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2014-2015 Annual Report

**La Perouse Precinct
AGM 2nd November 2015
Chairperson's Report**

Category: General Announcements
Posted by: Administrator

The past year saw three issues dominate the precinct landscape.

1. Urban Activation Precinct/Light Rail

The first of these was the Urban Activation Precincts (now Priority Precincts) and CBD and South East Light Rail development. Randwick was one of the first eight precincts announced to deliver more homes. With these developments came the relaxation of planning requirements.

We expressed regret [[Minute 7c, 03/11/2014](#)] that State and Environment Planning Policy No 65 [[SEPP 65](#)] removed the requirement for much needed parking spaces to be provided within apartments developments if they located within 800 metres of a light rail [[SEPP 65 - Car Parking](#)].

On the Light Rail front we saw little benefit and considerable disadvantage [[Minute 6c, 01/12/2014](#)] to our residents because of having to change between buses and trains (a bus and two trains for a visit to Prince of Wales hospital), and its imposition on the elderly or during inclement weather.

We affirmed our strong opposition to Light Rail [[Resolution 26/15, 01/06/2015](#)] citing detrimental effects on environmental and amenity values affecting us.

Our plight went unheard. Construction of the Light Rail is now well underway commencing with the closure Goerge Street closure [[City of Sydney Light Rail](#)].

2. Council Amalgamations/Fit for the Future

Immediately preceding the 2014 Mayoral elections, Council resolved [[Resolution 316/14 dated 23/09/2014](#)] that:

- it is unambiguously opposed to amalgamation;
- each and every councillor affirm that they are opposed to amalgamation even after 2016 Council Elections;
- and to fund a public awareness campaign opposing any amalgamation of Randwick Council.

However, sometime between September and December 2014, Council set sail in the opposite direction. It submitted a proposal to IPART seeking amalgamation with Waverley Council despite our strongest of objections. Our precinct's views (and that of the other precincts) were notably absent from Council's submissions and media statements.

We first heard of Council's change in direction in December 2015 [[Minute 6c, 01/12/2015](#)] and expressed our objections [[Minute 8 02/02/2015](#)] and strong opposition [[Resolution 25/15 01/06/2015](#)]. In response to Council's claim that the majority of residents were in favour of a merger option, we challenged Council's analysis [[Resolution 27/15, 01/06/2015](#)] based on our analysis of the raw data files provided by Council [[LGNSW Inquiry Submission No 169](#)].

Unhappy with the challenge and unable to fault the analysis, Council resorted to tactics that I can only describe as unprofessional. One councillor filed a code of conduct complaint against me alleging harassment while another (a ward councillor) made disparaging remarks and declared the me a "person non grata" having been expelled from his "inner circle of trust" [[Code of Conduct](#)].

Again our plight went unheard. Randwick and Waverley Councils submitted a merger proposal [[IPART, 29/06/2015](#)] that now set to proceed.

3. New Precinct Rules/Council's Code of Conduct

The last year saw Council's relentless pursuit to micromanage precincts. We believe this is its response to strong criticism from precincts of its recent policies and decisions. We are strongly opposed to the new measures being put in place because they serve to silence criticism and gag embarrassing revelations. We want precincts to continue operating as resident-run groups in accordance with Council's declared position on its website "Your voice on Council matters" [[Precinct Committees 02/11/2015](#)].

Council's rationale is that after 20 years of operation of precincts as resident-run groups it has now suddenly become clear that:

- publication of minutes of precinct meetings with discussions exposes it to "commercial and reputational risk";
- precinct meetings should not be open to public but restricted to residents and ratepayers from the local precinct;
- and that precincts are not resident-run groups but "Council Committees" and thus its members are bound by Council's code of conduct.

Despite Council having acknowledged that we have been one of the most active and successful precincts over the last 10 years [[General Manager, 08/03/2015](#)] there has been a notable absence of our minutes (and that of other precincts too) on Council's website in recent times. This is despite us repeatedly passing resolutions to have our minutes published on Council's website.

We responded by going online with our own website to publish agenda, minutes council responses and other information [[Minute 4, 07/09/2015](#)]. We resolved to allow anyone from outside our precinct to attend and contribute to our meetings [[Resolution 42/15, 07/09/2015](#)]

[\[Resolution 50/15, 12/10/2015\]](#). We also resolved to oppose and reject outright binding of any member of the precinct to Council's code of conduct [\[Resolution 37/15, 08/08/2015\]](#) [\[Resolution 41/15, 07/09/2015\]](#).

Yet again our plight went unheard. Council resolved to bind precinct executives to the its code of conduct [\[CM 28/07/2015 RESOLUTION 187/15\]](#).

Acknowledgements

Apart from the three issues above we had a good year. We held eleven meetings and had a quorum for all but one.

We now have a website to publish our notices, agenda, minutes of meetings, council responses, and other related information. In the next year we will be progressing towards incorporating on-line forum and self-subscribe mailing list.

We thank Hon Michael Daly MP, Cr Brendan Roberts Liberal Candidate and Mr James Cruz Greens Candidate for participating at our meet the candidates' forum in March that was also attended by members from Malabar and Matraville precincts.

We also thank the General Manager Ray Brownlee for his support of the precinct system and Council for the use of this excellent venue for our meetings. Thanks also to the Precinct Coordinator Giovanna Connolly for getting Council responses to precinct resolutions.

My personal thanks to staff members of council who have been of great assistance: Ingrid Watling, Senior Administrative Officer for handling registrations to address Council in a professional manner; David Levy, Desktop Publisher and Printer, for never failing to print flyers on short, often within hour or two of sending him our meeting flyer; and Mark Vreback of the Prince Henry Team for being especially patient and helpful in sorting out card key access problems, and for providing us support for our meetings without fail.

Thanks to Hyun Ja Kim, Secretary/Treasurer for managing our bank account, and for distributing meeting flyers. Special thanks to Charles Abela, my predecessor, for chairing the precinct over many years and also for his support and assistance during my first term as chair.

The precinct would like to express its appreciation of Cr Robert Belleli for taking time off his busy schedule to attend our meetings, for 'getting things done' and for his non-partisan support of precinct resolutions.

Last but not least, thank you all, including those who could not be here tonight, for your untiring support throughout the year.

Jayasooriah
Chairperson