

Theo Francis and the Artarmon Village Green

By Marianne Nestor, APA Heritage Committee

Theo Wesley Francis (1907- 1970) and his wife Marjorie were Artarmon residents and well known and liked in the community. They lived in White Street and established a radio and electrical business, first in Wilkes Avenue and later in Hampden Road.

Both Theo and Marjorie contributed significantly to the community: Theo worked towards the improvement and development of Artarmon as a suburb, and particularly as a shopping precinct. He was a founder council member of the Artarmon Chamber of Commerce (1951) and he envisaged and produced the original plan for the Artarmon Village Green. The Village Green, in honour of pioneer residents, was dedicated in 1968.

Marjorie helped in the shop but also taught piano, played the organ and sang at St Basil's and was active in the Girl Guide Movement.



Following Theo's sudden death in 1970, the community launched a fund to provide a memorial to him. With the support of Willoughby Council and the Railways, an old-time railway lantern was erected on the Village Green in 1971. The dedication reads:

This historic railway lantern was erected by the Artarmon Community as a tribute to the late Theodore Wesley Francis, businessman and resident of Artarmon, for his untiring interest and work in the development and improvement of the suburb.

The lantern has deteriorated over the years and the APA has recently liaised with Willoughby Council to have it repaired. We are promised the work will be completed during November.

Next time you visit the Artarmon shopping precinct, take the time to walk through the Village



Green and read the dedications to Theo Francis and the early pioneers of our suburb.

Information for this article was provided by Neil Houston, nephew of Mr Francis, and articles in *The Clarion*, Nov 4, 1970 and *North Shore Times*, Nov 25, 1970.

PHYSIOTHERAPY

For seventeen years, Physiotherapist Ann Liebert has run her practice in Artarmon, specialising in:

- Back pain
- Musculo-skeletal pain
- Sports injuries
- Occupational-related pain
- Neck headaches

ANN LIEBERT
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Artarmon pays more than fair share of rates by Robert Newman

When Council talks about 'rates', it refers to the rates bill that comes each August. That bill has three parts: (1) a levy set according to the notional value of the land component of each residence (the unimproved capital value), (2) a waste collection charge and (3) a charge for maintenance of the stormwater collection system.

For 2008/9, the waste and the stormwater charges were set at \$330 and \$25 per household (\$12.50 per strata unit).

In 2008, Council agreed unanimously that the minimum rate levy did not adequately distribute among the total residential community the costs of the services provided to that community by Council. Council supported a minimum rate levy increase of 30%, spread over three years (3 x 10%). The minimum rate amount continues to be indexed to the CPI. The combined effect of this increase to the minimum rate and the doubling of Council's e.restore levy is that this minimum rate payable increased by 12.5% this year.

A corresponding decrease in general rates of around 0.4%, and the addition of the e.restore levy, increases rates by 5.2% for owners not paying the minimum rate. This minimum rate increase also applies to business rates.

So why should this matter to Artarmon? In the Willoughby Local Government Area (WLGA), 45% of residences are units; in Artarmon, 75% of residences are units. The net result is that around 27% of the increase in domestic general rates (the domestic rates levy excluding domestic rates charges) for the WLGA will be sourced from Artarmon this year and over the subsequent two years, while Artarmon represents only 16% of the WLGA's residences and population.

The table below shows current and projected domestic general rates to 2010/2011 (full details of the assumptions made and calculations can be downloaded from the APA website). In each column, the first figure (A) is the domestic rate levy, and the second (B) is how much of the first

figure goes towards e.restore.

The average house in the WLGA will get a 6.2% increase this year – but what about the 45% of residences (mainly units, with a disproportionate number of these being in Artarmon) who will get a 20% increase this year?

I live in a block of 8 units, containing 13 people in total. Between us in 2007/08 we would have paid as much in rates as 5 houses, which is on par with the average for Willoughby of 2.7 people per household. By 2010/11 we will pay as much as 6 houses but sit on about as much land as a typical house block.

Council does a great job and the extra couple of dollars a week isn't going to kill us; but I have to wonder how much of the extra money beyond their share of the increase (over the 3 years) will be returned to benefit the unit owners and the wider community of Artarmon.

Domestic rate levy A, and e.restore contribution B	Artarmon (\$)	Willoughby LGA (\$)	Average House (\$)	Unit (\$)
2007/08	527.91A (34.21)B	659.92 (42.77)	855.81 (55.46)	419.40 (27.18)
2008/09	604.05 (73.88)	726.66 (88.87)	908.59 (111.12)	503.30 (61.55)
2009/10 projection	640.99 (76.06)	748.99 (88.87)	909.19 (107.88)	552.29 (65.53)
2010/11 projection	680.31 (78.31)	772.09 (88.87)	908.19 (104.54)	604.99 (69.64)
Projected 3 year increase	28.9%	17.0%	6.1%	44.3%