

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2020-21**

### **YARRALULA RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION**

#### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 26 October 2021**

Despite COVID, YRA has continued pursuing its goals of representing the views of Yarralumla residents, maintaining and improving the quality of life in Yarralumla and keeping the community informed on matters that affect Yarralumla.

The Committee has been active on a number of planning fronts including the Brickworks Development, the CSIRO site, the YMCA Auxiliary Hall as well as on the social front including our Red Bow campaign, Marathon and Heritage Walk.

Membership continues to go from strength to strength with 261 individual and household memberships at 30 June, representing 23% of all Yarralumla households.

#### **Yarralumla Does Christmas**

Unfortunately, due to COVID we had to cancel the event last December and also the event we had tentatively planned for this December. This is a great disappointment but we are considering an alternative community event, maybe in Autumn.

#### **Red Bows**

On the other hand, our Red Bows were again a huge success last Christmas. In addition to our sales in 2019 we sold many more metres, enough to decorate Yarralumla's trees and even the Governor-General came on board and decorated the gate posts and trees on Dunrossil Drive

Many thanks to the Committee's Red Bow Fairy, Margaret Pentony, assisted by her helper elves Chris Windsor and Anne Charlton.

#### **Floriade**

Given the success of last year's Floriade: Reimagined, the Government has again provided 1600 tulip bulbs and 1600 seedlings to YRA to plant at the shops and the pocket park on the corner of Novar and Hooker. These were planted in June and have been blooming beautifully.

Special thanks to Jan Tankiang for taking on the co-ordination role.

As part of this year's Floriade Community, grants were also made available to community organisations to stage a community event to celebrate Floriade. YRA was successful in obtaining a grant and had planned a Coffee and Cake Morning for Yarralumla residents. Unfortunately, it has had to be cancelled due to the Canberra lockdown.

## **Brickworks**

YRA has continued to be represented on the Community Panel established as part of the consultation process for the design of Brickworks development and meets every six weeks with DOMA.

DOMA held a series of public meetings in March and April to further discuss their draft Estate Development Plan (EDP).

They will hold another public meeting before the final EDP is lodged, which is currently expected to be in March 2022. The final EDP will be open for public comment and YRA will provide a submission.

As part of the planning process, DOMA has also lodged an Environmental Impact Statement and YRA provided a formal response in July.

Work has continued on the access road to the Brickworks and on the upgrade of Dudley Street. Construction is expected to be completed in mid-November.

Progress on the traffic lights to be installed at the intersection of Novar and Dudley Streets in Yarralumla and Kent and Denison Streets in Deakin has been delayed due to the need for additional design work. YRA will continue to monitor the situation and notify members when plans are available for review.

## **Derelict Building Site Bentham/Hutchins**

We have continued to push for action on this issue and despite our objections over the proposed number of dwellings and the loss of heritage values the planning department has recently approved seven townhouses on the site. The developer has three years to commence construction and three years to complete construction after starting, although these periods can be extended.

## **CSIRO Site (aka Forestry Place)**

The developer has now applied to the National Capital Authority to change the National Capital Plan to allow 275 apartments, a hotel, an aged care facility and commercial office space on the Heritage listed site. A survey of all Yarralumla residents conducted by YRA, found that only an aged care facility was supported. Concern was also expressed about the scale and height (5 stories) of many of the buildings. YRA has met with the NCA and provided written comments outlining the community's views.

Thanks to those YRA members who have assisted on this issue by serving on the special sub-committee.

### **YMCA Auxiliary Hall.**

YRA has continued to engage with the YMCA over the future of the Auxiliary Hall on Mueller St. We have been advised that it is uneconomical to renovate the Hall and bring it up to current building standards and the YMCA would prefer to redevelop the site.

YRA is not necessarily opposed to a redevelopment on the site provided the scale and use is acceptable to local residents and there is a benefit to the Yarralumla community.

### **Light Rail Stage 2**

The government has identified an 800-metre-wide strip parallel to Adelaide Avenue as an *Investigation Zone* as part of its planning for Stage 2B of light rail from Commonwealth Park to Woden. 800 metres from Adelaide Avenue takes us roughly to Loftus Street and the shops. The concern is that it will result in rezoning to allow high rise development as has occurred either side of Northbourne Avenue. YRA has provided feedback to the planning authorities that, given the estimated 70% increase resulting from developments underway (Brickworks) or in the pipeline (CSIRO site and Minimbah Court) in the next five years, we do not support further increased urban densification

Stage 2B of the project is currently in the feasibility design stage along with the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement. The construction timetable for Stage 2B is still unclear but will not commence until Stage 2A is completed which could be 2024.

### **Community Garden**

Unfortunately, this project is on hold at the moment because there is currently no one available to co-ordinate it.

Much progress has already been made by a working group to develop the concept, but a co-ordinator is needed to take it to the next stage.

### **Yarralumla Wetland**

Following support from Marisa Paterson, the ACT Government has agreed to include a feasibility study for the Yarralumla Wetland on the list of locations to be considered for the next tranche of water quality infrastructure projects.

### **Tree Maintenance Group**

The YRA volunteer tree maintenance group has been busy pruning and clearing undergrowth across Yarralumla nearly every Tuesday morning since 2018. There is a regular team of about 10 to 12 people who have contributed over 1000 hours in total, including 336 hours over 23 working bees during the last financial year.

Many thanks to Peter Pharaoh for leading the very dedicated team throughout the year.

## **Yarralumla Primary School**

YRA continued its support for the Yarralumla Primary School. YRA provides a \$150 annual prize to encourage and recognise community spirit in students and will also run a stall at the school fete if it goes ahead.

## **Clean-up Lake Burley Griffin**

Last November YRA again organised a team of volunteers to remove rubbish around the shoreline of Weston Park as part of the broader clean-up of Lake Burley Griffin.

Special thanks to Chris Windsor for organising it and to the volunteers who got their hands dirty.

## **Heritage Signs**

Thanks to a grant from ACT Heritage and Roads ACT together with a financial and in-kind contribution from YRA, the old concrete street signs, dating from the 1920s, on the corner of Banks and Bentham and Banks and Hooker were restored to their original condition.

## **Heritage Walk**

In April, as part of the Canberra Heritage Festival, YRA organised a short walk to highlight the many local heritage features in Yarralumla. The event was a great success with over 70 participants and made more enjoyable thanks to the knowledgeable and entertaining tour guides.

Special thanks to Jill Barnes who organised it and to our tour guides Brian Turner, David Beckhouse, John Lee and David Keany

## **Canberra Times Marathon Festival**

Also in April, YRA again co-ordinated Yarralumla residents and students from surrounding schools to staff four drink stations during the Canberra Times Marathon Festival. The volunteers handed out drinks and snacks to the passing runners and cheered them on.

Thanks to David Harvey and all the volunteers.

## **Pocket Parks**

Yarralumla has nine small pocket, or corner parks, which are public spaces and all the parks have large specimens of Arizona Cypress which are around 100 years old and registered under the ACT Tree Protection Act. The pocket parks were part of the original 1920s layout of Yarralumla and reflected the Garden City/City beautiful philosophies of the time

YRA is exploring how these pocket parks can better serve local residents. The first stage has been to seek members views on naming each park and we will then invite ideas from members as to how they might be better used.

Thanks to Steve Foley for leading this project.

### **Stakeholder meetings**

Given the recent move of Yarralumla to the electorate of Murrumbidgee, we have made a concerted effort to meet all the MLAs for Murrumbidgee as well as our Federal Member Alicia Payne. We have taken to opportunity to explain the issues facing Yarralumla and seek their support in addressing them.

### **Submissions**

YRA lodged several submissions during the course of the year including:

- Development Application for townhouses on the corner of Bentham and Hutchins Streets
- Seaplanes on Lake Burley Griffin
- Heritage nomination for Lake Burley Griffin
- CSIRO site proposed development - Environmental and Heritage protection
- Brickworks EIS
- Aged Care facility on Cotter Road

The submissions are available on the YRA website.

### **Communication**

YRA has been busy during the year keeping members and residents up to date with planning and other issues as well as letting people know of social and other events that may be of interest. This is achieved through our website, eNewsletters, hard copy newsletters, our Notice Board at the shops plus our social media accounts.

In addition, we twice set up a stall at the shops to meet members and answer questions.

### **ISCCC**

The Inner South Canberra Community Council (ISCCC) is a peak body representing eight local residents groups in the Inner South, including YRA. It deals with issues affecting Inner South residents and conducts a number of public forums each year. YRA has two representatives on the Committee and plays an active role.

## **Committee**

The Committee meets monthly and the changing COVID situation has presented its challenges requiring us to sometimes meet online and sometimes face to face. Nevertheless, Committee members have met regularly throughout the year.

I would also like to thank my fellow Committee members for all of their hard work over the past 12 months and in many cases longer. Diana Wright and David Johnstone, in particular, have been Committee members for 15 and 11 years respectively and Anne Charlton has been a member for 13 years. David Harvey has also been a member for 10 years.

We have lost two committee members this year, Lynette Heydenrych and Jill Barnes who have both moved from Yarralumla but who both made a valuable contribution to the work of the Committee.

## **Conclusion**

Also, thanks to the many volunteers who assist us in so many ways, from pruning trees, to distributing Newsletters, to cleaning up lake Burley Griffin.

Finally, thanks to you - the YRA members - for, not only your financial support, but also for your encouragement, your suggestions and your active participation in YRA.

Mike Lewis

President YRA

October 2021