



GREENWICH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

NEXT PUBLIC MEETING

Our next public meeting may possibly be 17 June 2020, in our usual venue. Fingers crossed! But it will come as no surprise to anyone that our meeting of 15 April **will not** take place.

BUT WHILE WE'RE STUCK AT HOME.....

....our keyboards and phones have been running hot because, despite the all-encompassing issue of the viral pandemic gripping the world, there are many other issues happening to occupy our time and attention, such as.....

ST LEONARDS SOUTH (SLS) WILL JUST NOT BE RESOLVED EASILY

The Independent Planning Commission has spoken

The Department of Planning has released its recommendations for SLS

Time for the community to have its say on SLS

THE SLS STORY SO FAR

There have been so many moving parts to this story. Here are a few key points as a recap:

- The re-zoning of SLS for high density is a Lane Cove Council proposal, not a developer-initiated proposal.
- The re-zoning has not been finalised, so high density development is not permitted.
- In 2019 the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) found that the SLS Plan represented overdevelopment, that it was not needed to meet current housing targets and that it met only 5 out of the 23 Department of Planning design criteria. This came as no surprise to the community - we have been saying this since 2015!
- At Council's request, the Department of Planning (DPIE) convened a review to advise Council on how it could amend its SLS Plan to respond to the IPC findings.
- The terms of reference for the review (Charrette) said that it

should respond to all of the IPC findings.

- The recommendations from the Charrette were released on 7 February, and **do not** address the IPC finding of overdevelopment, the most significant concern of the community – see more on this later.
- We thought Council's Mayoral Minutes of November and December 2019 had resolved to allow for community consultation on the Charrette recommendations before Council meets to consider them. But the Mayor has confirmed that there will be no community consultation before Council's meets.

So how is our Council proposing to deal with SLS?

The short answer is that we have no idea.

We have asked repeatedly for information about what Council has been doing with the Charrette recommendations since 7 February but have been told there is no information.

So we are now facing a Council meeting that could be called on short notice, about the biggest issue facing the Greenwich and adjacent communities for many years, with no idea of what recommendations Council will have before it and with no chance for the community to meet in advance to discuss a response.

Council Meetings are normally held

on a Monday night and the agenda is available online on the previous Thursday night. To conform with current regulations, meetings are to continue by AV link and to be webcast.

We will keep an eye out for notice of this meeting and alert the community by email.

We hope that, by the time the Council meeting is called, we will be able to address Councillors remotely and dispense with the recently-introduced constraints on participation. The Mayor has advised that Council is exploring this. Given the high level of concern about SLS, we trust that Council is making this a priority.

What we are asking for

- We are asking our Councillors to vote to put Council's report to them and its recommendations out for genuine community consultation and to defer a decision on the future density, scale and design of SLS until after this consultation.
- We want this consultation to last for significantly longer than is normal Council practice, given that community members face enormous challenges in day to day life at present.
- We want Council to provide online access to all technical and agency reports accessed by Council to develop its response to the Charrette recommendation.
- We are asking Council to designate a Council contact person who is able to respond promptly to queries from the community and to provide information that is not available on Council's website.
- And, finally, we are asking our Councillors to ensure that this round of consultation actually complies with its own Community Engagement Policy, something that has not characterised Council's previous approach to SLS.

A FACTOR WHICH WE DON'T UNDERSTAND

The DPIE asked the IPC to advise on the scale of SLS. The IPC found SLS represented over-development. The DPIE drafted the terms of reference for the SLS Charrette requiring the Charrette to address over-development. The DPIE wrote the Charrette report and then **ignored its own instructions about over-development.**

So, the question must be asked - why did the DPIE ignore a key element in its own terms of reference? We are waiting on the Minister for Planning's answer to this question.

However, this does not give Council an excuse to ignore the IPC finding of over-development in changes to its SLS Plan. The SLS Plan must ultimately go to the DPIE for finalisation.

And, in the words of Malcolm McDonald Executive Director, Eastern Harbour City, Greater Sydney Place and Infrastructure (DPIE) *"I can assure you the Department will assess the proposal against the conditions of the Gateway Determination, the Report as well as the IPC's advice."*

We look to the DPIE to ensure that the final SLS Plan includes a significant reduction in the 2400 units proposed by Council.

GREENWICH PUBLIC SCHOOL UPDATE

Students and staff alike are delighted with the new playground - there is a mini soccer field cum netball playing area, along with board games and ample space to run around, along with much-needed bicycle racks.

Inside, classrooms are grouped in twos, so a divider can allow larger-scale learning or a traditional single class environment. There are also learning cubicles which allow specialist small group learning. An internal auditorium / assembly area has replaced the former assembly area that had been outdoors, open to all weathers.

The original building with its historic architecture is retained along with the office and enlarged staff room. It is unfortunate that the Department didn't seize the opportunity for underground

staff parking as staff now have to compete for parking space with shoppers in nearby streets. Greenwich Rd now caters for Kindy through to Year 2.

Meanwhile, the Kingslangley Campus is in full-scale construction mode, with the school scheduled to move into the new building and enlarged hall after Easter. The historic sandstone entrance has been demolished to make way for installation of a large water tank, which should allow for a widened footpath and a reconstructed sandstone wall, using the original sandstone blocks.

LOCAL BUSINESSES COMING UP TRUMPS

We all know and love our local shops, and we appreciate what the shopkeepers do in supporting the community. They are stepping up in this era of crisis, where they can, and we appreciate it. So, a big thank you especially to IGA, the Pharmacy, Hooked, the Hairdresser et al, who regulate our patronage with good grace and plenty of humour.

Omission

We would like to say an extra heartfelt thanks to the Hairdresser, who generously supports Santa at the Wharf every Christmas. Due to an unfortunate oversight, we forgot to say thank you in our February newsletter.

A FERRY SUCCESS

If evidence were required that concerted community effort can achieve a successful outcome, then we need look no further than the recent backdown in the issue of changes to ferry routes, that so incensed our community over January and February.

We look back now and shudder when we remember the first time it actually sank in that the proposal to stop our beloved ferry service going to Circular Quay, and to Barangaroo instead, was real and not a joke. For a community already exhausted from the tsunami of first the bushfires, then floods, not to mention the ongoing struggle with SLS, it seemed the last straw.

Maybe this was why the community rallied in a way not seen for a long time, including tables at the shops manned by determined residents, petitions,

submissions to the relevant authorities and posters and banners all round the district, culminating in the GCA public meeting of February dedicating half their meeting to politely but firmly presenting its case to Transdev, the company making the proposal.

Long story short, we WON. Thank you to everyone who worked, wrote, manned, talked and showed their passion. It can be done!!

MEMORIAL TO A 'NICE GUY'

It was February five years ago when we wrote a sad item entitled 'Vale John May', in which we lamented the passing of a beloved and respected community leader.

We still miss him, and we are happier now to report that Lane Cove Council, together with John's widow Celia, have worked to memorialise John's passing with a very handsome park bench in Leemon Reserve, near the kid's Jungle Jim. As Celia says, "John would enjoy people sitting on his bench watching over the children to make sure they're safe."



STAY IN TOUCH

Please visit our website regularly to keep up to date. If you wish to receive electronic postings please email jsouthwood@spectrafin.com.au

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