

YOUTH VOICE

By Karina Curry-Hyde



We moved into our house when I was about three years old. The cracked driveway, colourful tiling and red-tiled roof held some peculiar delight to my imaginative eyes. I quickly learnt to dodge the gumnuts on the front pathway and to pull out the splinters in my small toes, of which our deck was very generous with. Then came the old tyre swing at the bottom of the garden, the thrilling adventures carried out behind the paint-peeling garage and the epic stories of survival carried out by myself and my neighbour. As I grew bigger I discovered the adventures waiting just outside the front gate. My wanderings in the reserve, down to the oval, the old park, cramming as many children as possible into the old slide, these days were innocent and full of creation. We would walk home from school together, convinced every car that drove past was spying on us. The notebooks I have, filled with the descriptions of each person we passed, the number plates of each car that drove by, I was fully prepared for any type of heist that might affront us on those walks home.

Then our house was renovated. Gone was the worn deck, the old garage, the cracked driveway. The colourful tiles were redone and the red roof was retiled. My bedroom, which conveniently looked into my next-door neighbour's house, the window through which we planned our many games, was turned into the spare room, I was upgraded to the front

room. I grew out of primary school, started high school and lost that creative child-like innocence. I discovered horizons beyond my, at one time, seemingly endless Artarmon boundaries. I grew up.

I miss the days, when the tree out the front could be a rocket ship one day and a castle the next. I miss the times that I would willingly spin on the tyre swing until I couldn't walk straight. As I grow older though, I realise more and more how it doesn't last forever. The oval no longer sinks endearingly on one side, the park has new equipment for the next lot of children to play their many games and the walk home is dotted with yellow Safe Houses should any imaginative children assume they are under attack. New children will create their childhood, learn how to dodge the gumnuts and find the limit to which they can spin before falling over.

Nonetheless, the new tiles, the new bedroom, the new walk to school, these will hold the teenage years and the stories yet to come. ■

HAVE YOU A STORY TO TELL OR AN
OPINION ON A LOCAL ISSUE? ARE
YOU UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE? THIS
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