



CIVIC TRUST REPORT ON ISSUES & ACTIVITIES IN 2009

- General Meetings were held on 17 February, 21 April, 16 June, 18 August, 20 October, and 1 December, 2009.
- Trust Committee Meetings were held on 20 January; 24 March, 12 May, 21 July, 15 September, 2009.
- Other Public Meetings are held on issues as necessary
- Trust Membership numbers remained strong and stable for the year.

January / February 2009

State Transit Authority proposed to extend Routes 546, 548 and 549 to Macquarie Centre later in 2009, subject to the feasibility and implementation of bus priority measures across Epping Bridge being investigated by the Roads & Traffic Authority. If approved seven buses an hour would have used this bus only lane in peak periods.

Councillor Lorraine Wearne reported that a number of meetings would happen early in February; meeting with State and Federal politicians regarding traffic and parking in Epping; meeting with stakeholders regarding the proposed bus only lane on Bridge Street, Epping; funding application for joint working group Parramatta/Hornsby Councils and Department of Planning; and traffic calming in Rawson Street, Epping.

Within metres of the Epping Town Centre we saw an appalling overgrown site in such an advanced state that rabbits are breeding and furthermore it's a haven for other vermin. This site used to be in pristine condition as the Epping Bowling Club adjoining the equally attractive Forest Park. We wrote to Hornsby Council about this matter and the area was subsequently cleaned up.

The long awaited upgrade of Oxford Street commenced. The Trust generally supported this project however there were a few concerns which were conveyed to Hornsby Shire Council in writing on the 5 Nov 2008.

Whilst RailCorp are quick to remove graffiti on their passenger rolling stock, they are unhurried in doing the same on railway property at Epping, such as the former signal box.

March / April

Clr Wearne reported that on the right hand bend of Beecroft Road after proceeding over the railway bridge during wet weather, another two vehicles ended up on the footpath and damaged the shops. Luckily no pedestrians were injured. After speaking to officers at the RTA they recognised the need for a safety barrier on this corner and funding approved.

Mayor of Hornsby Council, Clr Nick Berman said the last few weeks have been an exciting time for Epping with the opening of the long-awaited Epping to Chatswood rail line. This will no doubt result in increased demand for parking spots near Epping Station. Council has provided a number of 'kiss and drop' zones near the station for passenger set down and pick up.

Clr Chiang Lim said Civic Trust members have been a long term ally in the support of the introduction of electronic voting in Parramatta City Council. Voting on development applications recently became mandatory following the ICAC inquiry into the Wollongong Council's scandal last year. In Parramatta City Council's case, voting these days is conducted by having Councillors physically stand up for each vote and be manually recorded by the minute taker.

Clr Wearne announced that State Planning Housing Controls now in force mean surrounding properties will not be aware of any proposal until the bulldozers or construction vehicles begin to arrive on site. The owner is obliged to give 48 hours' notice to 'adjoining' property owners but there is no right to object to or oppose any such proposal. There is nothing Council can do to protect residents or control such projects.

May / June

Clr Wearne said that the developer of the Channel 7 site had lodged two applications with the Department of Planning. The first is for site works, which includes demolition of existing buildings, roads and infrastructure.

The second is for the first stage of the development being two residential flat buildings and a number of town houses on the top portion of the site closest to Edenlee Street. Both applications were lodged under Part 3A of the Planning Act, to be assessed by the Department of Planning and *not* by Parramatta Council.

Clr Nick Berman said Hornsby Council was very pleased to hear news that it will receive a \$2.4 million grant from the Federal Government to reduce water and energy use at sporting ovals in Epping and Eastwood. The water-saving measures will be implemented at Epping Oval, Ron Payne Park and Somerville Oval. Energy-saving initiatives will be undertaken at West Epping Oval and netball courts, Epping Oval, Ron Payne Park and Somerville Oval.

Parramatta Council adopted a Management Plan (Budget) for the coming year said Clr Wearne. This Plan includes an increased amount of spending for the removal and prevention of graffiti; funding for a Christmas Lights competition; increased funding for the installation of street lighting; funding for the repair and maintenance of footpaths; drainage upgrades and funding for upgrades of Epping Town Centre and many other projects. We have managed to pass a budget with a small surplus.

Parramatta Council purchased a new street “scrubber/sweeping” machine to be used in the Epping CBD every couple of weeks to clean the paving. Council conducted a 6-week operational trial from Monday, 25 May 2009. The trial was based on a 2-week cyclical schedule operating between the hours of 4am to 7am.

The RTA commenced installing the crash barrier and non-skid bitumen surface on the corner of Beecroft Road and Bridge Street to avoid the accidents where motor cars have ended up on the footpath and in the front of local businesses.

Clr Wearne said the tree planting islands, which are a traffic calming measure in Rawson Street, were now complete. Sadly just two days after completion of the works malicious vandals damaged a number of the trees and tore up many of the small plants. Fortunately residents in the street were very quick to personally replant some 40 plants and replace and stake the trees.

July / August

Details of the Stage 1 Epping Park residential development at 61 Mobbs Lane, Epping were announced by the applicant, Sydney Broadcast Property Pty Ltd. The proposal sought approval for the following elements:

- **Building 3:** 12 two-storey courtyard houses with at-grade parking and associated landscaping;
- **Building 4:** a 6 storey stepped residential flat building (RFB) containing 67 residential units, associated landscaping, and basement parking;
- **Building 5:** a 6 storey stepped RFB containing 67 residential units, associated landscaping, and basement parking;
- **Building 7:** a 6 storey RFB containing 84 residential units, associated landscaping and basement parking; strata subdivision of Buildings 4, 5 and 7; and Torrens title subdivision of Building 3.

The site is 89,190m² in area with a 500m primary frontage to Mobbs Lane. The site is currently occupied by the Seven Network which operates 24 hours a day, employing up to 700 staff.

RailCorp announced a new CityRail timetable which started on Sunday 11 October and incorporates the Epping to Chatswood rail link. Introduction of the new timetable integrates the link into the broader CityRail network so rail users will have direct services from the CBD and upper Northern/lower North Shore lines to this popular new link.

Under the new timetable, Northern Line suburban services operate from Hornsby to the City via Macquarie Park, then to North Sydney, the CBD, Strathfield and continue to Epping where they terminate.

For the first time in the history of the Northern Line, there will be no direct suburban services as they exist now. Epping will be an interchange so passengers bound for Cheltenham to Normanhurst stations will need to proceed to platform 6 underground. Southbound commuters will need to change at Epping if for example; they travel from Pennant Hills to West Ryde or Normanhurst to North Strathfield.

Hornsby Mayor Clr Berman said Council received news that the NSW Department of Planning has allocated \$125,000 for our joint application with Parramatta City Council to progress the Epping Town Centre Study. This represents a significant shortfall in the total costs of the study.

September / October

Former Member for Epping, Andrew Tink, presented his biography of *Australia's greatest native son William Charles Wentworth* detailing his famous personal achievements, to our October general meeting. The applause at the conclusion of Andrew's presentation again confirmed his popularity with Trust members over the many years as our State Member.

Front page of the October Newsletter announced “A warm and friendly welcome to our new neighbours at Eastwood”. The former Eastwood Brickworks site in Midson Road is being redeveloped for residential housing and the initial construction has seen 42 houses and townhouses completed, 30 of which have been sold. When finalised there will be between 250/280 new dwellings, mainly two-storey structures, on this 14.7 hectare site with a mixture of housing types; detached houses, townhouses and apartments.

Within the complex there is a proposed Heritage Park that preserves the old kiln and mill buildings, and the two old chimneys, as a sympathetic interpretation of the operations of The Great Northern Brick Company Ltd established in 1912.

Trust Vice President Graham Medhurst reported he attended the meeting with Federal MPs Anthony Albanese and Maxine McKew on Thursday 24 September at The Epping Club. The meeting was quite intimate with mostly Chambers of Commerce representatives (from the Hills to Ryde), some Councillors and staff (Parramatta noticeably absent) and representatives of Beecroft-Cheltenham and Epping Civic Trusts.

The Minister made a statement on where his Government stood on assisting States with infrastructure, transport and regional and local development. He emphasised that the difference between the Rudd and Howard governments is that the Rudd Government will involve itself in cities whereas the Howard government kept out.

November / December 2009

The New South Wales Government and the Hills Motorway Limited, owners of the Hills M2, have reached an in-principle agreement for an upgrade of the Motorway. The project would reduce congestion in peak periods, improve access to major growth areas, and provide new bus priority access. In a typical work day, the M2 is used by more than 100,000 vehicles and over 17,000 bus commuters. Trust President Graham Lovell and Vice President Chris Dunkerley attended briefings with RTA, Tollway companies and consultants regarding the proposed upgrade.

Clr Berman said Hornsby Council needs to improve the Shire's ageing infrastructure and facilities to meet the changing needs of its community. We are commencing a process to pursue a rate variation as part of our 2010/11 Management Plan. The rate increase as a result of the infrastructure levy is likely to be in the vicinity of five to six percent. For the average ratepayer, the increase would be around \$60 to \$70 per annum, or \$1.20-\$1.40 per week.

Clr Wearne said Parramatta Council has been advised by the Department of Planning that it will not approve the inclusion of the proposed extension of the Epping Conservation Zone in the new LEP. It will also not include Council's new proposed height and zoning controls for the Epping CBD.

Unless we remove Epping completely we will not be allowed to exhibit the new Parramatta LEP. What this means is that to ensure planning certainty for 95% of the Parramatta Local Government area, we must at this time, withdraw all planning controls for Epping. The Planning Minister and her Department are pushing for increased residential density within 800 metres of railway stations.

The Trust acknowledges the considerable and important work of many members and other residents during the year. It also thanks the outstanding work of your Local Government representatives - Clr Lorraine Wearne of Parramatta City Council, and Clrs Nick Berman and Michael Hutchence of Hornsby Shire Council. Their reports at our General Meetings and in the Newsletter were very much appreciated.

Thanks also to Mr Greg Smith our MP for Epping for his support and interest in Trust issues.

The Trust also gratefully appreciates the interest and publicity given by the Editor and his staff at the Northern District Times on important issues during the year.

February 2010

The Trust's web site: www.eppingcivictrust.org

To enquire about joining the trust: [Become-a-member](#)

To contact the trust, or to have your say: [Your-say](#)