



# GREENWICH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

## THESE ISSUES AFFECT YOU COUNCIL AMALGAMATION

**NEXT PUBLIC MEETING** is on Wednesday, 9 December 2015 (a week earlier than our usual meeting of the third Wednesday in the month), at the Greenwich Community Centre, 46 Greenwich Road, at 7.30pm.

At this meeting we will wrap up the year, celebrate progress, evaluate where events didn't quite turn out as hoped, and plan for next year – all over a festive drink and food. Everyone is warmly invited to attend and join in the discussion and good cheer.

We also have a major item to discuss – possible council amalgamation. This is a very divisive issue, with many people unsure of what is involved and the arguments for and against. We think it important that any discussion of the proposed amalgamation be informed by an assessment of our Council's performance.



## SO, HOW HAS OUR COUNCIL BEEN DOING?

The prime role of a council, like that of any other level of government, is to listen to and take into account the wishes of - as fairly and inclusively as possible - the community it was elected to represent. Also, the community needs to be able to trust that its elected representatives will act in the public interest. Lane Cove Council, our council, has done some excellent work as regards roads, services, rates, infrastructure etc. But in many ways it has shown a regrettable inability to take into account views of the community that are different from its own, even to a breathtaking disregard for those 'soft' issues such as sustainable development and the quality of living. And it has shown the same disregard for its own experts when those experts recommended action contrary to Councillors' own wishes.

### For example:

The St Leonards rezoning decision. (If ever there was an argument for an overarching council instead of the three smaller councils going hammer and tongs to develop an area without due regard for residents' quality of life, this is it!). The community has asked Council repeatedly for assurances that any planning decisions will prioritise issues that a vastly increased population will bring such as infrastructure, traffic and parking management, school capacity, green spaces and bike paths, but Council has shown little evidence that it is listening to and acting upon these concerns.

The extraordinary situation of the planning proposal for 1 – 13A Marshall Avenue is a further case in point. In March this year the Loftex proposal to increase the height of the tower to 94 meters was rejected by the Joint Regional Planning Panel (JRPP) by a 4 to 1 majority - a decision supported by residents who turned up in droves to the meeting - on the basis it was clearly overdevelopment of the area.

The JRPP is a NSW government body appointed to provide an independent decision, so residents reasonably expected that this had resolved the matter. But now Council is once again seeking to allow increase of the height of the tower from 65 meters to 94 meters, ignoring both residents' express wishes and the advice of their own experts. It is no wonder that residents are worried that serious and irreversible mistakes will be made.

The same situation happened with the Lane Cove Plaza upgrade. Community polls showed clearly that residents and community groups didn't support Council's plans; they were all ignored.

**In summary:** if experience has taught us that we can't fully depend on a small council to listen to residents, can we assume that a larger council will do a better job? Is the problem that local government is often subject to party politics? Would a larger council provide a better system of checks and balances?

Your opinion matters. Please come along and voice it.

## HOW GREENWICH WILL BE CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS

### *Carols By Candlelight*

Carols this year will be held on Monday 7 December at Leemon Reserve, Robert St Greenwich, and in the event of rain will move to the Community Centre in Greenwich Road.



The fun begins at 6pm with music, and the Carols will start at 6.30.

Come along and join in the fun, bring your own picnic or sausages will sizzle away for you to purchase, along with drinks, glow sticks and glow candles. All funds raised will go to Youth Off the Streets.

Enquiries: 9966 0543

### *Santa At The Wharf*



Santa is expected to arrive at Greenwich Wharf on Christmas morning at 8am with presents for the children.

Tea and coffee will be available at the wharf for a gold coin donation to Sydney City Mission.

**Santa's helpers** have moved to the home of Jane Marquard and Dennis Karp, 34 George Street - entrance in Harrison Street.

**Please ensure clearly labeled gifts are received after 15 December and before 24 December**

Enquiries Jane 0414 995 099  
or Garry 0412 660 066

## UPGRADE OF GREENWICH BATHS

The GCA has received notification of a proposed \$600,000 upgrade to the change rooms which incorporates the word 'clubhouse'. While we support the upgrade we are concerned that this increased capital cost will result in higher entry fees to the Baths, and we trust that Council will explain this apparently high cost and what 'clubhouse' means.

We also can't help noticing that there have been some very uneven allocations of funds over the last few years – hundreds of thousands of dollars for the Plaza upgrade, the public walkway and now the Baths, in stark contrast to the paltry amount allocated to, say, an integrated bike plan development - that seem at odds with community priorities.

## GORE BAY TERMINAL UPDATE

Readers will remember from earlier newsletters that the GCA has been pressing all regulatory bodies and the terminal operators to ensure that operations at the Gore Bay terminal be run according to best practice in the interests of community health and safety.

Readers will also remember that the terminal operators have been less than forthcoming to the GCA's applications for full disclosure on safeguards for its activities.

The latest step taken by the GCA was to make a formal submission to the EPA (Environmental Protection Authority) this month for the five- yearly review of the Viva Energy Licence for the Gore Bay terminal.

This is the first review since the switch from crude oil to petrol importation and the change in shareholder control of the terminal operator. We understand that a total of nine submissions were presented which is a sign to the EPA of the level of interest in the review. However, we won't know until the licence is updated on the EPA website exactly how many of the community's concerns have been addressed.

We are also concerned that the tradition of open and public meetings conducted by Shell has been replaced by Viva with a smaller, invitation-only format. The GCA has also been told by Viva Energy that its representatives are no longer welcome.

Regrettably, this extraordinary decision ends an important opportunity for the community to better understand what happens at the terminal and for the terminal operator to better understand community concerns about its operations, at a time when interest in and concern about terminal operations is high and growing higher.

Incredibly, no Minutes from the meetings are published on Viva's website, so meeting procedures are known only to those select few who are invited to Viva Energy meetings. We have to ask – why the secrecy?

## FACEBOOK FOR GCA

The GCA is still in the process of setting up a Facebook page. Residents interested in assisting please contact Michael Ryland on: [michaelryland@optusnet.com.au](mailto:michaelryland@optusnet.com.au)

## A REGAL ADDITION TO LANE COVE PUBLIC ART

On Sunday 8 November friends and family of the late Greenwich resident John Purdy joined chess players and councillors at a site just outside the Greenwich Baths to witness the Mayor, Deborah Hutchens, unveil a sculpture in memory of John, whose sudden death in October 2011 had saddened the community.



Left to Right: Michael Purdy, Mayor Deborah Hutchens, Colin Purdy, Felicity Purdy with 'Resignation'.

Prior to becoming a Family Court judge, John had twice won the Australian Chess Championship. He had virtually grown up at the Baths when his mother was lessee and continued to swim there for the rest of his life. It seemed natural to his family, therefore, that his memorial should be close to the harbour and have a chess theme.

His younger son, Michael, a well known sculptor, created the beautiful 'Resignation' from Appin sandstone, chosen for its durability and resistance to salt corrosion as well as its beauty. Chess fans will recognise the significance of the king's resignation as an acceptance that the game is over.

## Next year - the Greenwich Games.....

it's never too early to start practising!

## STAY IN TOUCH

We encourage ALL residents to stay in touch with regular visits to our website: [www.greenwich.org.au](http://www.greenwich.org.au) and that of Lane Cove Council: [www.lanecove.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lanecove.nsw.gov.au)

If you register your email address on the GCA's website you will also receive newsletters and updates electronically.  
Tom Gervay, President 0418 230 889  
Rob Hunter, Secretary 0413 451 209

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