



## **WARRANDYTE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**

**Annual General Meeting – 17<sup>th</sup> August 2017**

**7.30 pm Warrandyte Community Church**

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

#### **OVERVIEW**

It has been another busy year for the Association, with a number of big issues that warrant close member involvement and input.

As a result, we are holding the AGM in August, earlier than usual, to be followed by opportunity for open discussion on all the major issues.

Particular focus is on:-

- Defending the Green Wedge – Supreme Court and VCAT hearings
- Bridge widening issues
- Planning for a North-East Link to the Ring-Road
- 'McMansion' development in Warrandyte
- Continuing 'Be Ready Warrandyte' bushfire awareness
- Management of the Warrandyte Community Market
- Regular meetings with Council

Other areas in which the WCA is engaged include the Festival, Brumby's Road development, Jumping Creek Road upgrade, Manningham Cat Policy, and a big win at VCAT over the unsuitable service station development at the roundabout at 1,3-5 Yarra Street.

Updates are on the WCA website – [www.warrandyte.org.au](http://www.warrandyte.org.au) which also carries information on the Warrandyte Community Retirement Housing Cooperative plans for its 'Riverside' development. (WCRHC is now independent, but began as a WCA sub-committee.)

#### **1. 2016-2017 MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

##### **Office Bearers:**

President: Dick Davies  
Vice-President: Kyle Gillan  
Secretary: Warwick Leeson  
Treasurer: Barry Holding

**WARRANDYTE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION INC.**

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ACN A0042350W Inc. 23 120 318 791

Be Ready Warrandyte – Living with Bushfire Risk is a project of Warrandyte Community Association Inc.

### **Committee Members:**

Fiona Elliott  
Peter Hanson  
Lyn McDonald  
Robert Nabben - Membership Secretary  
Lesley Ryall  
Doug Seymour

### **Ex Committee:**

Phil Ashfield – Bookkeeping and accounts  
Carli Lange-Boutle – North East Link sub-committee convenor

My special thanks to all the Committee and helpers for their huge contributions during the year.

## **2. MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

There are currently 451 members of the Association, 143 financial and 308 unfinancial. We are following up lapsed subscriptions. We have introduced a five-year membership to help overcome renewal problems. In addition, we have a bushfire contact list of about 750 who have registered for information at fire and other forum events.

While some, particularly on Facebook, express the opinion that WCA does not speak for the Warrandyte Community as a whole, WCA does represent our membership and pursues the mandate in our constitution and schedule, available on our website. We have a point of view. We believe a significant proportion of Warrandyte residents are in agreement, even if they are not members. We urge our members to participate in activities, and contribute to the debate even if time is limited.

## **3. DEFENDING THE GREEN WEDGE - Supreme Court and VCAT hearings**

A planning application to develop Lot 2 Pigeon Bank Road was approved by Nillumbik Council against the strong and expert advice of its statutory planning officers. This appears to be part of the new Nillumbik Council's intent to re-write the planning scheme and encourage development whilst giving lip-service to the 'Green Wedge' (see <http://warrandyte.org.au/2017/03/23/thin-end-of-the-green-wedge/>).

WCA is opposing this decision on the basis that it contravenes the Nillumbik Planning Scheme as well as State and Local Government policies. The proposed ridge-line development would impact adversely on the visual amenity and bushland character of the area and it involves removal of 746 indigenous trees.

Part of the WCA mandate, incorporated in our Rules, is to

- '*Protect the environment and encourage restoration and regeneration of native flora and fauna*', and to
- '*Protect the Green Wedge (Non-urban areas)*'.

Consequently, we have opposed this decision at VCAT as a matter of principle, and leave for a joint application was granted by VCAT on 5 May. In this we are joined by local residents, the Friends of Nillumbik, the Green Wedge Protection Group and the Friends of Warrandyte State Park.

The developer is now challenging our right to object in the Supreme Court on 12 September. If that appeal is granted it will terminate the case; if the Supreme Court rejects the developer's application, then the VCAT case will be heard over 5 days from 22-29 January 2018.

A matter of principle much broader than the Nillumbik Green Wedge, i.e. residents' right to object, is under challenge in this case. Consequently Environmental Justice Australia has undertaken carriage and funding of the Supreme Court case on our behalf.

As costs may be considerable, WCA on behalf of the combined objectors has established a 'Green Wedge Protection' fund with a target of \$30,000; donations are welcome and can be made online at <http://www.greenwedge.warrandyte.org.au>.

#### **4. BRIDGE WIDENING ISSUES**

Background in earlier years to the Bridge widening debate is given in an Appendix. A brief update for 2017 follows:

- Manningham Council published a 'Planning Notice' inviting feedback on VicRoads Plan at the end of March; VicRoads made no such application to Nillumbik until June.
- The application to Manningham was sloppy. WCA objected on the basis that it was incorrectly filed, therefore invalid, and that there was no consideration of the Manningham Heritage overlay.
- At WCA's behest, VicRoads subsequently agreed to convene an Urban Design Advisory Panel to consider issues involving safe pedestrian crossing, footpaths, disabled access, wildlife access and appropriate construction materials.
- The panel has been convened and has held weekly meetings.

Like its predecessor, this development of the bridge may have a life of 60 years or more; it is the WCA's view that as a community we must do everything we can to get it right (See <http://warrandyte.org.au/2016/09/27/warrandyte-bridge-community-forum/> ).

#### **5. PLANNING FOR A NORTH-EAST LINK TO THE RING-ROAD**

Manningham and Nillumbik Councils have been left behind by Banyule in organising a lobby for an appropriate Ring Road link.

WCA has taken the local initiative in liaison with the Park Orchards Residents Association and Donvale Residents Association. Working under the banner of the North-East Link Alliance (NELA), the group is organising meetings to discuss best options for Warrandyte and the surrounding area without getting into a divisive 'NIMBY' argument with our closest neighbours.

Any freeway design which would generate additional traffic pressure on Yarra Street and the Warrandyte Bridge is totally unacceptable.

A WCA position paper is on the website, see [WCA Notes on NE Link Technical Summary – August 2017](#).

## **'McMANSION' DEVELOPMENT IN WARRANDYTE**

There is a trend in several new 'Look at me!' housing developments for large scale building which either fills the block, has intrusive overlooking balconies or occupies a dominant ridge-line position.

This is out of character with established Warrandyte building practice, distressing to immediate neighbours and visually intrusive for the rest of us. There are loopholes in the planning schemes which WCA has identified and we are having constructive discussions with Councils on suitable amendments to the planning scheme.

## **6. BUSHFIRE AWARENESS**

We have maintained 'Be Ready Warrandyte' with WCA representation on the Manningham Council Emergency Management Resilience Sub-Committee.

Together with both Councils, CFA and the SES we launched a 'Winter Clean-Up' campaign and staged another bushfire scenario event - '*Are You Ready?*' at the end of October 2016. Given the wet winter, the '*Winter Clean-Up*' campaign failed to really take off although it was publicised in the Diary and elsewhere.

The scenario event went well with about 120 attendees. Our thanks to Julie Robertson for sharing, in such an engaging and friendly way, her horrific experience of losing her house. Also to Steve Pascoe and Joff Manders for their facilitation. A survey taken during the night indicated that BRW has been successful in increasing the number of people in the Greater Warrandyte area with fire plans.

Some of the feedback and observations also suggested that the next event be focused on information and knowledge: e.g. How to assess individual property risk or what to plan. We have invited CSIRO's Justin Leonard to return in October 2017. He has some great information and stories out of the Wye River/Separation Creek house loss and survival research which would be transferable to Warrandyte.

WCA is a member of the Manningham Emergency Management Plan 'Resilience Sub-Committee' together with representatives from all emergency services and other residents groups. One initiative was to create a 'Fire Garden' at the Taffy Jones memorial site which was officially opened in March. The mild summer has encouraged plant growth and it is now looking very presentable. Future emphasis will be on 'All Emergencies' planning rather than a single focus on bushfire.

We continue to collaborate with Emergency Management Victoria in developing an 'experiential/immersive' bushfire experience as a community awareness tool.

We also discussed the trial of REFCL (Rapid Earth Fault Underground Current Limiters) to reduce the risk of fires from power lines at a Manningham Council meeting.

RMIT is preparing a paper for an international journal on the 'Be Ready Warrandyte' campaign as an example of community led engagement with authorities.

## **7. MANAGEMENT OF THE WARRANDYTE RIVERSIDE MARKET**

WCA is a member of the sub-committee convened by Warrandyte Donvale Rotary together with Warrandyte LIONS, the CFA and the Warrandyte Community Church, to manage the monthly Warrandyte Riverside Market.

This involves a commitment of time and personnel and we urge members to help spread the load by assisting with simple logistics on the day at least occasionally.

Manningham Council is pleased with the current arrangements and at the Festival, we announced that \$74,118 had been distributed back to the Community in the previous 12 months. The Market Committee is aiming to return 80% of total revenue to the Community, at 20% expenses (a challenging figure to maintain).

WCA has met with WarrandyteCAN (Climate Action Now) to discuss a plastic bag/cup free market.

## **8. MEETINGS WITH COUNCIL**

During the year, WCA met with Manningham Council twice and with Nillumbik on one occasion. To date there has not been a formal meeting with the new Nillumbik Council although individuals have met with Councillors.

## **9. OTHER ISSUES**

### **Proposed Service Station at 1,3-5 Yarra Street**

This development will not proceed; an appeal against Manningham Council's decision to refuse a permit was rejected by VCAT following a concerted campaign by the Warrandyte Character Protection Group, local residents and the WCA.

### **Warrandyte Festival**

Our contribution to the 2017 Festival was once again to collect comments on a 'Writers' Wall'; this time under the heading: "*What's on Your Mind in Warrandyte*". There was a strong sense that people love Warrandyte as it is, without too much change. Some of the comments:

- *Its Paradise here!*
- *Love Warrandyte!*
- *Best Parade!*
- *Love the Warrandyte Diary!*
- *Feeling blessed to live here!*

As before, the content will help the WCA to confirm and in some cases to challenge our understanding of the community's priorities for the future of Warrandyte. See <http://warrandyte.org.au/>.

### **Brumby's Road Development**

Local residents have objected to a proposed development in Brumby's Road by the Olivigna owners, adjacent to but independent of the current operation.

WCA supported their position and considers the proposal to be an inappropriate overdevelopment of the land which could set an undesirable precedent for future green wedge/non-urban area developments. Our position is stated at <http://warrandyte.org.au/2017/06/12/wca-submission-brumbys-road-south-warrandyte/>.

## **Jumping Creek Road Upgrade**

WCA is a participant in the Manningham Council Community Reference Group on a proposed upgrade to Jumping Creek Road. Wandering deer have become an additional hazard on that stretch of road.

See <http://warrandyte.org.au/2016/06/23/submission-from-the-wca-on-the-draft-jumping-creek-road-development-framework>

## **Cat Policy**

Last year, the WCA adopted a responsible pet ownership policy, and in particular endorsed the RSPCA policy that encourages containment of cats within the owners' property boundaries. As a result, Manningham Council has developed a draft Domestic Animal Management Program, (<http://www.yoursaymanningham.com.au/domestic-animals>).

Whilst we welcome this Council initiative, which incorporates some of the RSPCA recommendations, WCA continues to advocate adoption of the complete RSPCA policy (see [http://kb.rspca.org.au/RSPCA-Policy-A09-Cat-management\\_597.html](http://kb.rspca.org.au/RSPCA-Policy-A09-Cat-management_597.html) ).

## **10. FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

WCA gratefully acknowledges financial support from the Warrandyte Riverside Market.

**Dick Davies**

**President,  
Warrandyte Community Association Inc.  
17th August 2017**

## **APPENDIX : THE BRIDGE DEBATE 2005 – 2017!**

The WCA has held many forums and public meetings in recent years which expressed concern about traffic, public transport and bushfire evacuation. Public meetings enable residents to express and exchange a range of opinions which we try to capture but don't necessarily endorse.

In 2005 we held a Traffic Forum and invited VicRoads to give a presentation. We published all the opinions in the Warrandyte Diary. There was an emphasis on gridlock and emergency evacuation. As a result we campaigned for better public transport, especially rational school bus timetabling and the upgrade of the North East Arterial Road (Reynold's Road to Chirnside Park).

Following the terrible 2009 fires, a WCA facilitated forum enabled residents to raise many issues, including an opinion for a third lane on the bridge, which WCA relayed to the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission. Some of the opinions expressed were contentious, e.g. sirens, bunkers and bridge widening.

Residents have raised congestion on the bridge at every bushfire meeting since. The Emergency Management Commissioner, Craig Lapsley, attended these and other meetings in the area and decided that widening the bridge was an evacuation option.

VicRoads first presented a proposal to widen the bridge at a WCA Emergency Management Forum in November 2015. WCA had no prior knowledge of what they were going to present. (However it was later revealed that Emergency Management Victoria had recommended to State Government in 2014 that WCA be part of the VicRoads feasibility study. That didn't happen.)

Following the VicRoads presentation at our November meeting, VicRoads attended the Warrandyte Historical Society/ WCA 60th Warrandyte Bridge Anniversary Event in December 2015 for a feedback session followed by their attendance at the Warrandyte Festival in March 2016. Then the State Government announced that work would proceed in April 2016.

In April and May 2016, the WCA organized informal meetings with VicRoads to address vocal residents' concerns, both for and against the project. It is notable that although invited, some of our current Facebook critics chose not to attend.

VicRoads made it clear that widening the bridge was not negotiable, however design and environmental aspects would be taken into consideration. Consequently, although WCA members have a range of opinions on the bridge, we pursued a policy of achieving the best possible environmental and structural outcome.

VicRoads then organized an extensive information meeting on 14 July 2016, which, although well staffed and replete with visual information was subsequently criticized quite widely.

Many in the community clearly felt frustrated and uninformed about the results of those meetings which, although employing considerable resource from VicRoads, were not considered to be proper 'community consultations'. Then on 13th October 2016, WCA invited VicRoads to a facilitated Forum on 'The Bridge' to allow structured discussion, accepting that there were strongly held divergent views on the project.

We ran the Bridge Forum as a WCA meeting to enable VicRoads to share their results in a format acceptable to us rather than to their design. We are not aware of any other

group running public meetings on this issue, although many have expressed views on Facebook. As we have been accused of both supporting the VicRoads proposition and opposing it by different parties we obviously succeeded in providing a valuable forum for community debate!

A VicRoads online survey published in October 2016 received 528 responses from the wider area, 257 were local: – 436 supported the upgrade, 92 were against: a clear majority of locals were in favour of the upgrade.

Whilst Manningham Council published a 'Planning Notice' inviting feedback on VicRoads Plan at the end of March, VicRoads made no such application to Nillumbik until June. The application to Manningham was sloppy. WCA objected on the basis that it was incorrectly filed, therefore invalid, and that there was no consideration of the Manningham Heritage overlay.

At WCA's behest, VicRoads subsequently agreed to convene an Urban Design Advisory Panel to consider issues involving safe pedestrian crossing, footpaths, disabled access and appropriate construction materials. For a construction which will last for another 60 years or so we might as well get it right!

## VICROADS TIMETABLE

<https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/planning-and-projects/melbourne-road-projects/warrandyte-bridge>

<b>July - November 2016</b>	Design, services and pre-construction activities	Completing detailed designs for the bridge and intersection works, identifying and relocating services in the area and consulting with stakeholders to minimise impacts on the surrounding areas.
<b>December 2016</b>	Advertise works	Construction companies are invited to submit a tender to work on the project.
<b>Early-mid 2017</b>	Contract awarded	A contractor is chosen to work on the project.
<b>Late 2017</b>	Construction begins	Project work on site officially begins.
<b>Mid 2018</b>	Construction ends	Project is complete.