



**PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT  
MAY 2018**

I shall begin with a loud hurrah that Mosman escaped amalgamation and with thanks to all who worked so hard for that – former Mayor, Peter Abelson, current Mayor, Carolyn Corrigan, the councillors who opposed amalgamation, the MAFA group (Mosman Against Forced Amalgamations) and to one of our Citizens of the Year, Will Tuck supported by Jacqui.

The Mosman Parks & Bushland Association was part of this campaign too, always expressing the view that councillors who are local residents have an appreciation of Mosman's environment and natural assets.

We regret that state government legislation has taken from our councillors the capacity to make decisions about DAs on public land.

**New Council**

We offer our congratulations on their election to the Mayor, Cr Carolyn Corrigan and councillors, two of whom are on Council for the first time.

We appreciate the respectful relationship we have with Council, – elected councillors and staff - and that our views are heard.

We like to help if we can:

1. by supporting Council when a demonstration of community support may be helpful. e.g. We shall meet with the Member for North Shore, Felicity Wilson to back up Council's request to the Minister of Planning to maintain Mosman's Scenic Protection Zone. This is a clause in Mosman's LEP which limits the footprint of buildings in this Scenic Protection Zone. Without these limits Council and this Association fear that there will be a loss of foreshore trees and a consequent loss to the scenic view from the harbour.
2. alerting them to avenues that may be productive e.g changes to the Crown Lands Act that may simplify the protection of unmade roads
3. reminding them of desirable outcomes such as upgrading the zoning to protect our smaller green spaces
4. by keeping an eye on things – we shall be watching the Middle Head Oval to see how the improvements to the natural turf are going
5. opposing if necessary – eg we weren't happy with the Urban Forest Management Policy. It is so important to have an upfront policy that the public can readily understand  
New residents (and, it must be said some longer term residents) see Mosman in terms of the Harbour view and the property price. It takes a while for a new resident to "get" Mosman and to value its green areas and open space.

6. Lastly, cooperation: let us not forget how the bushland staff and the MPBA volunteer groups work together at ground level to regenerate our bushland. Recently I can honestly report on a growing optimism about the areas we care for, the Bradley Bushland Reserve and Wyargine. I confess to past perceptions of weeds growing faster than we could pull them out and

wondering whether regeneration would ever happen. This year both areas are looking good. Some members work in other areas. They too notice the value of what they do.

### **So what have we been doing since the last AGM?**

We have been trying to get our heads around new planning, new planning bodies, new legislation, new policies:

**The Greater Sydney Commission** has held several information evenings and community workshops which we have attended. We have used every opportunity to push for better protection of the Harbour Foreshores, bushland and open space, as we did in our submission last year. The Foreshores of Sydney Harbour are close to home, but their protection and conservation and maintaining public access is vital for this icon of Sydney and Australia.

#### **The Biodiversity Regulations and Codes**

We attended information sessions conducted by the EDO (Environmental Defenders' Office), and YS, our Vice President arranged a meeting with members of the Dept of Planning which we attended along with members of the NCC Urban Bushland Group. We were able to voice our concerns and members of the Department explained the *intended* effects which helped us with our submission.

#### **We have written a lot of submissions:**

1. On the NSW government's **Biodiversity Regulations and Codes**
2. On the Explanation of Intended Effect for a **proposed Environment SEPP** (State Environment Planning Policy) This is important for Urban Bushland as it incorporates two current policies – Urban Bushland and the Sydney Harbour Regional Policy.
3. On the **Draft Crown Lands Community Engagement Strategy** whose waivers and exemptions are of particular concern as they will allow decisions to be made without the community having a say about the use of its own land!
4. Closer to home – **Middle Head**

We made submissions on the **Harbour Trust's Interpretation Strategy for Middle Head**, emphasising the need for collaboration with NPWS on interpretation, our continuing wish for an interpretation and educational centre, and suggesting that the development of apps for interpretation would be enhanced by a film or films about the stories of Middle Head and the other Harbour Trust lands.

The draft Interpretation Strategy Report included pamphlets, signs, tours, collecting oral histories and more joint exhibitions with Mosman Council and NPWS. We cautioned against interpretation which might devalue intrinsic bushland values.

Later in the year we gave conditional support to Mosman Council's concept for lighting of the Netball Courts at the Drill Hall Common.

#### **And we have responded to Mosman Council's "Have Your Say" community consultations:**

- The draft **Street Tree Master Plan 2017**: Particularly supported in this plan was Council's intention to compensate for the loss of trees on private property due to development and to state legislation, including the 10/50 debacle. ***We are looking forward to hearing more about trees in Mosman from Steve Wall later this evening.***

- The draft **Urban Forest Management Policy**: This one disappointed us. It was all about the management **process** (which is excellent), but we felt that it was essential also to spell out the **policy** regarding the maintenance of Mosman's urban forest so that residents, new and old, council staff and elected representatives could be in no doubt about the value Mosman places on its urban forest. This was lacking.
- And finally to **"Imagine Mosman 2028"**. Would it be a surprise to any of our members to know that we advocated the preservation of our natural assets, public land and balancing the claims of active and passive recreation?

We have not yet examined the new Mosplan which is on public exhibition now, but we look forward to seeing whether our recommendations have been included.

***I include a reminder here of the community information evening on 8<sup>th</sup> May – 6 pm in the Council Chambers.***

**I would like to make some acknowledgements.**

#### **The Nature Conservation Council Urban Bushland Group**

Over the year we benefitted from regular monthly attendance at the NCC Urban Bushland Group meetings. At these meetings we would pool knowledge and share views with similar groups to ours. Meetings were chaired by Graham Holland from the Lane Cove Bushland and Conservation Society. Unfortunately, when Graham decided he couldn't continue in the role, none of the groups, including ours, stepped in to fill the gap. All of us are just too fully committed already! This Association would like to acknowledge the value of the meetings and to thank Graham for guiding us.

#### **The Turf War – acknowledging all who worked for this result**

This Association was hugely relieved when our elected Council decided in December last year to improve the natural turf on Middle Head Oval rather than using synthetic turf. Mosman Parks & Bushland had consistently opposed synthetic turf on environmental grounds and public access. During the two years of debate over this, this Association worked in parallel and cooperated with the Headland Preservation Group. We would like to acknowledge the great work of Linda Bergin, Annabella Fletcher, Julie Goodsir and others from the Headland Preservation Group in achieving this result.

#### **A Grant from Mosman Council for archiving our records**

The Mosman Parks & Bushland Association is now 54 years old and has a proud history. When Angela Lenning, daughter of Audrey, relinquished Audrey's records and placed them in our hands, we realised that the moment had come to begin the work of preserving our history. We are grateful to Mosman Council for a grant to assist with this project. Members of the committee and other enthusiasts have been beavering away with sorting and categorising. It is a **huge** task.

#### **A pleasurable event during the year - Audrey Lenning's plaque**

Many of you came to the unveiling of the memorial plaque for Audrey Lenning on a perfectly positioned seat at the entrance to the walk through the centre of the Bradley Bushland Reserve. What a happy occasion that was! Audrey holds a very special position in the Association's history. We thank the NPWS for allowing us to hold the subsequent celebratory drinks in the Soldier's Institute.

4.

**The loss of two members:**

It is always sad when we lose members. These two will be remembered with gratitude. Carolyn Bethwaite will always be remembered for her role in the Unmade Stanton Road campaign and Dick Taylor AM, was also a great supporter of public land- always ready and available.

**Penultimately, my thanks to the Committee**

I have been busier than usual this year and I am profusely grateful to the Committee. They have all stepped up!

Yolande Stone, our Vice President: we are lucky to be able to draw on her experience and knowledge of planning and of the system.

Rosie Adams, Secretary: also a planner with particular knowledge of community engagement practice.

Both have worked on our submissions this year.

Libby Manuel, Treasurer and Public Officer: What can one say? Libby just does it!

Bob Clark, a planner with a particular interest in heritage and in the conservation of Sydney Harbour – a great asset at the meetings we attend.

Brian Watters, an engineer who knows about planning and infrastructure and has a particular appreciation of local amenity. He's also a wordsmith who writes excellent letters.

Marg Woodforth, our membership secretary. Do introduce yourselves to her so that she can put faces to the names.

**And last of all and most importantly, our thanks to our members.....and a request**

An Association is nothing without its members

Please take one of our brochures with you and recruit a new member – preferably one with black, brown or blonde hair. Grey is beautiful and grey is powerful, but we need to hand these qualities on. Our parks and bushland need a continuing voice.

**Thank you for coming tonight. Thank you for your memberships, your donations and above all your support.**



Kate Eccles,  
President