



President's Report 2017

First, I wish to apologise for the delay in forwarding my President's report for 2017. At the time of the AGM, I was hospitalised and recovery has taken some time. Part of this report had been completed prior to the AGM and the remainder since.

Having been President of the *South Hobart Progress Association* for the past seven years, I decided to retire at the AGM in 2017 and, so, did not renominate as President nor for a position on the SHPA Executive. However, I intend to remain an active member of the SHPA and to advocate as a citizen and ratepayer on matters in the South Hobart community about which I am concerned.

It is a well-known truism that the more things change, the more they remain the same. To quote a paragraph from my 2015 and 2016 President's reports that remains as relevant in 2017:-

“Over the past few 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 upper Macquarie Street. These traffic measures are needed to protect the safety of all our residents, including the elderly residents of BUPA and Vaucluse aged care facilities and children at the schools and child care centres that are now proliferating in South Hobart. “

And so, in that same vein, 2017 was another busy year for the Association and especially for the Wynyard-Weld Street residents' group that fought so hard to ensure genuine representation for South Hobartians' concerns about planning and development decision making by the *Hobart City Council* and the Resource Management & Appeal Tribunal (RMPAT).

First cab off the rank in 2017 was our planning appeal against the excessively large and inappropriate development of the 24 Tanners' Row apartments by Mr. Stefan Giameos on the former *Blundstone's Tannery* site in Wynyard and Weld Streets. The HCC approved the development as proposed by the proponent, even though this Association and local residents had endeavoured to negotiate a different less 'looming' style, that allowed for green space and adequate on-site visitor parking. Mr

Giameos was not interested in our points of view, nor in mediation. The case went to appeal.

An informal, dedicated group of Weld and Wynyard Street residents fund-raised over \$20,000 towards the legal costs of the appeal to RMPAT. Based on our experience, I believe it is fair to say that, in 2017, the rights of local residents don't stand a chance when it comes to developers with deep pockets and lawyers hell-bent on taking local communities to the cleaners. Not content with winning the appeal, Mr. Giameos and his lawyers sought costs from the SHPA. Fortunately, our lawyer, Shaun McElwaine, made a strong case against the SHPA having to pay Mr. Giameos's costs. This was supported by the RMPAT decision based on RMPAT's precedent that each party pays its own costs.

The balance of funds raised by the Wynyard-Weld Street Appeal Fund residents' group stands at approx. \$1,200 and will be retained in a separate SHPA account until after completion of the Giameos development, in case further 'difficulties' arise with the developer.

The SHPA's second major issue for 2016-2017 was persuading the HCC of the urgent need to make our roads safer, especially Macquarie Street in the South Hobart Village. As we all know, Macquarie Street is an extremely busy road. It is an arterial road that services the *Cascade Brewery*, *McRobies Gully HCC tip*, *St. John's Hospital* and the *Cascade Hotel*, as well as *Ferntree* and other shoppers from further afield, including from the Kingston area, Mt Nelson and Sandy Bay. Daily commuters, who use our residential streets as a free, all-day parking lot, also shop in the Village. I shall say more about worsening traffic and parking congestion in South Hobart, later.

In September, the HCC finally approved installation, by the end of 2018, of pedestrian-operated traffic lights at the pedestrian crossing between the *South Hobart Butchery* and the *South Hobart Capital Chemist* on Macquarie Street. Traffic calming measures (kerb bulbing and plantings) will also be installed in that location, as well as across Elboden Street between the South Hobart chemist and *The Salad Bowl*, and at the enhanced crossing between BUPA and the *Lady Gowrie Centre*. The median traffic islands at each of these crossings will be enlarged to accommodate wheelchairs and prams which they do not do now. This creates a very dangerous situation for those using, or accompanying, wheelchairs and prams as they protrude into the traffic lanes. A bicycle lane will also be installed between the South Outlet couplet and Elboden Street at the instigation of HCC planners. Approximately 900 people signed the SHPA petition in support of the pedestrian-operated lights, including nearly all the Vacluse residents.

Peak hour traffic gridlock and all day commuter parking in Macquarie and residential streets remain daily headaches for many South Hobart locals. Peak hour gridlock getting out of Macquarie and Davey Streets in the mornings and back home at night is aggravated by 'rat-run' commuters from the Sandy Bay Road and the Southern Outlet who use Lynton Avenue to avoid congestion on the Southern Outlet Couplet and then park in South Hobart streets all day.

Commuters who, during the week, park all day in Davey, Macquarie and residential streets and even up as far as Huon Road, treat our suburb like a free parking lot. Having parked at their convenience, they then cycle, bus or walk to the CBD. Many are from suburbs south of Hobart or from the Mt Nelson, Tolman's Hill and Ferntree areas. This means that local residents, their families, visitors, carers and trades people cannot park near their homes.

Instead of using the 27 parking spaces available at the *South Hobart Living Arts Centre* (SHLAC) at a very modest cost, these commuters and the staff of local businesses use our streets for free parking. This is a disappointment for SHLAC and the SHPA. I am told that the staff of local businesses prefer the convenience of using the 2 hour parking spaces near the Village and close to their employment, rather than having to pay at SHLAC and walk a block to the Village. Perhaps the major employers in the Village could contribute to paying for a specified number of SHLAC spaces for their employees thus relieving the pressure on local residents? It would be a gesture of good faith and commitment to the social good of South Hobart-and be a potentially tax deductible business expense for the employer.

South Hobart Living Arts Centre (SHLAC): David Halse Rogers and Rosemary Sandford continued to represent the SHPA on the Board of the *South Hobart Living Arts Centre* (SHLAC). The Centre was formally opened in September 2017. The formal Centre opening was attended by Commonwealth, Tasmanian Government and *Hobart City Council* representatives, while a Community Open Day held by the SHLAC Board a few weeks later, was great fun and was extremely well attended by local residents, former Macquarie Street State School pupils and their families. We were all thrilled to see the Centre open at last. It had been a nine (9) year campaign to keep the site in community ownership.

As an inaugural SHLAC Board member, I did not stand for re-election to the SHLAC Board and was replaced by Kevin Green as the SHPA's second representative. David Halse Rogers remained on the Board and Nic Goodwolf is the third South Hobart representative. I wish David, Kevin and Nic well in their Board deliberations and in the on-going task of ensuring that the Centre remains financially viable and in community hands. Community ownership of this historic South Hobart landmark was certainly a cause worth fighting for.

Sales of Dr Alison Alexander 's book "Beneath the Mountain: A History of South Hobart" continued steadily, with a special signing by Alison of books sold at the SHLAC Community Open Day. Thanks again to Alison for her superb, scholarly production, her generosity and support of the SHPA and her time.

In the day to day work of the SHPA, I would very much like to thank David Halse Rogers (Hon. Secretary, SHPA) who edits and organises our monthly newsletter. The newsletter is delivered to over 2,700 households by our volunteers. Thank you to our many volunteers! David's work on SHPA planning representations and SHPA meetings and correspondence, is essential to the smooth running of SHPA business, and I thank him unreservedly for his years of contribution to the SHPA's efforts.

Many thanks indeed to Kevin Wilson (Senior Vice President) for his tireless work on the *South Hobart Residents' Traffic Committee* and his personal concern for and support of, pedestrian issues. In addition, I thank Kevin for his leadership of the *SHLAC Heritage Room Committee*, which curated a most interesting display of heritage memorabilia at the SHLAC Community Open Day.

I would like to thank Phil Brown, our Honorary Treasurer, for his much-appreciated work in keeping our financial and membership affairs in order and for keeping an eye on our Wynyard-Weld Street appeal Fund.

My thanks to Liz Rees, the SHPA's Minutes Secretary. Herding cats is no easy task. You have done a remarkable job!

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

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

As I commented in 2015 and 2016 and repeat in 2017, planning issues including: the impacts of the state-wide, Tasmanian Planning Scheme (TPS); inappropriate, in-fill developments; the continued erosion of South Hobart's built heritage and natural values; traffic speed and congestion; pedestrian safety; and parking issues for local residents, will remain core business of the SHPA into the future.

As I see it, the sale of an increasing number of family homes for conversion to Airbnb's is another issue that risks hollowing-out South Hobart as a community, especially in those streets within easy reach of the CBD and the *Hobart Rivulet track*.

And, no doubt, the accelerating cable car debate and its less than transparent planning and decision making processes will continue to 'enhance' our lives as will its potential impacts on traffic and parking congestion in South Hobart. I shall keep a keen eye on this issue.

The difficulties South Hobart now has in this age of increasing property prices, is that it has become an even more desirable place to live- if that were possible. We are close to the city; real estate values are rising; the number of commercial businesses in the suburb is increasing; and Airbnb's are proliferating. Our natural and cultural heritage is highly prized, and we have a reputation as a safe and caring community. The challenge will be protecting and conserving those values that we, as a community, hold dear while working out how best to deal with the inevitable and rapid changes coming down the pike.

To quote yet again from my 2015 report:-

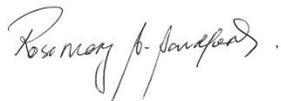
"In my opinion, the SHPA must remain vigilant in representing the interests of the South Hobart community so that we remain a compassionate and supportive community that demonstrates generosity of spirit and respects diversity, natural justice, equity, transparency and accountability in decision making at all levels of government".

As I see the future, the SHPA as the representative of, and advocate for, the South Hobart community, will have to deal not only with the changes that I have mentioned, but with rising 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 apparent loss of citizen rights, in state and local government planning and decision making processes.

To prepare for this future, the SHPA needs to actively encourage membership expansion and diversity, including the recruitment of a younger cohort and more women on the executive. As with many similar community organisations in an increasingly busy world, issues of organisational relevance and succession planning remain.

Thank you all for your support and friendship over the past seven years.

I wish the incoming President and the SHPA Executive all the best for the future.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rosemary A. Sandford".

Dr. Rosemary A. Sandford

President, SHPA

April 2018.