Ashfield Community Action Network

President’s Report

August 2024

August was a month of drenching rain, so important to the health of our parks and gardens, our creeks and our river. Well done, Hewie!

AshfieldCAN marked the month with some significant achievements.

A small grant from the Town of Bassendean will allow us to enhance our community communication and consultation, via the development of a webpage.

Particularly important were on-site meetings with our Town of Bassendean CEO Cameron Woods and his recently appointed Director of Infrastructure and Sustainability, Shane Asmus.

The Town of Bassendean's commitment to, and the progression of, installing a new pathway in Gary Blanch Reserve, replacing one that had become unsafe and unusable, is a demonstration of the Town’s commitment to our village. We are rightly proud of our shared achievement in creating this Reserve, the Ashfield Parade Reserve and the Lookout Park, as well as other infrastructure projects. The on-site meetings created a greater understanding of their history and the issues affecting their future.

Invasive weeds and pests were discussed at the meeting. Consequently, following the discovery of nests of small, slow-moving black ants, that deliver a particularly painful, aching bite, the Town has taken decisive action to limit their damage. It seems these invasive ants are becoming more widespread in the Metropolitan area and if left unchecked may well destroy the amenity of our parks.

A further meeting with Andy Williams from DBCA at the Lookout Park heralded the good news that the vista over the iconic wetlands, the parklands, the river valley and the Darling Ranges beyond will be restored. We look forward to supporting DBCA and the Town in this, with the installation of a free-to-use community binocular which will be a permanent installation. This initiative was sponsored by a grant secured by our local MLA Dave Kelly.

The issue of the ‘Master Plan’ for Ashfield Flats remains a vexed issue. As a community we need to support the Department of Biosecurity, Community and Attractions (DBCA) in its primary objectives of enhancing and protecting our river environment. However, we must strongly oppose those aspects of the Plan that, contrary to the desires of our community, are likely to destroy our current, unique and intimate connection with the river estuary.

Alternatives to this plan, seemingly, are being ignored. One does not have to travel far to witness an entirely different approach to community engagement with our river. Opposite the Town, within the City of Belmont, the Ayres Reserve and associated wetland in Ascot graphically illustrates this alternative approach. This large wetland reserve, in some respects more pristine than our own, is enhanced by a recently installed pathway closely following the riverbank. The environmental authorities and architects of this pathway saw no need to fence off the riverbank and install a second pathway and an excluding barrier in the hinterland, a basic tenet of the Master Plan. Rather they have embraced the riverside experience so enjoyed by the community. Photographs of a section of the Ayres Reserve pathway are enclosed in this report.

A notable distinction between the Ayres Reserve pathway and our Ashfield Flats, is the pathway linking Ashfield and Bassendean, for the most part, does not traverse a wetland, as some believe. Our thoroughfare is almost entirely situated within a parkland that historically, was a dairy farm and trotting track. It is higher above the river than Ayres Reserve and will not be affected by the predicted climate change induced inundation for many, many decades.

In the opinion of AshfieldCAN and its membership, supported by the results of a broad community survey conducted by DBCA, the course and outlook of our existing pathway should be maintained.

Finally, a reminder that one of our signature events, the Dog’s Breakfast at Sandy Beach is scheduled for Sunday October 27, with details to be published via signs and on our Face Book page. Our wonderfully supportive State Emergency Service will be cooking breakfast, once again.

Bob Brown

President

On behalf of the Committee and Membership

Ashfield Community Action Network

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