



PRESIDENT'S REPORT AGM 10th NOVEMBER 2013

It has been another busy year for the Warrandyte Community Association with much activity on bushfire awareness, state planning, meetings with State and Local Government and Departments and a range of other local issues.

Our website has been updated again in response to feedback and features both the WCA home site and the 'Be Ready Warrandyte' Fire Ready Communities project. It is accessible on www.warrandyte.org.au.

2012-2013 MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Office Bearers

| | |
|---|----------------|
| President | Dick Davies |
| Vice President | Jonathan Upson |
| Deputy Vice President & Public Officer | Bruce Davidson |
| Treasurer | Kerrie Boyle |
| Secretary | Doug Mealy |

Committee Members

Richard Aumann
David Dyason
Fiona Elliott
David Ellis
Merilyn Evans
Jozica Kutin
Warwick Leeson
Lesley Ryall
Doug Seymour
Meindert Withoff

Richard Aumann resigned during the year.

Our thanks to him and to all the Committee for their contribution during the year.

CONSTITUTION CHANGE

New laws for Victorian incorporated associations came into effect on 26 November 2012, the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* (Vic). As a result, WCA has had to change its constitution in line with the Act. Much time and effort has gone into this to update and improve the rules.

LEGAL ADVICE



We have received pro-bono legal advice from Hall and Willcox regarding liability statements particularly for the fire program under the auspices of PILCH Connect.

BUSHFIRE AWARENESS

The Warrandyte Community Association 'Be Ready Warrandyte' sub committee extended the 'Fire Ready Communities Grant' from the Victorian Government to terminate on 31 December 2012. Further funding of \$15,000 has been granted from Manningham Council and \$10,000 from Nillumbik Council. This will be boosted by another \$5000 from WCA funds (from the recovery and transfer of \$6,600 from the former Warrandyte Civic Association to the WCA).

These funds will allow the project to continue in its present form until about mid 2014. WCA has applied for further funding from the Natural Disaster Resilience Grants and Resilient Australia Awards. However both sources are very competitive and the results of our applications are not yet available.

Project oversight continues to be by a Project Management sub-committee consisting of representatives of the WCA, local CFA brigades, CFA Districts 13 & 14, as well as Municipal Emergency Management Officers from both Manningham and Nillumbik.

Part time Project Management continues to be by the Warrandyte based 'Good Work Group' which has developed a strong communications plan and online presence to inform the community of the objectives, progress and outcomes of the project, as well as on other relevant bushfire awareness and safety related issues.

As reported last year, the 'Be Ready Warrandyte – Living with Bushfire Risk' completed a survey of households in the Warrandyte, North Warrandyte and South Warrandyte areas to assess the current level of community awareness and knowledge in regard to bushfire safety preparedness.

The survey, analysed by the RMIT University Centre for Risk and Community Safety – part of the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre, was published promptly in a 'Bushfire Survey Key Findings Report' (February 2013, 48pp) available in hard copy and online. This Report is the basis of our strategy outlining how households and the community can be informed and educated about bushfire survival plans.

Based on survey outcomes, the Project has developed a 'toolkit' and resources targeted to the practical needs of the local community and the key elements of an effective bushfire survival plan.



Since the last AGM, the 'Be Ready Warrandyte' project has:

1. Published the 'Bushfire Survey Key Findings' report
2. Developed a wide range of publicity materials to advertise the program.
3. Established a website with local information and fire links, updated regularly
4. Developed an online sample fire-plan tailored to local needs which is being used by residents.
5. Released a humorous and very successful educational video, distributed State-wide by the CFA and in NSW by the RFS.
6. Developed a unique Warrandyte Fire Watch app consolidating local fire warnings, alerts, traffic and weather information, created by the international organisation, Random Hacks of Kindness.
7. Held a pilot scenario planning workshop based on a fire emergency in Warrandyte limited to 50 invited participants.
8. Held a 'Bunkers or Bunkum!' Forum with CSIRO and 170 participants
9. Conducted meetings with local organisations to gain support.
10. Made presentations at various State-wide conferences and workshops (CFA, MAV, DEPI, RMIT, Local Councils) to publicise the program and exchange ideas.
11. Begun a program to inform 'vulnerable' people (including new residents and visitors to Warrandyte as well as the elderly, disabled and socially isolated).

This project complements and enhances existing government programs by taking a local community approach. It involves Council Emergency Services Officers and local CFA. It has been widely praised by the Department of Planning and Community Development, the Chief Officers of CFA, MFB and the Emergency Services Commissioner. Its success is due to the active involvement of local professionals and volunteers in community organisations and all the Emergency Services. Of particular importance is the employment of local part-time project management.

STATE PLANNING ISSUES

Last year saw considerable concern and activity as a result of State Planning Minister Matthew Guy's "*Review of Urban Growth Boundary Anomalies Outside Growth Areas*" in June 2011 which was seen as potentially weakening provisions in the Green Wedge (encompassing both low density residential and specific Green Wedge zones). Minister Guy went on to announce in July 2012 that planning zones are being "reformed" to ensure that they are still relevant and adequately reflect the "aspirations of all Victorians".



WCA expressed three primary concerns with regards to the Planning Zone reforms and the outcomes as follows:

1. The draft residential zone for the Warrandyte Township would have specified that two dwellings on a lot would be allowed. Following discussions with Councils and lobbying from the WCA, the outcome is that Final Zone documents will be lodged by each Council to specify only one dwelling per lot---as is the case today.

A win for Warrandyte.

2. Draft zoning for North Warrandyte and Warrandyte west of Tindals Road enables 1 acre blocks to subdivide to ½ acre once sewerage is available. The outcome is that Final Zone documents are unchanged; however, both Manningham and Nillumbik Councils have obtained a special 'schedule' to maintain the current lot sizes for one year. The Planning Minister has told the WCA he is inclined to keep the 1 acre minimum lot size if requested by Councils. If this occurs, it's another win for Warrandyte. WCA has been liaising with both Councils on this issues and have been assured that this will happen.
3. The draft 'Green Wedge' zone allowed many new types of development as well as removing restrictions on sizes of restaurant and hotels. The outcome is that the Final Zone document prohibited a few of the proposed new uses, but quarries, service stations, crematoriums and other previously prohibited developments now allowed even if they are unlikely to be approved by Councils in the Warrandyte area. (There are no limits on the sizes of restaurants and hotels and they no longer have to be 'in conjunction' with an agricultural use like a winery.)

In conclusion, the two primary issues with regards to Warrandyte itself appear to have been resolved satisfactorily. However, the types and sizes of new developments in the Green Wedge near Warrandyte has been significantly expanded which is very disappointing.



The 300+ submissions from Warrandyte residents opposing these changes helped win the top two issues and hopefully had some impact on the Green Wedge changes.

WARRANDYTE FESTIVAL

The WCA display at the Warrandyte Festival invited residents to indicate whether they stayed or left when a fire occurred in North Warrandyte on 9 January. Whilst it was ad hoc and of no great statistical relevance, it was indicative of intentions and engaged residents in discussion of the issues.

WARRANDYTE COMMUNITY CENTRE

The WCA has supported Manningham City Council in the update of the Warrandyte Community Centre building in Yarra Street and has congratulated Council on the quality of its refurbishment and success so far in attracting library patrons and other activities.

WCA is represented on the Advisory Committee will continue to represent the interests of casual users of the facility. There is an issue of potential accidents to schoolchildren crossing to use the library from the opposite bus stop. Council will conduct additional pedestrian counts and discuss options with VicRoads with respect to options for a pedestrian crossing, traffic lights or speed restrictions.

WARRANDYTE BACKLOG SEWERAGE PROGRAMME

WCA acknowledges that whilst sewerage will improve water quality and the run off into the river environment, there are some concerns. Principally the financial considerations are plumbing connection costs, any possible rate increase and opt-out provisions for those with existing treatment systems. However, the major political impact may be to increase the pressure for subdivision on larger blocks. WCA will oppose any such subdivision proposals.

The planned Yarra Valley Water (YVW) backlog sewerage programme has been completed in Warrandyte and begun in North Warrandyte. Uncertainty continues about potential connection costs particularly for steeper blocks where the use of machinery to drill and/or dig trenches may not be practical. WCA has met with YVW to discuss these issues and awaits outcomes. Community members in North Warrandyte with concerns should contact YVW.

TOWN PLANNING

Proposed Development for 44 – 46 Yarra Street

The proposal by United Petroleum to redevelop the site at 44-46 Yarra Street as a Petrol Station with a shop and restaurant continues to be opposed by local residents. Whilst not opposing a new petrol outlet *per se*, WCA has opposed this particular development as being excessive and out of character with the Township Heritage Strategy. WCA has made a submission to Manningham Council, available on the website.



Recently, United engaged in what appears to be unauthorised activity in re-opening the site. Local residents were concerned about health and safety issues and Manningham Council intervened. The situation is not yet resolved.

Meanwhile, it appears that an alternative petrol station facility is proposed for the old 'Bird Engineering' site near the roundabout.

Warrandyte Sports Pavilion

There is a proposal for commercial sponsorship of a ceramic mural and also an electronic scoreboard for the new Sports Pavilion. Manningham Council is clarifying their signage and sponsorship policy in relation to the mural and scoreboard. Council also offered guidance on possible management models for the Warrandyte Sports Group.

Melbourne Hill Road Drainage

WCA has liaised with residents and Manningham Council on plans to improve the drainage on Melbourne Hill Road.

Retrospective Planning Approval – Lawrence Court

Following concern from neighbours, WCA engaged with Nillumbik Council to help resolve issues regarding unauthorised development in Lawrence Court. The Association viewed the site and drawings and also talked with Council staff. Although WCA was dismayed at the extent of the works undertaken, Council was alerted so late in the process that much of it cannot be reinstated. WCA is satisfied that subsequent action appears to have been appropriate.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

WCA continues to meet formally on a twice yearly basis with Councillors and Officers of Manningham and Nillumbik Councils. We are grateful for the opportunity to discuss issues as they arise.

Manningham advised that work had begun on the Middle Yarra Backdrop Study funded by the State Government.

Dick Davies

President

10 November 2013