



**PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT
18th MAY, 2021**

This year I have been given a challenge – to make my annual report brief. This puts me in a dilemma because on the one hand I want to let you know why you're paying your subscriptions but on the other I realise that the evening becomes too long.

So remembering Mark Twain's saying, "I apologise for writing a long letter – I didn't have time to write a short one", here is a short-as-possible report.

Once again, we remember our origins dating back to 1964 when the Bradley sisters and their associates, began their advocacy for parks and bushland and their development of the Bradley Method of Bush Regeneration. We continue that focus.

First, Bush Regeneration

In the Mosman Council area, our members volunteer in the Bradley Bushland (of course), Wyargine, the Lawry Plunkett Reserve, Reid Park, Millet Road, Little Ashton, and Government Road. We also have a wonderful team from all over Sydney that works in the Sydney Harbour National Park – actually very close, we think, to where Eileen and Joan Bradley worked and developed their Bradley Method of Bush Regeneration.

Our **special extras** which you will have heard about from Hugh Wyllie - Rawson Slopes thanks to our Federal grant, and the special tree planting all over our reserves, thanks to the NSW Greening our City grant.

Our heartfelt appreciation goes to Hugh. He goes 'over and beyond'.

And **extra special extras** – our work on the garden of the Biala Hostel for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Girls at Allambie Heights, and more recently on the garden at Mosman House, a Women's Community Shelter. This has been a combined effort of MPBA and the Mosman Garden Club. Many thanks to all the volunteers who have made these activities so productive and such fun.

An activity earlier this year which gave a lot of pleasure was our early morning **bird walks** led by Mosman's own bird authority – Barry Lancaster. Thank you, Barry.

Our Advocacy

First of all **the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust**

The Review was published in mid-2020 and we were all very relieved that the Trust was to remain a Commonwealth Agency.

The Review made recommendations, and our views as community representatives were sought.

The draft SHFT Amendment Bill was crucial, especially the legislation regarding the permissible length of leases.

I would like to thank the **HPG President Jill L'Estrange** who is here tonight. The HPG and MPBA were both determined that long-term leases would lead to commercialisation and effective privatisation of our public Trust land. Jill was in almost daily conversation with the Environment Dept and the Minister and eventually achieved a lease length of 35 years, with conditions applied to leases longer than 25 years.

Thanks also to the indefatigable **Linda Bergin OAM** who continues to investigate issues and to research heritage with dogged determination. Linda's ability to get to the nut of a problem is amazing.

Current matters of concern are plans for **Cockatoo Island** and for the **North Head Sanctuary**. Both are on the Trust website and are open for comment.

Locally – 10 Terminal at Middle Head is still under discussion. We have been writing our responses and attending Stakeholders' meetings. We want an outcome that respects the heritage of Middle Head and includes an Interpretation Centre to tell this headland's history.

Advocacy on Federal matters

Zali Steggall's Climate Change Bills: The Bills were presented on November 9th and were considered by the House Standing Committee in the same month. We submitted that humans are not the only species affected by climate change. Our biodiversity, our flora and fauna, is unique, and Australia is in the midst of an extinction crisis. Land clearing plays a large part, but climate change is an overarching cause.

The EPBC Act Review (Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act): Without strong laws and legal protections, nature doesn't stand a chance. We made a submission, but when the government sought to rush through new laws that ignored the Review's interim report, we wrote to Zali Steggall. Zali's speech in parliament on 27th October, responded to widespread community distress. The government's response to the final report does not give much cause for optimism.

(NSW matters: Recently we wrote a submission on a proposed new SEPP (State Environmental Planning Policy) called Design and Place. In its current form it will be better for developers, than for green spaces and climate. It's a worrying one.)

Local matters: On the whole, this is the bright spot. We very much appreciate that Council hears our concerns with an open mind.

This year, we have made submissions on:

- A new road reserves policy – sale, leasing and consent
- An initial consultation on a Plan of Management for Reid, Harnett, Curraghbeena Parks and Sirius Cove
- The draft Climate Strategy and Action Plan (Committee member, Rosie Adams is on the Community Advisory Committee on Climate Change. I thank her for her work)
- We support Council's attempt to continue to protect our Scenic Protection Area in the face of NSW planning policies. (Committee member, Yolande Stone has been working on this one and I thank *her*.)
- **Synthetic Turf:** Another local bright spot is Middle Head Oval, where the natural turf installation has the approbation of sports players as well as people like us. A video is being made on its installation, and other community

groups now battling this plastic scourge are looking to Mosman for advice. We thank our councillors whose research into an effective, hard wearing natural turf playing surface turned sentiments around.

Before I finish, I have some more THANKS to make:

- To Mosman Council for a grant for an improved website and to Marta Mangold for her in-kind contribution (We're still working on this)
- To Donna Braye, Mosman's Local Studies librarian for initiating Facebook talks for several community groups of which we were one.

Sincere thanks to ALL the committee:

and congratulations to Yolande Stone on her selection as a member of Council's Environmental Foundation Trust.

This evening, I wish to thank Libby Manuel in particular. Libby resigned in 2020. She was our wonderful treasurer for many years, and we miss her.

Fortunately, Brian Watters has agreed to take on the role. You will meet him when he presents the financial report.

And last, you, our members

We are sad to report the loss of some long-standing and loyal members:

Pam Poland, Eva Bitel, Barbara Burkitt and Frances Hunt (formerly the Chinaman's Beach Association's President). We miss them.

However, it is good news that a group with as long a history as Mosman Parks & Bushland's – now 57 years old - continues to attract members. We are delighted to welcome our new members.

To all of you here tonight, old members, new members, thank you for coming; thank you for caring about your local environment; thank you if you are volunteers; and thank you for your support of Mosman Parks & Bushland.



Kate Eccles

President

18th May, 2021