



REID RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION INC.

AO 1247

info@reid.northcanberra.org.au

**DRAFT Minutes of Annual General Meeting (AGM) - 27 March 2024
6pm at the Mercure Hotel, Ainslie Avenue**

Attending: Eighteen residents.

1. Welcome and apologies

Marianne opened the meeting, acknowledged First Nations people, and welcomed residents and the guest speaker, Duncan Marshall AM.

Apologies were received from Rebecca Vassarotti MLA, Elizabeth Lee MLA, resident Max Wang, and committee members Anne Buttsworth and Sue Byrne.

2. Address by guest speaker - Duncan Marshall AM

Looking Back and Looking Forward and the work of the ACT Heritage Council

Duncan acknowledged the traditional owners and the Reid Residents' Association, commenting that organisations that care for heritage make heritage conservation work.

Prior to the 1970s only organisations like ours got excited about heritage and agitated Government to take an interest. Then the Builders Labourers Federation (BLF) tried to help with green bans; even trying to place one on the building of Telstra Tower on Black Mountain. In the 1980s, when Duncan's career began, the Government thought it would have a statutory response and established heritage councils. Community groups breathed a sigh of relief and relaxed a bit. But there is still a role for community groups in heritage because, as history shows, sometimes governments do good and sometimes they don't.

Duncan remarked that the beautiful light he noticed one evening at home—the result of the bush fire glow that comes with a burn-off—made him think of a couple of heritage dimensions of the Canberra bushfires in 2003. One was that the containment lines bulldozed to control the fires also exposed a great deal of Aboriginal material, an otherwise hidden bit of heritage. Another hidden bit of heritage is the Bert Flugelman sculpture in Commonwealth Park which you won't find if you go looking for it because it has been buried.

Turning to the Heritage Council, Duncan said that the Government only appointed the new Council for a year and that, during that time, the Council has been trying to settle down its work and the heritage staff. The Government initiated a review of the old system which uncovered problems, issues, challenges and potential solutions. This chewed up a lot of energy. At the same time the Legislative Assembly held an enquiry into heritage. Their report and the government's response has only just appeared. Duncan hopes it is a good thing that heritage is a priority topic for the government at this time.

Part of the work of the Council is to nominate heritage sites for registration eg the Belconnen Library and Canberra Brickworks. The development of the latter is a long running issue with everyone hoping a white knight will ride up with the money for conservation and development. The Council has been looking at a number of other issues including roof top solar and he hopes they can do some public consultation on a new policy that respond to the ACT Government's concerns about climate change.

In terms of Aboriginal heritage, they are looking at what a layered approach to might mean, for instance in Reid compared to the Majura Valley. Related to this is bringing Aboriginal organisation more substantially into Heritage Council meetings and deliberations.

In terms of stakeholder engagement, Duncan is keen to put more structure around this with the aim of hearing all views in the community. At the recent launch of the Heritage Festival—a government activity rather than a Heritage Council activity—conversations afterwards reinforced the breath of community involvement. As part of the whole engagement activity, he thought it might be worth getting various heritage groups around the table.

Looking forward, Duncan commented that, while the Heritage Council is back and working, this shouldn't give the false impression that all is well. There is a backlog of heritage nominations and a backlog of advice required, some of which goes back months and years. Another problem is that, while there is a degree of proactivity with developers and home owners, there is scope to do a lot more work.

The reviews chart a way forward for the ACT heritage system with two broad areas of change relating to aboriginal heritage and to government administration. A key component to successful change is resources. In an election year, sometimes the impossible (more resources) becomes possible.

Finally, Duncan spoke of 2027 which is the centenary of the opening of the Commonwealth Parliament in Canberra. It was the first meaningful event in the national capital. Duncan has looked at how dollars flow to heritage and it is more likely to be through commemorative events, such as the centenary, than through the regular budget cycle. In the Centenary of Federation, the federal government provided about \$150m for Australian heritage which was one of the largest commonwealth contributions ever. So, he felt it is worth thinking about what the coming centenary year might mean for Reid.

Two questions were asked of Duncan. Graham Carter commented that one doesn't hear much about the garden city concept any more, that it grew out of the problems of the time, and that perhaps this is a selling point for Canberra. Duncan agreed, saying that one of the lessons of history is that we don't learn from the lessons of history. John Tucker asked about resources in the heritage unit. Duncan responded that the grinding down of staff through relentless pressure led to some of the pressures in the unit and that finding people with the right skills is hard.

Marianne thanked Duncan for his presentation.

3. Confirmation of minutes of 2023 AGM

Acceptance of the minutes of the AGM on 29 March 2023 was proposed by Ian Clark, seconded by Robyn Boyd and confirmed by those present.

4. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Report from President of Reid Residents' Association

The President spoke to her report and advised that copies were available.

Marianne opened by thanking everyone for attending; the committee for their on-going work; the contribution of John Tucker, the National Trust and those who opened their homes for the 15th annual Reid Open House and Gardens event; and the ACT Government for grant funding that went to conserving the pillar posts and to a Conservation Management Plan for the Reid Park Sports Ground.

She went on to thank Margaret Avard, who has been working to archive Judith Clark's documents and John Tucker's collection of papers, noting that it was the intention to present these collections in Library and Information Week in August.

Four other institutions were acknowledged for their important contribution to the community: Reid Tennis Club, Ainslie Primary and Reid Preschool, and St John's with its annual fair.

Marianne noted that much has changed since Canberra was declared Australia's national capital on 12 March 1913 and Parliament House opened in 1927. In 1927, the mean population of the ACT was 7,334. This is only 8/9 years after the losses of WWI – a traumatic legacy that lasted for many decades. Yet construction of Reid houses was well underway to accommodate thousands of public servants, principally from the interim capital, Melbourne.

Most construction work was undertaken by Commonwealth instrumentalities and the stars in Reid's firmament were the Federal Capital Commission (FCC) which then became the Department of Interior. All the homes built in these first suburbs (Parkes, Barton, Kingston, Manuka, Braddon and Reid) were government built and owned.

There was some adaptation to the Griffin Plan by John Sulman, an architect who provided enough space to grow fruit and vegetables and have chooks. Then the great Depression arrived and, in 1930, around 1800 labour-force workers and about one-seventh of the Commonwealth Public Service's staff in Canberra were retrenched. Yet still, despite these incredible world crises, these suburbs were built and survived with major input from the Commonwealth Government. Canberra has also withstood five major droughts: 1918–20; 1939–45; 1958–68 1982–83, 1996–2011.

This leads to the fact that this government housing scheme/development had longevity, these sturdy houses still stand and we are still here in the now twice listed Heritage precincts: the Register of the National Estate 1980 with thanks to the extraordinary work of

Margaret Swieringa and her team and then the listing on the ACT Heritage Register, again assisted with the help of the RRA, despite some naysayers.

Today we have a climate crisis, a housing crisis, an unstable world, influential social media, and the prevalence of 'falsefacts'.

There are lessons to learn from the history of this small housing precinct: sound building methods & materials, adaptive reuse, multiple tree plantings, resolve and adaptability, and elements and/or values that are well worth fighting for. So, we try to provide sensible input to various inquiries in 2023, both in written submissions and in person. These are listed in the full report and include:

- Inquiry into fostering and promoting the significance of Australia's National Capital (Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital & External Territories)
- ACT Inquiry into the Territory Plan and other associated documents
- UNSW Canberra City Campus Stage 1
- ACT Government Inquiry into ACT's heritage arrangements
- ACT Heritage Jurisdictional Review Consultation

In addition, we have been active in:

- 15th Reid Open Houses and Gardens, Sunday 29 October:
- Heritage Grants as previously mentioned
- Canberra and Region Heritage Festivals *Sharing Stories 2023: Reid Reminiscences*
- opposing the proposed Optus Tower on Reid Park Sports Ground
- Reid Archives as already mentioned
- Welcome Packs distributing to new residents
- Reid weeders – on ongoing task!
- Age Friendly suburbs program due to start in the next couple of months
- NCCC meetings on North Canberra planning etc. NCCC always supportive on matters of concern and with funding
- St John's community Fair 14 Oct
- Ainslie School Speech & Reid Preschool 80th birthday

Works in progress include:

- Conservation Management Plan with Philip Leeson Architects Katrina Keller
- an 80th Anniversary RRA dinner planning
- 100th anniversary celebration of the gazetting of our beautiful Reid in 1927.

Marianne remarked that it had been a very busy year, wished everyone a safe and restful Easter, and thanked them for coming to the meeting.

Acceptance of the President's Report was proposed by Derk Swieringa and seconded by Molly Henman.

6. Report from Treasurer and adoption of 2023 financial statements

The Treasurer delivered his report for the calendar year 2023.

Roy reported that we began 2023 with \$23,469.08 and that our income totalled \$50,155.65, most of which consisted of grants for ongoing projects. Our expenses totalled \$40,154.79, much of which consisted of payments for the pillar posts conservation project. At 31 December 2023 there was \$33,469.94 in the bank, \$23,696 of which is grant money for an ongoing project to develop a Conservation Management Plan for Reid Park and Sportsgrounds.

He thanked Derk Swieringa for auditing the accounts and noted that copies of the audited Profit and Loss summary are available for viewing.

Acceptance of the Treasurer's Report was proposed by Graeme Carter and seconded by Pam Henderson.

7. Appointment of Auditor

It was agreed that Derk Swieringa be appointed auditor for 2024.

8. Election of President, Secretary, Treasurer, Public Officer and Committee

Marianne handed the meeting over to Derk Swieringa for the election of officers. He advised that nominations had been received for Marianne Albury-Colless as President; Robyn Bergin as Secretary; Roy Jordan as Treasurer and Public Officer; and Sue Byrne, Anne Buttsworth, Molly Henman, John Henderson and Gary Fan as Committee Members. They were nominated en-bloc and seconded by acclamation and confirmed as the new Committee members.

9. Other business

Graeme Carter noted that new people were moving into Reid but not being represented at meetings like this and wondered what the Committee could do to encourage participation. It was thought that a family friendly activity such as a sausage sizzle in one of the parks might help.

There was no other business and Marianne closed the meeting at 7.20pm, thanking residents for their attendance and inviting people to stay for an informal meal.

RRA Committee 2024-25

Contact via: info@reid.northcanberra.org.au

President: Marianne Albury-Colless

Secretary: Robyn Bergin

Treasurer & Public Officer: Roy Jordan

Committee: Anne Buttsworth, Sue Byrne, Gary Fan, John Henderson, Molly Henman