

Dear Neighbours,

Our first Millers Point Community Resident Action Group meeting of the year was held on Tuesday night at the Abe Mott Hall - and only our second in-person meeting since Covid hit in March 2020. We plan to continue the in-person meetings as Covid restrictions (hopefully) are relaxed.

Here is a quick summary of the major topics.

Windmill St Revitalisation Project

Marc Lucas of the recently formed Windmill St Association (representing owners of terraces on 1-63 Windmill St) spoke to the meeting on some ideas and projects to improve the general safety and amenity of Windmill St, as well as seek to return the 1-63 Windmill St terrace row to its original external appearance. They are seeking a Heritage NSW grant to re-point the front of their terrace group. The MPC RAG is supportive of their efforts and will work with them and other Windmill St residents on the safety and amenity issues impacting the street.

Kent St Cycleway Diversion

We were very pleased to have Councillor Philip Thalis attend our meeting and give his update on this critical community issue.

Over the Christmas period, TfNSW briefed Philip (who is the chair of the Local Pedestrian, Traffic Calming and Cycling Committee) on the Kent St cyclist diversion proposal. Both he and Alex Greenwich decided not to support the proposal and advised that if it came to a formal vote, they would vote against it. To say that would be a rare thing would be an understatement. It demonstrates that the proposal is seriously flawed and the proponents (School Infrastructure aka Department of Education and TfNSW) should go back to the drawing board and devise a solution that remains on Observatory Hill.

Over the last few weeks, the City of Sydney (led by their Chief Operating Office, Kim Woodbury) have been in discussions with School Infrastructure and TfNSW and their construction contractor, LendLease. The discussions are continuing with our continued optimism that this seriously flawed proposition will be defeated.

We continue to be in discussions with the City of Sydney, Alex Greenwich, the Langham Hotel (who has retained both government relations and legal advice) and residents on further strategies to defeat proposal.

Future Planning with the City of Sydney

We continue to engage with the City on a forward looking agenda, with the issue of traffic conditions at the centre of these discussions. Whether it be additional traffic on Argyle St due to the specious George St partial closure, hoons speeding down Windmill St, pedestrian safety at unmarked street crossings, or just being the u-turn capital of Sydney, we feel there is considerable work to be done. This all has to happen of course in a heritage-sensitive manner, which, as all know, slows things down a tad. We will keep you updated.

Sydney Theatre Company Trading Hours

You will recall an application was made in November 2020 by the NSW Department of Planning to allow up to 3am trading hours for STC venues. This was vigorously opposed by the RAG and the Walsh Bay Precinct Association at the time. The application was withdrawn and STC reiterated all they want to do is

reflect current custom and practice on post-show functions where selected guests/patrons and performers and crew mingle to celebrate a successful opening night. This view was reiterated at a meeting Yasmina and I attended last week with STC.

We await whatever application unfolds from the Department of Planning and will review it carefully. The devil is always in the detail. We must also be cognisant of what might be sought for Pier 2-3 when it is completed and its "function centre" becomes operational. Pier 2-3 is managed by Create NSW not STC.

Short Term Rental Update

You may have noticed an increasing number of properties that had been AirBnB venues are now being put up as long term rentals. This can only be a good thing as we are a residential neighbourhood, not party central.

Apart from the influence of Covid, this is also being driven by a change in policy from the City of Sydney. They have effectively declared short term renting illegal under our zoning regulations (we are zoned "residential" not "tourist and visitor accommodation").

There is now the ability to directly report unauthorised short term letting to Council. Please see the link below. We encourage you to report a property near you if it is being used for this purpose. The only way we will achieve the level of residential amenity many other suburbs naturally enjoy is to rid Millers Point of the short term letting menace.

<https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/report-issue/report-unauthorised-and-illegal-accommodation>

Treasurer's Report

Jim Warren, our Treasurer, gave us the good news that the Millers Point calendar project has swelled the coffers nicely, with both a combination of sold-out calendar revenue and donations from local pubs. Special shout-out to our resident artist, David Wilson, who painted the original images. We thank all who made a contribution to this including you the calendar buyer!

Millers Point Farmers Market

The highly successful and popular Millers Point Farmers' Market has now been going for 14 months. Well done to all involved, particularly Heather for driving the idea. Your continued support and publicising among your neighbours and friends would be most appreciated.

Thank you for reading this far. As always, if you have any suggestions, comments, feedback, criticism, please don't hesitate to contact me.

And yes, this is a new email address. It will ensure all RAG email correspondence is maintained under one digital roof.

All the best,

Bernard