

Councillors' feedback...feedback...feedback



Barry Thompson

Housing and Sustainability: I am writing this note in Melbourne, where Eve and I are again attending the Australian Open. We stay with friends in Kew. Recently they sold their house with a view to downsizing. This morning, surveyors turned up to the house to begin the process of design of a new home and the demolition of the existing building. You might expect that the existing house was in disrepair and you would be entirely mistaken. It would grace any street in Artarmon. It has been extensively and sensitively extended and renovated and is a fine, spacious, convenient and modern home. Its former owners are distraught for its future! The sale has set a new benchmark for land value in the area.

I have had the opportunity to walk past some of the recent additions to the Kew landscape during recent visits. I am appalled. The favoured style is neo-Georgian monstrosities – eaves-less, dark-roofed, multi-storied and with a near-total footprint on the land. Even using resource-saving strategies, their energy demand must be enormous. These buildings would not have met the requirements of the local Council, but seem to be legitimised by the new standardised Federal regulations. Such waste – and such a portent for Willoughby! I will encourage the earliest implementation of the strategies we have agreed to combat such waste and

move to encourage change of the taxation system so as to curb excessive investment in the 'Australian family home'.

Artarmon St Leonards Chamber of Commerce (ASLCO): The Chamber held its AGM just before Christmas. It was a delight to see so many new faces at the event and to experience such a buzz among the attendees. With all the imminent changes in the area and the advent of local transport (strongly encouraged and supported over the years by the Chamber) the need for a CofC has never been greater. I welcome the proposal for greater inclusion of St Leonards and Hampden Rd businesses in its deliberations and look forward to hearing its new voice at Council. I thank most sincerely those who have loyally supported the Chamber and urge others to add their support. It seems to me that there is a lot of mutual benefit and development of local spirit to be gained.

The Concourse: Melbourne has Docklands, Redfern has Carriageworks. Willoughby's hope and expectation is that The Concourse will be as well recognised and used as the name for our community facilities and meeting place, formerly known as Civic Place. We hope that recognition and reputation will extend beyond our local area to citywide, then nationally and eventually internationally. Our drawing area for performers will extend that far from the outset, and we expect that those who have trained and 'cut their teeth' in our cultural spaces will eventually progress to worldwide stages (as have some past local performers).

I was fortunate to participate in an extensive tour

of The Concourse site recently and was most impressed with the spaces. The 5000m² library will be most spacious and attractively lit; the concert hall I found pleasantly intimate; and the open space will be a most expansive addition to our CBD. Please take time to get to know the new facilities and plan to support them financially, if possible, and certainly by your patronage once they begin to open in mid-2011.

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Kate Lamb

Thinking Globally, Acting Locally: So what happened in Copenhagen? Council's Environmental Program Manager Sally Hamilton provided us with a summary of the outcomes including :

- The "Copenhagen Accord" was prepared, confirming continuation of the Kyoto Protocol and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC);
- It recognises the need to limit global temperature rise to two degrees Celsius average global temperature rise;
- Countries are to confirm/pledge their individual reduction target for 2020 by 31st January 2010;
- Developed countries commit collectively to providing US\$30 billion in new funding for developing countries for the 2010-2012 period, establishing a "Green Climate

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Fund" for the purpose.

The Accord is however a "non-binding, non-committal, non-signed document with no formal targets or mitigation plans." For more information and to read the full document go to <http://unfccc.int/2860.php>. So much for the capacity of our national governments to come to terms with the greatest threat to our children's future!

Fortunately the need for local action to reduce greenhouse emissions is not only more readily understood by members of our community but also supported by the Council!

One such initiative is the "Walking Bus". In Naremburn/Artarmon, Melissa Turnock and Alan Jones led the reinstatement of what used to be, for many of us, a common and healthy adventure beginning the school day. Walking the route and being 'driven' by one or two responsible adults are the essential components. A safe route and 'critical mass' support from parents and the school make all the difference to a successful bus.



Burra Rd 8.40 am bus drivers Gwyn, Kym and Kirsty, with APS passengers and fellow travellers, including Maggie the dog...

When the parents involved approached me about the safety risk at the traffic lights on Hampden Rd, I was pleased to be able to advocate for construction of the fence, which was installed at the end of last year so 'bus drivers' no longer have to shepherd the young ones away from the road's edge!! The Walking Bus will be continuing three mornings per week in 2010 and welcomes newcomers - contact Melissa melissa.turnock@pilatesscene.com or Gwyn on ggdenton@bigpond.net.au.

Visit my blog - www.katelamb.blogspot.com ■



Stuart Coppock

Musical Equipment within the Concourse:

You may have noticed that Civic Place has been rebadged 'The Concourse'. Late last year Council was briefed on the name change less than a fortnight before the date set for the launch. Council was told that the rationale

for the name change was to do with national and international marketing of the venue.

Much has been made of the upgrade of the Council's Wurlitzer organ for location in the Concourse. When the organ was removed before demolition of the old Civic Place, Council undertook to refurbish the organ. Now the proposal is to alter the organ from a two manual (keyboard) to a three manual instrument (something quite different).

The argument for the upgrade has become heated and passionate, indeed quite political, having been running since late November. What Council has not been reminded of is the larger issue of the general state of instrumentation for this new complex, of which the organ is a part. Before making any decision on the organ, Council should be reminded that the Council's grand piano from the old Civic Place is a 50-year-old Steinway and there is no budget to refurbish or to replace it. Yet the Concourse will need an international standard piano in the complex to attract the style of concerts envisaged. The plan was to have the current grand piano as a second piano. But there is no budget for this and never has been. It was to be left to sponsorship. The Council report says the organ upgrade will allow for organ concerts. Yet, piano concerts are of equal importance and there are a higher number of piano roles in orchestrated pieces. Not a word in the report about this, the grand piano or the general standard of the Council's instrumentation in this proposed state-of-the-art venue.

Proposed 7-Eleven store, 92 Hampden Rd, Artarmon: On 4 January 2010 the Council approved this Development, after a serious breakdown (very much the exception) in the Council

ward meeting procedure. The Report for a Ward Inspection had been issued on 15 December. A Ward Inspection request, complying with the Council's policy for a ward meeting, was then faxed to Council within the required 5 days.

A petition signed by many local residents was lodged on 23 November. At that time I gave notice that the matter was to go to a Ward meeting. Consent cannot be revoked once given, so the 7-Eleven store has approval to open subject to the conditions of the consent. It was these conditions - particularly trading hours and security (along with disabled access requirements which were waived) - that I wanted to explore at a ward meeting.

One of the conditions is that consent for 24 hour operation only be allowed for 12 months. After this, a fresh application would be needed, giving Council an opportunity to re-notify the matter and consider whether any issues arose with the 24 hour operation. The assessment also noted that the use is permissible in the zone and that a plan of management for the operation of the premises was to be implemented covering security, customer complaints handling, littering and vandalism.

Given the circumstances of this DA approval and the concerns of residents I have spoken at length with Mayor Reilly. He shares my concerns as to how the request for a ward meeting did not reach the relevant officer, given the security and noise issues raised both by residents and Chatswood Police.

Whilst a response to the events has to be worked through in detail, at the time of writing (3 February), the Mayor and I will be working with the GM and my Ward colleagues to examine the possibility for a public meeting on the issue of security and noise associated with the development and to examine how, over the next twelve months, Council officers may survey residents on their concerns and experiences on the same matters. This is to assist any Council arguments over an application for the renewal of all day trading. These possible actions reflect the need to ensure residents have the right to put their case when it comes to developments in our City.

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