

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – YARRALULA RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 24 November 2020

YRA has always been proud of its twin goals of, not only advocating for the interests of Yarralumla residents in matters like traffic and planning, but also in organising events that help improve the amenity of Yarralumla and help bring the local community together.

COVID unfortunately has had a serious impact on many of the community activities we run each year such as Yarralumla Does Christmas and our participation in the annual Canberra Running Festival.

Nevertheless, we have continued to organise a number of COVID-safe community events as well as continue our community advocacy role.

Red Bows

As part of the festive season, last year we encouraged residents to put up a big red bow in front of their house or apartment. The response was amazing. Over 500 bows decorated Yarralumla with whole streets a blaze of colour. We are again encouraging residents to do the same this year and have even persuaded the Governor-General to decorate Dunrossil Drive with bows.

Many thanks to David Harvey who came up with the idea and to Margaret Pentony our very own Red Bow Fairy who cut up the material and erected hundreds of the bows.

Yarralumla Does Christmas

Yarralumla Does Christmas in December last year was another great success with some 300 adults and children enjoying the warm evening, the music and all the activities on offer including participation by the Lake Burley Griffin Sea Scouts, the Embassy of Finland, the Embassy of Japan and Capital Petanque.

Such an event wouldn't be possible without the generous support of our sponsors including the Southern Cross Club, , the Yarralumla Surgery, the Yarralumla Pharmacy, Cork & Glass, the Heritage Nursery, IGA Yarralumla and Beess and Co to whom we are most grateful and without the organising skills of Belynda Buck and husband Corey from Buzz Bump and Jump.

Many thanks to the Committee too for their work and everyone else involved.

Unfortunately, due to COVID we have had to cancel the event for this year but hope to be back again in 2021.

Floriade: Reimagined

Because of COVID, Floriade was reimagined this year and YRA was successful in obtaining nearly 2700 tulip bulbs and several trays of annuals, which a team of volunteers planted at the shops and in the pocket park on the corner of Novar and Hooker Streets. They produced a spectacular display and we will now maintain a permanent flower bed at the shops.

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

Brickworks

After being announced as the successful tenderer to develop the Canberra Brickworks Precinct, DOMA held a public meeting in October 2019 to outline their initial plans for the site. YRA subsequently organised a public meeting of residents in November to gather feedback on the proposals. While some residents had specific concerns, the general view was one of support.

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 monthly with DOMA.

DOMA held another public meeting in October this year to present their draft Estate Development Plan (EDP) and outline their plans for the restoration of the Brickworks buildings and the first of the dwelling precincts. DOMA is aiming to present the final EDP to the broader community in January 2021 and lodged in Feb/March 2021.

The Community Panel and the YRA will be looking closely at the final EDP and once the final EDP is approved, we will have very little influence to make additional changes.

You will have noticed construction has started on the access road to the Brickworks and to the upgrade of Dudley Street. Work cannot start at the Brickworks until this road is completed which is expected to be towards the end of September next year. The government has also announced that traffic lights will be installed at the intersection of Novar and Dudley Streets in Yarralumla and Kent and Denison Streets in Deakin, and the YRA will notify members as soon as plans are available for review.

Derelict Building Site Bentham/Hutchins

We were finally successful in getting the site cleaned up shortly before the owners lodged a development application to erect seven townhouses (one more than before) on the site. Following consultation with members, YRA lodged a submission in September drawing attention to the number of townhouses proposed not being in compliance with the planning requirements and the lack of attention given to the heritage values of the site.

The development application is still under consideration.

CSIRO Site (aka Forestry Place)

YRA has established a sub-committee to deal with this issue and I am grateful to those members who have agreed to be part of the sub-committee. We have met a number of times and developed a draft list of community objectives that we have presented to the advisors to the owners – Oakstand.

We have also participated in a series of meetings where Oakstand have outlined their proposals.

At this stage, Oakstand are proposing to develop the site with 300 dwellings plus an 80-room hotel plus a 130 room aged care centre. The dwellings are up to 5 stories in height.

YRA has flagged a number of concerns relating to the size of the proposed development and its impact on traffic and parking and on the height of the buildings.

A change to the National Capital Plan would be required to allow residential and hotel use and the YRA has met with the NCA to discuss our initial concerns.

YMCA

I am pleased to say that after 7 years of unlawfully occupying the YMCA Sailing Club as their corporate headquarters, the YMCA finally moved their permanent staff out in September 2019. We are grateful to the current YMCA CEO for facilitating this move.

Since then the YMCA has undertaken emergency repairs of the YMCA Auxiliary Hall on Mueller St and is considering its future use. YRA has suggested that if it is not to be used by the YMCA then it should be returned to the community. YRA is working with the YMCA on a solution and on the general use of the land adjoining the Hall.

Light Rail Stage 2

Things have been fairly quiet as far as Stage 2 of light rail from Civic to Woden is concerned.

The Government announced the extension of light rail from Civic to Commonwealth Park and outlined the route from Commonwealth Park to Woden. But apart from that there has been little other action. Stage 2B along Adelaide Avenues had been expected to be completed in 2025 but that is looking increasingly unlikely. YRA will continue to monitor developments.

Community Garden

A working group of interested volunteers is continuing to progress the idea of a community garden in Yarralumla. They conducted a survey of residents to gauge the degree of support for the concept. The response was overwhelmingly positive and work continues to make the idea a reality.

Yarralumla Wetland

With the assistance of a Yarralumla resident, YRA has prepared a detailed paper setting out the benefits of constructing a wetland at the end of the two concrete stormwater drains that flow into Lake Burley Griffin from Schlich St and Hopetoun Circuit. The proposal also envisages naturalising the concrete drains that run along Newman, Gunn and MacGillivray Streets. We will now meet with key stakeholders to try to secure support and funding for the project.

Stakeholder meetings

COVID has somewhat restricted our ability to meet face to face with key stakeholders. Nevertheless, YRA has met with local members of the ACT Legislative Assembly and ACT government and NCA officials on a number of occasions.

Submissions

YRA only lodged one submission during the course of the year in respect of the Development Application for seven townhouses on the corner of Bentham and Hutchins Streets.

The submission is available on the YRA website.

Tree Maintenance Group

The YRA volunteer tree maintenance group spent 300 hours during the year pruning trees throughout Yarralumla. In addition, they spread 720 cubic metres of mulch around the base of many of Yarralumla's trees including at the School.

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 an annual prize to encourage and recognise community spirit in students and has recently agreed to increase the prize from \$100 to \$150. YRA also had a stall at the school fete last November.

Clean-up Lake Burley Griffin

In December last year, and again recently, YRA organised a team of volunteers to assist in cleaning up the shoreline around Weston Park as part of the clean-up of lake Burley Griffin.

Special thanks to Chris Windsor for organising it all.

Website

The new YRA website went live in July. The completely redesigned website is more user friendly and easier to navigate. Special thanks to Anne Charlton-Bien for all her work on this project. If you haven't had a look at it yet see www.yarralumla.residents.org.au.

Heritage Grant

YRA was successful in obtaining a Heritage Grant to restore the old street signs on the corner of Bentham and Banks Streets and Banks and Hooker Streets. The Heritage Grant was also matched by a grant from Roads Act. We are most grateful to both organisations.

Restoration work is expected to commence in March next year when the weather is a little cooler.

Election statements

In the lead up to the 2020 ACT Election, YRA contacted all the known candidates for Murrumbidgee (Yarralumla's new electorate) and posed a series of questions relating to Yarralumla. The responses were placed on the YRA website.

Thanks

Finally, but by no means least, I would like to thank you, the members of YRA, for your support. I'm pleased to say membership numbers have increased from 169 two years ago to 212 today. This is very encouraging.

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. We are fortunate as a community that we have people who are prepared to give up their time for the benefit of the community as a whole. Not everywhere has this, but it is one of the joys of living in Yarralumla.

We have lost two committee members this year, Gwen Gray-Jamieson because she has moved from Yarralumla and Teffeny Thiedman who has retired after two terms on the Committee. I am grateful to them both for their contribution. Teffany was responsible amongst other things for some of our iconic Yarralumla Does Christmas posters.

But it's not just the Committee members who make a contribution to the success of YRA. We are fortunate that we have many members who respond to calls to help distribute newsletters, plant bulbs, clean up Lake Burley Griffin, run our Twitter feed, work as part of the Tree Maintenance Group and all the other tasks that have to be done.

So to all of you – thank you.

Michael Lewis

President YRA

24 November 2020