



President's Report 2015

It is fair to say that the Association has had a number of significant successes during the year. Perhaps one of our most conspicuous successes is the acquisition, from State Government ownership and control, of the heritage-listed former Macquarie Street State School and its adaptive reuse as the South Hobart Living Arts Centre Ltd. (SHLAC). The campaign to achieve this was long (2009) and hard-fought, and we thank, again, Andrew Wilkie MHR, Damon Thomas former Lord Mayor of Hobart, and Speaker Elise Archer, MHA for their support.

At this stage, a MOU has been signed with the Tasmanian Government for the purchase and operation of the site by the SHLAC Board, and formal deeds with the Commonwealth and State governments will follow once the Development Application has been approved by the HCC. The legal and DA processes are expected to be completed shortly, following which it is expected that renovations will commence to make the buildings and the hall suitable for contemporary use as a living arts centre.

The SHPA will occupy a large room with magnificent views of Mt. Wellington, and we envisage that this space will be used by the SHPA as the South Hobart Heritage Centre. As such, it will house the extensive collection of historical photographic and archival material held by the SHPA generously donated by members. These community resources will be available for viewing and as resource materials for members of the community and for tourists visiting Hobart and the nearby World Heritage-listed Cascades Female Factory Historic Site, the history of which is integral to the evolution of South Hobart as a suburb. Rebecca Fullerton (local architect), David Halse Rogers (Secretary, SHPA), and Rosemary Sandford (President, SHPA) will represent the interests of the South Hobart community on the inaugural Board of the SHLAC.

Another of the Association's notable successes is the publication of the stunning book by Dr Alison Alexander "Beneath the Mountain: A History of South Hobart". Not only is it a fascinating read about the characters and events that have formed and transformed South Hobart and its neighbouring locality - the Cascades - over the centuries, but the outstanding graphic design by Julie Hawkins [*In Graphic Design*] and the over 700 historical and current photos, maps and paintings add hugely to its visual appeal and

make this 360 page book an easy read and a wonderful resource for the future.

The SHPA's financial partnership with the HCC was a unique and constructive approach to this project, and our thanks go to Brendan Lennard, HCC Senior Heritage Officer, for his support in making this possible.

My thanks for this remarkable work, which has been a three-year collaboration and labour of love between Dr. Alexander and the Association, go to the History Book sub-committee members: Malcolm Saltmarsh (Convenor), Lindsay Brinsdon, Kevin and Elizabeth Green, David Halse Rogers, Ros Saltmarsh and Kevin Wilson.

The Book was officially launched by The Governor, the Honourable, Professor Kate Warner AM, in September. She gave a delightful speech in which she reminisced about her childhood experiences growing up in South Hobart. The community launch that followed a few days later, was held in the Hall of the former Macquarie Street State School, and was attended by a staggering 300 people many of whom had either attended the former School or were former or present local residents and their families. For the welcoming tinkling of the ivories on the old Hall piano, thanks Lindsay Brinsdon!

Another event held in September 2015 was the South Hobart Village Street Party. Convened at very short notice, it was instigated by the HCC and its Melbourne-based consultants flown in for the occasion as part to the HCC's development of its Retail Precinct Plans across the municipality. While the South Hobart Village Street Party was heralded as a success and great fun by most who attended, it was also a good example of how not to conduct an inclusive community consultation. At the insistence of the consultants, the process was originally pitched solely at local retailers who were expected to leave their small businesses to design, develop and implement the Party. It seems that the aim was to demonstrate how, working together, such an event would benefit their businesses. The consultants made it clear at the outset that community groups, such as the SHPA, were not welcome at the event planning meetings. It soon became clear that the retailers along Macquarie Street from the Southern Outlet to D'Arcy Street were too busy in their small businesses to attend the frequent and very time-consuming meetings, and to liaise with HCC staff and the consultants, to set up and run the event. The final organising committee came down to three people: Anne Pickering, Mike Dutta (The Foodstore) and myself (as a Board member of the SHLAC), with significant advice and encouragement from Yvonne O'Neill, All Saints' Church. My thanks to Anne, Mike, Yvonne and everyone involved.

The SHPA has since formally written to the HCC about the desired results for South Hobart namely: improved pedestrian safety for all residents, including the elderly and children; reduction of the traffic speed from 50 to 40 kph along Macquarie Street from the Southern Outlet Couplet to St John's

Hospital; retention of the South Hobart Village bus stop in its current location; retention of the pedestrian-refuge/island crossing outside BUPA; retention of the parking spaces outside the newsagent, Live Life and the other shops in that stretch of road; installation of a 40 kph sign outside BUPA (as was in place during the Street Party); and an improved crossing outside the butcher's shop (as was in place during the Street Party).

While these three events have been highly visible to the community, the stock-in-trade of the SHPA's work continues steadily in the background. Here I refer to the sterling efforts of David Halse Rogers, Hon. Secretary, as he prepares and organises our monthly Newsletter that is delivered to over 2,700 households by our ever-willing volunteers; his work on HCC planning representations; SHPA correspondence; and as the Minutes Secretary at SHPA monthly meetings. I would also like to thank Phil Brown, Hon. Treasurer, for his work in keeping our financial and membership affairs in order. To other members of the SHPA Executive: my thanks for your unstinting commitment to the Association, and your attendance at our monthly meetings. In addition, regular representations to the Hobart City Council on planning and development issues are made by David and myself, as President, on behalf of the Association, and by many SHPA members and local residents. The majority of these representations relate to developments that are considered inappropriate to the character and needs of South Hobart as an historic and residential suburb. The two most significant developments in the past 12 months - one under way and one pending- are the Lady Gowrie Tasmania Child Care Centre on the former Performance Autos site in the middle of the South Hobart Village; and the pending development of the former historic Blundstone's site, currently owned by Cuthbertson's, but understood to be under offer.

It should be noted that the Association supports the provision of child care opportunities in South Hobart. In fact there are currently three Lady Gowrie Child Care centres and two other significant child care facilities already operational in South Hobart. However, the location of this fourth Lady Gowrie development, approved by the HCC in 2014 in a process that many SHPA members and affected local residents considered to be less than transparent, is considered by many residents in South Hobart, to be inappropriate for the purpose of such a centre. The SHPA considers the location of this particular development, with places for some 50 children, 28 staff and the usual trades people and deliveries, to be a risk to pedestrian safety, including that of children and the elderly who use the Village on a daily basis. These dangers are: the previously mentioned traffic speeds of both cars and the frequent heavy vehicles that use Macquarie Street; existing pedestrian safety issues; and greater pressure on the limited parking spaces available for shoppers and others using the Village. The additional volume of traffic that will inevitably be generated by the presence of the centre will further exacerbate safety and parking issues for local residents and others who regularly use the Village. As this development has been approved and

construction is underway, the SHPA will endeavour to continue to work collaboratively with all users of the Village in the interests of ensuring the safety of everyone. The former Blundestone's site, including the historic Hursey Cottage that is still standing (at time of writing, Ed.) but is slated for demolition, is another prime piece of real estate that is flagged for a major development in the near future - although the plans of the potential new owner are not yet known publicly. However, local residents of Weld and Wynyard Streets are understandably very concerned about the nature of any such development and its implications for traffic, parking, noise, and sunlight.

As I see it, planning issues (including the impacts of the Tasmanian Government's proposed single state-wide planning scheme); inappropriate developments; the continued erosion of South Hobart's built heritage and natural values; traffic speed; pedestrian safety; and parking issues for local residents, will remain the core business of the SHPA into the future - especially now that South Hobart has 'graduated' from a modest workers' suburb to one of Hobart's most desirable pieces of real estate. In my opinion, this Association must remain vigilant in representing the interests of the South Hobart community so that we remain a compassionate and supportive community that demonstrates generosity of spirit and respects diversity, natural justice, equity, transparency and accountability in decision-making at all levels of government. As far as the future of the operation of this Association is concerned, diversity of membership, including recruitment of a younger cohort and succession planning, are two key issues that need to be addressed. That said, I fully recognise the challenges faced by time-poor younger families and those who have demanding jobs. I thank you for your support and friendship over my years as President of the South Hobart Progress Association. It has been an honour.

Dr. R.A. Sandford.
14th October, 2015