

WEST ST KILDA RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION Inc

PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR 2022-2023

7 September 2023

Membership

For the 2023-22 year, there were 95 paid up members, a decrease on the pre-Covid membership. We believe this reduction is due to the disruptions caused to our neighbourhood and our lives during the past several 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 six 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

Over the last year we returned to our routine activities:

- regular Committee meetings every two months;
- distribution of regular emails to members;
- updating of our web page and Facebook page; and
- distribution of two newsletters to every household in West St Kilda.

We were able to hold a number of events for residents: our usual coffee morning, an end of year gathering in the park, and a guided visit to the Linden Gallery.

Key issues

After the significant lockdowns of the past few years, local activity has pretty much returned back to normal. However, many of the issues and concerns of the past have not gone away.

- Traffic Congestion: After eight years of raising resident concerns over safety issues, and the congestion caused by the growing rat running through our streets during peak hours, Council has agreed to a trial. We met with Council several times during the year to discuss alternative strategies. Although it was not what residents had initially recommended to Council, we agreed that a trial of a no right hand turn from Canterbury Road into Cowderoy Street would be worthwhile. Councillors agreed to implement this for a six month trial with extensive monitoring of traffic on surrounding streets. We agreed with this as it has always been our intention not to just move 'our' problem in West St Kilda to other streets. The trial is intended to be conducted from July this year until early next year.

Hooning: WSKRA and the neighbouring Beacon Cove Neighbourhood Group have been part of a State Government task force with local governments, police and other community groups to investigate and 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

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speed cameras but record point of time excessive vehicle noise. The taskforce and a number of local and Victoria wide resident consultations have now concluded and a report to government is being prepared. We hope that the recommendations will be accepted and changes introduced to help reduce hooning on our local roads and to reduce the impacts on residents.

- Event Management and Related Noise Issues: This continues to be a concern of residents. Council recently developed a new Event Management policy and has been implementing the changes for the past year. 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. We have seen some improvement but there continue to be issues.
- Flooding in our Streets: We have previously passed on resident concerns around flooding to the appropriate authorities. However, we continue to see no specific action to reduce flooding in the area. The ongoing extreme weather events locally and around the world have highlighted the need for better planning for extreme weather events. We will work to escalate our concerns to the authorities.
- Other issues: In addition to the above items the Committee has been reviewing and watching a number of issues, for example:
 - the growing use of electric cars and the need for charging;
 - the use of electric scooters- road use and safety;
 - changes and Council activity on waste management and recycling;
 - the introduction of shared defibrillators;
 - the possible changes to planning that may come if the State government moves responsibility from local government to the State level; and
 - pop-up bike paths.
- Our Twenty Fifth Birthday: Many of you have been members for a long time. A look at our records shows that we began as an association in 1999. Thus, we are in our twenty fifth year and due to have a birthday in the first half of next year. We are keen to receive ideas from members on how we should celebrate.

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 work on a number of common interests.

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

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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

7 September 2023