

Convenor's Report – Annual General Meeting, 13 July, 2023

We have again had a very busy year in 2022-23 with many developments and strategies requiring our attention. We continue to attract new members, albeit at a slower rate, as planning for the implementation of the Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy (PPPS) has proceeded largely behind closed doors. As the pace of large-scale developments proceeds, it is evident that the workload of Pyrmont Action needs to be shared more equitably among members of the Committee and other volunteers. We are developing a new *modus operandi* which should be finalized in the next couple of months. It is also proposed that the position of Convenor be rotated at 5-yearly or less intervals. We ask members to support these changes when finalized and to volunteer for those positions in areas of most relevance to them.

We continue to work with New Sydney Waterfront Co and CEO, Jace Tyrell, has joined PA and been hosted on two walks around Pyrmont. NSW Co is strongly supports the push for improved public transport, led by Lesley Bentley. More detail on projects worked on during the year follow.

PPPS – There has been little feedback from either the Dept of Planning (DPE) or Infrastructure NSW since the modified Blackwattle Bay State Significant Precinct Strategy was delivered by INSW in 2022, the only changes being the lowering of the tower heights, with a consequential reduction in the number of residences. However, the City of Sydney was given the task of drawing up a new Local Environment Plans (LEPs) across the Peninsula, excluding Key Sites of Harbourside, West Metro Station, Blackwattle Bay, The Star and UTS's First Nations College which are being progressed through DPE. The City has held several community presentations on their approach to this task, with a release of the LEPs expected in July, 2023. We have been assured that existing Public and Affordable Housing complexes which were designated as "sites capable of change" by DPE will not be affected in the City's planning for the rest of the Peninsula. INSW conducted a credible community consultation on the proposed Bank Street Foreshore Park, producing 3 options upon which the public was asked to comment and PA made a submission which supported elements from two of the three concepts. The draft plans will be exhibited later in 2023. We continue to make the case for the redevelopment of the Maybanke site as an indoor Community Sports & Recreation Centre.

Bays West Strategy – Detailed planning is proceeding on Stage 1 of the redevelopment proposed for this Precinct, in particular associated with the construction of the Bays West Metro station. The Port Authority has re-tendered for use of part of Glebe Island for a Multi-User Facility as the previous tenant pulled out of the project. Hanson is still trying to reconcile the Independent Planning Commission's required changes to the company's proposed concrete batching plant with a viable business case. In the meantime, Ports is embarking on establishing shore to ship power facilities at 5 locations at White Bay and Glebe Island, as well as planning for provision of renewable power to the Port sites. Multiplex continues to use the north-eastern end of Glebe Island for storage and fabrication of materials for the new Sydney Fish Markets construction. I have continued to represent Pyrmont Action on the Glebe Is/White Bay Community Liaison Group during the year.

Harbourside - Whilst Mirvac incorporated the changes required by the IDP in its revised Master Plan, further changes are being made which water down the IDP requirements. Of particular concern is the change of use of the top of the podium in front of 50 Murray Street from public recreation to a garden with a path running through it. The amount of soil required to support trees will impact views from the apartment block. Demolition of the existing building is almost complete, including the removal of the former monorail structure. Contrary to earlier advice the path providing direct access to Pyrmont Bridge



for locals and visitors has also been removed requiring pedestrians to cross a busy road linking Darling Drive with Murray Street. The crossing has no traffic lights, and there is poor visibility for vehicles which regularly crash into the wall lining the road.

West Metro Station – In 2021 PA made comments on the draft DA for the new Pyrmont station entries, generally endorsing the plans, with a few amendments and DPE approved the plans. Recently, with no consultation or prior warning, the West Metro organization moved the site of a huge crossover cavern from Bays West to Pyrmont directly below heritage terraces in Pyrmont Street, with the potential for damage to these and, possibly, those in Union Square. The change was declared "consistent" with the approved DA. In our view, whilst the move may be consistent in engineering terms, it is definitely not consistent in the impact the excavation of the cavern will have on nearby residents and structures. Meetings have been held recently with the proponents, contractors and a representative from the Minister for Transport's office, to no avail. However, given the severe impacts now being experienced by nearby residents living next to the W station demolition, we are hopeful that a Community Consultation Committee will be established where issues impacting residents and businesses can be addressed at monthly meetings. Unlike the tunnels which will be bored deep underground, with spoil taken back to the West Metro site via rail, without requiring surface transportation, excavation for the cavern will occur from the surface, with spoil trucked from the site via local streets. The excavation is likely to take a year to complete, with work continuing 24/7.

Planning is well advanced on the 110m high building on the Union Street site with the Master Plan and Design Guidelines approved, all with no community consultation. We have been advised that the street frontage will be activated, with the possibility of 24/7 venues. We have reiterated our request for inclusion of space for a 24/7 street-front local Police Station in the plans.

Residential Amenity – We continue to support the operation of the Revy as a restaurant. The City rejected Doltone House's MOD to change its use to another function centre and the proponent has appealed to the Land and Environment Court. Mediation failed and the court will now convene on 21-22 September, 2023 and can be addressed by those objecting to the MOD. Whilst we have continued to receive reports of anti-social behaviour of patrons entering and departing Doltone House Function Centres, mainly over the summer months, such complaints have not been received in recent months. We have continued to maintain connection with the Community Liaison Officer from the Day Street Local Area Command who has suggested that Doltone House be asked to provide mini-buses to transport guests quickly away from the premises. We continue to ask both the Police and the Council to provide additional CCTV around precincts with high concentrations of rowdy people, including the Casino Wharf and the Star with both claiming that the other is responsible for such installations. It has also been suggested that owners of private dwellings and stratas install their own CCTV.

The City of Sydney, The Star and affected residents have revised the arrangements for taxis which queue in Jones Bay Road. Signage and road marking changes to Jones Bay Road have been recommended, along with installation by the Star of an automatic call up system which will result in a more orderly progression of the queue towards the Porte Cochere entry to the pick-up location. The goal is to minimise current disruption. This work is yet to happen. Directional signage to Rest Rooms has been installed in prominent locations on walls facing Jones Bay Road, to lessen public urination.

Traffic & Transport – We have continued to advocate for changes to the 389 bus route, including a stop in York Street. Re-routing of the 389 service to terminate at an existing bus stop in Murray St at the end of the Pyrmont Bridge, then proceeding in a loop along Darling Drive and back to a new stop outside the Jones Bay LR station would be quicker and avoid delays during the years of construction and movement of heavy vehicles along its current route. Lesley Bentley and her team have held several well-attended Pyrmont Public Transport Forum meetings during the year, attended by the then Shadow Minister (now Minister) for Transport as well as Alex Greenwich MP. They have met recently with the new



Minister and we await advice on the outcomes of their and our representations. We also keep pushing for a new bus route linking Pyrmont with Broadway Shopping Centre, Sydney University, RPAH (Missenden Road) returning via Bridge Road with stops in Glebe, the new Fish Markets, and in Bank Street. The push for a ferry stop at Pirrama Park is supported by the new Government but it is unable to reintroduce the service as the standards for ferry wharves have changed and the Pyrmont wharves no longer comply. We are attempting to ascertain what Government Agency is responsible for upgrading the wharf. Jace Tyrrell of NSW Co continues to be a strong advocate to Government for improved public transport to serve the Peninsula.

Pyrmont Action has also responded to the Transport for NSW proposals for Western Distributor "Improvements". The former Premier rejected the installation of gantries on the Anzac Bridge but they have been installed recently and plans for installation of "Smart Motorway technologies" have just been announced, with no community consultation. The so-called improvements include re-routing the 501 bus from taking the first exit from the Anzac Bridge, and having it join Harris Street from the Allen Street exit, thus missing out Pyrmont from its route to Central. Vehicles taking the first exit will no longer be able to turn right into Bank Street, thus adding to congestion in Pyrmont Bridge Road at the Harris Street intersection. We have strongly opposed these measures but have had no feedback.

Community Centres – With the closure of the Pyrmont Community Centre, initially for 1-1/2 years and as recently announced for a further 6 months (till July 2024) community activities have continued at various venues, however, some with diminishing numbers, including Pyrmont Sings! and the Community Dinners. Mary Mortimer (Friends of PCC and PA member) has resurrected the request to the City of Sydney for funding to enable the leasing of vacant premises for a further 12 months to assist in re-building Pyrmont's social cohesion which has dissipated over the period of closure.

PA and the Friends continue to liaise with the 4Cs in lobbying for the staffing of City of Sydney community facilities and the easing of the administrative burden on volunteers in seeking access to Council community premises. The 4Cs representations led to an increase in the City's budget for community facilities and an increase in staff, only 2 of whom were allocated to positions in staffed community centres. A number of members attended the recent Combatting Loneliness Forum on 8 June hosted by the Deputy Lord Mayor, Sylvie Ellsmore at which the need for staffed centres was raised.

Public Fast EV Charging Stations – The City approved its Electrification of Transport in the City Strategy and Action Plan on 26 June, 2023. The Plan generally does not support measures that encourage cars in the LGA but does allow for consideration of the installation of EV chargers in off-street carparks on sites controlled by the City. Given that the site at 13 Refinery Drive, Pyrmont, meets these criteria, we will pursue further our request for such installation. I addressed the Transport, Heritage, Environment and Planning Committee to argue the case for more pro-active support for EV charging in the LGA.

The Ultimo Powerhouse – With the election of a new NSW Government, PA has joined with Save the Powerhouse coalition and other supporters to ask the new Minister for the Arts, Hon John Graham MLC to stop the demolition of the Wran extension and the proposed rebuild over the site, including on the Harris Street forecourt, and instead refurbish the existing facilities, thus saving at least \$250M and ensuring protection of the remaining large historic items. Whilst the new Government is "committed to the delivery of a world-class Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences" there is no assurance given that the demolition/re-build won't proceed. We continue to make representations on this issue. We welcome Save the Powerhouse advocate, Tom Lockley, as a new member of PA.

Land Transfers – There has been no update on the proposed transfers of public lands in Pyrmont from the ownership of the Office of Strategic Lands to the City of Sydney despite requests. A further request has been sent. There has been some progress in that OSL has undertaken stabilization work on the cliff above the Jones St Pocket Park but the barriers remain in place.



The Star – MOD18 which proposes the re-purposing of the existing 4,000 seat theatre fronting Pirrama Road, as 2 smaller theatres seating fewer people but involving bulky structures on the existing roof has been approved and work is commencing. The Star's Community Liaison person has left the company but we will continue to liaise with staff as needed.

Schools – Whilst the previous Minister for Education rejected community calls for provision of a new Yrs 7 – 12 secondary school to serve Pyrmont, Ultimo and other Inner West communities, at our June meeting members resolved unanimously to join with Ultimo Village Voice to promote to the new Minister the construction of a high rise school, similar to the Inner City High School from which our students are excluded, on the site of the Greyhound Racing facilities utilizing the existing oval which would remain open to the public. It should be noted that one PA member who did not attend the meeting subsequently lodged an objection to this proposal. The new Minister is reported to be reviewing the status of all schools and their catchment boundaries.

Publicity and Fundraising – I have been interviewed for several Sydney Morning Herald articles during the year and we have been fortunate to attract a new, tech savvy member, David Connah, who is updating the website and investigating how we can attract new and younger members, noting that some of us have been volunteering with PA for 23 years. We hosted a Community Dinner over this reporting period and promoted PA at the November Christmas in Pyrmont event. I also represented PA at the Anzac Day ceremony, laying a wreath at the Union Square memorial. Our main publicity event was the Candidates' Forum organized jointly with Friends of Ultimo and held on 15 February, 2023. Six candidates from the Sydney and Balmain electorates attended and provided their responses to our Policy Manifesto, as well as answered questions from around 100 attendees in the Q and A session. My thanks go to all those who assisted on the day and prior to the event. It was declared a great success by participants and we received support for our top 10 issues from the candidates.

Committee – The work of Pyrmont Action Inc has been overseen by its Committee:

Elizabeth Elenius, Convenor and Public Officer

Ken Loudon, Deputy Convenor

Bob Boakes, Treasurer

Committee: Keith Johnson, Lydia Ivanchenko, Helen Mok, Zena Vaassen, Bill d' Anthes, John Brooks

11 meetings of the membership have been held monthly, alternating between in-person meetings at 6.00pm in the Pyrmont Community Centre and, following its closure, at The Station in Bowman Street, and at 4pm by Zoom, managed by Lisa Moulf. My thanks go to Ken Loudon who has provided tireless support and taken over the role of Chair of our monthly meetings. Zena Vaassen has been tireless in briefing us on many issues, especially those relating to safety, security and residential amenity and becoming DA Officer alerting us to new DAs on exhibition. Bill d'Anthes continues to provide advice on matters associated with schools. Lesley Bentley has kept us up to date on Transport matters and Christina Juchniewicz has provided forensically researched submissions on EV charging. We welcome Tom Lockley to the membership and look forward to working in partnership with him and his colleagues in the community's efforts to save the Powerhouse in Ultimo. Committee members, as always, have provided valuable feedback on letters and submissions and have assisted in drafting letters and submissions. And thanks to all our members who continue to support us.

Last year, I gave notice of my intention to retire from the position of Convenor. This AGM I really mean it but will continue to work in whatever capacity members deem appropriate.

Elizabeth Elenius, Convenor, Retiring

