

VILLAGE VOICE



**THE FIRST FIGHT: SAVING WAIMEA HOUSE
FUNERAL HOME DA GAINS APPROVAL
REVISIT WOOLLAHRA'S ORIGINAL
OCEAN STREET COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



so successful, keeping the formalities and speeches to a minimum and promoting the event as a great social evening to meet your fellow Woollahra residents.

The QSWWA Annual Dinner will be held on Tuesday 14 June at 6.30pm for 7.30pm at the Woollahra Hotel. Details are in a following article, including how to book and pay online at www.woollahravillage.com.au. This is another great opportunity to catch up with locals, so get in quickly as numbers are limited.

As part of our 50th anniversary celebrations, to encourage even more residents and businesses to join the association we are trialling a Shop Local Rewards Card for members, with four local businesses participating. Cards will be handed out to members at the AGM, so make sure your membership is up to date and come and join us.

It's great to see the QSWWA continuing to be recognised in parliament. This time it was a Community Recognition Statement that Alex Greenwich, MP for Sydney, made in state parliament on 17 February. Full details of the statement are in the Community section on our website, www.woollahravillage.com.au.

Next state election there is a boundary adjustment which will return all of our area to Vaucluse, so we take this opportunity to thank Alex for his kind comments and his support of the association over the years.

On the development front, a DA has been submitted to develop the large triangular block of ten previously separate properties that comprise 60–80 Oxford Street and 2A James Street (DA 607/2021). The proposal includes a two-storey underground basement for parking, renovation of the current historical buildings for residential use, plus a series of new units fronting James Street. This is the largest development in the area for a while and residents are encouraged to inspect the DA and make a submission if they have concerns.

Staying with DAs, residents in Ocean and Forth Streets will be disappointed with the council reaching an agreement with the funeral home operators to use 37 Ocean Street fairly much as the original DA requested (see article, p 8). On a positive note, it's good to see the Woollahra Local Planning Panel rejecting the inappropriately timed DA for 136–148 Edgecliff Road (see following article).

Looking forward to catching up with members at the AGM and Annual Dinner.

GILES EDMONDS, PRESIDENT, QSWWA

2022 QSWWA AGM AND SOCIAL DRINKS

The 2022 QSWWA Annual General Meeting and social drinks will start at 6pm upstairs in the Queen Street Lounge at the Woollahra Hotel on Tuesday 17 May. Doors will open from 5.30pm, please come early so that we can start promptly. To speed entry and help us with catering, please register for this event in advance by logging in at www.woollahravillage.com.au and going to the Events page. Note that this is for members only and, being the AGM, is a free event. Individual and business memberships are entitled to register one voting member while household memberships are entitled to two voting members. If your membership has lapsed or you are not a member, you will need to join first before being able to register.

Following last year's success, we are continuing the format of combining the AGM with social drinks, with the association providing a welcome drink and canapés for members. Using the Woollahra Hotel will also enable members to continue after the meeting, should they wish.

As usual, we have invited a number of special guests including the Mayor, the general manager of Woollahra



Council, our three local Cooper Ward councillors and our local state and federal members, as well as our *Village Voice* team and representatives from the Woollahra Philharmonic Orchestra. To keep the formal part of the AGM short, we will not be asking our guests to give a speech but will instead ask them to stay for the social part and give members a chance to meet with

them individually, as their time permits.

As 2022 is the 50th anniversary of the founding of the QSWWA, I encourage all members to attend to hear about your association, catch up and socialise with other members, and meet with our special guests. If you are not currently a member or your membership has lapsed, you can still join or update your membership online at www.woollahravillage.com.au/join-us or sign up at the door before the meeting. I look forward to seeing as many members as possible and making it another memorable meeting.

GILES EDMONDS, PRESIDENT, QSWWA

Well, here we are in May already, trying to put behind us a fairly unmemorable summer dominated by La Niña weather. The BOM is forecasting that La Niña should dissipate in the next month or so – good news for readers who are tired of wiping mould off walls, ceilings, clothes and shoes, not to mention ruining shoes in the puddles on the pavement.

We encourage all members to join us at the AGM on Tuesday 17 May at the Woollahra Hotel (details in a following article). We are following the same format as last year which proved

The Queen Street and West Woollahra Association Ltd
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<https://woollahravillage.com.au> | Email: admin@qswwa.com.au
Follow us on Instagram @qswwa_sydney

The QSWWA is a residents and traders group in the area bounded by Jersey Road, Ocean Street between Jersey Road and Edgecliff Road, Edgecliff Road between Ocean Street and Leswell Street, Leswell Street and Oxford Street between Leswell Street and Jersey Road.

President: Giles Edmonds, Treasurer: Alan Smith, Committee Members: Richard Banks, Phillip Mitchelhill, Susie Willmott, John Knott, Richard Haigh, Christine Whiston, Stephanie Macindoe.

The *Village Voice* Editor: Christine Whiston, Designer: Kerry Klinner, MegaCity Design, Subeditor: Deborah Brown.

DISCLAIMER: The views expressed in this publication are those of the writers and not necessarily those of The Queen Street and West Woollahra Association Ltd.

ON OUR COVER

Waimea House, one of the finest examples of Georgian architecture in the area, was saved from demolition 50 years ago in a fight led by the newly formed QSWWA. Photograph by Paul McGuire. See more of Paul's work at [Instagram@paulmcguire5970](https://www.instagram.com/paulmcguire5970)



QSWWA 2022 ANNUAL DINNER: TUESDAY 14 JUNE, THE WOOLLAHRA HOTEL

Book now for the ever-popular QSWWA Annual Dinner, which will be held on Tuesday 14 June at 6.30pm for 7.30pm at the Woollahra Hotel, Queen Street. Given that we've had to cancel our dinner for the last two years due to COVID, this is a great chance to catch up with friends and neighbours over fabulous food and wine, so put together a table and make a booking. This is the 50th anniversary of the founding of the association, another great reason to support your local community.

Cost is \$130 per person, which is great value for a highly enjoyable evening at one of Woollahra's best venues. Numbers are limited, so make sure you book early. Please include a note as part of your reservation if you want to be on a table with someone and we will do our best to seat you together. Bookings and payments are being taken online on our website, www.woollahravillage.com.au.

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COMMUNITY NEWS: THE LATEST NEWS, VIEWS, SHOPS AND EVENTS IN WOOLLAHRA

LACKLUSTRE PLANTINGS IN QUEEN STREET

The recent under-tree plantings along both sides of Queen Street have drawn criticism from a number of local residents.

The council's previous plantings were a random mixture of azaleas, perennials and natives, with varieties inappropriate for a civic planting where there is shade competition from the trees they are planted around. The second planting species selection is even more inappropriate, and most will be dead or in decline by Christmas.

The key to good urban landscaping is to choose suitable species and plant them en masse. The council needs only to look at Oxford Street near the bus depot, where Waverley Council has engaged a professional landscape architect to design street planters with good species selections. Here they have used mass plantings of Philodendron 'Xanadu'. Varieties like this will tolerate sun, shade, wet, dry, and dogs walking on them. Mascot street plantings are another example of good urban landscape design.



Recent under-tree plantings on Queen Street have drawn criticism.



The Corner House in Edgecliff Road is now the subject of a Heritage order.

Woollahra Council's approach seems to be piecemeal: they send out a couple of gardeners with a few odd plants. The council should take a larger view and engage a professional landscape architect to look at the streetscape in its entirety.

As a landscape designer and a ratepayer, I am dismayed at Woollahra Council's lack of foresight and waste of ratepayers' taxes.

CONCERNED RESIDENT

HERITAGE ORDER GRANTED

The Corner House, the property at the centre of a controversial DA proposing a six-storey apartment building with a further two storeys of excavation at 364 and 364A Edgecliff Road, has been granted an Interim Heritage Order. The order was granted following a Notice of Motion to Council by Luise Elsing and former councillors Anthony Marano and Megan McEwin. While the outcome of the DA is still pending, the Heritage Order means that approval from the Heritage Council is required for any works for the duration of the order.

LOCAL CINEMA RETURNS TO THE BAY

It has been a long wait, but the movies are set to make a welcome return to Double Bay. A new cinema complex, with retail and community space, offices, residential apartments and parking will replace the Cross Street car park in Double Bay in plans just announced by Woollahra Council.

The new design proposal, developed in response to longstanding community demand to bring a cinema back to Double Bay, will see the outdated public car park replaced with a mixed-use building delivered at no financial cost to council or ratepayers. A partnership between Woollahra Council, Pallas Group, Assembly Funds Management and Fortis, the project will involve the demolition of the existing 380-space car park and replacement with a new structure.

As well as a multi-screen cinema complex and retail space, the plan includes office and residential space, dedicated community space, including replacement of the existing early childhood centre, and a 380-space basement public car park, plus additional parking for cinema, retail, commercial and residential tenants.

The planning process will involve extensive public exhibition and community consultation at both planning proposal and DA stage. Following DA approval, it is anticipated a three-year construction phase will commence in 2024-25.

WPO — A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

The Woollahra Philharmonic Orchestra made its triumphant post-lockdown return to the community in March under the baton of guest conductor, Chris Upton. Resound, the first of its exhilarating programs for 2022, was performed at St Matthias Church in Oxford Street and featured works by Bach, Bizet and Rachmaninoff.



Pianist Paul Cheung thrilled audiences at last month's WPO's first post-lockdown concert.

The concert opened with JS Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D Minor, arranged for the WPO by Chris Upton. This was followed by four pieces from George Bizet's Carmen Suite No 2, arranged as stand-alone concert pieces and delightful in their familiarity.

The final work featured pianist Paul Cheung performing Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No 3, Op 30, which is considered to be one of the most challenging in the piano repertoire. Paul delivered a breathtaking performance; cadenza followed cadenza and the rapturous applause as the final notes died away was fitting tribute to an emotional and uplifting musical experience.



The community art event – twice washed out due to rain – was transferred indoors and hailed a great success.

The WPO will perform again in June with its program Rejoice at St Columba Uniting Church (see page 10).

COMMUNITY ART EVENT

After postponing twice due to the wet weather, Ky Smith and her team of tutors at the Art Lab School decided to host their community art event in the Art Lab School Studio on 1 May. The event was to be an outdoor event in Chiswick Park but given the ongoing uncertainty about the rain, the decision was made to bring the easels indoors! Participants were guided through a live painting tutorial, working step by step from a blank canvas to a finished piece which they were able to take home.

The event, a first for Woollahra, was supported by Woollahra Council and will hopefully become a regular on the community calendar.

BUS TO BOOKS

Woollahra Libraries offers a monthly bus service for residents in our LGA who have difficulty accessing the library due to limited mobility or access to transport.

The Woollahra Libraries Bus to Books service picks you up from your home and takes you to Woollahra Library at Double Bay. During your visit you can access our library resources to browse and borrow our

books, movies, magazines and much more. Enjoy morning tea and conversation with some new friends before the bus takes you back home.

The service will operate on the fourth Thursday of every month and bookings are essential as places are limited.

Please contact the library for bookings on 02 9391 7100 or email homelibraryservice@woollahra.nsw.gov.au.



BECOME A MEMBER AND BE REWARDED

Join the QSWWA and be rewarded. New and renewing members will receive a Local Rewards Card with access to \$100 or more in savings at local businesses.

Your Local Rewards Card entitles you to offers and savings in Woollahra village at shops including:

BODALLA DAIRY: Buy a double scoop, get one free (of the same value), and/or 25% off a take-home tub of ice cream.

PHOENIX HOTEL: Dine in on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday and get 25% off your bill, up to \$25.

PIZZA MONCUR: Pick-up offer – free bread with any regular pizza, valued at \$8. Dine-in – free glass of wine with any regular pizza, valued at \$10.

PARTERRE: 10% off any purchase.

ENJOY OTHER BENEFITS:

- Meet and grow your local connections.
- Have a voice in what happens in your community.
- Help protect the unique character of the Queen Street precinct.

Join up or renew your membership now, be rewarded and help protect all that is unique about your community.

Membership fees:

Individual: standard \$30; senior or student \$15

Household: standard (2 members) \$50; senior (2 members) \$25

Business: \$55

Offer available for a limited time only. Join online at www.woollahravillage.com.au.

A DEAD LOSS: FUNERAL HOME DA GAINS APPROVAL

FOLLOWING A HEARING LAST MONTH IN THE LAND AND ENVIRONMENT COURT, THE DA PROPOSING TO CHANGE THE USE OF THE FORMER ART GALLERY AT 37 OCEAN STREET TO A FUNERAL HOME HAS BEEN GIVEN THE GO-AHEAD.

As reported in the *Village Voice* last year, the community objected strongly to the proposal, with almost 200 written objections being submitted to council as well as a change.org petition.

The proposal was subsequently rejected by the Local Planning Authority on the grounds that it did not meet planning requirements regarding having a residence above the proposed commercial premises. However, the applicant appealed that decision and council subsequently advised that the matter would be heard before the commissioner in the Land and Environment Court on 4 April this year.

A group of six business owners and residents had the opportunity to present their objections at that hearing.

On 21 April council advised that the commissioner, Susan O'Neill, had upheld the appeal and the amended DA had been approved, subject to the conditions of consent.

These conditions included a requirement that the applicant decrease the height of the parking structure behind the premises 'to mitigate additional overshadowing of the neighbouring property to the south'.

The commissioner also noted the following:

'I accept that the residents' concerns regarding the presence of dead bodies on the site genuinely affects their perception of the amenity impacts of the proposal, however, their concerns about dead bodies are in fact a fear or concern without justification in objective, observable, likely consequences.'

The residents group formed to rally the objections of residents and local businesses directly affected by the proposal funeral home are bitterly disappointed. The following comments were made to the *Village Voice* following news of the decision:

'Based on the debate, we think the residents' arguments raised the distinct possibility that council's deal with the applicant is flawed in a number of aspects. It's a shame to see council spend our rates supporting a use that is so firmly rejected by every surrounding resident.'

'When you look at how much money council wastes fighting DAs that are highly acceptable and then they fold and do a deal on this highly inappropriate proposal, we can't help but reach the conclusion that the Woollahra Council executive has lost touch with the community they are supposed to serve, and the elected council is spineless to fix the problem.'

CHRISTINE WHISTON



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FOR OUR COMMUNITY**

Authorised by Dave Sharma MP, Liberal Party, Suite 302, Level 3, 179-191 New South Head Road, NSW Edgecliff 2027



QSWWA CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

FORMED AS A FORUM FOR RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES TO HAVE A SAY IN THE PROTECTION AND PROGRESS OF THEIR COMMUNITY, THE QUEEN STREET AND WEST WOOLLAHRA ASSOCIATION HAS BEEN AN ACTIVE VOICE IN THE WOOLLAHRA COMMUNITY FOR 50 YEARS SINCE ITS FIRST AGM IN MAY 1972.

Today's president, Giles Edmonds, reflects here on the association's role in preserving the heritage and character of our village and its surrounds over five decades.

Well-known conservation advocate and Sydney identity, Leo Schofield, was the first chairman and he continued to play a part in the QSWWA for many years.

The restoration and ongoing success of Queen Street has always depended on its residents, business proprietors and property owners collaborating to secure outcomes which preserve and enhance the village. The QSWWA was formed in 1972 with the goal of regenerating and reactivating Queen Street's shopping area, promoting its facilities and preserving the charm of West Woollahra streets. The founders pledged to act 'as a forum through which residents can raise their voices effectively on planning matters and influence decisions of public authorities'. This was a time when Woollahra had no planning protections and the attractive Victorian facades of Queen Street could

be bulldozed and replaced by the brick inelegancies popular with architects at the time.

The QSWWA's first fight was opposing a state government proposal for a sports complex at Moore Park, which would have encroached on 40 hectares of Centennial Park, equivalent to 30 per cent of the entire Parklands. On the day before a giant protest rally in the park, the association collected 500 signatures on a petition. The association later succeeded in opposing the proposed destruction of Jersey Road. A previous attempt had occurred in the late 1960s, when a scheme to run a freeway through Jersey Road was defeated by an imaginative campaign led by the Paddington Society.

Early in 1973, the Royal Blind Society applied to demolish Waimea House and sent in the bulldozers. Reaction from local residents was swift and effective and the Builders Labourers Federation was persuaded to put an immediate black ban on the work. Unfortunately, the veranda, windows



vehicles through the heart of Woollahra. This would have caused major disruption to our quality of life and was totally avoidable by choosing a much more direct route from the site to New South Head Road. The QSWWA quickly emailed all members and included a flyer in the *Village Voice*, alerting residents to the plan and urging them to contact council and lodge an objection. The campaign was a major success; the council received over 100 objections and the developer changed their proposal, bypassing Woollahra.

Today as well as protecting our environment the QSWWA continues to play a vital community role, holding regular events such as our AGM and Social Drinks, Annual Dinner, Christmas Carols and Christmas Window Display Competition; occasional one-off events, such as Paint Queen Street; promoting the community, local businesses

and events through social media on our Facebook page, our Instagram account and our website; and publishing our quarterly magazine *Village Voice* and delivering it to 5000 local residences and businesses. We look forward to the next 50 years continuing to support and build our community.

GILES EDMONDS, PRESIDENT, QSWWA

and much of the roof had already been ripped off, leaving only the fabric of the building and masonry. A protest meeting onsite that evening attracted 100 local residents. The following week, the Royal Blind Society decided not to continue with the demolition, leaving it up to the QSWWA to provide tarpaulins on the roof to keep out the rain, and later, volunteer labour for a clean-up. Sadly, the building stood derelict until 1987, when new owners received approval from the Heritage Council of NSW for a full restoration. Waimea House is featured on the cover of this, our 50th Anniversary edition.

Seeking a sympathetic planning scheme for the area, in 1974 the QSWWA submitted a draft action plan to Woollahra Council as a model for proposed planning and zoning principles. Finally adopted by the council in 1980, its most important elements were a height limit of 9.5 metres on new buildings and a conservation zoning over the whole area. However, it took another five years for the planning scheme to be finalised and gazetted by the state government.

One of our earliest initiatives was to ask Rowan Beckett, a member with a deep interest in gardening and art, to draft a tree-planting proposal for Queen Street. Her design, jacarandas and Illawarra flame trees planted alternately to give a blaze of colour, was endorsed by council in November 1972. However, it took another five years before council finally planted trees in Queen Street, accepting a grant of \$2000 from the association towards the costs but changing the trees to a mixture of liquidambar and fraxinus pennsylvanica. Sadly, this selection, combined with a lack of root barriers, continues to adversely impact our pavements today.

The QSWWA has never lost its major focus: protecting and preserving our unique village atmosphere. In March 2020, the association learned that the developers of the former White City site had proposed to route construction

Photographs courtesy Woollahra Libraries Digital Archive, from a collection donated by Robin Brampton, QSWWA.



ABOVE AND OPPOSITE TOP: In 1973, residents and the QSWWA protested against the demolition of Queen Street's Waimea House. Street view courtesy of the Department of Environment 1982. The 1858 Georgian residence was saved and protected under a heritage order in 1987. It has now been fully restored.



A tree-planting scheme proposed by the QSWWA in 1972 was finally implemented by council in 1977, albeit with different species. The beautiful canopy belies root problems at pavement level.

FIGHT OVER EDGECLIFF OVERDEVELOPMENT CONTINUES

Although the Draft Edgecliff Commercial Centre Planning and Urban Design Strategy is still in development (see *Village Voice*, February 2022, p 6), developers are continuing to try to get their plans through without waiting for an approved strategy.

Residents will remember that council knocked back a proposal for a 45-storey, 19-metre-high residential tower and development above Edgecliff Station in February 2021, a decision ratified by Sydney Eastern City Planning Panel in November 2021. In mid-April this year, another proposal came before the Woollahra Local Planning Panel. The application was for 136-48 Edgecliff Road, which is opposite



136-148 Edgecliff Rd (artist's impression)

the Edgecliff Centre and includes the heritage-listed JOM building on the corner of Edgecliff Road and Darling Point Road, and proposed increasing the number of storeys from four to 12 (see artist's impression).

So, what happened? A couple of twists here. In spite of the Draft Edgecliff Strategy not being complete and the site not even being proposed for an increase in building height in the draft strategy consultation documents, for reasons best known to itself council's advice to the Woollahra Local Planning

Panel was to approve the development! It's hard to fathom why the council didn't simply tell the developer to wait until the strategy was approved but, as readers will know, the

council can move in mysterious ways. The good news is that the Planning Panel rejected the application. The panel received objections from individuals and local organisations; six objectors were allowed to address the panel, including Cooper Ward Councillor Luise Elsing. Their objections must have resonated with the panel, as the determination was that the council wait until the draft Edgecliff Strategy is complete and further studies on traffic and transportation implications are available.

'This decision is significant because it demonstrates that the Woollahra Local Planning Panel is listening to the community and is concerned about traffic around

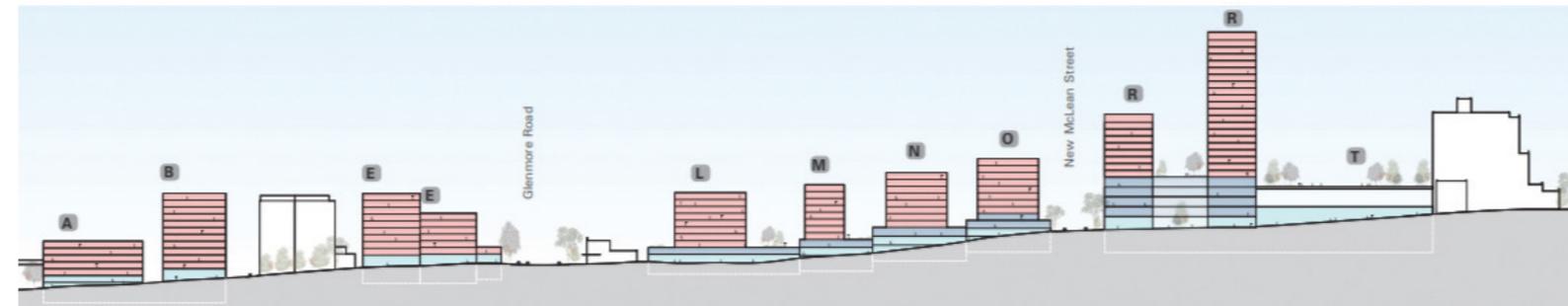
'THIS DECISION IS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE IT DEMONSTRATES THAT THE WOOLLAHRA PLANNING PANEL IS LISTENING TO THE COMMUNITY ...'

COUNCILLOR LUISE ELSING

Edgecliff Centre, provision of adequate community infrastructure, and the overall resistance to excessive bulk and form,' said Councillor Elsing.

This was a victory for common sense but is likely to be only an opening skirmish in the battle for Edgecliff. As the QSWWA has previously mentioned, allowing heights of up to 12 stories or 46 meters along the Edgecliff corridor risks turning this into another soulless concrete canyon, as well as exacerbating traffic and parking problems. We hope the council uses this as an opportunity to develop a strategy that will enhance the entrance to the eastern suburbs in the manner it deserves.

GILES EDMONDS, PRESIDENT, QSWWA



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BARRIE IS A 69-YEAR-OLD SYDNEY RESIDENT WHO HAS CONNECTED WITH HOLDSWORTH'S SERVICES THROUGH HIS SUPPORT COORDINATOR. BARRIE'S NOT THE TYPE YOU'D EXPECT TO ASK FOR HELP, BUT HIS NDIS FUNDING HELPS HIM GET THE BEST OUT OF LIFE. IT ISN'T ALWAYS EASY, BUT HIS HOLDSWORTH SUPPORT COORDINATOR MAKES IT ALL POSSIBLE.

There are not many people who genuinely contribute to the social fabric of an entire city. But Barrie does. Barrie's lived all over. There were some bad times, welfare issues, medication side effects and the like, but he's pretty quick at remembering the good. He's nearly 70 now. That's a good innings. He's surprised he made it to this age, but he still feels like a young man.

The first thing most people notice about him is that he's a Rabbitohs fan, often donning his Rabbitohs zip-up jacket. But actually, until the 1999 grand final where a controversial penalty try secured Melbourne Storm's victory over the Dragons, Barrie was a St George man. It's less about the team, really. It's more about treasured memories of Rugby League games with his parents and great conversations. After all, Barrie's the social type.

Barrie's got a heart of gold. You can just see it glistening through his chest when he helps out with the older folk on their Tuesday bus outings. He's as healthy as a horse, so why wouldn't he help? That's what Barrie thinks, anyway. And he talks about his friends with such warmth. What they think of him in return is no secret, either. A jam-packed social calendar; a thoughtful birthday gift; enthusiasm to try a restaurant Barrie's chosen. You can just tell how much he means to them.

Barrie's not a guy you'd expect to lean on someone.



A Support Coordinator can help you discover your goals, and how you can get there with your NDIS plan.

After all, he gives so much of himself to others. But evenings are dark in Redfern where he lives, and public transport can feel dangerous and unpredictable. Without Aaron, his support worker, Barrie would stay home on Friday nights. He says it himself. But with Aaron, Barrie's adventures take him far and wide with his Friday night social group.

Aaron and Barrie hit it off the first time they went out. Aaron meets up with Barrie and they always get to their location early – a good restaurant, a sports club – and grab coffee before the others in the group arrive. Then Barrie gets home without a worry – aside from bumper-to-bumper traffic on

the nights when the big games are on at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

Next year, when it's time to reassess his NDIS goals, Barrie will look at what's next: what he might want and the support to get him there. He knows his support coordinator will help him navigate it all. He's got Aaron on his side, too. Just as Barrie is there for so many other people in the community, they'll go into bat for him. And that's a good thing

for Barrie to know.

Could you, or someone you care for, benefit from support to take small steps or make big changes like Barrie? A support coordinator can help you discover your goals, and how you can get there with your NDIS plan. Talk to a Holdsworth support coordinator today on 02 9302 3600.



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IN CHAMBERS: THE STORY BEHIND 90 OCEAN STREET

THE GRAND BUILDING AT THE JUNCTION OF JERSEY ROAD AND OCEAN STREET, HOME TO THE GOETHE- INSTITUT, IS ONE OF THE MOST FAMILIAR IN WOOLLAHRA. BUT FEW KNOW THAT 158 YEARS AGO THIS WONDERFUL OLD EDIFICE WAS WOOLLAHRA COUNCIL'S FIRST BESPOKE CHAMBERS.

No 90 Ocean Street (the home of the Goethe-Institut since 1976) was once almost an acre of land that was, by the 1840s, part of the extensive local landholding of the Cooper family. Much of the land in the 19th-century suburb of Woollahra was developed under leasehold to the estate.

The Municipality of Woollahra was proclaimed in April 1860, and the need for a council headquarters was among the earliest priorities addressed by the newly elected councillors. Initially the council operated from a rented house (the Iron House, or Woodbine Cottage) at the corner of Edgecliff Road and Ocean Street – now Edgecliff Square – but efforts to secure



Today, 90 Ocean Street is home to the Goethe-Institut. The German Republic purchased the site in 1976. All the original features of the grand old building have been restored and retained, including the garden.

more suitable accommodation became a priority. At a meeting of Woollahra Council on 13 August 1861, the council accepted the offer of 'an allotment of land on the Point Piper Estate' for the sum of £80. It was not until January 1900 that council secured the freehold to the land, which had by then served as the site of its headquarters for nearly 40 years.

Construction of the Ocean Street chambers, designed by Harold Brees, began in 1863 with the council taking possession in February 1864. On the Ocean Street frontage (at the junction of Ocean Street and Jersey Road) adjoining the rear of the main building stood the Town Clerk's residence. Behind the chambers, the Trelawney Street end of the site was dedicated to the council depot, including the council pound where the straying stock of the district was temporarily held. Following a council resolution in October 1868, an overseer's residence was built in this section of the complex, situated on the corner formed by the junction of Jersey Road and Trelawney Street.

The triangular area now known as Euroka Reserve originally formed the front garden of the council chambers, overlooked by the two-storey stone building. Entry to the garden was from the Ocean Street frontage, through a gateway surmounted by an ornamental archway, from which hung a



Early meeting of councillors held at the new council chambers, 90 Ocean Street (circa 1900).



Council chambers, circa 1920s. In the early 1960s the building was saved from almost certain destruction during the proposed widening of Ocean Street by the then state government.

lantern. Twin iron gates hung from decorative iron gateposts, creating an imposing entrance to the double-storeyed portico of the facade.

During the 1920s the front garden was dominated by the presence of a 6-inch German naval gun on a field mounting, captured by Australian forces in France during World War I and presented to the Municipality of Woollahra as a 'war trophy'. The gun was removed to the South Head Military Reserve in the 1930s to make way for a new landscaping scheme for the front garden, as part of renovations to the chambers.

The main building of the Ocean Street complex was used as council's offices and chambers for over 80 years. When council headquarters moved to Redleaf in Double Bay in August 1947, the building was leased by Clyde Industries, a Sydney-based engineering, locomotive, agricultural machinery and industrial company, and major munitions supplier during World War II. In 1955 Clyde Industries purchased the building but not the garden, which remained council property. Following several intervening ownerships, in 1976 the property was eventually acquired by the German Republic, which has operated the Goethe-Institut there ever since.

The small garden in front of the former chambers was kept as a green space and in 1971 council named the garden 'Euroka', meaning 'sunlit corner'. In 1985, when council celebrated the 125th anniversary of the incorporation of the municipality, funds were set aside to enhance Euroka Reserve in recognition of its historical significance to council. The landscaping scheme was based on a formal design incorporating classical elements, including the retention and upgrading of the ornamental ponds and the restoration of various decorative features.

Interestingly, in 2019, as part of the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, a large piece of that wall was erected within Euroka Reserve, where it still stands. Today, the reserve remains a small, peaceful place between two busy roadways, the intermingled canopies of the two large figs at its apex providing shade in summer and a place for rest and reflection about the history of the suburb in which we live.

So, the next time you drive or walk past 90 Ocean Street and Euroka Reserve, take a second look, and just a little further down on your right glance at Edgecliff Square – the first two sites of your Council chambers.

JAQUI LANE

Photographs Courtesy Woollahra Libraries Digital Archive

MONCUR CELLARS NEWS

Sydney's widespread rain this summer produced some interesting consumer trends.

We sold a considerable amount of alcoholic seltzers; at the same time, we were doing our best to keep up with the demand for quality champagne, which was in short supply across the industry. We have also seen a lot of interest in the many new tequila products hitting our market, along with some new quality Australian vodkas: try Grainshaker's varieties made from corn, rye and wheat, and SoHi vodka from Bowral, using locally grown potatoes.

Moncur Cellars has its own exclusive champagne arriving this month. After meeting Chantal Gonet from Philippe Gonet Champagne, we were inspired by the house's rich family history along with their quality product range. It's an amazing champagne house based in the heart of the Côte des Blancs. Moncur Cellars and Woollahra Hotel are very proud to be in partnership with this high-quality brand and family-run business.

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

To find out what's happening down south in Victoria, we had a chat with owner-winemaker George Mihaly from Paradigm Hill in Mornington Peninsula.

Q: What was the Mornington like in 2022 after the great 2021 vintage?

The season got off to a challenging start with cold, wet, windy conditions in October last year at the time of flowering; this is the 'trifecta of evil' in terms of fruit-set and resulted in dramatic reductions in crop levels. This was not universal – and was very dependent on exactly where the vineyard was located. Vineyards located in cooler or more elevated locations flowered later in the season and tended to miss the worst of this. The ripening season from November through February was delightfully benign, with no extreme weather events and ideal conditions for ripening the small amount of fruit on the vines. In summary, exceptional quality associated with depressingly low quantities.

Q: Does it remind you of any other vintages and do the reds or whites stand out this vintage?

The season was reminiscent of 2020, when similar reductions in crop levels were experienced. However, the



ripening season wasn't as ideal then and so there are higher expectations for the finished wines of 2022. There seems to be little to distinguish between reds and whites – with similar outcomes for both in terms of quality and quantity.

Q: After this vintage, do you have a holiday destination in mind?

For the first time in so many years we are hoping for an opportunity to reconnect with our Burgundian winemaker friends.

MONCUR CELLAR TASTINGS

For the month of June, we will have a carefully selected bottle open every Friday night (from approximately 5.45pm) for our customers to taste in-store.

Cheers!

WOOLLAHRAHOTEL.COM.AU | BISTROMONCUR.COM.AU
MONCURCELLARS.COM.AU

THE DENTAL ROOMS
WOOLLAHRA



New Patient Welcome Package
\$75 off your first appointment!

Introducing **Akira Baigent**
Our new Oral Health Therapist!



An OHT works to prevent dental decay and gum disease in children and adults, with a focus on building healthy habits.

Dr Bal Bahra
98 Queen Street, Woollahra
www.dentalrooms.net.au
(02) 9328 7862
reception@dentalrooms.net.au

THE MAKING OF: A DIAMOND TIARA

It starts with a sketch. World-renowned artisan, Matthew Ely, transforms dreams onto paper, bringing stories to life as spectacular jewellery; true wearable works of art.

THE DATE: June–November 2021.

TOTAL HOURS: 650.

THE PIECE: A handmade diamond wedding tiara, which can also be worn as a necklace. The tiara contains a total 580 diamonds, weighing 40.25 carats, and a suite of 11 oval South Sea pearls of the highest quality.

THE PROCESS:

STEP 1: THE PRIVATE CONSULTATION

Our Matthew Ely Jewellery client was searching for a very special gift that his daughter could wear on her wedding day. A wearable artwork and family heirloom; inimitable in design and sparkling with diamonds. A tiara.

'We worked together to draw up some concepts,' said Matt. 'At this stage, I also presented the pearls. They're incredibly rare and direct from the private collection of Rosario Autore.'

STEP 2: CLIENT FEEDBACK AND REVISED SKETCH

'After adding more diamonds, we agreed on a design that was perfect for the bride. She had no idea of the surprise in store!

'Our final sketch was transformed into a colourful artwork, painted from France by our talented Matthew Ely designer, Louis.'

STEP 3: HANDCRAFTING THE DIAMOND HEADBAND AND INDIVIDUAL CLUSTERS

'We started with the diamond headband to get an overall shape and dimension for the piece,' said Matt.

'Each individual shape for the tiara had to be cut separately, with the diamond clusters perfectly positioned. We needed the length of all those parts to finish perfectly. If you add even a millimetre to each piece, the full length would be 2cm too long. The beauty is in the detail.'

STEP 4: ALIGNING THE PARTS AND CLUSTERS

'Before the jewels were placed, we needed to triple-check the length and parts. For the necklace, this meant considering how the pearls and diamonds sat on the neck. When transformed into a tiara, every single piece had to sit flat, with all jewels at the right height.'

STEP 5: SETTING THE JEWELS

'It's time for some jewels! We started with diamonds, setting the individual stones in their clusters, with a constant reference to the original sketch.'

STEP 6: NECKLACE-TIARA TRANSFORMATION

'A critical step was to work out the mechanics of how the tiara transformed into a necklace. It had to be an easy process, only requiring a tiny screwdriver, which was made of 18 carat white gold, with a pearl on top – of course!'

STEP 7: FINAL PRODUCT ... AND A WEDDING TO ATTEND!

'The diamonds are in. The piece is fully convertible. And here it is – a sparkling diamond tiara, ready to walk down the aisle!'



ASK THE VET

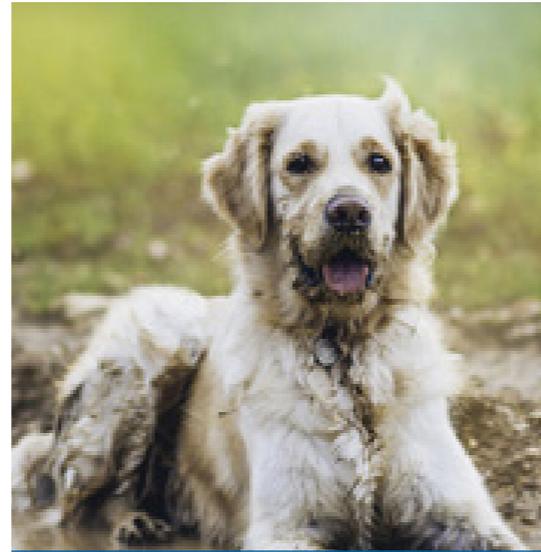
RAINY DAY BLUES

The recent heavy rain has been causing a few issues for our beloved pet dogs. The first of these is boredom – all that rain has meant fewer park visits for a lot of dogs, often leading to boredom and destructive behaviour. It is important even in the rain to try to stick to a dog's normal exercise schedule as much as possible. If this isn't possible, then providing more entertainment at home can help to reduce their boredom, including playing games with them in the house or engaging them with puzzle toys. If dogs are out walking in the rain, it is okay for them to get wet. However,

prolonged wet fur can lead to dogs feeling cold.

Skin and ear infections are more common in wet and humid weather, so it is important to keep dogs' coats clean and dry. Areas to focus on are the hair on their back, their belly, between their toes and in their ears. A doggy raincoat can be helpful in keeping them dry; if they aren't wearing a coat then it is important to remove any mud and dry them off at home with a towel or a hairdryer on a cool setting. Drinking from dirty puddles often gives dogs an upset stomach, and they can pick up nasty infections from dirty water, such as giardia and leptospirosis, so try to stop them drinking from puddles while on walks.

DR INDIA, JERSEY ROAD VETS



Make sure to dry off your dog after a walk in the rain. Doggy raincoats are a good investment.

WOOLLAHRA BOOKSHOP

FOUR BRILLIANT NEW AUSTRALIAN PICTURE BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

In *The Echidna Near My Place* a young child and their Nana go searching for an echidna that is snuffling around in a nearby scrubby paddock. Illustrated by Cate James, the book combines Sue Whiting's charming story with an abundance of natural history facts.

Elizabeth Phillips, our children's bookseller, can also tell you about her recent discovery of an echidna while walking in bushland near her home.

A homage to the joys of summer, *Jetty Jumping* also looks at being brave and overcoming the fear of water. This book, written and beautifully illustrated by Andrea Rowe and Hannah Sommerville, is shortlisted for the 2022 Children's Book Council of Australia awards. Congratulations.

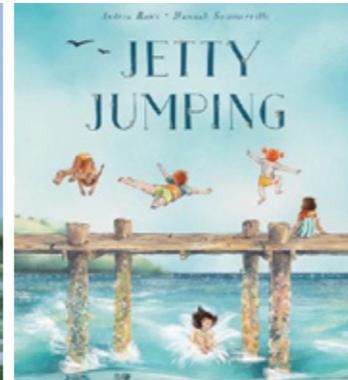
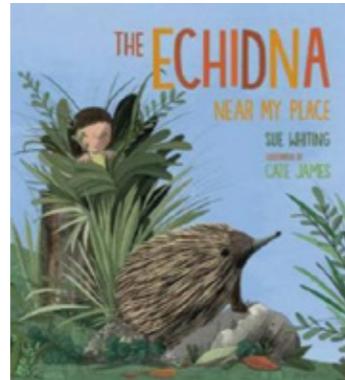
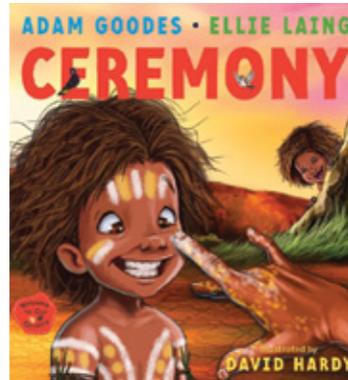
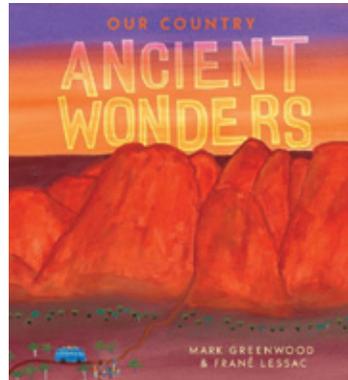
Ancient landscapes that reveal some of Australia's natural wonders and treasures are mapped out in *Our Country Ancient Wonders*, written and illustrated by Mark Greenwood and Frané Lessac. This is a book for dinosaur lovers, geologists in the making and young modern-day travellers.

Ceremony is the second book by Adam Goodes and Ellie Laing, illustrated by David Hardy, in the *Welcome to Our Country* series that introduces First Nation histories to children. The rich traditions of dance, family and community are told through pictures and a combination of English and Adnyamathanha words.

Come and see us at the bookshop. We are very happy to help find the right book for you.

– MICHAEL, PENELOPE, ELIZABETH, LIZ AND GORDON.

WOOLLAHRA BOOKSHOP, SPICER STREET
02 9328 2733 | OPEN MONDAY–SATURDAY
10AM–5PM, SUNDAY 10AM–4PM



COUNCILLOR'S CORNER



A FIX FOR FLOODS AND POTHOLES: WOOLLAHRA COUNCIL RESPONSE TO EXCESSIVE RAIN EVENTS

Throughout the recent heavy rain Woollahra Council has arranged to have three specialised contractors available 24/7 for rapid response. As well, council staff work in shifts to ensure there are people on the ground to mitigate any localised flooding before it becomes an issue. When significant rain events are predicted, council staff visit areas that are known to be susceptible to localised flooding to ensure the grates and inlets are clear and ready for any increase in water.

The Waverley–Woollahra State Emergency Service (SES) is a very important component of the response strategy. The SES works with council to increase awareness of who the SES are and what they do, educate people on how best to prepare their properties for storms and adverse weather, and increase the number of volunteers at the SES local unit. It is vital that everyone accesses information on how to prepare for significant weather events through www.ses.nsw.gov.au/get-involved/get-ready-nsw.

Another tool is getting to know your neighbours, to build connections for support and to encourage those

around you to be better prepared and more resilient. It may be possible to arrange a street meeting with the NSW Fire Service, SES and local police (let me know if I can assist). This would help to ensure that your home and neighbourhood are in the best shape possible to face extreme weather events.

POTHOLES

Woollahra Council has identified 310 potholes (from 1 January 2022) across the Woollahra LGA, with 50 in Woollahra. Potholes are caused by water penetrating the surface of the asphalt with most appearing on busy roads and corners. A council crew looks after pothole repairs. The standard response time is six days, but most are completed within half that time. The time it takes to fix each pothole depends on the location, the size of the pothole and the amount of traffic but is usually approximately 20–40 minutes. While repair times do not change because of the rain, the material used to patch the holes does. Normally a 'hot mix' is used, which lasts several years. But this product does not work in the wet, where an inferior 'cold mix' method is utilised. The cold mix is expected to last at most one year. Under the recent extreme weather conditions, however, there are instances where a cold mix has only lasted weeks. Not all potholes are sufficient for repair; some need to grow for the correct application of asphalt.

Where the pothole is located on a road managed by Transport for NSW, you can report it through a customer information form on their website: www.roads-waterways.transport.nsw.gov.au/contact-us/report-road-damage-potholes.html or call 131 700.

STORMWATER PITS IN WEST WOOLLAHRA

Woollahra Council's stormwater system is over 100 years old and many

of the stormwater pipes do not have the same capacity to hold excess water (especially during extreme rainfall) as more modern versions do. As a pipe system reaches capacity, ponding and overland water flow may occur in the surrounding area. Debris from street trees and tree roots can also exacerbate the situation, regularly blocking stormwater inlets.

Given that stormwater upgrade works typically involve a substantial cost, council recommends funding projects in areas known to have local flooding and stormwater issues. Stormwater improvements usually involve upgrading the existing pits and relining the pipes to strengthen the pipe system and prevent tree root intrusion.

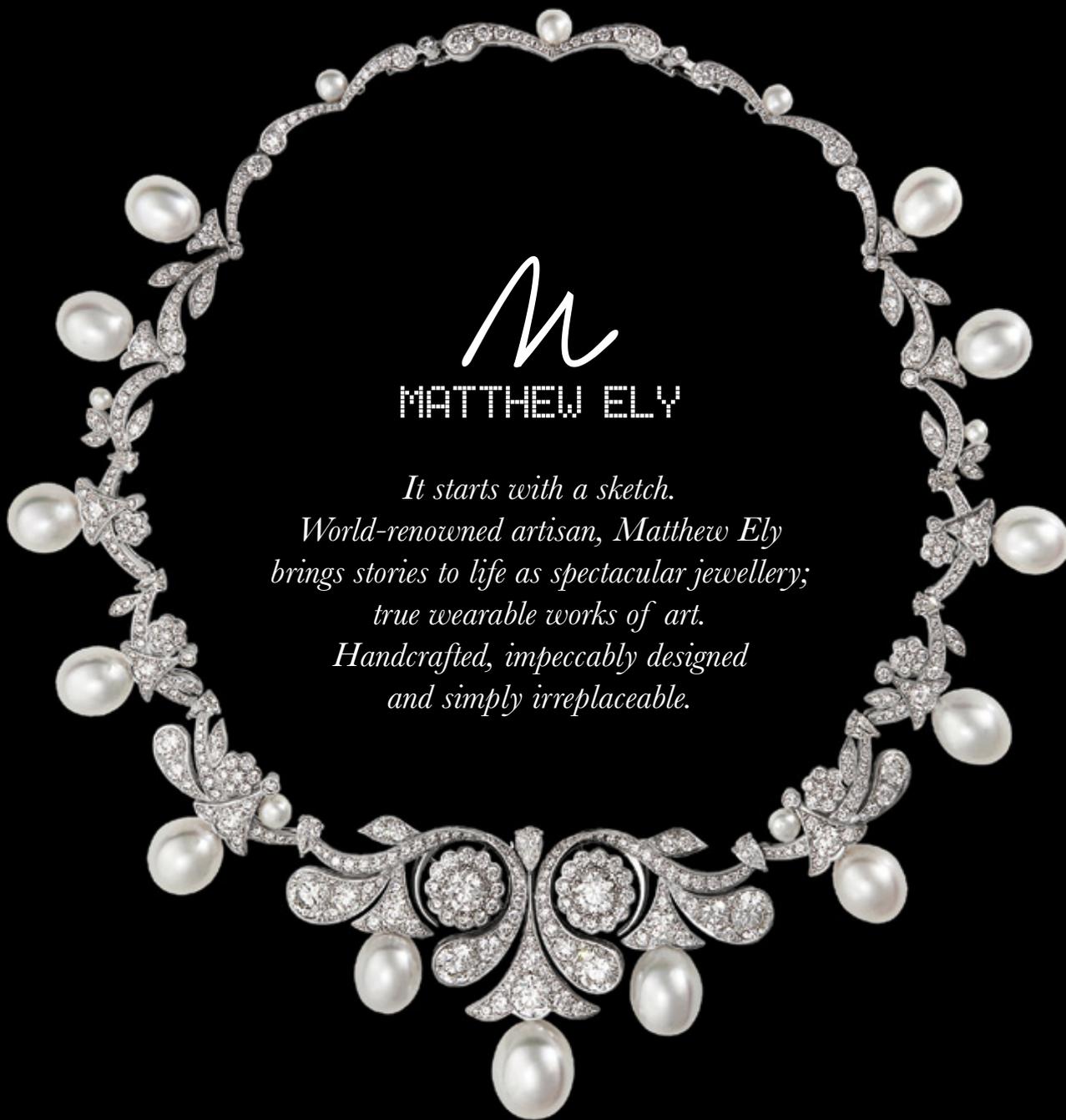
Council has recently undertaken stormwater upgrade works near the intersection of Ocean Street (which has 39 stormwater pits) and Peaker Lane. Queen Street has 23 stormwater pits and there are plans to undertake stormwater upgrade works by June 2023 between the intersection of Queen Street and Ocean Street, and 135 Queen Street. There are currently no planned works to Holdsworth Street's 11 stormwater pits.

Most areas within the western parts of Woollahra have been investigated as part of the Double Bay Flood Study: www.woollahra.nsw.gov.au/environment/water_and_coast/our_projects/floodplain_management/double_bay_catchment_flood_study.

WOOLLAHRA COUNCIL APP

Download this app on your phone. It is the best way to let council know when you see an overflowing stormwater pit or a pothole or other concern. Or contact me and together we can try to fix the problem.

COUNCILLOR LUISE ELSING
RESIDENTS FIRST
0407 417 704



M

MATTHEW ELY

*It starts with a sketch.
World-renowned artisan, Matthew Ely
brings stories to life as spectacular jewellery;
true wearable works of art.
Handcrafted, impeccably designed
and simply irreplaceable.*