**Local Matters Forum – Balmain-Baludarri 4 April 2023**

On Tuesday 4 April 2023, 44 Balmain-Baludarri ward residents gathered at the Hannaford Centre in Rozelle to discuss local matters that were of key importance to them. The agenda for the group discussion was driven by residents.

**Below is a summary of the discussion:**

| Subject/issue | Discussion and response from Council | Further action if required |
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| De-amalgamation |
| Update on de-amalgamation process | * The Inner West Council de-amalgamation business case was submitted to the Minister for Local Government in December 2022. The Minister has confirmed that the business case has been sent to the NSW Boundaries Commission for assessment.
* Mayor Darcy Byrne has written again to the Minister for Local Government reiterating the concerns around costs and administration.
* Mayor Darcy Byrne explained only the Minister for Local Government has the legal ability to make this decision and it will cost an estimated $190M which Council has proposed that the State Government cover.
 | No further action  |
| Development and planning |
| Drainage issue at King Georges Oval | * Resident asked if drainage was being redesigned to redirect stormwater to avoid destroying the mulch in the playground.
* Council is currently formalising the existing King Georges carpark which should prevent the stormwater run-off.
* Resident advised that the mulch put in place last week have been moved by the runoff.
 | Council is monitoring the area and will undertake extra work if required  |
| Environment |
| Solar Strata Scheme | * Council is currently not undertaking a broad recruitment of new strata but are happy to assist with ad-hoc requests from strata properties.
* Mayor Darcy Byrne explained that Inner West has the lowest uptake of solar which is a result of competing requirements with strata, heritage in particular, as well as other planning instruments under NSW legislation. Council has reached out to every school in the Inner West to advocate for more solar panels and we have successfully helped 18 schools install. Our objective is to have new solar panels on every school in the LGA. We need to do more work with businesses and community groups to expand solar across the Inner West.
* Resident was advised to contact Mayor directly to assist with advocating to Strata members
 | No further action |
| Callan Park landfill | * Resident enquired about landfill site at Callan Park.
* Callan Park is managed by the Greater Sydney Parklands Authority (GSP). The GSP will be developing a plan of management and an associated master plan for Callan Park this year and this could be an opportunity to provide feedback when it is on exhibition.
 | Following further correspondence between the Resident and the Director Planning after the Forum, representations have been forwarded by Council to Greater Sydney Parklands  |
| Pollution | * Resident expressed concerns of pollution from two commercial properties
* General Counsel discussed with resident after the meeting
 | Following the Forum the resident also discussed with the Director Planning who committed to assist with facilitating access to a relevant report for the resident. |
| Dealing with Council | * Resident expressed concerns about dealing with Council and the many separate departments.
* Council is working on improving our customer experience through a new customer service charter, fortnightly customer service stalls and a customer experience strategy that will go through community consultation this year
 | No further action  |
| Parking and traffic |
| Parking in Fitzroy Avenue | * Resident asked about introducing 4 hour parking for non-residents due to vehicles staying for long periods of time
* Council confirmed that this matter is listed for community engagement in the Precinct Parking Study schedules for 2023/2024
 | No further action  |
| New parking in Smith Street | * Resident advised that the new limited parking on Smith St was not providing much impact
* Council explained that changes in parking behaviour may take some time to complete and become more apparent went enforcement action initiates when the scheme is fully operational
* Mayor confirmed he is the chair of the Local Traffic Committee and confirmed that the resident can contact him directly for this matter to be brought up at the next committee meeting
 | Resident to contact Mayor directly about this issue |
| Aggressive road behaviour | * Resident asked what can be done about the increasing issues of speeding, excessive use of car horns and abusive driver language in Rozelle and Balmain.
* IWC is one of the first Council’s to introduce a 40km/h speed limit. Council regularly undertakes a series of Local Area Traffic Management (LATM) studies which reviews and recommends traffic calming treatments in a local precinct. Council is currently undertaking the Balmain LATM which is expected to go on public exhibition in mid 2023. The Rozelle North LATM has recently been completed with works being scheduled in the forward capital works program.
* Mayor Darcy Byrne suggested that Council work with NSW Police and requested a report to come back to the Local Traffic Committee. He advised that there has been a problem with Victoria Road for a long time and there have been failed attempts of working with the previous State governments to rectify the issues. With a new government in place the he confirmed that this is a priority for Council.
 | Council to work with NSW Police and report back to the Local Traffic Committee. |
| Illegal parking in Evans and Belmore St | * Resident asked what Council plan was to alleviate illegal parking issues around a local venue and the surrounding streets
* Since the beginning of the year there have been a few penalties issued.
 | Council will schedule additional patrols over the next two weeks |
| Illegal parking in laneway of Yerroulbin Street | * Resident reported a vehicle illegally parked in the laneway of Yerroulbin Street for 6 months.
* Council Rangers confirmed the owner was identified and the vehicle was moved
* Director of Planning confirmed that new legislation has been introduced that allowed Council to move vehicles if they have been abandoned. Council has been monitoring different locations and targeting trailers and caravans
* Resident advised that a street sign is missing
 | Director of Infrastructure to investigate street sign issue |
| Parking in Railway Parade | * Resident reported a person has been living in a van on Railway Parade, that the vehicle may be illegally parked and there are issues with WestConnex staff parking for long periods of time on residential streets
* Council has limited authority to manage this situation. Mayor advised state legislation is weak and that abandoned vehicles are an issue for local governments however new legislation was introduced last year that will give further authority to Councils. Mayor asked the resident to contact him directly.
 | No further action |
| Illegal driving – one way streets | * Resident expressed concerns of vehicles breaching one-way rules through steets that intersect Darling and Moodie Streets. Resident advised they have complained to Council and Police multiple times.
* Director of Planning confirmed this is a police matter.
* Mayor asked resident to contact him directly on the matter
 | Director of Planning to discuss matter with Local Area Command |
| Bike path through Rozelle | * Resident enquired about Council’s position on the proposed bike path through Rozelle including Belmore Street.
* Council has not approved TfNSW plans for a bike route through local streets parrallel to Victoria Road, including Belmore Street. We have requested that the plans be presented to the Local Traffic Committee for approval.
 | No further action |
| Parks and sporting grounds |
| Non-native planting in parks | * Resident queried the use of non-native annuals in parks
* Council operations, design and urban ecology teams work together to develop sustainable landscaped areas across the LGA. Whilst there are areas of well-loved lawn in established parks, all newly constructed landscaped areas are designed with native plant specifications. Our Urban Ecology team focus on balancing ecology and maintenance issues.
 | No further action  |  |
| Assistance with a community garden | * Resident asked if Council would help with the maintenance of a native garden in Fitzroy Avenue.
* Council’s community garden program assists residents to ensure all policies and procedures are complied with
 | Council officers will schedule meeting resident  |
| Adequate signage in dog off leash area at Punch Park | * In August 2022, Inner West Councillors requested a review of all existing signage. The audit was completed in December 2022 and Council is reviewing the information. Across the LGA there are 43 off leash parks within the LGA and Council is trialling colourful stencils on footpaths in lieu of more formal signage at Whites Creek, Petersham Park Playground, Johnson Park Playground and Camperdown Park. The following parks are scheduled for stencils this FY – Marrickville Park, Enmore Park Playground and Weekly Park
 | Director of Planning to investigate stencils at Punch Park and arrange for some randomised Companion Animal inspections  |
| Roads and footpaths |
| Possible non-compliant construction site – 93 Louisa Road  | * Council has reported this issue to our Compliance team for investigation
 | An inspection is being undertaken in the days immediately following the Forum and follow up action will take place |
| Trees |
| Pruning of trees across Balmain and Leichhardt | * Resident advised they have reported the issue of trees requiring pruning across Balmain and Leichhardt many times. They highlighted the issue of having to report trees individually and that Council only focuses on the one tree in question when actioning a report.
* A new tree inventory program will be delivered at the end of the year which provides an action plan for tree maintenance. Council staff proactively report issues they see.
 | Council officers to investigate |
| Tree issue near Victoria Road | * Resident queried tree issue located above Victoria Road at the rear of 5-7 Quirk Street.
 | Council officers to make contact with resident  |
| 40% target for tree canopy on residential sites in the Inner West | * Council is increasing tree canopy planting by 1000 trees each year. The 40% tree canopy target on residential sites is a target set by the Greater Cities Commission, and has been echoed within the new Tree DCP as an aspirational target in support of both biodiversity and climate change goals.
* Director of Planning confirmed that Council cannot force home -owners to plant trees, although if a property is the subject of a development consent tree planting requirements may be specified in the approval.
 | No further action required |

**Not all submitted questions were addressed on the night. Responses to questions that were submitted but not discussed during the Forum have been prepared:**

| Subject | Response from Council |
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| Development and Planning |
| Can you do anything to expedite the return of the pedestrian crossing from Callum street, it is taking forever with little priority placed on the needs of residents? | * Council is of the position that the intersection of Callan Street at Victoria Road should be returned to its previous configuration and not its current widened configuration. The WestConnex project has identified that the intersection will remain in its widened configuration with a pedestrian refuge to be built at the intersection to assist pedestrians continue along the Victoria Road footpath.
* The Shared Zone treatments would be reinstated after the refuge, in Callan Street. Council has not been advised of when works will be completed but will continue to advocate for a better outcome.
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| Can you please provide some details on when the work on the Leagues Club will commence and when it will finish? | * Council is currently assessing a modification application for this site, which is required to be reported to and determined by the Sydney Eastern City Planning Panel. A determination date for the application is yet to be set. The application was received mid December last year. There is little change to the building envelope - some pleasing architectural finishes are being modified, the most significant change is the decrease in the number of units and an increase in the number of bedrooms within those units - so an increase in 2-3 bedroom units and a decrease in studio and 1 bedroom apartments. Total units have changed from 164 to 147.
* The application will be determined by the SECPPP, the exhibition period ended 30 March and a virtual public meeting on the application was held on 16 March 2023. 20 community members attended.
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| Having just been through a development proposal for an adjoining property, how can council approve changes which are against their own planning rules for an area? | * Council assesses Development Applications in accordance with Council's LEP and DCP which outlines Council's planning controls, and also uses a merit based assessment where those controls do not work due to relevant site constraints.
* The EP&A Act allows Councils to apply certain level of flexibility in the planning controls to encourage development opportunities whilst ensuring development proposals minimise amenity impacts
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| We are getting increasingly worried about the proposed plans to increase increased density in Rozelle/ Lilyfield particularly given the current traffic congestion issues along Balmain road etc. We don't see this being alleviate by the West Connex project. Can you advise. How do these large high story developments get passed while surrounding suburbs have a 2 storey max. height limitation? (*See follow up question below re traffic congestion)* | * Council is also concerned with increasing density in particular areas of the local government area where there is limited public transport and has flow on affects to traffic congestion. In the case of 469-483 Balmain Road this was a Planning Proposal lodged by a private developer to change the planning controls under Council's LEP to increase density on the site.
* Council did not support the Planning Proposal and however it was subsequently approved by the State Government.
* Following LEP amendments, DCPs are required to be amended and Council is awaiting the submission of a DCP from the developer for Council's further consideration. This DCP will be publicly exhibited and reported to a Council meeting for consideration. A DA will follow after a relevant DCP has been adopted.
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| How can we get information on the timings of the development of 469 - 483 Balmain Rd, Lilyfield with construction of 6 stories/ 150 apartments?" | * On 26 February 2021 Amendment No. 18 to the Leichhardt LEP 2013 was made.
* This enabled residential uses on the industrial site and increased the FSR to 2.2:1 and HOB control to 23m equivalent to 6 storeys with minimum 6000sqm of employment uses.
* The Draft DCP was exhibited 21 June 2021 to 30 July 2021 and reported to Council on 3 August 2021. Consideration of DCP was deferred by Council to obtain AEDRP comments.
* The draft DCP was reported to Council 6 Dec 2022, Council resolved not to support and seek new DCP addressing Council town planning officer and AEDRP concerns.
* Site owners were advised the following will be lodged in April:
* Draft DCP. This will be assessed by officers , and if satisfactory reported to Council seeking public exhibition.
* Concept Plan Application (ie similar process to DA), this will be put on public exhibition.
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| I propose that public access via Booth St and Stephen St to Robert St for pedestrians and cyclists be put in place. The simplest and least controversial way would be to move the security boom gate to Booth St. However if the Port Authority agrees it could be removed altogether. Circular Quay cruise ship terminal has been an open public area for a long time.On Facebook’s Balmain Living group my proposal for steps at Stephen St got 42 likes but a firestorm of protests from some Stephen St residents. Up to the 1960’s there was a ferry wharf at the end of Stephen St. Public access to the waterfront with cafes and faster cycle access to the Metro West station, Anzac Bridge and Rozelle parklands would be a big benefit." | Council has no direct control on the use of a boom gate by Ports, our role in this is confined to advocating for its removal.  |
| General |
| Dear Mayor - I would like to request that the Inner West Council put more effort into maintenance of the visual appearance of the council. Painting railings (instead of replacing them), removing unnecessary signs (and replacing old ones so that they stand straight), replacing the shade sails over playgrounds, cleaning public buildings such as the Annandale Neighbourhood centre, interesting landscaping using native plants (instead of just plonking plants in anyhow). Regarding the last point, there is very appealing landscaping on Pritchard Street, Annandale (between Pritchard St and Breillat lane) which could serve as a model. Generally speaking, this council area looks dilapidated and run down compared with its neighbours. I think well cared for public spaces and buildings make people feel well cared for. When considering your various initiatives, please do not add to the visual clutter. Thank you,  | * Council undertook a condition audit of all its transport assets which created a renewal action plan which we are currently working through.
* Council is currently undertaking a building condition assessment and action plan.
* Resident shared some views on the local street network.
* Council to investigate further and make contact with the resident
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| Parking and traffic |
| Will Council install any on-road EV charging facility in Balmain? Lack of this is a disincentive to buying an EV. I have ordered an EV, but on-road rapid charging stations are very sparse anywhere near Balmain. Not the same for petrol stations | * In recognition of the increasing demand for electric vehicle charging in the Inner West, Council exhibited its draft Electric Vehicle Encouragement Strategy at the end of 2022. We are currently reviewing submissions received on this with a view to moving forward to a final strategy to be reported to Council in mid 2023.
* Council has also issued an Expression of Interest to attract electric vehicle charging companies into the LGA to provide public charging stations. Responses are currently being reviewed.
* It is currently anticipated that Council will partner with a number of charging providers with a view to commencing the installation of our first public charging stations by the end of 2023.
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| With the WestConnex interchange nearing completion, does Council have any news on the plans for Victoria Road (from White bay to Iron Cove bridge) that will become a local road when through traffic to Drummoyne and beyond will have a toll-free tunnel to use?There is a great opportunity to turn this now-busy main road into a pleasant boulevard, with the emphasis on pedestrian, bicycle and local traffic usage." | * For some time Council has recognised there is an opportunity to improve the place functions of Victoria Road as a result of reduced surface traffic when the Iron Cove Link component of WestConnex Rozelle Interchange opens.
* Accordingly, Council is developing a public domain Master Plan for Victoria Road. This would reduce traffic capacity and create more space for active transport, public transport, landscaping and outdoor dining. The masterplan also includes a section of Darling Street either side of its intersection with Victoria Road.
* Community consultation for the Master plan is planned for coming months.
* Victoria Road is classified as a State Road, limiting Council’s ability to take direct action from its Master Plan. It is however anticipated that it will help guide the road network review plans that Transport for NSW (TfNSW) is required to undertake according to a condition of approval for WestConnex.
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| (Follow up question from above) We are getting increasingly worried about the proposed plans to increase density in Rozelle/ Lilyfield particularly given the current traffic congestion issues along Balmain road etc. We don't see this being alleviated by the West Connex project.Particularly the development of 483 Balmain Rd, Lilyfield with construction of 6 stories/ 150 apartments?" | * Council recognises that traffic congestion is an issue across the Inner West and has always advocated public and active transport solutions to this congestion instead of expansion of road space, as is the case for WestConnex.  Notwithstanding, Council recognises that WestConnex will reduce surface traffic in some areas.
* Traffic congestion along Balmain Road has been a concern for some time, but it is anticipated that the opening of the Iron Cove Link component of WestConnex Rozelle Interchange will reduce surface traffic along Victoria Road and adjoining streets such as Balmain Road.  When assessing rezoning and development proposals, Council considers local traffic congestion and always strives to ensure that additional traffic created by new development will not have a significant impact on congestion.
* Transport for NSW will also be considering local traffic congestion issues when it undertakes road network review plans for WestConnex Rozelle Interchange, as required by conditions of approval for the project.
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| Parks and sporting grounds |
| Any updates on Callan Park redevelopment would be appreciated. | * Callan Park is managed by the Greater Sydney Parklands Authority and we often find out relevant information in media releases or when we are contacted by the community and we seek further information as a result.
* In terms of recent events, the inaugural meeting of all trust boards was held by the GSP on 7th February 2023. Council staff do not attend these meetings but has a dedicated representative in Mayor Darcy Byrne. The next meeting has yet to be advised on the GSP website: Community trustee boards (gspengagement.com.au)
* Recent/current works include the establishment of the Village Green and Waterfront development are progressing well. Signage has recently been installed throughout the park advertising the recently enacted on and off leash areas for companion animal access.
* Council is also taking the lead on the Callan Park swim site - we have a draft design we are working through with the GSP and we are working toward a timeframe for opening in mid / late 2024.
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| Roads and footpaths |
| Would there be any plans to have bicycle paths restored in the Leichhardt/Balmain area - bicycles form an important part of the transport infrastructure and to have them neglected only serves to make any transport outside of road vehicles difficult at best, and impossible at worst? | * Council does arrange the maintenance of bicycle paths both as part of reactive maintenance activities and following road resheeting or other maintenance works.
* Council encourages residents to report any specific bicycle paths of concern to Council for review.
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| "The Darling Street roundabout joining Balmain and East Balmain is a highly visible part of our community infrastructure, yet looks like skid row. Upgrading it should be a high priority of Council.Does Council have any plans to (a) replace the traffic islands' dirty red tiles with evergreen low plants, (b) repair the worn out and broken footpath and traffic island kerbs hemming the roundabout, and (c) narrowing the roundabout hub so buses can have a safe turning circle without damaging the roundabout.?" | * Council undertook a condition audit of all its transport assets which created a renewal action plan which we are currently working through. Council has a Main Street revitalisation program which we will consider this area for.
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| Unregulated, free parking is clogging our Balmain neighbourhoods with cars and trailers. This puts private benefit ahead of community benefit. What are the prospects for reforming Inner West Council's parking policy (and public space value) to beautify streetscapes and make our streets safer? | * There is new legislation, known as the Public Spaces Unattended Property Act that has changed the enforcement regime for Council regarding long terms vehicle stay which effect amenity and / or are deemed unsafe.
* We have run some pilots around enforcement of trailers and caravans earlier this year, specifically in Balmain Rd and Lilyfield Rd.
* In those two streets we moved on 30 vehicles, 2 were impounded, following this 19 new trailers moved into those streets, which while representing some relief for residents in that a number of trailers were moved on, nevertheless it demonstrates that continuous enforcement by Council is required in order to effectively manage this.
* In the meantime residents are encouraged to report any specific instance including the nearest address, we rely on reports from the community to identify where the problems are. Please be aware that once the process has commenced it takes about 60 days to see it to the end.
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| Waste and recycling |
| We put considerable energy into sorting recyclable waste for collection, but there are now doubts about where and how the waste is recycled. | * Recycling collected is taken to the VIsy facility and sorted via largely automated sorting process. There is a small percentage of waste from the process that is landfilled (about 8 %) the rest is turned into useful product.
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Three specific issues have been lodged through Council’s Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system for staff to follow up.

Ends.