

# WEST ST KILDA RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION Inc

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR 2021-2022

### Membership

For the 2021-22 year, there were 104 paid up members, a decrease on the 170 members at 30 June 2021. We believe this reduction is due to the disruptions caused to our neighbourhood and our lives during the past two years of Covid. We would like the membership levels to increase again as it is important to be able to claim strong support from St Kilda West residents. We had a committee of ten members giving their time and using their skills to bring attention to the issues that we were addressing. In addition, a number of other members were involved as we dealt with City of Port Phillip staff and councillors and some joined the committee members to assist with newsletter distribution. We continued to see generous financial donations from members, providing valuable support to our subscriptions.

### Routine activities

Of course, the Covid-19 pandemic affected our activities through the year. Despite this, as far as possible, we continued with our routine activities:

- regular Committee meetings every two months- although some by Zoom;
- distribution of regular emails to members; and
- distribution of two newsletters to every household in West St Kilda.

Despite the scheduling difficulties of Covid we were able to hold a number of events for residents: a coffee morning, an end of year gathering in the park, and our belated 2021 AGM in March this year.

### Key issues

As you all know, the 20-21 year was dramatically affected by, significant lockdowns, changes to work practices and major impacts on the hospitality industry. These changes also had significant impacts on issues we have been working on such as local traffic, events, and the rejuvenation of Fitzroy Street.

- Traffic Congestion: Since the 'opening up' after Covid, rat running traffic has again become a significant issue. Gary Edwards and Peter Denson, two of our members have continued to focus on these problems. As a result of this work, Council has conducted a number of traffic counts in our streets. They now seem to agree there is a problem and we met with a number of Council officers who are happy to work with us on finding a solution.
- Hooning: WSKRA joined with the Beacon Cove Neighbourhood Group (BCNG) to raise concerns about hooning in our neighbourhoods. As a result, Council hired, and subsequently purchased, a mobile video trailer to be used by police in our local neighbourhoods to both act as a deterrent and to manage hooning events. WSKRA and BCNG have also joined a State Government task force with local governments, police and other community groups to make recommendations on controlling hooning. As part of this work we highlighted to the taskforce the use of 'noise cameras' overseas to help manage excessive vehicle noise. These cameras are like speed cameras but record point of time excessive vehicle noise.

## WEST ST KILDA RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION Inc

- 
- Event Management and Related Noise Issues: Covid led to a dramatic reduction in the number of events and consequent problems. However, since the 'opening up', events have again become an issue for some residents. We, like many residents, were surprised at the lack of any community involvement in the approval of a ferris wheel in Catani Gardens. We objected to the the lack of consultation and the apparent failure to properly consider impacts. However, the approval still went ahead. Fortunately, it seems that the impacts were not too detrimental. Council has recently developed a new Event Management policy. We, and a number of our members, provided input focussing on the need for the policy to minimise impacts on the environment and the amenity of residents. Council has assured us that this is the case. Time will tell.
  - Public Toilets: The lack of public toilets had been raised as an issue concerning residents. We had highlighted the lack of public toilets in Fitzroy Street to Council and the dilapidated nature of the toilet block at the end of Cowderoy Street in the Beaconsfield Parade nature strip. In conjunction with Council, WSKRA selected and funded a street artist to rejuvenate the outside of the Cowderoy Street toilets. We were able to select a street artist- Buff Diss, who grew up in the local neighbourhood... although from the distant suburb of Middle Park. We have received many favourable reviews of the work. The toilets have been made much more presentable and the toilets are now being well patronised. Hopefully, the Council will take further action to improve the toilets internally!
  - Proposed Albert Park Redistribution: WSKRA argued against a proposal to separate our area from other bayside electorates and join an electorate in Prahran. Fortunately, this did not happen.
  - Flooding in our Streets: We have previously passed on resident concerns around flooding to the appropriate authorities. However, we are yet to see any specific action to reduce flooding in the area. The recent weather events have highlighted the need for better planning for extreme weather events. We will work to escalate our concerns to the authorities.

### **Ongoing communication with other local groups and initiatives**

Previously, we introduced you to a number of other local resident groups. We have continued to connect with these groups and have started working with the Beacon Cove Neighbourhood Group on a number of common interests.

We were pleased to see the development of the new Pride Centre during the year.

The committee continues to focus on providing support and good communication to our members. In addition to our traditional means such as newsletters, mail, telephone and email, we want to continue to improve our website to ensure the site provides ongoing updates for our members. We recognise that we need to continue developing and updating the site.

### **Thanks**

I record our thanks to Councillors and staff of the City of Port Phillip. We appreciate their support and cooperation and look forward to working with the Council. And finally, I provide my personal thanks to committee members for their dedicated work and to all WSKRA members and donors for their invaluable support.

Leigh Hardy, President  
19 October 2022