Douglas Gordon.

Village Voice is published approximately every six months. Letters and other contributions on local topics are invited. The editor is Robin Brampton (331 1188 day, 326 1257 evening and weekends).

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Please Join Us!

The Association needs all the help it can get in its fight for the best interests of the local community. If you are reading this and you are not a member, please join us. For individuals, the cost is only \$5 a year.

Family membership costs \$8 (two people); corporate membership is \$10; and life membership \$50. Just fill in the application form below and post it, with your cheque, to the secretary at the above address. Many thanks.

THE QUEEN STREET AND WEST WOOLLAHRA ASSOCIATION

Please enrol me as a member in the category of (tick box)

Individual member

Family member

Corporate member

Life member

I enclose a cheque for \$.....

NAME

ADDRESS

POST TO:

The Secretary,
Queen Street and West Woollahra Association,
PO Box 16,
WOOLLAHRA, NSW 2025.