



# Artarmon

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# GAZETTE

Newsletter of the Artarmon Progress Association

## What's happening in Willoughby in 2009?

*This article is a summary of the issues currently facing Council, and the planned responses, as outlined in both an address by Nick Tobin, General Manager of Willoughby City Council (WCC), to the Federation of Willoughby Progress Associations on 6 December 2008; and in an address by Greg Woodhams, Director of Environmental Services, WCC, at a meeting of the Castlecrag Progress Association on 28 October 2008. The Gazette would like to thank Bob McKillop, Editor of 'The Crag' (Newsletter of the Castlecrag Progress Association), for much of the material contained in this article.*

**Residential Strategy:** Under pressure from the NSW government, WCC is required to provide 6800 new dwellings for future residents. 1400 of these will be provided in high density developments in the CBD, while the remainder will need to be provided in other areas of the city.

**Chatswood CBD:** As a result of a number of developments taking place in the CBD, the commercial area will increase from 190,000 to 250,000 m<sup>2</sup> and the retail workforce, currently 8000, is growing as a consequence. This will generate attendant traffic and transport congestion and parking issues.

**Victoria Avenue Mall:** Plans for an estimated \$3-5 million upgrade of the Mall are expected to go on display early in 2009. An application for funding is to be made under the Federal Government's Infrastructure grants to local government.

**Chatswood Transport Interchange:** The construction project for the new transport interchange has been very frustrating for Council. The developer, Transport Infrastructure Development Corporation (TIDC), frequently ignored Council staff advice, leading to unsatisfactory outcomes with regard to access and connecting transport.

Council recently won a case for settlement from TIDC for an undisclosed sum in relation to compensation for Council land resumed for the Interchange.

CRI Chatswood, the Interchange builder, is in the hands of an Administrator. Shops are expected to open in May. There has been a suggestion that other builders may be interested in taking over the tower construction. Despite other options for an evacuation

route from the towers, TIDC compulsorily acquired a 5-metre wide easement over the Memorial Gardens.

**Changes to NSW Planning Legislation:** The new NSW planning legislation comes into operation in late February 2009. A core element of the reforms is the idea of defining 'Complying Development' through a series of codes for different types of development in an effort to streamline the planning and approval process. WCC will have to make significant changes to handle process under this scheme. One outcome of the legislation is that residents will not receive any advice on complying development until 48 hours before construction starts.

The first code, for single storey houses, will have limited application in the Willoughby local government area. Two-storey houses will be much more complex. Views are not addressed in the codes, but overshadowing is likely to be a big issue with two-storey houses. After pressure from local councils, FSR (floor:space ratio) controls have been reinstated to the codes.

The Artarmon Conservation Area, and other existing WCC conservation zones, is currently exempt from these measures, but many of the factors that contribute to the character of the street may not be protected. For non-complying development in Conservation Areas, existing procedures remain with DAs to be assessed against existing planning controls.

**Council Governance and Finance:** In combination with the changes to NSW planning laws, Council will take the opportunity to move towards a more integrated planning approach. In line with State government requirements, Council expects to introduce a new management plan and budget during 2009. This will be integrated with the WLEP and 10-year Strategic Plan and will incorporate performance indicators.

A Federal grant of \$3.8 million was obtained for remedial works to the CBD storm water system, and Council is hopeful of obtaining a minimum \$2 million grant under the Federal Government's recently announced infrastructure scheme.

**Process Improvement Committee:** This new Council committee has replaced the Communications Committee. Its aim is to foster good governance by identifying and

improving business processes. The Committee comprises a Councillor from each ward, and interested members of the public.

**Council Works Depot:** The 99-year lease of the old Reserve Road Depot in Artarmon yielded \$52 million. Council's new Gibbs Street Depot is expected to open March 2009 at a cost of \$23-24 million and should return around \$1 million per year from leased commercial premises.

The old depot is being developed into an integrated bulky goods home and lifestyle centre, to be called North Shore HomeHQ. The heritage features of the building are required to be retained in the development, which will have over 22,000 sq metres of retail space, and over 500 parking spaces.

**Dementia Day Care Centre:** WCC has provided a property for the establishment of a centre in Sydney Street which is expected to provide respite for 40 - 50 families per week.

**Artarmon Industrial Area (AIA) Bus:** Scheduled to commence in mid 2009, this will be a significant positive step in providing accessible and timely public transport to the AIA. The bus will operate on a fixed route throughout the AIA during the day, to and from St Leonards station. Artarmon station is not currently planned as part of the route. Readers in the AIA will soon see bus stops being constructed. A comprehensive article on the new bus service will appear in the May edition of the Gazette.

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How will NSW Planning Legislation changes affect Artarmon? Come to the Public Information Meeting at Artarmon Bowling Club, 8pm, 24 February. More on page 2.