



Alexandria Residents Action Group Convenor's Report

10 August 2017

Since the last AGM, it has again been a busy year – full of activity and progress for ARAG. The Convenors Vanessa Knight and Ben Aveling report the following:

Meetings

Meetings have been held every month in 2016/2017, except for January 2017.

ARAG continues to assist residents to face a significant number of issues that impact our area by actively providing them with information so that they are informed and can take action if they chose.

We continue the fight against WestCONnex, although this year, the focus has largely been on the proposed road widening of Euston Road/McEvoy Street (known as Alexandria to Moore Park Connectivity) which is being run by Roads & Maritime Services (RMS). In some sections, it is proposed that the road will be less than 180cm from people's homes which is of great concern.

We tried unsuccessfully to get speakers from RMS to attend an ARAG meeting to talk to residents about the road widening. We also strongly advocated for broader community consultation closer to Alexandria. We were able to secure two meetings with representatives of RMS, the ARAG Co-ordination Group and a number of resident and business representatives, but they would **not** agree to attend a regular ARAG meeting.

The meetings with RMS allowed ARAG to raise concerns on behalf of the community and we were able to secure the concession which allowed residents to email objections after the consultation period had closed.

We held a successful Lord Mayoral Candidates Forum in August 2016 in conjunction with Friends of Erskineville, RedWatch and Chippendale Residents Interest Group which was well attended.

We presented to the Planning Assessment Commission (PAC) on 17 November 2016 on ARAG's behalf on the proposed development of Australian Technology Park (ATP) by the consortium led by Mirvac with the Commonwealth Bank as a tenant. It was encouraging that a number of Alexandria residents also made presentations to the PAC.

We continue to be concerned about the ATP development and the real lack of planning in relation to transport and traffic management plans to outline how the additional 10,000 people per day will travel to and from ATP on a daily basis. In addition, the developer's ongoing commitment to the management of the heritage items is both questionable and disappointing.

On development applications, ARAG has supported residents in their direct action to save the Alexandria Hotel. With strong community opposition and support from the City of Sydney, the developer eventually gave up the plan for a 7-storey block on the beer garden with the pub being left intact. The Merivale Group has now purchased the Alex and we await information about their plans to re-open the hotel as a going concern.

On McEvoy Street, the Joshua Building has been an on-going issue, with private building certifiers having endorsed illegal changes to the approved plans. The certifier has now been sanctioned and the developer has been directed by Council to remediate the building elements that are illegal. This would not have been possible without the vigilance and continued action by a committed group of residents.

The community continues a watching brief on the site.



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With the active support of the ARAG Coordination Group and in response to suggestions and requests by residents, we have had a number of guest speakers and interesting topics during the year. These have included:

- August 16: - City of Sydney Lord Mayoral Candidates forum
- September 16: Proposed development of the Alexandria Hotel
- October 16: Alexandria Park Community School development, Alexandria's priorities for the City of Sydney, Australian Technology Park (ATP) planning process
- November 16: ATP development and the Planning Assessment Commission (PAC) hearing, impacts of WestConnex on Sydney Park and Sydney Metro
- December 16: Waterloo Metro, community wins for 2016
- February 17: McEvoy Street/Euston Rd widening, options for meeting venues
- March 17: Health impacts of WestConnex and McEvoy Street/Euston Rd widening
- April 17: NBN rollout in Alexandria, WestConnex and McEvoy Street/Euston Rd widening
- May 17: WestConnex and McEvoy Street/Euston Rd widening, 163-17 Euston Road development, Act4Alexandria
- June 17: Traffic calming in Alexandria, Act4 Alexandria social media campaign, update on 163-17 Euston Road development, update on ATP
- July 17: McEvoy Street/Euston Rd widening – update on meeting with RMS, ATP heritage plans

As always, the ARAG Coordination Group have forwarded a number of messages to the ARAG email group to inform them of what is happening with WestCONnex, the development of Australian Technology Park, the Alexandria Hotel, and also on other topics.'

ACT4Alexandria

ARAG now has a campaign vehicle which has a social media presence using Facebook, called Act4Alexandria. There are two key campaign issues – WestConnex and the McEvoy Street/ Euston Road widening, and demanding a metro station for Alexandria.

Residents have participated in actions including handing out leaflets at the RMS consultations and also at the new Alexandria Woolworths to inform and activate residents.

We will continue to build on this campaign vehicle.

Continuing Support from Council

ARAG continues to get strong support from the City of Sydney and we are pleased to advise that Councillor Jess Miller has agreed to be the key contact between ARAG and the Council. We were also pleased that one of the newer Councillors, Cr Craig Chung attended the May 2017 meeting.

Alexandria Fair

ARAG was successful in its application for the three year Festival and Events grant from the City of Sydney for the 2017, 2018 and 2019 period. This provided ARAG with more funding than previously. The Alexandria Sunday Funday was held for the fourth time on 26 March 2017.

It was our largest Fair yet, with additional participants and activities compared to past years. With the additional funding, we were able to supply a free petting zoo and face painting along with the jumping castles.



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We finally secured power to Alexandria Park for the food stalls, rides and PA system which made things much easier.

There was strong community interest in the ARAG stand, with big maps being displayed of WestConnex. Residents were able to ask questions of ARAG members who manned the stand.

Financials

ARAG is in good shape financially as per the Treasurer's Report. The proceeds from the Alexandria Sunday Funday have contributed strongly to ARAG's financial position.

ARAG's Reputation

ARAG is proud of its growing reputation as an effective residents' group which brings together residents and experts to ensure that the community is informed and can make decisions about actions that individuals and groups can take – whether it is about local development or larger state government issues.

Special Thanks to the Coordination Group and others

The Convenors would like to thank the members of the Coordination Group including Joy Brookes, Yvonne Cowell, Jim Patsouris, Katie Lawley, Mark Troy, Greg Smith, Marie Flood, Danny Carroll and Gary Speechley.

Greg and Katie have recently resigned from the Co-Ordination Group and we thank them for their contribution and commitment.

We would also like to thank our volunteers who distribute the flyers every month – Eric Jackson, Robyn Fairfax-Ross, Greg and Geralyn Smith, Marie Flood, Kathie Speechley, Mark Troy, and Yvonne Cowell.

The volunteers who helped organise the Alexandria Sunday Funday also deserve a special mention – Cynthia Talone, Jodi Hawthorne, Yvonne Cowell, Michael Lassman, Nick Stevens, Tania Robinson, and Gary Speechley.

Invitation to Join the Coordination Group

Members are invited to join the Coordination Group and assist with the ongoing management of ARAG. The pay is as meagre as ever, but the satisfaction is endless.

Also – there is fun to be had – come and join us.

Ben Aveling

and

Vanessa Knight