



PO BOX 271, EPPING 1710

2019 Annual Report

As the pace of development in Epping continues, 2019 was a very busy year for the Trust as it tried to keep on top of many council plans and papers, and frequent Development Applications. However, it was also a year when the Trust consolidated some new processes and also launched a number of new sub-committees to local at local issues beyond the Town Centre in more depth.

Key issues during the year that the Trust addressed were:

Development Applications: These kept coming in thick and fast – from small residential applications, medium density unit blocks, and huge major projects in the town centre. The Trust made submissions on numerous applications, or responded to existing applications as they passed through the various stages of approval. We spoke at Planning Panel meetings. Preparing responses to DAs takes time as there are numerous documents to read, and it is important to highlight areas where the application fails to meet zoning requirements or has additional impacts.

This year saw the first DA pass for a site on the west side of the railway in the area bordered by Beecroft Road and Rawson Street. The Trust has long lobbied for a proper master plan for this area as there are a number of developers vying to get major projects through, but no integrated plan for how the zone will work for the benefit of residents in the long term. The council has a key site in the Rawson Street car park which needs to be used for community use.

Council Liaison: The Trust thanks all our local councillors for their work – it is often a thankless, time consuming task and we appreciate the work they do with the Trust behind the scenes. From hundreds of street trees planted in North Epping, to the future Epping Community Centre – they are supporting new facilities for residents. Liaising with council staff, and being a conduit for resident's views to those working on our suburb is vital.

Infrastructure: Two major events happened in 2019 that will ultimately give Epping better community facilities. The Dence Park master plan was completed, and if properly funded (the next challenge!) will yield a new and larger aquatic centre, picnic/playground areas and a rejuvenated Creative Centre building. The Council also purchased the Boronia Grove function centre and started essential work to bring it up to code so it can start to be used for community activities in 2020.

However, challenges remain. There is a push within council to ultimately move the library from the east side (and presumably sell off that land). Whilst everyone wants to see a new modern library hub, the place for it is the current site rather than the community losing what is a publicly owned location.

At year end, news came that the planning proposal for the site bordering Epping and Blaxland Roads (incorporating the old Bowling club) has been turned down by the Department of Planning. This is an incredible opportunity for Council to join with the State Government and give visionary community space at this key location. There are no other areas of the size and locality.

Trust governance and membership: In early 2019, the Trust launched the option to join via the website. This is powered by a new database and offers members the option to pay via Paypal. In addition, they can now get the newsletter electronically, and more than two thirds have moved to that. The Trust membership has held steady at 379 members. Income from members (both annual dues and donations) ensure the Trust can undertake a range of activities, but it is needing to dip into reserves to engage expert reports and consultancy advice on some issues. A new Treasurer has modernised the Trust's accounts and payment systems.

Three sub committees now work to look after topics in more detail – North Epping and liaison with Hornsby Council, West Epping (west of town centre through to Carlingford) and Trees. These committees are also a great way for members to get involved in the work of the Trust. Four busy General Meetings were held with a range of speakers and topics, in particular focussing on the State and Federal elections and local candidates.

Thank You: To all members who have made submissions, attended meetings, got involved in the new sub committees, letterboxed flyers, and voiced support on Facebook – thank you.

To those on the committee – Vice President, Mike Moffatt, Treasurer, Leo Hart, Minutes secretary Ron Dunstan, Newsletter editor Judith Dawes, Committee members Graeme Wyber, Margaret McCartney, Anne Mulherin, Ruth Evans, Garry Humphrey – my appreciation and thanks. Also, to former committee members Emma Bush and Norman Jessup. The Trust also appreciates the work of Ian Scott on the website, and our auditor Ray Barnam.

Janet McGarry
President