

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – YARRALULA RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 20 August 2019

Over the past 12 months, YRA has continued to be very active in trying to maintain and improve the amenity of Yarralumla.

YRA has a membership of some 180 households which represents about 15% of the households in the suburb. This level of support helps us to have our voice heard and provides financial stability for our activities.

While the last 12 months have been a busy time, it has also been a somewhat frustrating time.

Brickworks

The sale contract for the Brickworks development has still not been signed. This means the plans for the development have not been released for public comment. The latest information we have is that the Suburban Land Agency who are selling the land on behalf of the ACT Government to DOMA, expect the contract to be signed off by the SLA Board in mid-September. However, as soon as the plans are released YRA will organise a public meeting to enable residents to have their say.

Derelict Building Site Bentham/Hutchins

In terms of other planning issues we have been actively pursuing Access Canberra to get some action on the derelict building site on the corner of Bentham and Hutchins Streets next to the Shops. We were advised in March that formal action had commenced to resolve the matter but for privacy reasons we couldn't be told what the action was, nor when it might be concluded. The latest information we have from Access Canberra is that a Development Application for a new development is being prepared and Access Canberra is confident it will be lodged before the end of the year. Once a Development Application is lodged there will be the usual process of public consultation.

CSIRO Site

The future of the CSIRO site on Banks St is also of concern. The site is owned by a Sydney development company and leased to the CSIRO until 2022. However, the CSIRO has already moved out and will not be renewing their lease. YRA has been in touch with the owners to discuss what plans they may have for the site. We are proposing to set up a sub-committee to develop a set of planning principles to present to the owners, based on the principles that were developed by the Community Panel for the Brickworks, to guide their planning

process. After the formal business of this meeting is concluded we will have more of a discussion on the CSIRO site.

YMCA

Again we have had a frustrating time with Access Canberra over their failure to enforce the lease purpose clause of the YMCA Sailing Club. The lease requires the building to be used as an aquatic recreational facility; however, since 2012 the YMCA has been using it as their corporate headquarters. Despite Access Canberra's lack of action, we have engaged directly with the new CEO of the YMCA who has indicated his willingness to comply with the lease and move corporate staff out of the building.

The new CEO has also advised that the YMCA will repair the YMCA Auxiliary Hall on the corner of Loftus St and Meuller St and will explore alternative community uses in consultation with the YRA. I notice work has started to repair the broken windows at the Hall.

Brickworks Access Road and Dudley St upgrade

Despite YRA raising some objections, the ACT government has approved the construction of the Brickworks access road and the upgrading of Dudley St. Construction is expected to commence shortly.

The Government has also allocated funds for the replacement of the mini roundabout at the corner of Dudley St and Novar St with a set of traffic lights and also for the installation of traffic lights at the Adelaide Ave off ramp at Kent St. We would have preferred to see the congestion problem at Novar and Kent Streets fixed before the Dudley St upgrade and we will be interested to see the plans when they are available.

Light Rail Stage 2

The Government has started detailed planning for Stage 2 of light rail from Civic to Woden. At this stage the route will run down Commonwealth Ave and around State Circle and down the centre of Adelaide Ave with stops at Hopetoun Circuit and Kent St. Construction is not expected to start until 2023 and be operational in 2025.

Yarralumla Wetland

The 2009 Yarralumla Bay Master Plan envisaged turning the two stormwater drains that flow into Lake Burley Griffin from Schlich St and Hopetoun Circuit into a wetland. YRA has held discussions with both the National Capital Authority and with ACT Environment and Planning to try and revive the idea.

Rheinberger Centre

We have also been monitoring the use of the Rheinberger Centre in Weston St. The Centre has been occupied by Marymead for a few years now while their premises in Narrabundah were being renovated. They are being replaced by the St Vincent de Paul Society who have taken a 10 year lease over the building to use as their main office.

Stakeholder meetings

YRA Committee members met both Federal representatives and local members of the ACT Legislative Assembly on a number of occasions.

Committee members also attended a number of meetings with senior executives from a range of ACT and Commonwealth directorates and agencies including Transport Canberra and City Services, Access Canberra, Planning and Environment and the National Capital Authority.

Submissions

YRA lodged a number of submissions during the course of the year. These were

- Suggestions for the ACT 2019 Budget
- Opposing the move of Yarralumla from the electorate of Kurrajong to the electorate of Murrumbidgee
- Commenting on aspects of the Brickworks access road and the upgrade of Dudley St
- Calling for an independent inquiry into the proposed route of Stage 2 of Light Rail.

All of these submissions are available on the YRA website.

I also appeared before the ACT Standing Committee on Environment, Transport and City Services to expand on our earlier submission on Nature in Our City.

YRA not only advocates on behalf of the Yarralumla community but also actively works to provide events and activities that promote a sense of community.

Yarralumla Does Christmas

Yarralumla Does Christmas was again held in Weston Park in December. It was another huge success, attended by some 250 people of all ages, thanks largely to the efforts of David Harvey, our Immediate Past President, Belinda Buck, impresario extra-ordinaire, the performers and other participants such as Capital Petanque and the Finnish Embassy. Special thanks as well to our sponsors, the Southern Cross Club, Yarralumla Pharmacy, Yarralumla IGA, GG Flowers, Heritage Nursery and Yarralumla Play Station.

Canberra Running Festival

YRA volunteers, as well as students from Girls and Boys Grammar and Narrabundah College, again manned a number of drink stations in April as some 1400 runners ran through Yarralumla as part of the Canberra Running Festival. Providing volunteers for this event is also a useful source of revenue for YRA.

Tree Maintenance Group

The YRA volunteer tree maintenance group continued its activities improving the look of the suburb over the first few months of last year before we were asked to suspend activities because City Services didn't have the resources to pick up the prunings. In that time the group conducted 8 sessions for a total of 80 hours work. We are currently negotiation a new agreement with City Services so work can resume.

Special thanks to Peter Pharaoh for leading the team throughout the year.

Yarralumla Primary School

YRA continued its close association supporting the Yarralumla Primary School. YRA provides an annual prize to encourage and recognise community spirit in students. YRA also had a stall at the school fete last November and will again have a stall at the fete in November this year.

YRA Information Stall

In May, YRA held an information stall at the Yarralumla shops. It was an opportunity for residents to meet members of the Committee and provide feedback and comments on issues affecting Yarralumla. The Committee found it most useful and will repeat the event again.

Park Benches

YRA was again successful in applying for funding under the Commonwealth's Stronger Communities Grants Program to install two more park benches in Yarralumla. One has been installed in the pocket park on the corner of Banks St and Solander Place and the other near Blue Gum point overlooking the Lake. The Commonwealth provided half the funds and YRA the other half. We appreciate the support of Gai Brodtmann the former Federal member for Canberra for her support. These are in addition to the 2 benches, the drinking fountain at the shops and the two defibrillators installed in Yarralumla last year for a total YRA expenditure of some \$12000 over the two years.

Clean up Lake Burley Griffin

In December, YRA volunteered to assist various Lake Burley Griffin water craft groups to clean up the lake shore. YRA picked up rubbish littering the shore around Weston Park.

Community Garden

With YRA encouragement, a working group of local residents has been established to progress the idea of a community garden in Yarralumla, possibly in the area next to the YMCA Auxiliary Hall. The group is preparing to consult residents in the immediate area.

Website

We have been working at redesigning and updating the YRA website to make it cleaner and more user-friendly. Unfortunately we haven't been able to finalise it as we had hoped. But it is very close and hopefully will be up and running in the next few months.

New Paint Colour at the Shops

Following mostly negative feedback on the new blue colour at the Shops YRA surveyed Members and discussed the matter with TCCS who agreed to repaint the area in a more popular sandy/grey colour and the work has now been completed.

ISCCC

YRA continues to be an active member of the Inner South Canberra Community Council. The ISCCC is a non-government organisation that represents the residents of Inner South Canberra. The ISCCC looks at issues that are shared across boundaries and runs a series of public forums throughout the year. YRA hosted the public forum on Urban Infill in June that was attended by over 100 people. ISCCC also provides funding to YRA for communication purposes.

Thanks

Community organisations, like YRA, are only successful because of the time and effort volunteers from the community put into it. Yarralumla is fortunate that it has people who are prepared to put their time and effort into working on behalf the community. In particular, I would like to recognise and thank my fellow Committee members, many of whom have been serving on the Committee for many years, for the hard work they have done over the last 12 months and indeed for their work over all the years.

Two long serving committee members are retiring this year Janie Gillespie and Paul Flanagan and I would like to say a special thank you to them both for their hard work and contribution to Yarralumla.

Also it is important to recognise the many other volunteers who respond to calls from the Committee to distribute the hard copy newsletters or undertake other tasks like Alissa Johnston who runs our Twitter feed. Thank you.

Special thanks also to the Yarralumla Neighbourhood Watch Group who have moved their regular meeting tonight so we can use this hall.

Finally, a special thanks to Denise Page who has kept the YRA notice board at the Shops up to date for many years. Denise has had to resign for personal reasons but we are very grateful for all of her work over the years and wish her well for the future.

Michael Lewis

President YRA

20 August 2019