PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2021-22
YARRALUMLA RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 6 September 2022

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The last year has been another challenging year concerning YRA operations and activities due to the pandemic continuing to impact our lives. The Committee maintained monthly meetings albeit we have formally adopted a hybrid meeting approach combining physical attendance with an online meeting. Committee members like all members of the community have had to deal with the stresses imposed by the pandemic on their own families and our capacity was somewhat reduced as a result. From this meeting we will be losing David Harvey. David has been a committee member since 2011 and was the president from 2015 – 2018. David is our entrepreneur and he personally initiated many of the events that we now routinely conduct such Yarralumla does Christmas and our support to the Canberra Marathon. We will miss his energy, expertise and experience. During the year, we also lost our Secretary, Chris Windsor, who had to resign from the Committee. Chris has been a committee member since 2015 and secretary since 2016 and reliably supported the YRA in all its activities. We will greatly miss her steady hand on the Committee and appreciate the fantastic service she provided.

Throughout the year we maintained a monthly eNewsletter for members and distributed a hardcopy newsletter to all Yarralumla mailboxes. Members might have noticed that we regenerated the noticeboard at the shops and have reproduced key Newsletter articles and posted them in large format on the Noticeboard for ease of reading. Unfortunately, our website was out of date for much of the year as our webmaster was also unavailable due to family concerns, but members may have noticed that the website has been recently updated is again proving to be an important channel for our communications.

As members will soon hear, we remain financially healthy. We are well supported by members and our membership continues to grow and represents some 20 percent of Yarralumla households. Where appropriate, we apply for ACT government grants to fund relevant activities and we do our best to ensure that activities, where possible, are self-funded.

Red Bows. The Christmas Red Bows activity is going from strength to strength each year with Christmas 2021 being the biggest and most successful yet. Last year we donated some 20 bows to the social housing areas and placed bows on the heritage trees in the nine pocket parks. We try to break even and have sales pay for the material and last year overall we came in at a small loss of around $300. We receive tremendous feedback from the community for this activity and it has now attracted media attention for the last few years. Margaret Pentony is the driving force behind the Red Bows activity, and I would like to thanks her for the effort she puts in each year to make this Christmas and holiday celebration a success.

Floriade. Yarralumla has again celebrated Floriade with the planting of tulips and cottage garden plants at the shops and the pocket park on the corner of Novar and Hooker Streets. Like the Christmas bows this event is greatly appreciated by the community. This year we applied for and was awarded an ACT government grant to run a Floriade celebration on Saturday 24 Sep at the shops. The celebration will involve a YRA stand where we will hand out vouchers for coffee and drinks to be purchased at the local cafes. We will also take the

opportunity to conduct a meet the YRA activity. I would like to thank Jan Tankiang for again organising our participation in Floriade. The gardens require quite a bit of work to establish and maintain and Jan approaches this tirelessly.

Clean-up Australia. We participated in the Clean-up Australia event and focussed our clean-up activities at Weston Park. We were pleased to report that Weston Park was relatively free of rubbish given its use, but the amount of rubbish found on the lake's shore at the water edge was very disappointing.

Canberra Times Marathon. We also participated again in volunteering at drinks stands for the Canberra marathon. Despite providing a community service and gives the participants great satisfaction in supporting the event, our contribution is rewarded with a welcome payment to the YRA from the event organisers. Ingrid Mitchell who joined the committee at the last AGM organises both the Canberra Marathon and Clean-up Australia activities and I thank Ingrid for stepping up and taking on these events.

Tree Group. The Tree Group continues as a very energetic group that value adds greatly to our suburb. While it had to cease activities during the height of the pandemic it kicked off with vigour at the start of 2022. Most of its work this year has been removing the privet, cotoneaster and woody weeds from around the CSIRO oval. Residents can now view the oval from Banks Street, for the first time in many years, along with the wonderful heritage buildings that comprised the CSIRO Forestry School. I would particularly like to thank Peter Pharaoh for keeping the group running and the energy he brings to the group and its activities.

Development Issues

We maintained representation on the Inner South Community Council ((ISCCC) the YRA has two members) and contributed to and supported its position on a range of ACT development related bills and plans with potential impact for Yarralumla. The Inner South Community Council is a peak body representing eight local resident groups from the Inner South region and deals with issues that impact across all resident groups. We chose to support the Inner South Community Council on its position on a range of new proposals from the ACT government as it seeks to transform development planning in ACT. We felt that these proposals in many cases, in their desire to reduce red tape and administrative overheads, were at risk of devolving discretionary decision-making powers to too few in Government without adequate community consultation. The YRA supported the ISCCC in developing submissions on the following:

Development Planning Bill. The ACT government has proposed a new draft bill that transforms its system of approving development. This is supported by a raft of plans and bills including a new Territory Plan expected in Oct / Nov and a draft district plan in November. We supported the ISCCC submission on the planning bill and expect to comment on the other plans early in 2023.

Urban Forestry Bill. This proposed bill replaces the Territory's Protected Tree Act. Closely related to this was Development Approval amendment 369 which addresses compliance with the Territory's 30 percent canopy and land permeability requirements until the Forestry Bill is enacted.

Active Transport Plan. The ACT Government has produced an Active Transport Plan which is a good plan for developing and managing alternative travel infrastructure for pedestrians, bikes, and scooters. The plan is an innovative and proactive approach to developing and fast-tracking infrastructure which promotes these alternate modes of transport. Of course, we

think that the ACT Government has many good plans and ideas. We believe our task is to pressure the Government to implement them consistently.

Other Development Issues

The YRA Committee chooses to act apolitically and consequently, we have decided to take a neutral position on the question of the ACT light rail and it project stages. This was reflected in a survey we conducted of the Yarralumla residents which revealed that support for the light rail is roughly split 50/50. Consequently, we have decided to focus on the peripheral issues and in particular the Government's densification agenda to build up residential and business density within one kilometre either side of the light rail axis.

Traffic Management. We consider that apart from resisting developments that increase the density within Yarralumla, our main issue is traffic management and safety. In association with this we have lobbied the Government concerning its signalisation of the intersection of Kent and Novar Streets and called for a dedicated right turning lane travelling South off Adelaide Avenue. The ACT Government has modelled Yarralumla traffic out to 2031 and it would appear has seriously underestimated population and employment growth arising from the Brickworks and Forestry Place developments.

Brickworks Development. The YRA has representatives on DOMA's community panel and has been engaged with the developer throughout development of the Brickworks proposal. DOMA submitted a revised Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in March 2022, followed by a Stage 1 Draft Estate Development Plan (EDP) and Stage 1 Draft Development Application (DA). The YRA and the broader community provided comments on the EIS. DOMA is currently working to address concerns raised in these community submissions and by government departments before they produce the new Stage 1 EDP and DA.

DOMA will hold at least one more public forum before it submits the EDP and DA (for initial works). With representatives attending regular meetings of the Brickworks Community Panel, the YRA has certain insight into how the plans are proceeding and the rationale behind some of the decisions. However, this does not necessarily mean we have endorsed all the elements and we are keen to hear feedback from members of the Yarralumla community especially, once the EDP and DA are available for public consultation. This is likely to occur in the second half of 2022 and we do not anticipate any construction to commence before the first half of 2023.

Forestry Place (CSIRO Site). The old CSIRO site development is at the forefront of YRA considerations and we continue to maintain a dedicated sub-committee. Oakstand, the developers acting on behalf of the Shepherd foundation, submitted a proposed amendment to the National Capital Plan to the National Capital Authority (NCA) which was rejected by the NCA on the grounds that the residential component included unit blocks of too many stories and the overall development was too dense in terms of residences and not in keeping with Yarralumla aesthetic.

Oakstand revised the proposal in response but we were extremely dissatisfied with the revised proposal as it still proposes a development that has too many residences (274 apartments, 130 place aged care facility and an 80 key boutique hotel) and fails to embrace the liveability features that residents would expect. The proposal also makes no allowances for the increased traffic and parking issues that the development will generate. The unsatisfactory response prompted us to write to the Shepherd Foundation and to meet with the NCA to present our concerns.

We recently received advice that Oakstand has indeed lodged another amendment proposal with the NCA and we have requested access to the details. We will continue to fight the

proposal on the basis that it is too high density, has an unfavourable impact on Yarralumla's environs and exacerbates the present traffic management issues.

YMCA Hall. The YRA has requested that the YMCA use and upgrade the YMCA Hall and met with the CEO to discuss the issues. The YMCA advised that they would try and identify a suitable use for the hall and if successful they will expend the necessary funds to upgrade the building to make it fit-for-purpose. If they are unsuccessful, then they intend to advise the ACT Government by June next year that they are unable to use the building and seek a swap for a more suitable location.

Other Issues

As you can see there have been no shortage of issues for us to deal with. Others that we continue to progress include:

Heritage Signs. You might recall that we restored two heritage pillar street signs in Banks Street last year. Unfortunately, the sign on the corner of Banks and Hooker Streets was damaged by builder vehicles. The ACT Government has accepted responsibility for maintaining the signs now that they have been restored and will repair the damage.

Naming of the Pocket Parks. We ran a survey to select the naming theme for the nine pocket parks and although responders chose bird names the survey response was impacted by the pandemic. We have decided to re-run the survey but to date this has been frustrated by a lack of a suitable computer survey tool and overstretch of the committee members.

Street Art. The committee has been investigating the prospect of introducing some street art, such as a mural on the toilet block at the Yarralumla shops. Presently, the project is awaiting advice from the ACT Government concerning its support for the idea.

Conclusion

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow committee members who continue to make their time available and uphold the goal of our constitution in preserving and progressing our wonderful suburb and community. Diana Wright, our Public Officer, first joined the committee in 1989 and continues to ensure that we comply with Government requirements. David Johnstone, our Treasurer has been a member of the committee for some 12 years and has been keeping the books for most of that time. Anne Charlton, joined the committee in 2008 and manages most of our communications. Many of our members continue to serve the YRA and the Yarralumla community after many years and without the interest and stamina of all committee members we wouldn't be able to address anywhere near the number of items that we do.

I would also like to thank the broader YRA community not only for their financial support but also for contributing their time to take an interest in Yarralumla activities and issues and to assist in maintaining gardens, delivering newsletters and writing into info@yarralumlaresidents.gov.au to contribute to the discussion.

Steve Foley
President YRA
September 2022