The Concourse, Chatswood’s $171m big heart

by Jane Rowley

Artarmon and other Willoughby City residents will soon have their first opportunity to view The Concourse, Willoughby City Council’s $171m redevelopment in the heart of the Chatswood commercial district.

A community open day will be held on Saturday, September 10 as part of the StreetFair. Members of the public are invited to see inside the 1,000-seat concert hall, 500-seat theatre and 5,000sq m state of the art library.

WCC acting general manager Greg Woodhams predicts residents will be delighted with the results. “We wanted to have a heart and soul in Chatswood and we’ve delivered on a big heart and a whole lot of soul,” he told the Artarmon Gazette.

In addition to the library, concert hall and theatre, the site also boasts a civic pavilion, studio, rehearsal rooms, an orchestra room and art space together with retail and dining facilities.

According to Woodhams, the biggest challenge was fitting everything on the wish list onto the site. “The expectations of our community were so enormous with relation to this site but we rose to the challenge,” he said. “It’s on budget and on time and the delivery of the product is outstanding. The builders and project managers have done a fantastic job to bring this extraordinary venture to completion.”

Another challenge was equipping a library that was almost three times the size of the original. The new Chatswood library will be one of the biggest in Australia and features separate study areas, meeting rooms, training facilities and a multilingual collection in more than 10 languages.

State of the art library technologies, including self-checkouts and an automated sorting system, will free staff from some time-consuming and tedious tasks, enabling them to interact more with library users.

But spending money on all this technology does not mean the collection will be on the lean side. “Over time we’ve been putting money away in reserve under ‘book stock’ so that when it’s opened there’s not going to be five books on the shelf,” Woodhams said.

Much effort has also been applied to ensure the green credentials of the site, including the integration of one of Australia’s biggest stormwater reclamation systems. Up to 5ML water can be stored on site and will be used throughout The Concourse for grey water purposes.

NSW Governor, Prof Marie Bashir will officially open The Concourse on Saturday, September 17, at 4.30pm.
Editorial

As I write this from the shores of Lake Constance, in Austria, my thoughts and prayers go to relatives and friends in Norway. My birth country is in deep mourning over the killing of 76 Norwegians in the Oslo bombing and massacre at Utøya’s Labour youth camp on July 22 – named “long Friday” – which will go down in that peace-loving country’s history as the most deadly atrocity since its German occupation in WWII.

Since leaving Australia at the end of May, I have had occasion to be grateful for living in the safe and stable community Australia is. Before coming here to Lake Constance, I spent 10 days in Greece, which was an experience of “close shaves”, getting out of Athens and catching the last ferry to the Greek islands before the riots put the city to a standstill for almost at week and on return managing to get a hire car to the airport for my flight out of Greece before striking taxi drivers started blocking the roads.

But there is nothing like a visit to Europe – especially after having wandered among the ancient ruins of Acropolis – to bring home the importance of preserving our heritage for future generations.

APA’s Artarmon web history project (see APA needs your help on historic project, p9) is a very worthwhile and exciting initiative, which I urge our readers to support. Knowledge of our community’s history – the people who were there before us, their activities and the stories of the buildings we walk past each day – gives us a sense of pride, unity and belonging. I urge all our readers who have any meaningful records, whether they be photographs, any written records or oral history to contribute.

- Eva Wiland, editor@artarmonprogress.org.au

Letter to the editor

I refer to a current application to Willoughby City Council to establish another pizza outlet, this time in Broughton Road. (see Artarmon@Council, p4). As a long-time Artarmon resident, I would like to encourage the WCC planning authorities to take a broader and more innovative view of development in the Artarmon retail precinct.

The latest approvals continue to create a concentration of fast food and mini mart outlets in the area at the expense of more diverse and interesting retail outlets that one could imagine would attract people and street life to our neighbourhood and make this a place for the community.

There are already several fast food outlets and my question is: “Do we really need yet another pizza shop?” I could certainly imagine a much more interesting future for this area!

- Charl Pienaar

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How time flies. It only seems like last month I was writing my first note as president. All the new executive committee members and I are now well worn into our respective roles.

Marianne Nestor has stepped down from her role as convenor of the heritage committee after many years. She oversaw the committee’s latest project, Amazing Stories: the history of our local businesses (see last Gazette); past events, including Leadlights of Artarmon; and open house visits to local heritage houses with the help of her long-serving committee members Margot McKay and Helen Wheeler. The open house visits was an eye-opener for me, seeing how appearances can deceive, because behind many a small federation facade is a big modern home.

This year will be one of consolidation for the heritage committee, when the information gathered over the years is transferred into a more accessible format (see APA needs your help in historic project, p8). Katie Walshe, who joined the heritage committee this year, has described herself as the filing cabinet for the Amazing Stories project. She is preparing material for the transition to the website.

Initial planning has started on APA’s 2012 Artarmon fair, which looks to be held around May as usual. Any successful event needs the support of the local community – not just to turn up on the day but volunteers to help organise and staff stalls; stall holders to book and pay in advance for their stalls; and local business sponsors who commit early, easing uncertainty as we plan the event. The fair’s main purpose is to give local community organisations the chance to raise awareness and funds and of course, for the kids to have fun.

Parking continues to be an issue. Ironically, a resident from my neighbourhood in May addressed the executive committee about workers parking in the local streets. Also in May, a resident whose household owns five cars, three of them parked on the street close to where I park for work, put a note on my car asking me to stop parking in front of their house. I have friends who used to have plenty of street parking. But increasingly, local residents park on the street, many finding it is more convenient than using their garages, which have become storage. They now lack street parking so you just cannot win.

On Saturday, September 10, is the Willoughby Spring Fair. The APA will have a stall at the fair so make sure you pop in and say hello.

Quiz No 22: What’s in the Gazette (look for clues inside this issue)

Questions
1. Who will officially open The Concourse on September 17, at 4:30pm?
2. Who turned 100 last month?
3. How many Affordable Housing dwellings approved in Willoughby LGA since 2009?
4. When did Artarmon’s first Post Office open?

Answers: p15

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Pizza wars: Eagle Boys Pizza lodged an application (DA-2011/279) on July 18 for a shop fit out, signage and change of use of the former video shop at 3/2A Broughton Road (Shop 3). Trading hours will be 11am-11pm on Sundays and 11am to 12am on weekdays. Although the development would not have any dramatic impact on the public, it is worth noting Artarmon is already well served with three pizza outlets. Eagle Boys is a 335-store Australian-owned national chain. In Artarmon, it plans to hire 14 staff. The outlet will have four car spaces in the common parking at the back, two of which are for the manager and delivery van and the other two for customers. However, 65% of customer pick-up is expected from Broughton Road, which might lead to increased competition for parking.

The following DAs have been submitted to council and are not expected to have any adverse effect on the general public:
- (DA-2011/303), 4 Carlotta St: use of premises for three separate and independent childcare centres.
- (DA-2011/311), 41 Sheppard Rd: alterations and additions to existing dwelling.
- (DA-2011/289), 45 Burra Rd: alterations and additions to rear of existing dwelling, including internal layout changes, rear patio and pergola and front veranda.
- (DA-2011/299), 9 Coree Rd, alterations and additions to existing dwelling, including habitable area to attic level, new swimming pool, fencing, terrace, garage, replace existing driveway and fencing.
- (DA-2011/275), 61 Elizabeth St: alteration and addition to the rear of existing dwelling, including 1st floor addition, new swimming pool, timber decks and carport.
- (DA-2011/282), 127 Artarmon Rd: proposed in-ground pool in back yard of Carlos Rd
- (DA-2010/218), 56 Tindale St: modification of existing terrace to include roof over paved area
- (DA-2010/206), 42 Stafford St: alteration and addition to existing dwelling and for new swimming pool.

(See also p7)
Artarmon Public School (APS) is building a community of winners. Leading by example are parents and carers involved in the multicultural committee’s beginner English classes. Averaging 17 participants a week, the classes have been so successful that, despite losing Department of Education funding, the program is set to expand in the second half of this year.

The Parents and Citizens committee is meeting the cost of materials and resources while two new teachers will volunteer their time and expertise. Lee Young is an ESL (English as a Second language) teacher and native Korean speaker.

Mandy Zhang speaks Mandarin and is a member of the Willoughby City Council (WCC)’s Mosaic Centre. In addition, APS will join with Chatswood Public School (CPS), which ran a similar course. APS will host beginner lessons and intermediate students will attend class at CPS.

Multicultural committee co-convenor Gwyn Denton says everybody wins. “Community breeds community,” she said. “Parents attending the class wanted to give back to the school. They have covered numerous books for the school library and taken over the management of lost property.”

Assistant principal Caroline Alford said the classes had benefited the school. “The fact that parents have a better understanding of English allows them to participate more in the school community which supports the children and also helps the parents connect with each other”.

Connecting with each other through understanding was also the theme at the multicultural perspectives public speaking competition, which APS students contested. Tony Davey from The Arts Unit of the Department of Education and Communities said the competition had two distinct aims. “Firstly it provides an opportunity for students to develop confidence – it’s the only state-wide speaking competition for primary school students – and secondly, it encourages them to think about multicultural issues,” he said. Year 5 APS student Daniel Selvadurai won his section and will now join 81 speakers at the regional finals.

Three APS athletes – Lewis Clabburn, Kevin Yang & Claire Eaton – are also heading for competition finals. They will compete in the School Sports Australia Annual Athletics Championship in Darwin in the Northern Territory later this year. Lewis will compete in 100m and 200m running events while Kevin and Claire will contest the discus and shot put.

According to Regional Sports Organiser Peter Tomlin it is a noteworthy result. “There are approximately 110 places in the state team,” he said. “Students from all schools – public, catholic, private and independent – compete for a place so to have three students from the one school make the NSW athletics team is an outstanding achievement.”

Members of the school band program are also dedicated achievers. The Concert Band and Stage Band recently participated in the Dicksons’ Yamaha Band Festival. The festival hosts entrants from all over the state and this year more than 300 bands participated.

Mark Strykowski, the festival’s education and schools’ manager said the festival was unique because entrants received valuable feedback on their performance. “After the band has played an adjudicator goes backstage and holds a mini-workshop with them. It’s valuable information which helps them improve and refine their performance,” he said. The APS Stage Band and the APS Concert Band were both awarded Gold in their categories, adding to a cache of awards, which reflects their commitment and high standards. Gold was also awarded to a talented team of APS gymnasts who recently won medals at the NSW State Championships for Gymnastics Sports Acrobatics. Lauren Ward, Anna Dutschke and Samantha Anderson won their section for trios with a routine that included tumbling, rolling, standing on and jumping off each other’s thighs and backs.

The school anticipates large numbers of children at the kindergarten orientation program. Enrolling students for 2012 are invited to spend the morning at “big school”.

The next kindergarten orientation day is on November 9. Prospective parents can also join a school tour on September 7 or October 25 and experience for themselves a school community, which encourages a winning attitude.
Parkes Rd Artarmon resident Elsa Sakk celebrated her 100th birthday in June at the Freeway Hotel, surrounded by 20 friends and family.

She was somewhat overcome by reaching such a milestone in her life, which was recognised by messages from Queen Elizabeth II, Governor General Quentin Bryce, Premier Barry O’Farrell and her local member Anthony Roberts.

She was born on June 8, 1911, in Narva, Estonia to blacksmith Johannes Sakk and his wife Rosalie Koll.

The middle of three children, she had an older and younger brother (both deceased). Elsa remembers the blacksmith’s family lived by a beautiful waterfall.

But when Europe’s political unrest turned to war in 1939, her life, like those of all who lived in Estonia at the time, became intertwined with the events of WWII, which determined her destiny.

Estonia had declared itself as neutral, but that was not to be. In 1940, Estonia was occupied by the Red Army and in 1941, by the German Army. The Sakk family survived the turmoil of war-torn Europe but Elsa and her younger brother were never to live in Estonia again.

At the end of the war, while trying to return to Estonia, they made their way to the now partitioned Berlin. They were too late to enter the American sector and ended up in the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration refugee camp in the Russian sector.

Just as the iron curtain was descending, Elsa, her father, younger brother and sister-in-law were able to escape from Berlin to Kassel, in American-occupied, west-Germany. Refugees were able to put their names on lists for transport and resettlement in England, USA, Canada and other little-known countries.

The family put their names on the shortest list they could find - Australia - the most obscure country. In 1948, Elsa arrived in Sydney by British transport ship and was reunited with her younger brother and sister-in-law who had arrived several months earlier.

Elsa began a new life in Australia training as a nurse. She became an Australian citizen in the 1950s and worked in several psychiatric and general hospitals in Sydney, the Blue Mountains and Lake Macquarie, where she made many lifelong friends.

She always enjoyed travel and spent her holidays travelling around Australia or the world. Through letters and parcels, she kept in close contact with friends and relatives in Estonia.

Travel to Estonia was very difficult because Estonia was now part of USSR and behind the iron curtain. But through persistence and extensive planning she managed to visit family in Estonia although she was not able to travel beyond the capital city Tallinn.

In 1977, Elsa retired from nursing at Concord Hospital and moved to her current home in Artarmon.

After the fall of the iron curtain, Estonia reclaimed its independence on August 20, 1991. Two weeks later, Elsa, together with her niece Viva Howell, husband Ian and family travelled to Estonia. For the first time in 50 years, she could finally visit the town and home of her childhood. It was a fascinating time to visit.

Monuments of national importance that had been buried when the country was invaded were being excavated and restored.

Churches that had been abandoned during Soviet rule were actively being restored. Impromptu soapbox political speeches were commonplace on city street corners and in parks.

Elsa continues to live independently in Artarmon and is fiercely independent despite some difficulty in hearing and reduced eyesight.

She is an excellent cook and still makes meals for her niece’s family and loves going out to lunch or dinner with friends and family.
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Nick Logan Pharmacist Advice is supporting a Willoughby City Council initiative to provide a FREE sharps disposal program for the local community.

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**Affordable Housing:** Council officers are still negotiating with the Department of Planning and Infrastructure on how the draft WLEP (see November Gazette, pp1&5) – particularly its affordable housing (AH) provisions – conforms to the standard LEP template. According to general manager Nick Tobin last month, June timing for gazettal has been delayed most likely until August.

Currently, WCC requires 4% of floor space to AH, or contribution, for essential workers such as school teachers, police, firemen, nurses, etc who cannot otherwise afford to live in the local area but work in Artarmon and other Willoughby local government areas (see Councillors Feedback, Kate Lamb, p12).

Council has requested the NSW government, after it removed the councils program for housing in 2009 under the state environment planning policy (SEPP), for agreement to continue its existing AH policy.

The draft WLEP 2009 proposes also to exclude the AH unit area from the floor space ratio calculation if council is satisfied a development incorporating AH will not cause adverse impacts on adjoining properties such as overshadowing, bulk and scale.

But former NSW Planning Minister Tony Kelly said he was not “prepared to support” council’s request because the AH policy did not conform to the state environment planning policy for AH (AHSEPP) which “relies on incentives, rather than impose contributions, to provide AH”.

The Gazette understands since 2009, Willoughby has had only one AH application determined (by approval) and there are two outstanding applications, one of which is close to Artarmon, in Talus Street, Naremburn, which only has three out of 13 units earmarked as AH.

**Channel 9 site:** At this stage, the Channel 9 project appears to be at a standstill. According to WCC environmental services director Greg Woodhams, after council officers again approached the consultants representing Nine Entertainment Co, they were advised the project’s current status was unchanged and that the company was still focussing on its other business activities. At this stage, the consultants had not been instructed to proceed any further with the Channel 9 site’s design and planning.

Yet, the NSW Government still considers plans for the development too far advanced to be repealed from Part 3A of the planning laws and returned to council (see Councillors Feedback, Barry Thompson, p12).

**Council wins:** WCC was awarded a Green Globe Award on July 26 by the NSW Government – the second of probably more to come – for its sustainability initiatives, which includes a first for an Australian local council, the installation of a 165kW co-generation system at the Leisure Centre which will save 600t of greenhouse gas emissions and about $40,000 a year in energy bills (see Councillors feedback, pp12-13).
Amazing Stories: Artarmon Post Office

This is the first in a series of “Amazing Stories” to be published in the Artarmon Gazette as part of APA’s history website project (see APA needs your help on historic project, p9). Former head of the APA heritage committee Marianne Nestor and her team Katie Walshe, Margot MacKay and Helen Wheeler, oversaw the Artarmon shopping precinct history project.

1909: The first Artarmon Post Office opens in a general store where 7-Eleven is now located. Mr Greatrex who ran the store was the first postmaster.

1909: James Hall takes over as general store operator and postmaster.

1915: Hall, as postmaster also becomes agent for Commonwealth of Australia Savings Bank Dept (the Australian Post Office became agent for Commonwealth Bank in 1912).

1921: Smith James becomes general store operator and Artarmon Post Office gets a postmistress, Miss AM Lisle, who is also responsible for the Commonwealth Bank agency.

1923: The general store and post office moves down the street, to where the present post office is now. James continues to operate the general store and Lisle remains postmistress and agent for the Commonwealth Bank.

1925: A post office is built and Lisle stays on as postmistress.

1929: GW Hancock PM takes over as postmaster.

1973: The post office is demolished and rebuilt on the same location.

We’ll meet you on The Concourse

Join us for a Community Open Day, 12 noon to 4pm, Saturday 10 September.

For the first time the doors of The Concourse will open and you are invited to drop in for an exclusive preview.

Be one of the first on site, take a look inside the Concert Hall, Theatre and library and find out more about shows and performances.

The Community Open Day will be held as part of the Willoughby StreetFair. Tours depart from the box office.

The Governor of New South Wales, Her Excellency, Professor Marie Bashir AC, CVO will officially open The Concourse. You are also invited to join in the celebrations on The Concourse 4.30pm, Saturday 17 September.

409 Victoria Avenue, Chatswood | Visit theconcourse.com.au for show information.
APA needs your help in historic project by Adrian Alexander

After the success and Artarmon residents’ interest in the Amazing Stories project the Artarmon Progress Association undertook for heritage week this year (see last Artarmon Gazette), the association has decided to sponsor a website to bring together a history of Artarmon since the area’s settlement.

This project is regarded as a long-term project and the website will be expanded progressively as information is received and verified.

For the purpose of the website development, Artarmon will be separated into four main areas – the industrial area south of the Gore Hill Freeway; Artarmon village; Artarmon’s residential area west of the railway line, to the Pacific Highway; and Artarmon’s residential area east of the railway line, to Willoughby and Mowbray roads to the north.

The website will include a history of land use since the area’s first land grants, in the very early part of the 1800s.

As part of the research, and to provide some indication of the life during the settlement/development of the Artarmon area, the association would like to collect photographs of Artarmon’s past social events, such as functions held in the old Masonic Hall; the School of Arts/Drill Hall; the jubilee celebrations; the scout and girl guide halls; the churches; and associated programs, posters and invitations, etc.

Photographs of homes, streets and people dating back over time would also be appreciated.

If you are renovating or moving house and find any old newspapers, documents, old publications and books you think may be of benefit to the history team, please contact us. We would also like to hear from any residents who have any historical information that may help us complete this project.

The association will scan any photographs or documentation, such as old newspapers, school magazines covers, posters, event programs, local organisation newsletters, business cards, home movies/videos, books on the north shore’s early days, particularly in the Willoughby City Council local government area and return the original documents to their owners.

The association is looking for volunteers who are interested in undertaking research on:

- specific projects, such as early settler history, land use and histories of local businesses;
- local organisations, such as churches, schools, scouts, girl guides, and tennis clubs, etc;
- community facilities, such as libraries, child care centres, aged care centres and parks and reserves;
- the industrial area evolution;
- television channels and transmitters;
- railway development since the early 1890s;
- local government; or
- recording oral histories from people who have lived in Artarmon, have worked in or had some connection with Artarmon’s past and present.

If you are interested in assisting with research, in providing information, such as photographs, documentation and other material relevant to the Artarmon’s History, or can suggest people who may be willing to provide us with oral histories of Artarmon, please contact the association: PO Box 540, Artarmon 1570; email the APA at history@artarmonprogress.org.au; telephone: 9419 3916; or call Adrian on: 0401 644 052.

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Stories behind our street trees by Mollie Shelley

Following requests for more information about early planting of street trees in Artarmon, below is an update of an article I wrote for the Artarmon Gazette in July 2001. There have been many trees planted in our area since then, in particular many Jacarandas and Blueberry Ash (Elaeocarpus reticulatus). An article about these later plantings was published in the August 2006 Gazette.

It is interesting to speculate that, if Governor Phillip's First Fleet had not called in at the Canary Islands on its way to Botany Bay, we might not have date palms (Phoenix canariensis) in Tindale, Burra and Wee don roads. Seed collected on that visit has propagated all over Australia because it germinates readily and the tree is so hardy.

Willoughby City Council has only begun keeping detailed records of street tree plantings in recent years. However, with the help of the Willoughby Local History Librarian, some interesting facts have come to light in the council archives.

In 1926, council canvassed the idea of forming a street improvement committee for each street. The aims were to secure uniformity in a particular street, promote individual interest, foster community spirit and ensure the welfare of streets and sidewalks. Young trees would be made available from the Botanic Gardens in June and July.

However, in 1930, a letter from the Botanic Gardens told the council that trees and shrubs would no longer be provided free. Trees, palms and shrubs would now cost 1s each, paid in advance. Hedge plants like privet would be 1s per hundred. We had not yet realised the havoc the dreaded privet would cause in our natural bushland!

In October of that year, a rather plain report was inserted into the council archives. Some members had hoped. The most substantial planting was a 12m avenue of twelve mature Brush Box in Hawkins Street shows how magnificent they can be in the right environment.

The following year, the newly formed 2nd Artarmon Boy Scouts proposed to plant, and care for, a dozen ornamental trees in any Artarmon street the council nominated. Subsequently, council called a public meeting and the Willoughby Street Beautification Committee was formed. It included two Artarmon Progress Association members, AR Watson and AE Harrison. Money would be raised through the progress association. These were the years when Charles Wickham (see last Gazette), with support from local residents, was planting his famous garden around the railway station that travellers to Sydney craned their necks to see.

In 1937, council was requested to include tree planting in the

They were then 6ft - 8ft tall. Only five of those remain. There are eleven left in Burra and four in Weedon Road. One Burra Road resident recalls a palm being removed from outside her house many years ago because Noisy Mynahs nested in it. Some things never change!

In 1931, council received Tristania conferta seed (now called Lophostemon confertus), the ubiquitous Brush Box, for street beautification. The donor was a botanical seed collector in Woy Woy. Brush Box, a native tree, is found near the margins of rainforest and in wet sclerophyll forest. It is fast growing and hardy. The avenue of twelve mature Brush Box in Hawkins Street shows how magnificent they can be in the right environment.

The following year, the newly formed 2nd Artarmon Boy Scouts proposed to plant, and care for, a dozen ornamental trees in any Artarmon street the council nominated. Subsequently, council called a public meeting and the Willoughby Street Beautification Committee was formed. It included two Artarmon Progress Association members, AR Watson and AE Harrison. Money would be raised through the progress association. These were the years when Charles Wickham (see last Gazette), with support from local residents, was planting his famous garden around the railway station that travellers to Sydney craned their necks to see.

In 1937, council was requested to include tree planting in the

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“Warmer and wetter” is climate scientists’ prediction and based on the latest weather patterns, I’ve got no doubts! Council has accepted the reality of climate change for years. It is therefore more than puzzling people at other levels of government (aided by the popular media) still peddle fear and ignorance – wasting precious time – as if we could just carry on as we have done, without jeopardising our children’s future!

**Cleaner Future:** In Willoughby, we are not delaying investment in a cleaner and less wasteful future. As Phase 1 of a council-owned and operated ‘solar farm’, last month we went to tender for installation of a 33kW photovoltaic system on the Albert Street carpark, distributing power via a private wire to meet the needs of the Devonshire Street Child Care Centre.

In May, we commissioned a 165kW cogeneration plant at Willoughby Leisure Centre, which is expected to reduce by 50% that facility’s power drawn from the grid. These and other sustainability initiatives such as the Artarmon Loop local bus service have earned us the honour of winning the local government category at the UN Association of Australia’s 2011 World Environment Day Awards http://www.unaavictoria.org.au/awards-programs/world-environment-day-awards/winner-finalists.

**Affordable housing (AH):** is another field where council has led. Put simply, housing in much of Sydney is too expensive. That may suit those of us fortunate to own our homes but more that 10 years ago, council recognised many people we needed among us could not afford to live locally. Those included nurses, police and council staff such as child care workers. One definition is that AH does not cost more than 30% of gross household income. Underlying the AH movement, is government distaste for providing large-scale public housing. Governments have therefore attempted to entice private investment into housing for lower income groups.

Council introduced its inclusionary zoning in LEP 95, requiring 4% of total floor space of multiunit residential development on identified sites to be dedicated to AH through contributions onsite or as a cash equivalent. The policy demands AH units to be constructed to the same standard as other dwellings.

Under this policy, council has acquired title to 10 units, which are managed by North Shore Community Housing. Unbelievably, the previous NSW government in its campaign to standardise planning controls, refused us permission to carry this provision forward, into our new LEP http://www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/Development/Draft-Willoughby-Local-Environmental-Plan-2009/WLEP2009-Affordable-Housing/.

Instead, we are obliged to adopt their SEPP, which, although requiring dedication of 20% of floor area, permits the units to return to the private rental market after 10 years. It remains to be seen whether the current government has the sense to enable our local program to continue.

- Kate.lamb@willoughby.nsw.gov.au

I sit down to write this column on the third day of a very damp spell. It is cold and gloomy – I could be talking about the political situation. Unlike Sydney’s meteorology, I do not see a break in the political weather coming any time soon. Nonetheless, I believe a break will come and signs of spring will appear.

**At the local level,** your council is just one month from opening The Concourse. The builders have handed the building over and council staffs are extremely busy as they prepare to open the new library and trial the theatre and concert hall for their opening shows. I remain convinced the new facilities will transform the Chatswood CBD and mark the beginning of a new phase of our city’s development. I urge you to make some time in September to join in the festivities of this year’s very special Spring Fair, including a visit to The Concourse venues. For Willoughby, 2011 will be the start of a great and lasting spring break.

**At the state level,** the new government is active on several fronts. It was disappointing the repeal of the controversial Part 3A of the planning laws did not include the Channel 9 site because its application was judged too far advanced. The community has been promised a thorough consultation process.

In another locally relevant area, changing the number and size of councils are is under consideration, bringing NSW in line with other states. Before the election, both sides of politics indicated they would not force any amalgamations. Nonetheless, most rural shires are in financial crisis so something will have to be done. Most urban councils are better placed but increasingly, the view is that bigger size will enable them to cope with greater operational scope and complexity not to mention the clout needed to negotiate for Federal funding. I find it very hard to mount any argument for amalgamation with clear benefits for Willoughby residents.

Nonetheless, I am among several of your councillors pondering whether steps can be taken to “keep Willoughby ahead of the game” if structural change is proposed. At state level, spring may be some time coming.

**At the federal level,** I find the situation appallingly wintry. While both sides of politics now agree action on climate change is required and have similar targets for emissions reduction by 2020, they have succeeded in confounding the public to a point of deep malaise. Symptoms include disinterest, resulting in support for climate action plummeting from 70% to 30%; and mounting confusion and uncertainty. The latter symptom can be seen in falling retail spending and increased saving and frugality. Perhaps we all are finding our own way to sustainability! I am reminded of Mark Twain’s comment about rumours of his death being exaggerated as I read the pundits’ judgement on the Gillard government. In this case, spring could be up to two years away.

**Finally, the international scene** also appears wintry as blizzards, typhoons and eruptions are reported.
Artarmon Loop: Council has secured bus company I Love Oz Pty Ltd to operate the Artarmon Loop and Loop services for another three years. Shuttle Bus routes will remain unchanged in the immediate future. Council has engaged a contractor to review the Loop operations. It will conduct market research of existing and potential Loop customers before making recommendations to council on how the various Loop routes and services might be improved.

It is interesting to note the Royal North Shore Hospital information desk has a display advertising the Artarmon Loop.

On June 14, council adopted the plan and budget 2011-2012. Residents this year have more than ever voiced their concern to me over the rate increases. I am pleased to receive such feedback.

The NSW Government authorising agency IPART did not approve council’s application to increase the minimum rate for 2011-2012 (see Artarmon@council, p4) because of inadequate consultation with residents.

There is also a suggestion of a 20% general rate increase for infrastructure spending. A report on that is expected to come before council before the end of the year.

Council’s economic development team is surveying home-based businesses. The survey aims to identify how we can best help home businesses or people looking to work from home. A Growing Your Business in Willoughby brochure aimed at all businesses is also being drafted.

Council library services have made the Top 5 Libraries in NSW list, Willoughby Library coming second in per capita circulation, according to Public Library Statistics 2009-10 just released. Council newly received a local government cultural award for its iBIMS project.

Sustainability: Energy consultants will continue visiting residents at the Phyllis Burke Court apartment complex in Barton Road to encourage participation in the home power saving program. Its community garden just won a NSW Housing grant for another community garden bed (see Sustainability Street, p15).

Council worked with Green Strata Inc and the Owners Corporation Network of Australia to stage the inaugural Sydney Green Apartments Forum on July 23.

Last month a 7kW solar power array was commissioned on the Chatswood West library and a 6kW solar power array on the Artarmon Kids Cottage. Fabrication of the Sustainability Education Centre for The Concourse and installation have commenced.

Speed Cushion: After resident representation, council approved a three-month trial installation of a speed cushion on the road next to No 52 Artarmon Rd.

Residents will be invited to make submissions at the end of the trial to help council determine if the speed cushion should remain.

- stuart.coppock@willoughby.nsw.gov.au
Local SES volunteer on winning team

Artarmon local Andrew Hurley is part of the Willoughby-Lane Cove State Emergency Service (SES) team which in June was placed sixth in the biannual SES state disaster rescue competition among teams across NSW. The placing follows the team’s May win in the 2011 SES Sydney northern region rescue competition.

The state competition tested SES volunteers’ skills, training, teamwork and leadership through a simulated large-scale disaster - this year’s theme was an aircraft accident.

The placing was particularly impressive, team leader David Lowe said, because the unit had not competed in the state disaster competition in more than 10 years.

“The team did what was asked of them and more, performing extremely well under the challenging conditions. I couldn’t have asked for a better team,” David said. “The competition also provided a great opportunity for increased learning opportunities.”

Willoughby Mayor Pat Reilly congratulated the unit on their impressive result. “Well done to the Willoughby-Lane Cove SES unit,” he said. “I know the team and other volunteers have trained tirelessly over the last couple of months in preparation for the competition. They have done the local Willoughby area proud.”

Talking 2064

by Ross Dickson, the community watchdog

The Artarmon Fair is going ahead in May next year but the APA needs contributors. Those who are interested in giving a hand contact the community watchdog (details below).

Artarmon Progress Association will showcase Amazing Stories, the Artarmon shops history project at the Willoughby Spring Fair on September 10.

The talk around our neighbourhood is that shopping precinct in Hampton Road is looking tired and in need of an update. Shop owners in shopping strips in several suburbs in NSW like Crows Nest, Castle Hill and Newtown, have joined forces to combat the competition from the shopping centres and taken advantage of funding through the Main Street Program administered by their local councils.

There was much excitement in Artarmon last month when pop star Lady Gaga made an appearance at Channel 9 in Artarmon Road.

If you have any news or have seen or heard anything unusual in your neighbourhood, email the Artarmon community watchdog: rossjdickson@gmail.com

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As many of us grapple with current debate on climate change or simply try to reduce our impacts and the cost of living, a rich source of information remains the local library, writes Alethea Morison.

Artarmon Library, as previously reported in the Artarmon Gazette’s Sustainability Street pages, houses a special “sustainable living” collection, set up as a community project with council support and Environmental Trust funding. Its success has led to “copy-cat” collections at the Northbridge, Castle Cove and West Chatswood branch libraries.

The original collection will travel with Artarmon library when it eventually relocates to the corner of Artarmon and Tindale roads. While a separate collection is not currently proposed for the soon-to-open main council library at The Concourse, books on sustainability will bear special labels and a dedicated education space will showcase the new development’s sustainability features and other local sustainability and environmental initiatives.

The diverse treasury in the Artarmon collection includes some classic Australian writings on sustainability. A gem among these is Resurrection in a Bucket by Margaret Simons, published in 2004.

“The rich and fertile story of compost” as it is subtitled, is a true journey to the centre of the earth. It reveals the incredible dynamics deep in the micro-world of compost and the lives of the organisms within. The heroes of the story are, naturally, worms.

As well as going to the heart of compost itself, Resurrection in a Bucket takes us through society and history viewed through the prism of compost. Characters include environmental educator and compost guru Peter Rutherford, who, besides launching the Artarmon sustainable living collection, authored the ADAM principles of composting – Aliveness, Diversity, Aeration and Moisture – all required for successful composting.

Other significant names in Australian composting include the father of permaculture Bill Mollison and the Bradley sisters, best known for their work in bush regeneration but also pioneers of Australian composting.

On the bigger world canvas, compost greats include George Washington who experimented in enriching soil with decaying manure when he was not fighting for American independence and becoming the first US president.

Perhaps the most compelling character in the saga is Sir Albert Howard, appointed Imperial economic botanist to India in 1905 and tasked with solving starvation there. He is credited for inventing the compost heap. The book itself has a rich organic quality as it traces the germination of ideas and innovations in composting and their cross-fertilisation over time and across continents.

Resurrection in a Bucket also explores, very amusingly, how people reveal themselves in their attitudes to compost. Yet, while entertaining and even hilarious at times, it also offers practical composting advice and serious insights into concepts such as sustainability, organic gardening, permaculture and biodynamics. The perfect read for weekends that are too wet to spend in the bush or the garden.

Contact: stuartrsexton@gmail.com.

Quiz No 22 Answers
1. NSW Governor, Prof Marie Bashir (p1)
2. Elsa Sakk (p6)
3. One (p7)
4. 1909 (p8)

Compiled by Eva Wiland, Artarmon Gazette editor. Questions on page 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stretch, Strengthen and Relax yoga</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hatha classes with a green, leafy outlook at Artarmon Bowling Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small classes emphasising safe progress and individual attention</td>
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<tr>
<td>Highly qualified, experienced teachers</td>
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<td>Tuesday 7:00 - 8:00am - Sue</td>
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<td>Tuesday 9:00 - 10:30am - Sue</td>
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<td>Thursday 7:30 - 8:30am - Sue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 9:15 - 10:45am - Gill</td>
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Enquiries welcome
Sue Livingston - 0423 697 363 yogaroad@optusnet.com.au
Gill Kamsler - 0438 177 480 gill@kamsler.com.au
The 37 house sales in the 2010/2011 financial year were again around the long-term average volume of 36. The median price increased by approximately $100,000 to $1,536,000. Seven East-side houses produced transactions in excess of $2,000,000 with a five-bedroom house in Cameron Avenue achieving the second highest ever price of $2,605,000.

Confidence in the high end of the market is still dampened by economic concerns and prices are likely to remain relatively stable over the next twelve months.

The residential unit sector has paused for breath after two very strong years of price increases. First homebuyers are still the major force in this segment of the market and there are more investors buying now compared to the last few years.

Rentals are strong across the board and vacancy levels are extremely low. A response to the competition for selection for a tenancy is that now some prospective tenants are providing bound CVs with full supporting documentation in an effort to be chosen. Legislated changes for residential leases came into operation in February. Many of the new rules are (retrospectively) applied to existing tenancies, so owners should make themselves aware of them if they are considering selling the property or asking the tenant for vacant possession. Marriott Lane manages many hundreds of properties in the vicinity and we are happy to give you guidance in any aspects of renting, including a free rental value assessment.

Marriott Lane collects the most comprehensive and accurate property sales data that is available to the general public. To see the up to date details of properties sold in Artarmon and many other suburbs in the vicinity, plus general suburb-statistics, go to our website (www.marriottlane.com.au). You will find the information under the red Suburb Sales tab.