

HACKETT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

2013 CHAIR'S REPORT

It has been a very active and productive year for your committee and I am pleased to say that I feel that we have made significant progress towards our ultimate vision for Hackett which is where we all feel a sense of belonging and pride and that our less mobile and isolated residents feel included.

I would now like to mention our achievements and our future plans.

Pharmacy

The pharmacy as you would all be aware closed down earlier this year due to the lack of turnover which the pharmacist attributed to the inability to obtain a PBS number and she was unwilling to continue in the face of the ongoing uncertainty. The Hackett Community Association had been lobbying for years for a pharmacy and we were very disappointed with the final outcome. Despite all strong lobbying of both ACT Government and Federal members the federal bureaucracy won out in the end. We now believe that the opportunity to establish a pharmacy in Hackett has passed for the foreseeable future.

Website

The website continues to be one of our key methods of communication and news items are continually being added to the site. We are pleased that the site is being visited regularly. We currently have around 120 residents subscribing to our monthly newsletter and if you are not already subscribed we encourage you to join via the website. We understand that not everyone is online and we also add most new items to the Hackett Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter to ensure that we also reach these residents.

Shopping Centre

It is hard to believe that only several years ago the shopping centre was subject to graffiti and was an eyesore to look at. Now it is hard to get parking spot there at times and the place is now a hive of activity. We believe that the increased usage of the shopping centre will improve a sense of community within Hackett and the committee are very pleased with the turnaround to which we owe a vote of thanks to the majority owners the Savoulidis brothers Steve, Arthur and Andrew.

If you recall a toilet was due to be built at the shops by the ACT Government but when the previous owners of the supermarket announced they were going to demolish and rebuild the existing supermarket the installation was delayed. Our subsequent inquiries to find out why construction has not commenced have been unsuccessful. We will be pursuing this issue as a matter of urgency.

Following our initial discussions with the Government on installing a notice board, chairs and tables outside the shops we have heard nothing more. Our subsequent inquiries to find out what is going on have been unsuccessful. Again we will be pursuing this issue as a matter of urgency.

Shopping Centre Sign and Memorial to Sir John Hackett

Last year we mentioned that one of our aims was to establish a shopping centre sign together with a memorial to Sir John Hackett. We undertook some preliminary discussions with the Government and they told us that they are willing to help us on a shared cost basis. We approached the previous owners of the supermarket for support and they agreed to help us as part of the rebuilding of the supermarket. We will continue to explore options for achieving our objectives including seeking support from the shopping centre owners and perhaps an accompanying funding drive.

Traffic Lights

The traffic lights at the corner of Phillip Avenue and Majura Avenue have now been operating for a couple of years and I think you will all agree that the efforts of past committees in pursuing these lights had been well and truly vindicated. The solution offered by the lights has greatly benefited the suburb and should continue to do so as traffic patterns are now well established and they show no signs of going back to the rat running patterns of old.

Parties at the Shops in March

The Parties at the Shops event on 12 March 2013 to celebrate Canberra's 100th anniversary was a resounding success. We tried to include activities to cover all age groups including older residents and children and I think we successfully achieved this. Several hundred people joined in and we had a number of people come up to us later and tell us that they wished they had come.

50th Birthday Party

The big ticket item for 2013 will be our 50th birthday party on the weekend of 21 and 22 September 2013. Robyn Archer the Creative Director for Centenary of Canberra will officially launch the celebrations. Robyn has recently been appointed to the Australia Council which oversees arts grants and her participation is a real coup for us. A lot of work has gone into organising this event and I am very appreciative of the hard work that the committee has undertaken to date and it is far from over. We have also been placing updates in The Hackett Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter and on our website as we have firmed up details to keep you up to date. We are expecting thousands to attend, based on past experience so it will be a big weekend for the suburb.

Community Garden

Last year I mentioned that one of our key objectives going forward is to establish a community garden. We have been in contact with the ACT Government, visited the Mitch Community garden and undertaken discussions with the convenor and met with the principal of Blue Gum school with a view to siting the garden alongside the school. We had expected that by now we would have something concrete to report on but the cost, governance and approval processes are formidable and it will require much more work on our part to progress this issue. With the birthday taking up a large slice of our time this year we have put the community garden in abeyance until we have more capacity to pursue it.

HCA

It is with great sadness that I mention the deaths of two of our committee members this last year. Firstly, Laura Turnbull who passed away late last year. Laura and her husband Freddie were founding members of the HCA and had been tireless supporters of the HCA for many years. Secondly, Max Huntington our long standing Vice Chairman who passed away last week. Again Max was a longstanding and generous contributor to the HCA. Both will be sadly missed.

One of our committee members Waltraud Pix, who many of you will know through her role as convenor of Friends of Mount Majura has decided to retire. Waltraud has been with the committee over many years and she has somehow managed to juggle this commitment with her huge Friends of Mount Majura. But nothing should surprise us with Waltraud as she is such a dynamo of energy but sensibly she has decided to take a well-earned rest not only from the HCA but also from her role as convenor of FoMM. Waltraud on behalf of the Committee thank you for your support. Finally, Dorothy Mackenzie has also decided to retire from the HCA. I believe that Dorothy was also a founding member of the HCA so she has been there with us for many many years and like Waltraud Dorothy is also a human dynamo. You would have thought that Dorothy would be slowing down but no she is leaving us to take on a new role with her church. Dorothy on behalf of the Committee I thank you for tireless support over more years than we care to remember and our very best wishes wherever life should take you.

We have been very active during the last year recruiting additional members through our tables, sausage sizzle and new brochure and we now have over 200 members.

Eight committee meetings have been held since the last Annual General Meeting. Average attendance has been seven Committee members and from time to time two or three non-members in the form of local residents and more recently our local candidates.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow committee members for their untiring support. It is very much a team game as we are generally all time poor and without everyone's contribution and encouragement we would not have achieved what we have done and I might add that we will continue to do so as long as our members see value in our efforts.

I would also like to thank everyone here tonight. We are all busy and your attendance comes at some sacrifice to yourselves and for that we are very appreciative.