

## There is movement round the station...

by Peter Egan and Barry Thompson

**RUMOURS** abound concerning the future of Artarmon station and about changes to the shopping strip in Hampden Rd. Revival of a local Chamber of Commerce (CoC) under the banner 'Artarmon Village' is mooted. We will try to provide a context for these activities and question if and when the community will have a chance to have its say.

Two empty shops confront all those who come off the trains and enter Hampden Rd. Efforts to fill one have come to nothing over a three year span. The second went vacant after the dry cleaner's lease ran out in mid-2013. Suggestions for 'pop-up' shops appear not to have been taken up. The adjacent butcher shop's lease ends in March. There seems a chance that this lease will be extended. With a second DA for development on this significant aggregated site still to be evaluated by Council Officers and then by

Councillors, there is the prospect that these shops will remain unoccupied or under construction for several years.

These empty shops plus the loss of other businesses along the strip (Vinnies and most recently Marriott Lane) has led to questioning of the future for our strip. Our local councillors, bless 'em, have taken the issue to Council where sympathetic officers have said 'we can help, but the initiative has to come from the businesses and their landlords'. Therein lies the genesis for the revival of a CoC.

It is not all bad. Breaking news suggests a licence is being sought for a second liquor outlet in place of real estate while the Vinnies site might see a more extreme makeover into a tattoo parlour. Can a CoC or Council impact these commercial decisions and developments? We think not. But it is possible to set a tone, hence the proposal of 'Artarmon Village'. Part of Council's offer is provision of a consultant to offer suggestions of how a 'village' ambiance might be established.

As the strip changes, so too is change mooted for the station. When a 4000+ signature petition was presented recently to local State representative and Minister for Transport, Gladys Berejiklian, outside the station, she indicated an imminent announcement of changes much more comprehensive than provision of disabled access. Rumour has it that a new station is planned as part of line duplication between Chatswood and St Leonards. The entrance to the 'new' station will be opposite Jersey Rd. Whether that entrance will be for a permanent station or a temporary one while the existing station is reconfigured is the

**BIG** question. A permanent relocation has the potential for major impacts on businesses and property values....a great reason for their owners to band together to find out what is going on. Residential property owners also are affected since the west-side zonings and 50 years of development are predicated on the station in its present location. We might argue that Council also needs to know what the future holds before they spend money to plan a redevelopment of the old library site in Elizabeth St.

If the rail changes are part of the NW rail-link and a plan to relieve congestion at Chatswood station, then time is short and it behoves our community to find out what is going on and not be just one link in a chain of unintended consequences. What do you think? Send your view to your Progress Association (See how on P2) or better still, come along to our next meeting on Wednesday April 2 and make your views known. ■

**VALE**

**Patrick Thomas  
Reilly**

25 Dec 1952 – 20 Jan 2014

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