



ANNUAL REPORT 2011

In presenting the 41st Annual Report, I would like to thank the Executive Committee and some members for their good work and support during the year.

In particular, the following deserve special mention:

Alan Swales as Treasurer & Valma Swales as Assistant Treasurer for maintaining the membership list and organising distribution of the Newsletter; Chris Dunkerley and Graham Medhurst as Vice Presidents; Chris Dunkerley as Secretary; Ron Dunstan as Minutes Secretary and for his community spirit; Committee Members, Helen Strasser, Anne Dean, Ruth Evans, John Goddard and Graeme Wyber.

My special thanks to: [Ed. A wide range of members for their work for the Trust - excluded for privacy - full details in the copy provided to members]

I also wish to acknowledge with many thanks the outstanding work of your Local Government representatives - Cllr Lorraine Wearne of Parramatta City Council and Cllrs Nick Berman, Michael Hutchence and Robert Browne of Hornsby Shire Council. Their reports at our General Meetings and in the Newsletter were very much appreciated.

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

Membership at 1 January - 285 households = 489 individual members. Membership at 31 December - 277 households = 453 individual members.

- General Meetings were held on 15 February, 19 April, 21 June, 16 August, 18 October and 6 December.
- 40th Anniversary Celebration Evening held on 8 March and Public Meeting held on 18 October for Hornsby Council's Epping Town Centre Study.
- Committee Meetings were held on 11 January; 8 March, 10 May, 12 July, 13 September and 8 November.

My sincere thanks to every member who continued to support the work of the Trust and maintain their membership.

Matters dealt with and items of interest during the year

January / February

Publicity about the closure of the M2 bus ramp feeding into and out of Epping at Beecroft Road (Northern District Times 1/12/2010 and Sydney Morning Herald 13/12/2010) lead one to believe that the loss of bus services through Epping would severely impact on the local community. The Trust reported in its February newsletter that these buses overwhelmingly carried passengers whose destination wasn't Epping, but were the major job centres of Macquarie Park and the City.

Vice President Chris Dunkerley reported on the M2 Upgrade Stakeholder Briefing: In line with the conditions of approval 21/10/2010, the 'Tollway Concession' will now extend to 2042, with a 7.7% one-off increase in toll from completion in November 2012 (on top of the regular adjustments).

NSW Councils were still calling for the removal of rate pegging, despite a new method of determining the rate cap limit. The new rate peg of 2.8% was announced on 10 December 2010 by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART).

Hornsby Mayor Nick Berman said the devastating events in Queensland and across the eastern seaboard are a timely reminder of the importance of planning for floods. Flooding is a serious matter that Council doesn't take lightly. We have prepared these documents in response to guidelines set out in the NSW Government's *Floodplain Development Manual (2005)*.

Councillor Lorraine Wearne reported that applications have been lodged and are awaiting approval for the former Channel 7 site: Variation of the original consent to build 650 units to now build 800 units; variation to allow the applicant to obtain construction certificates without complying with its Voluntary Planning Agreement with Parramatta City Council.

March / April

We celebrated our 40th Anniversary on Tuesday 8 March which was an outstanding success with former MP Andrew Tink as the guest speaker. Other speakers were Parramatta City Councillor Lorraine Wearne, Hornsby Deputy Mayor Michael Hutchence and State Member for Epping, Greg Smith. I gave a brief history of the numerous significant achievements during the past 40 years.

Also present was the former Lord Mayor of Parramatta, Alan Hyam, former Hornsby C Ward Councillor, Barbara Baker and current Hornsby Councillors Robert Browne and Andrew Martin. There was enormous interest in the continuous PowerPoint presentation and the large display of photos of the early days in Carlingford, Eastwood and Epping.

Long standing member Agnes Evans cut the cake and I was presented with a solid glass plaque for my 40 years' of continuous service and the promotion of good planning in Epping. Lyn MacGregor and her team provided appetizing light refreshments for the 85 invited guests and Trust members who were present.

Trust Vice President Graham Medhurst reported on the March 3 Stakeholders meeting for the Epping Town Centre Study: Hornsby Shire and Parramatta City Councils have engaged JBA Planning to undertake a study of the Town Centre to explore the potential for residential development and job establishment. The aim is to maximise the use of the public

March / April - continued

transport infrastructure developed by the State Government and to cater for future population growth in terms of the Metropolitan Strategy Plan for Sydney 2036.

In the April newsletter Councillor Lorraine Wearne said that despite community and Council submissions against the proposal to increase the number of units from 650 to 800 units on the former Channel 7 site, the Department of Planning has now approved the variation sought by Meriton. Approval was granted on 21 February, 2011.

Hornsby Mayor Nick Berman reported that Council has now completed the \$2.4 million Epping-Eastwood storm water harvesting project, which was funded by the Federal Government through its Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program. Underground storm water tanks with a combined capacity of 1.2 million litres were installed at Epping Oval, North Epping Oval and Eastwood's Somerville Oval. Storm water runoff from surrounding streets will be captured and stored in the tanks.

Parramatta City Council held a "get to know your sanctuary" function in the Edna Hunt Reserve. About 45 people attended and some offered to join the volunteer bush care group and help look after the reserve. In 1957 Mayor E.A. Hunt who owned part of the reserve donated the land to Council as he was concerned that the area would be degraded by future development and should be protected "for the use of the people and as an amenity to the district".

May / June

Residents of Ray Road Epping were dealing with an application for an affordable rental housing development on a double block at 176-178 Ray Road. This application was lodged under the NSW Government policy known as the Affordable Rental Housing, State Environmental Planning Policy 2009 (AHSEPP09). The application was described as a shocker.

On 29 May the new Planning Minister, Brad Hazzard, announced amendments to the AHSEPP. He has called an immediate halt to all new developments under the policy pending a review. For current applications (those pending) he directed that they satisfy a new local character test.

Representatives from Transurban and Hills M2 Upgrade Team attended the June meeting to discuss access to/from the M2 at Epping and the way this access is tolled; and the future use of the old access tunnel under the railway line at Epping.

Councillor Lorraine Wearne said the electorate had a decided win with the changes made by this current government to the planning laws. Many decisions previously lodged under Part 3A have now been returned to Council and future developments will be dealt with by Council. Items of major infrastructure will always be decided by the State Government.

Perhaps an even bigger win for the community are the amendments made to the Affordable Housing Policy by the State Government. A requirement has been inserted into the policy that any development must meet a compatibility test - it must suit the character of the existing neighbourhood.

July / August

Hornsby Shire Council Report - Epping Town Centre Structure Plan: A compact, high density town centre with increased development potential around the Railway Station. A single mixed use zoning is proposed that permits a wide range of retail, commercial, residential and community uses and adjustment of the Town Centre boundary to include properties Nos. 2 and 4 Epping Road as business zoned land;

Identification of opportunities for 1,745-2,845 new dwellings within precincts within the Town Centre Core with building heights between 4 to 22 storeys and approximately 1,275 new dwellings outside the Town Centre Core in the form of town houses and residential units.

In the August newsletter Councillor Lorraine Wearne said the consultants' Plan for Epping will form the basis of a document on which members of the Epping community can have their say prior to the preparation of a joint Local Environmental Plan for the area. The community needs to be aware that the Plan deals with many issues of neighbourhood planning apart from the height of buildings near the railway station.

Planning Department guidelines state that public open space should be 2.83 hectares per 1000 persons for residents in an urban environment. The provision of open space within the study area is well below this benchmark prior to any proposed additional residences, yet it also suggests that we should build on the Rawson Street Car Park, not retain it as an open space extension of Boronia Park."

September / October

We held a public meeting on Tuesday 18 October attended by 160 residents to discuss the future of the Epping Town Centre and adjoining single dwelling residential areas as proposed by the consultants and exhibited by Hornsby Shire Council for two months from Wednesday, 28 September until Monday, 28 November 2011. The meeting resolved: "That there should be no re-zoning of the areas that are single residences to multi-unit housing and residential flats". Less than a handful disagreed.

A revised plan for an Affordable Housing Development at 176-178 Ray Road was submitted to Hornsby Council in recognition of the Government's ruling that current affordable housing applications must meet a local character test. The new plan has four separate buildings comprising twelve apartments and the developer has agreed to retain the current front wall and vegetation.

We were very disappointed that the Minister for Planning Brad Hazzard had approved 5-storey units for the Carlingford Precinct bounded by Carlingford Road, Pennant Hills Road, Keeler Street and Hepburn Avenue. The Minister gazetted this amendment to the Hornsby Shire Local Environmental Plan on Friday 2 September 2011.

September / October - continued

Councillor Wearne reported that Parramatta Council had adopted a new neighbourhood centre plan that includes Epping in the very first year of works. The works proposed will cost approximately \$700,000 and are mainly footpath and streetscape upgrades in Beecroft Road, Bridge and Rawson Streets.

On 28 September, after 54 years, the West Epping Bowling Club had its gates padlocked on the orders of the Panthers Group and had to close down. The club sits on land that is currently zoned for open space or recreational use and it was stated at the Trust meeting that Hornsby Council is not intending any rezoning of the land.

November / December

Parramatta Lord Mayor, Councillor Lorraine Wearne reported that Council had received the assent of the State Government for their Local Environmental Plan 2011. This Plan settles the planning controls for the whole of the Parramatta Local Government Area including the Epping CBD on the western side of the railway line.

This document is not the combined Epping Town Centre Study that is being exhibited by Hornsby Shire Council but is the Plan that our Council had been working on and consulting the local residents about for almost five years. This plan has now set the direction and controls for development in the Epping CBD and envisages building heights between 6 to 14 storeys.

Building inspections of the Epping Croquet clubhouse carried out by Parramatta City Council at 47 Kent Street Epping (next to Duncan Park) identified pest infestation, extensive water damage and major structural problems. As a result, Council is recommending the heritage listed 60-year-old pavilion be replaced by a new building which would be in the same location, of similar shape and material.

Finally, my sincere thanks to everyone for the support and encouragement I have received this year.

GRAHAM F. LOVELL - President 2011/12

Adopted at AGM of ECT on 21 February, 2012