

AGM 12th October 2016

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It is with a sense of *déjà vu*, that I submit my President's Report for 2016. In my President's Report 2015, I said:

“Over the past 4-5 years, the SHPA has continued to be an active voice for the residents of South Hobart on a range of issues, most notably: planning issues involving inappropriate developments, both large and small; continued advocacy for the conservation and protection of the built and natural heritage values and the qualities that make South Hobart one of Hobart's most desirable and liveable suburbs; and the Association's ongoing campaigns and lobbying of local and state government politicians to reduce the traffic speed from 50 to 40 km/h and to improve crossing points in parts of Macquarie Street. These traffic measures are needed to protect the safety of all our residents, including the elderly residents of BUPA and Vaucluse and children at the schools and child care centres that are now proliferating in South Hobart. “

And what, if anything, has changed in the past 12 months? I will keep it short.

First, the Board of South Hobart Living Arts Centre (SHLAC) with the excellent guidance and support of the HCC officers, Heather Salisbury (Deputy General Manager) and Penny Saile (Project Officer, Corporate Services), is now the legal owner of the former Macquarie Street State School site, and the long-promised Commonwealth funding is being held on our behalf by the Hobart City Council. The Tasmanian Government has, at last, formally handed over ownership and management of the site to the SHLAC Board. State funding has been secured and will supplement the Commonwealth funding in achieving the necessary renovations and occupation of the main building and the hall.

Architect Robert Morris-Nunn's company, *Circa*, will be responsible for overall coordination and management of the renovation processes so that the SHLAC will open for business in April 2017, all going well. It has been a protracted process, frustrating at times, but we are now well underway.

As SHLAC Board members, David Halse Rogers and I would like to say a special thank you to our project manager, Neil Cameron, and his right-hand-woman, Lucinda Toynbee Wilson. We would not be at this exciting point in the project if it were not for their expertise and generosity of spirit.

I am sure everyone in South Hobart and beyond, will be thrilled to see the Centre open. It shows what a cohesive community can achieve with vision, persistence and a spirit of 'can do'. To quote from my 2015 report:-

"The SHPA will occupy a large, former classroom with magnificent views of Mount Wellington and we envisage that this space will be used by the SHPA as the South Hobart Heritage Centre. It will house the extensive collection of historical photographic and archival material held by the SHPA and 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, the history of which is integral to the evolution of South Hobart as a suburb."

The other notable success of 2015-16 was the publication of the superb book by Dr Alison Alexander *"Beneath the Mountain: A History of South Hobart"*. The SHPA's financial partnership with the HCC was a unique and constructive approach to this project. Book sales continue at a steady pace, thanks to Malcolm and Ros Saltmarsh. Special thanks to Terry Carless, South Hobart Butchery, for his unflagging willingness to support all things South Hobart, in this case a steady sale of this wonderful heritage book (as well as meat) from his shop.

Don't forget everyone, Christmas is on the way and what better way to remember family, and friends than to buy them a copy of *"Beneath the Mountain: A History of South Hobart"*. The third notable event of 2016 is undeniably the 'Old Tannery Apartments' planning application. This was approved by Hobart City Council on 19 September 2016 with barely a variation, despite widespread community distress and 19 objections about its excessive density (24, two storey, 3 bedroom units), and its inappropriate design for its location on the historic former Blundstone's site on the Hobart Rivulet between Weld and Wynyard Streets. It is virtually in the middle of the South Hobart Village. For those not familiar with this multiple-dwelling, residential development, it consists of two unbroken rows of two-storey 'terrace houses' separated by a relatively narrow road that runs down the middle of the site. All traffic to and from the site is via the narrow 'no through' laneway of Wynyard Street. There are insufficient car parking spaces on the site for all the occupants, so some will have to park on nearby streets as will their visitors and tradespeople. The developer estimates that over 70 cars per day will use Wynyard Street. Because of traffic impacts of these extra vehicles, he has asked for removal of on-street parking in Wynyard and Macquarie Streets, even some of these properties do not have any off street parking capacity as they are old colonial cottages (1857) and historic houses. Then there is the overshadowing of Weld Street properties that back onto the site, and which for several winter months will have no, or almost no, sunshine in their living areas and gardens. This is a mental health, as well as a physical construction issue.

A further concern is the lengthy 3-stage construction process at the developer's discretion. Following a series of SHPA and community meetings with local residents and businesses, the SHPA Inc. decided to lodge an appeal with RMPAT against the HCC's decision to approve the

development in its current form. We would have preferred to negotiate redesign, reduced density and traffic impacts, and no loss of on-street parking spaces, with the developer, Mr. Stefan Giameos, but this could not be achieved- and not from want of trying on the part of the SHPA.

So, as I write, we are full steam ahead to raise \$20,000 for legal and expert witness fees (planning consultant and traffic engineer). This will supplement the SHPA contribution. Appeals are expensive but we have been advised this is important as the Wynyard Street appeal is a test case under the Hobart Interim Planning Scheme 2015 (HIPS) and will set a precedent for the HIPS' successor, the state-wide Tasmanian Planning Scheme scheduled to come into effect in December 2016, once it is signed off by the Tasmanian Minister for Planning.

Please wish us luck! Appeals are costly as it is essential to have a lawyer argue for you in a *Resource Management Planning Appeal Tribunal* hearing these days, but sometime you have to stand up for what is good and important to your community. This is what the SHPA is doing.

Meanwhile, the SHPA's 'bread and butter' work continues. I would very much like to thank David Halse Rogers (Secretary, SHPA) who, uncomplainingly, organises our monthly Newsletter. The Newsletter is delivered to over 2,700 households by our volunteers. Thank you to our tireless volunteers! David's work on HCC planning representations and SHPA correspondence is essential to the smooth running of SHPA business, and I thank him for this, too.

I would like to thank Phil Brown, Treasurer, for his work in keeping our financial and membership affairs in order and for keeping an eye on the additional task of monitoring and recording the progress of our Wynyard Street Appeal Fund.

To Liz Rees, Minutes Secretary, thanks Liz for a great job. Keeping us on track and succinct is not an easy task.

To other members of the SHPA Executive, Kevin Wilson (Senior Vice President), Pru Bonham (Junior Vice president) - a special thank you for your advice and input; and to members of our sub-committees, Kevin Green, Lindsay Brinsdon, Taki Douramanis, Ros and Malcolm Saltmarsh, Margaret Wilmot, and Stan Mather, thanks for your unstinting commitment to the Association and your attendance at our monthly and community meetings.

Thanks also to Craig Hoey and Phil Hoysted for their contribution to centre bookings and management.

As I commented last year and see it still, planning issues including: the impacts of the looming state-wide Tasmanian Planning Scheme (TPS); 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 core business of the SHPA into the future.

In my view, South Hobart appears to have become a 'dumping ground' for development proposals rejected by other communities and for which the HCC is determined to 'find a good home', a charitable motive no doubt, but not one we welcome.

The 'problem' South Hobart now has in this age of residential intensification (regardless of the negative impacts on local heritage and character and on the wider community), is that it has become a highly desirable place to live. We are close to the city, real estate prices are rising, our natural and cultural heritage is in highly prized, and we have a reputation as a safe and caring community.

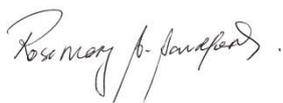
To quote yet again from my 2015 report:-

"In my opinion, the SHPA 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 operation of the SHPA is concerned, for the organisation to remain relevant, visible and active in a rapidly changing world, we need to embrace change, painful as it may be. As the representative of, and advocate for, the South Hobart community, the SHPA of 2017 and beyond will have to deal with *inter alia* the impacts of the new planning schemes; and rising discontent and distrust within and among local communities about the lack of transparency and accountability, the denial of natural justice, the loss of community consultation and the loss of citizen rights of appeal from these planning schemes.

To prepare for this future, the SHPA needs to encourage membership expansion and diversity, including recruitment of a younger cohort and succession planning. It also needs to embrace social media more than we have done to date. This will require members who are website, social media and Facebook savvy and who are prepared to put in the time. The community expects websites, FB and other forms of social media to be constantly updated and kept relevant and topical. Not something I am skilled at!

Thank you all for your support and friendship over the past year. It has been (mostly) a joy.



Dr Rosemary A. Sandford.
President, SHPA (Inc.)

12th October, 2016.