



Mosman Parks & Bushland Association

January 2022

Dear Members and Supporters

I am somewhat late with seasonal greetings but I'm sending you our sincere wishes for good health, energy and loads of optimism for 2022!

An upcoming event - Saturday, January 22nd starting at 9am.

The Millet Road bush regeneration group has invited MPBA members to come and view their site on **Saturday, January 22nd starting at 9am.**

Pam Lofthouse has written – “We would love to have a visit to our site. We are so proud of the progress we have made since 2002 – and just writing that I’m thinking early next year is our 20th anniversary, so what better excuse for morning tea with MPBA. We meet on the 4th Saturday of each month so how about 22 Jan? We start at 8am in summer so you could join us say at 9am for a tour of the site, then we usually have morning tea around 10am. And a bit more work after morning tea and finish around 12. Anyone who wanted to do a bit of weeding would be very welcome to join in too! Many years ago, council organised a bus trip to several bushcare sites, including ours. Ours was underwhelming at the time because we had cleared out several trees and masses of weeds and spread ground sandstone at the top of the slope. So it all looked completely bare”.

Pam has pictures of the site as it was when the group began work. When I made a preliminary visit to the site recently, I observed that the “trad” had had a field day just as it had at other sites while we weren’t volunteering during the Covid lockdown. The Millet Road group was very busy dealing with it just like the rest of us.

Please send me an email if you would like to come. Everyone is welcome – bush regenerators or not – and there is no obligation to stay beyond morning tea. We shall start at 9 am and depending on numbers we shall decide where we shall meet. I shall send directions.

Birds

The obliging and enthusiastic Barry Lancaster has offered to take us on a short circuit walk to Bradleys Head to show us his hypothesis that bush turkeys are having a beneficial effect on bushland and seemingly not affecting the numbers of small birds. No date(s) has been set, but **please let me know whether you would be interested.**

Valete

Since our last newsletter we have lost two highly regarded and greatly valued members.

Rob Bagnall OAM (August 1949 – July 2021)

Rob was a great supporter of community causes over the years, bringing his legal knowledge to bear on issues, nutting out problems and gently guiding campaigners.

Rob was particularly proud of his role in the Aged Care debacle at Middle Head. The proposal for a large private facility on Harbour Trust land was eventually defeated.

MPBA was particularly appreciative of his role during the steamy days of the campaign against forced amalgamations of local councils. Together we designed leaflets, spoke at meetings, made our submissions, attended rallies and court cases..... We love it when we win battles, but the comradeship is wonderful too. In Rob we have lost a community champion and friend.

Brian Wilder (1939 –October 2021)

Brian was a renowned book publisher with an exceptional knowledge of Australian history which he was always willing to share with us. He played a major role in the revival of the Mosman Historical Society during the 1990s.

Brian was a stalwart advocate for the Harbour Trust lands from the very beginning of the campaign to save them in 1996. He was a member of the Headland Preservation Group's committee from 2002, Vice President in 2004 and President in 2007 before ill health forced him to resign from that position.

Brian always believed that inadequate government funding for the Harbour Trust would result in over- commercialisation and inappropriate use of its buildings. Essentially, he wished to see more parkland, fewer buildings. He was part of the community action which achieved the demolition of the Commando One building on Georges Heights and the creation in its place of an extension of the headland's green parkland.

Brian was another who strongly opposed the proposal for an Aged Care Facility on Middle Head saying that it was completely at odds with the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust's Comprehensive Plan to create a lasting legacy for the people of Australia by helping to create the finest foreshore park in the world.

He was an environmentalist who was very proud of his son Martijn's climate change initiatives and leadership.

Thank you, Brian.

Information needed

Geraldine Palmer was a committee member of MPBA during the 1980s, involved in the Bicentennial project to create the Wildflower Walk in the Bradley Bushland Reserve and another walk at Beauty Point. She was president of the Mosman Historical Society, a committee member of the Chinaman's Beach Resident Action Group and the Bathers' Pavilion Group. She died last year, and her son is writing a biographical account of her life for the family and would like information.

I haven't had time to research her activities myself yet, but if any members remember her, **could you contact me please**. Some of the information would be of value to MPBA too.

More recycling information

Last year there was an enthusiastic response to our information about Arnies Recon and the recycling of electronics and appliances.

Two of our members are recommending another organisation - Recyclesmart

<https://www.recyclesmart.com>

Mosman Council has partnered with them to support a free pick up of 2 bags once a month for residents who sign up. Google them to discover how many things they will take – even white polystyrene.

In the words of a member “They are amazing. So simple to sign up and they come to your house once a month (send you multiple emails to remind you!) and collect a whole range of items (list on website too many to name but soft plastics and e waste are on there) and the first two bags are free and then only \$1/bag thereafter. So simple - on the day of your collection you just leave outside your house before 8am. I've been using them for a while and it's great to have someone collect for you as before I was sorting and spending almost a whole day dropping things here and there!”

Bush Regeneration

Ben Wyllie is Mosman’s new Bushcare Officer. We are looking forward to getting to know him better now that we are getting back into the swing of bush regeneration and dealing with those pesky weeds that took advantage of our absence during last year’s lockdown.

News and Issues

Many of these are on our web site with our position on the issues explained. While you are on the www, don’t forget to go down to the green panel at the bottom of any page to see some of the beautiful photographs taken by our website adviser, Marta Sengers. To see the photos, click on the square shape which is Instagram.

An Australian Government grant

We have recently heard that our application for funding under the 2021 Volunteer Grants has been successful. We have received \$2,488 to spend on bush regeneration tools and kits. Our thanks to Zali Steggall’s team for encouraging us to apply.

Other news from our Federal Member

The PEP11 application to drill for oil and gas off the coast from Manly to Newcastle has been refused. Zali moved her Stopping PEP11 Bill in October. This is excellent news.

Disappointing was the lack of success of Helen Haines’ ICAC Bill which was supported by Zali. Australians are desperate for an ICAC that would increase government integrity.

Needless to say, MPBA is highly appreciative of her continued work to achieve federal action on climate.

Bike tracks

These unauthorised tracks were a major concern during lockdown periods and the issue was dividing the community. Our concern was, as always, for the bushland and open space and for public safety and enjoyment.

There were three main areas where bike tracks were constructed.

At Reid Park

An impromptu bike track was constructed at Reid Park. Council management resulted in less damage to shortcuts to the track through bushland areas, but the track created considerable concern among other users of the area, particularly dog owners, as it is an off-leash area.

In its Draft Mosman Bay and Little Sirius Cove Foreshore Reserves Plan of Management, Council has suggested the Construction of a Children's Bike Track at Reid Park, "if agreed". The MPBA's position as written to Councillors for their consideration and repeated in our submission on the Draft Plan of Management is that the area could be assessed in an evaluation process for consideration as a permanent area. Even as a temporary area, criteria should be observed:

- No access tracks to the main bike area through the bushland slopes
- Public access for residents must be maintained
- The beautiful rocky bushland beyond the bike area must continue to be safely accessible to walkers
- For safety, bike and walking areas will need to be separated with dogs **on** leads in this section of the park.

In our response to the draft POM, we noted that in the location currently proposed by council for the bike track, bushland areas would not be impacted, no tree would be removed and that the walking path and bike area would be separated by a chain wire fence. We expressed our satisfaction with the sympathetic approach but continued to suggest a trial period prior to approval.

At Georges Heights on Council, Trust and NPWS land

These tracks run alongside and extend into bushland controlled by the three organisations. Tributary tracts increase the impact.

Residents have approached the Harbour Trust Board with a request for a permanent track. We understand that Mosman Council, the Harbour Trust and National Parks & Wildlife are considering the request.

MPBA is strongly opposed.

- **Harbour Trust:** Our letter to the Chairman of the Trust Board reminded him that the Harbour Trust lands were fought for and won for the people of all Australia. The rallying cry was "Not just for Mosman, not just for Sydney, but for all Australians". The lands are nationally significant. The construction of a bike track for the pleasure of local children might seem a small matter, but it would create a dangerous precedent for future local demands which would diminish the value of these iconic lands. Our views are supported by the Headland Preservation Group.
- **National Parks & Wildlife land – Sydney Harbour National Park**
 - This land is not just Mosman's. It is an integral part of our amazing Harbour. If we allow parts to be annexed, we lose an asset that supports an exceptional ecological system of birds, trees, and native flora and fauna.
 - We support the goal of net zero extinctions in National Parks and this land is known to support several threatened and vulnerable species.
 - Some of the bushland where the unauthorized bike track now runs, is not in pristine condition and would benefit from some bush regeneration. However, a principle of this association has always been that no bushland, no matter how degraded, should ever be destroyed.
 - Additionally, the interface between bad bushland and good bushland gives protection to the good bushland.

On NPWS land near Taronga Zoo.

The same principles apply to the bushland in this area.

E4 zoning for the Scenic Protection Area

Members will be aware that for many years MPBA has been supporting the continuation of the control of development on Mosman's harbour slopes in the area below the 60 m contour – the Scenic Protection Area.

Mosman's location on Sydney Harbour is unique and visually significant. The way the built environment sits within the landscape is the result of a planning framework that has recognised the need to protect the vegetation and the quality of architectural design.

Unfortunately, the NSW government's standard Housing Code would take development control of this area out of the hands of Mosman Council. In 2009, Mosman obtained a temporary exclusion from the standard code and continued to control development on the harbour slopes. The temporary exclusion was extended from time to time (we advocated strongly for those extensions) but was due to end finally in 2021.

Eventually the NSW government allowed Mosman Council to consult residents about the creation of a special environmental zone, E4, that would allow council to continue its control of development within the Scenic Protection Area. That consultation has now taken place. We are hopeful that residents will have given their approval to the E4 zoning, and we look forward to its implementation and the continued protection of the scenic value of Mosman and Sydney Harbour.

Harbour Trust

The Sydney Harbour Federation Trust has been celebrating twenty years since its creation. You may enjoy watching some interviews with some of the key people involved in the campaign to save the defence lands and the establishment of the Trust.

<https://www.harbourtrust.gov.au/en/our-story/>

Janet Carding joined the Trust as its new CEO in September

Recently appointed new Board members include – Tanya Denning-Orman, Steven Issa, Brad Manera and Carolyn McNally

<https://www.harbourtrust.gov.au/en/corporate/our-people/>

At Middle Head, consultations and planning for the 10 Terminal building and parklands are likely to be resumed soon.

North Head and Cockatoo Island community consultations will be presented to government soon. Some members of the Trust's Community Advisory Committee are anxious that the desire to attract visitation could detract from the heritage significance of these sites.

Mosman Councillors

We congratulate all those elected:

Mayor, Carolyn Corrigan

Councillors Roy Bendall, Pip Friedrich, Sarah Hughes, Simon Menzies, Libby Moline, and Michael Randall

This Association has been very appreciative of its respectful relationship with councillors. We do not expect that our views will always attract agreement, but we are grateful that they are acknowledged and heard.

We would like to thank members of the last Council, not elected this time, for their efforts:

Tom Sherlock for his 13 years on Council and particularly for introducing the Declaration of Climate Emergency, for his fight for Mosman's independence when the NSW government attempted to amalgamate local governments, and for his work to improve waste management.

David Cook for his work on a solution for turf at Middle Head Oval, the result of which has been a beautiful natural turf oval which sportspeople and the wider public love.

Jacqui Willoughby for her concern for the preservation of trees and for her interest in raising awareness of the natural environment in young sportspeople.

With apologies for the length of this newsletter and thanks for reading it! (It's just as well that I don't write many of them!)

And again, our best wishes for a healthy, active, and cheerful 2022.



Kate Eccles OAM

President