

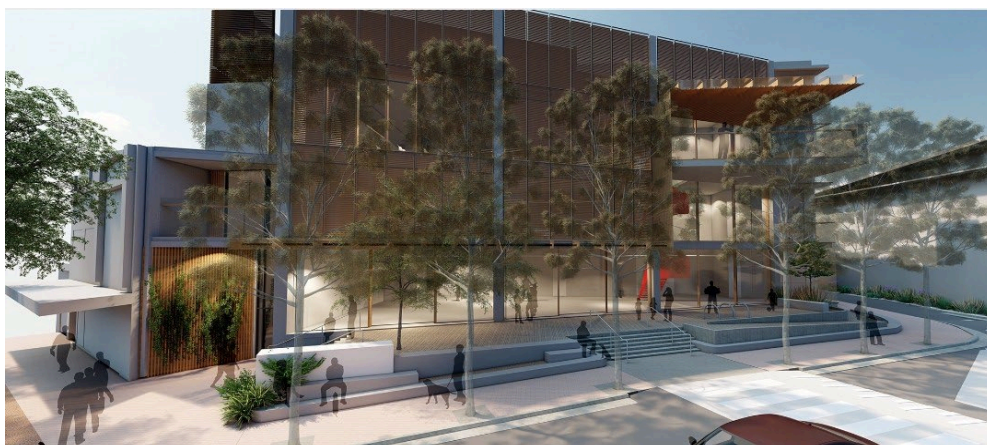
Hi Everyone,

Council life has been busy as usual. Here are a few important updates. Please email or call if you have any questions or concerns: [merrill.witt@woollahra.nsw.gov.au](mailto:merrill.witt@woollahra.nsw.gov.au), 0412 145 289.

Topics covered in this newsletter:

- **Community Meeting re Wilberforce Avenue Car Park, Tuesday, 4 July, 6.30 pm, Rose Bay RSL**
- **Strategic & Corporate Committee meeting to discuss the amended draft Double Bay Planning and Urban Design Strategy, Monday, 17 July 2023, 6.30 pm Woollahra Council Chambers or via Zoom**
- **State and Federal government cost shifting to local councils**
- **Cooper Park Ward Community Meeting**
- **Final decision on whether to continue Development Applications notifications in the Wentworth Courier to be made at tomorrow night's Council meeting, Monday, 26 June 2023**

### Upcoming community meeting re Wilberforce Avenue Car Park



A [community meeting](#) will be held at 6.30 pm on Tuesday 4 July 2023 at the Rose Bay RSL, 1 Vickery Ave Rose Bay, to discuss the redevelopment of the Wilberforce Avenue Car Park (see proposed design above).

The new facility will more than double the existing car parking spaces and include new community spaces, public toilets and a parents' room.

Council has been working on ways to address the temporary loss of parking over the anticipated 2-year construction period for the new facility, with work expected to commence no earlier than mid 2024.

RSVP by Monday 3 July 2023, [rsvp@woollahra.nsw.gov.au](mailto:rsvp@woollahra.nsw.gov.au)

### **Strategic & Corporate Committee meeting to discuss the amended Double Bay Planning and Urban Design Strategy, Monday 17 July 2023**

As you recall, last year the public was invited to comment on a proposal to lift the height limit in the Double Bay Commercial Centre to 6 storeys. The draft Double Bay Commercial

Centre Planning and Urban Design Strategy has subsequently been amended and Councillors were given a confidential briefing earlier this month. A revised draft planning strategy will be discussed at the Strategic and Corporate Committee meeting at 6.30 pm on Monday, 17 July 2023.

You can send in Late Correspondence to [records@woollahra.nsw.gov.au](mailto:records@woollahra.nsw.gov.au) or [register to speak](#) at the meeting. (Councillors have been informed that the draft revised planning strategy will be loaded onto Council's website at least a week before the meeting.)

### **Copper Ward community meeting**

Last Tuesday night, the Mayor and Cooper Ward Councillors were joined by Woollahra Council's General Manager and other members of the executive team at a community meeting for residents of the Cooper Ward.

Many of the issues raised are also relevant to the Vaucluse ward. Community concerns included inadequate local bus services, parking pressures, the impact of excavation for new developments on surrounding homes, inappropriate development, stormwater run-off, pruning of trees on public land and a desire for more urban greening.

I will be advocating for a similar meeting to take place soon for the Vaucluse Ward. If you have any topics you would like to include on the proposed agenda, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

### **State and federal government cost shifting to local councils**



I've just returned from the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) Conference in Canberra. We were reminded that the federal Labor Government has not yet delivered on its promise to [restore](#) Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs) to 1% of total Australia-wide taxation revenue. In percentage terms, FAGs have been declining for the last 20 years with the level currently at .5% of total tax revenue.

FAGs are an important source of revenue for local councils. Most of the funds are untied, meaning councils can choose how to spend the grants. Woollahra Council received approximately \$1.8 million from FAGs in the 2022 -2023 financial year.

The state government also has a long record of cost-shifting to local councils. Woollahra Council has estimated that the [impact of cost-shifting](#) on the 2020-21 budget was approximately \$4.78 million. The ongoing problem of cost shifting is exacerbated by the inability of local councils to raise additional revenue from rates and other sources. Annual rate rises, for example, are pegged by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART), and in recent years the Rate Peg has not kept pace with inflation.

Woollahra Council's [application to IPART for a Special Rate Variation \(SRV\)](#) of 10% plus the rate peg of 3.7% for 2023/24 and 5% plus the rate peg of 2.5% for 2024/25 was recently approved. Whilst the SRV will enhance the Council's financial stability position and allow the funding of improved infrastructure and services, the necessity for SRVs would be less likely if cost shifting from other levels of government was stopped and preferably reversed.

If you would like more information on the underfunding of our local governments by both the federal and state governments, see the [Agenda for tomorrow night's Council meeting](#), 26 June 2023.

I encourage you to ask our local and federal MPs to advocate for more local government funding:

Kelly Sloan MP, Member for Vaucluse, [vaucluse@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:vaucluse@parliament.nsw.gov.au), (02) 9326 1856  
Allegra Spender MP, Member for Wentworth, [Allegra.Spender.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:Allegra.Spender.MP@aph.gov.au) (02) 9327 3988

### **DA notifications in the Wentworth Courier**

Many residents have been in touch with me and other Councillors to express concerns about an impending decision to cease advertisement in the Wentworth Courier of DA notifications and DA decisions issued by Council.

The matter will be finalised at tomorrow night's meeting. See Agenda, [13.2 Environmental Planning Committee, R1 Post-Exhibition Report - Amendment to the Woollahra Community Participation Plan](#), page 127.

Given that Council staff has confirmed that implementing a system for providing regular updates of DA notifications via email is not yet possible, in the spirit of open and transparent communication, I will be voting to continue the advertising of DA notifications in the Wentworth Courier.

Thanks again for your invaluable feedback.

Regards,

Merrill

Merrill Witt, Woollahra Councillor for the Vaucluse Ward  
[merrill.witt@woollahra.nsw.gov.au](mailto:merrill.witt@woollahra.nsw.gov.au)  
0412 145 289