



President's Report 2019

It has been a year of consolidation for the *South Hobart Progress Association* (SHPA Inc.). We have continued to advocate on behalf of our members and the broader South Hobart community on a broad range of issues impacting on our Suburb. Progress does at times appear slow but change does take time and if the Association has learnt over its nearly one hundred year history, it is to be patient. A number of major proposals have occupied the time and efforts of the Association throughout the year, including the cable car proposal and the creation of a dedicated bus lane running from Kingston into the City. The need for an active, community-based organisation has never been more acute.

Before summarising some of the activities of the Association, I would like to make a few thank yous. First and foremost I would like to express my gratitude to our Honorary Secretary, David Halse Rogers. David has worked tirelessly and with passion, for a long time, for the Association, and, therefore, for the broader community. He writes and edits Association correspondence, co-ordinates our response to development applications and organises volunteers in the distribution of our Newsletter, to which he often contributes and always edits. He regularly provides invaluable advice to me and contributes to debate at General Meetings of the Association.

Kevin Wilson is another tireless campaigner for a better South Hobart whether it is pedestrian infrastructure, parking in the Suburb, remembering our history and fallen soldiers or recognising others who make a contribution. He keeps both me and other members of the Executive up-to-date on issues, and, as Vice President, he also has been very supportive.

I would also like to thank Phil Brown for his on-going and professional approach to managing our financial affairs and membership. He has also stepped into the breach when the D'Arcy Street Community Centre has needed attention. There is often little understanding of the importance of a Honorary Treasurer in community organisations; fortunately we are in good hands with Phil.

Many thanks also to Liz Rees for 'volunteering' to be our Minutes Secretary. It can be a thankless task but it is crucial to the smooth running of the Organisation.

Finally, I would like to thank all our members who have turned up come rain, hail or shine to our General Meetings throughout the year. Your participation, whether through asking questions, putting pen to paper or attending meetings or participating in discussions, enables the Association to not only understand the issues confronting the community but legitimises our claim to represent the views of our local community. Please continue to contribute.

As I mentioned, the Association has dealt with a broad range of issues throughout the year. The following are just some of the most prominent concerns we have addressed:-

1) Traffic and Parking

Traffic management continues to be a major issue within the Suburb. The Association continues to press the *City of Hobart* to take a far more pro-active approach to dealing with a broad range of transport-related issues, including pedestrian walkways, regulation of parking in South Hobart, management of the Southern Outlet, speed limits and footpaths.

The Association took a strong position opposing the *City of Hobart* efforts to replace the *South Hobart Residents Traffic Committee* with another broader consultation mechanism. It was felt that traffic management was a major community concern and needed a specific forum. Although the Council abolished the committee system across suburbs, we now have much more direct access to senior officers in the Council's transport and infrastructure section.

The commuter parking issue continues unabated. With the increasing costs and availability of car parking in the CBD, and the demands of increased business in the area coupled with population growth, we are in danger of becoming a parking lot for commuters, primarily travelling from southern areas. The Association has sought a parking strategy for the whole Suburb that focuses on the needs of locals rather than commuters. This could involve residential parking zones, timed zones and other parking measures that are in our interests, not those of the more southern suburbs. The Council has promised to conduct a survey of residents in preparation for a parking strategy for the Suburb. It is hoped that the plan identifies where there should be residential parking only; where there should be timed parking and no parking, or maintain the *status quo*.

Early last year, the Government released a consultant's report canvassing options for a dedicated bus lane on the Southern Outlet. The Government is considering options that would alleviate traffic congestion on the Outlet, particularly during the morning and afternoon rush hours. The preferred option is to use the current slip road into Macquarie Street as a bus lane, direct traffic into Davey Street then down Elboden Street and into South Hobart. The lower part of Macquarie Street would become one way only. The net results are 5,000 additional cars coming down Elboden Street, the loss of car parking spaces, and a number of businesses adversely effected. The Association and local traders lobbied the State Government against the proposal throughout 2019, and, at the time of writing, it looks like the Government has heard our concerns and is looking at alternatives.

The SHPA, along with the *Childs Play Centre* were also successful in convincing the Council to lower the speed limit in Degraes Street to 40 kilometres an hour.

2) Cable Car

As I have mentioned, the Association has been around for nearly one hundred years. There is one central reason that helps explain our longevity – the Association fights for what our community wants. For over a quarter of a century, we have opposed a cable car on kunyanni/Mt Wellington. The Mountain is a symbol of our City.

I said in my 2018 report that;

“There is little doubt that the proposed cable car will continue to be a major issue for the Association in 2019 as is likely a development application will be submitted to Council.”

Never have truer words been spoken. The proposed cable car has occupied a considerable amount of my time and effort as President and that of the Association more generally. We have lobbied against the proposal, spoken publicly against it, worked with other like-minded organisations, and raised questions in Parliament. A major undertaking was the organisation of a Public Meeting in August to debate the impact the cable car will have on traffic arrangements in South Hobart. On a rainy and windy night, over 180 people turned up to voice their opposition.

The South Hobart road network is already under considerable pressure due to increased traffic congestion, an inadequate road network, particularly narrow sections in Davey and Macquarie Street, and increased commuters parking in the Suburb. An extra 600 vehicles a day will only exacerbate the problem. The reality is that if the cable car goes ahead up to an extra 500,000 people or 200,000 cars will travel through the heart of South Hobart each and every year. The developers own consultant has indicated that the road network can only cope if the T junction of Cascade and McRobies Roads undergoes a major, multimillion dollar upgrade.

The proponent has lodged a development application (DA) with the *City of Hobart*, who immediately sought additional information on up to 30 different aspects of the DA. At the time of writing, that information had not been provided. It should be noted that the DA did not include an upgrade of the T junction.

The Association will continue to oppose any inappropriate development on the Mountain.

3) Beneath the Mountain

Sales of the Association's book by Alison Alexander's book "*Beneath the Mountain: A History of South Hobart*" have continued steadily, so much so we have now paid off the debt we owe to the *City of Hobart*. We have managed to sell well over 1,000 copies of the book, and they continue to sell slowly, especially thanks to the efforts of Mark and Michelle Henshaw, our local traditional butcher. Much of the credit can go to Ros and Malcolm Saltmarsh who, not only made a major contribution to the Book, but have also taken on the responsibility of marketing and distributing the Book, and having the inconvenience of having much of the remaining stock cluttering their home! Many thanks to you both.

4) A New Community Centre

For the last few decades, the activities of the Association and numerous other community and interest groups, families and individuals have all taken place in the *South Hobart Community Centre*. In many ways, the Centre was at the heart of the community and was well patronised, being situated in a picturesque small park. Unfortunately, the Centre can no longer meet the needs of the community; it is too antiquated and not fit-for-purpose. Built in 1955 as soccer club offices and change rooms, it is too small, too dark, and too inaccessible.

Following a nine year saga, the Association managed to have the former *Macquarie Street State School* retained in community hands. Disappointingly for the Association, the promised Community Heritage Room, for which the SHPA (Inc.) had fought for so hard over so many years, was deemed to prevent the new entity – *South Hobart Living Arts Centre* – from applying for much-needed grants to maintain and preserve this important historic building and curtilage, required the Association to divest itself of its space.

The Association and the *City of Hobart* have since joined forces to completely renovate the *South Hobart Community Centre*. We were successful in a joint application to the *Tasmanian Community Fund* (TCF) and the Council has agreed to match TCF funding. Many thanks from the Association to Nadia Mahjouri, from the Playgroup, who did all the initial work on the Submission.

The Council is managing the Project and has done all the design work in consultation with the Association. A development application has been approved and partial demolition will begin shortly. It is expected a new and vibrant Centre will open in May – June of next year. It would be remiss of me not to thank Council staff who have worked long hours to get the project up: Kimbra Parker, Manager, Community and Social Programmes, Megan Cunningham, Community Development Officer, and Martin Schmidt, Senior Architect. It is as much their Project as it is ours.

This is and will be an exciting time for SHPA and the South Hobart community. Let's hope it gets all the support it richly deserves.

5) Community Plan

The SHPA has decided to turn planning on its head – instead of relying on governments telling us what is important for South Hobart - both now and in the future - we are going to do it! Work has begun on developing a community based vision/plan for South Hobart that outlines the local community's views on what is important now and in the future for our Suburb.

Such a document will only carry some weight with decision-makers if it seen to represent the views of the local Community – once a draft is approved by SHPA it will be available for public comment.

6) May Floods – 18 Months On

By far the single biggest event to occur in South Hobart was the downpour and subsequent flooding that hit our Suburb in May last year. What a frightening and catastrophic night it was. It is hard to find anyone not affected by, what will hopefully be, a once-in-a-life-time event.

The floods taught two valuable lessons: disastrous events can strike at any time, and, secondly, we need to be well-prepared in advance.

The SHPA has been involved in a number of projects jointly funded by the State and Federal Governments and administered by the *City of Hobart*. A number of the ideas for funding were put forward by the Association and we have maintained an active interest. They include:-

1) Stories of Resilience

Between February and May 2019, Helene Thomas owner of *The Wayfinder*, a mobile storytelling studio, spoke to people from across the Hobart region about the Floods. Individuals were encouraged to tell their stories and help themselves and others learn from the experience. The Project is designed to raise community awareness about disaster planning, preparedness, response and recovery and help local governments improve their services.

2) Communities Assessing Their Own Resilience

Four community working groups in Lenah Valley, New Town, Sandy Bay and South Hobart are in the process of assessing the resilience of their suburbs using the *Torrens Resilience Scorecard*. So far the focus has been on understanding the current situation, what areas are in need of improvement and make plans for increasing South Hobart's ability to bounce back after an emergency. The results of this process have the potential to guide resilience-building efforts in other suburbs and regions across the State.

3) "Afloat" – A Children and Families Community Art Project

"Afloat" – came to life after childcare centres, school staff and parents from South Hobart Primary School shared their experiences during the Flood, and the impact it had on their community.

Taking a creative approach, the "Afloat" project engaged professional artists to work with children, families and educators using play as a means to help children deal with change, adversity and the associated feelings. The end result is the City of Hobart has developed a resource booklet for parents and educators about children's creative recovery. It explores how art and storytelling can be applied to build children's resilience and capacity to cope with an ever-changing environment.

There are a number of other projects on the go such as *Australian Red Cross Workshops* and the creation of a new permanent work of art near the *Hobart Rivulet*.

7) Commemoration of the Armistice 11th November 1918

The Local History Group of SHPA put in a tremendous amount of energy and effort into organising an exhibition looking at some of the impacts World War 1 (WW1) had on South Hobart. Done in conjunction with the *Anglesea Barracks Museum*, the Exhibition had a series of panels featuring aspects of the War and its specific impact on former South Hobart residents.

The Exhibition was officially opened by the former Governor, William Cox, with the *South Hobart Primary School*, not only providing items for display but also reading out the names of fallen soldiers from our Suburb.

It was a moving and fitting tribute to those who died in the line of duty just over 100 years ago in WW1.

I would like to thank Lindsay Brinsdon, Kevin Wilson and Kevin Green for their commitment and efforts in putting the Exhibition together.

8) Conclusion

As always, it has been a challenging year for the Progress Association. From a personal perspective, it has been not only enjoyable but also productive. I want to place on the public record my appreciation for the support of the Executive and the stalwarts of the SHPA who turn up so regularly to general meetings because they care about what happens in our Suburb.

I said last year, and it is worth repeating, what is becoming increasingly obvious is that we need to plan for the future by attracting younger members and ensuring gender and ethnic diversity within the membership and senior positions.



Phillip Hoysted

President

The South Hobart Progress Association Incorporated

October 2019