

# Artarmon

www.artarmonprogress.org.au

Edition 47  
August 2009

## GAZETTE

Newsletter of the Artarmon Progress Association

### A tale of two (or three) "community centres"

by Alethea Morison

#### The 'new' library / community centre

Plans to upgrade the renovated church buildings on the corner of Tindale and Artarmon Roads as a new library and community centre (Gazette, May 2009) are rapidly taking shape. Willoughby Council's planners have been working with access consultants, structural engineers and library staff on fit-out of the new library and hall to create an inviting and exciting community space.

The plans will be unveiled when Council lodges the development application in August and nearby residents and the APA will be invited to comment. Anyone interested can also visit the proposal display at the Council offices in Victor St, Chatswood. An external, independent town planning consultant will assess the development application before its determination by Council. If consent is granted, the hall will be made available for public use while fit-out of the new library continues.

Council proposes that the name, 'David Warner Community Centre', borne by the existing library in Elizabeth St, should travel to the new site. Curiously, the name of this eminent Artarmon citizen is even more apt at the new location.

A former Artarmon councillor and Willoughby Mayor, David Warner was born in Tindale Rd in 1920, the son of a returned Gallipoli veteran. Following his own war service in the Middle East and New Guinea, David was married to Janette Brodie of Artarmon at the church on Tindale Rd in 1948. The church bell, salvaged from a sailing wreck, was heard for the first time in Artarmon when it rang to mark their nuptials.

The APA urged David to run for Council in 1969. He represented Naremburn Ward until 1974, for the last four years as Mayor, directing such events as the Willoughby Centenary Week in 1965 and Youth Spectacular. In professional life he was a cartographer and ultimately General Manager of Gregory's.

David and his family were very active in the Artarmon Presbyterian Church. His

father, Vernon, was the first Sunday School Superintendent in 1926, and David's roles included elder, youth worker and convening the annual fete. Prominent preachers of the era at the church included the Reverend Dr John Flynn of Royal Flying Doctor Service fame and the \$20.00 note.

As well as the church and APA, David's energetic local involvement spanned the Artarmon P&C, Boy Scouts, Masonic Lodge, Rotary Club and presidency of the Chatswood High P&C. It is clear that he epitomised the community spirit that still inspires and unites Artarmon today.

#### Kids Cottage

In 2001, the APA had encouraged Council to purchase the Tindale Rd church, when it was originally sold. Ironically, at the August 2001 APA meeting, and as reported in the Gazette of May 2002, Mayor Pat Reilly was adamant that the purchase of another property was neither feasible nor necessary, as the Council was committed to developing Kids Cottage as a community space.

Built in 2002, Kids Cottage, just off Broughton Rd, was originally conceived as a community centre, and Council spent more than \$2.6m on the building, surrounds and fitout. Calls to extend its public uses and operating hours did then, and have since, met with resistance from neighbouring residents, concerned mainly about the potential impacts of noise and increased traffic. The building has therefore been used only for weekday child care and Council office space.

Recently, renewed pressure on Council from community groups for access to this facility has resulted in the formation of a committee to advise Council on the possible terms and conditions to be included in a Development Application for extended community use. The APA continues to push for community facilities in west Artarmon where the suburb's population is concentrated.

#### The existing library

Meanwhile, the proposed re-development of the existing library site at Elizabeth St has



*Kids Cottage in White St, Artarmon*

been at least postponed by the church purchase and refurbishment. In the short term, pending the site's re-development, the current library premises are expected to be leased and Noah's Ark toy library will remain in situ.

While the Tindale Rd property is a great new asset and opportunity for Artarmon, the future of the current library site remains a major issue. Together with the station and shops, it forms part of the heart and hub of Artarmon and helps make it a functional, vibrant community. It is less subject to noise and traffic constraints than the other community centre locations.

In response to strong petitioning and submissions from the community, Council had agreed to re-develop the current library site as a community centre, meeting the highest standards of sustainability. It is hoped that planning to redevelop the entire library precinct, incorporating the library and other community uses and maintaining the commitment to sustainable development, will proceed in 2010. This will not be an easy process, with RailCorp's long term plans for duplication of the North Shore line and re-developing Artarmon Station potentially cutting across any plans by Council to re-develop the adjacent land.

Council now has three community buildings in Artarmon, and subsequently, more flexibility to match building use to local environmental impact.

Council, APA and Artarmon residents will need to continue to work together to rejuvenate our existing community space in Elizabeth St while sensitively creating new community places at the Tindale Rd premises and Kids Cottage.

*(The Gazette thanks Janette Warner for information about David Warner)*

Hear Nick Logan talk about "Drugs, alcohol & safe parties at home - how to have fun & keep safe!" - Artarmon Bowling Club, 8pm, 25 Aug. More on page 2.