



MELBOURNE SOUTH YARRA RESIDENTS GROUP INC.

Established by the residents of South Yarra in 1969

BULLETIN

MSYRG AGM Report

The 2023 MSYRG AGM was held on Sunday 15th October 2023 at St Martins Youth Theatre. It was well attended and at the close of the meeting the committee and members enjoyed a Meet n Greet in the foyer.

The Election of Office Bearers and Committee.

James Syme was elected at President, with Phil Lukies Vice-President, Pam Dethridge Treasurer, Jan Armstrong-Conn Secretary. The Committee was re-elected: Anne Roso, Michael Butcher, David Parker, Andrew Bennett, Elizabeth Allwood, Gayle Gledhill.

President's Report by the out-going President, Gayle Gledhill

'In our last Annual General Meeting, the MYSRG committee highlighted four key pillars of focus for the 2022/23 year. These were Heritage, Planning, Engagement and Membership. I am pleased to report we have made good progress over the past year.

In terms of Heritage, the long-awaited South Yarra Heritage Review has achieved two key milestones. By way of background, the Review is vitally important as the last heritage review was conducted in the 1980's. Many buildings are without proper heritage protection. The review process by its nature is long and protracted. But we are now one step closer to better heritage classification and protection in South Yarra. At the time of our last Annual General Meeting, the MSYRG had lodged a substantial submission to the City of Melbourne's heritage consultant GML, who were appointed to oversee the Heritage Review. The MSYRG submission was prepared with the support of Nigel Lewis a heritage consultant supported by the hard work of many MSYRG members and volunteers. There have been two key milestones in this last year. They relate to the finalization of the GML report which is now lodged with Council, and public panel hearings about the GML report are scheduled for this month. After the hearings and finalization of the report and acceptance by Council, the recommendations can then proceed to the Planning Minister. In the meantime, and importantly, interim protection has been granted to the buildings that the review proposes to be assessed as significant.

These achievements would not have been possible without the relentless work by two of our committee members Michael Butcher and James Syme and also another MSYRG member, Paul McSweeney. In addition, we had the support of about 15 volunteers as street representatives surveying their own streets. This work will have a significant and a very positive long-lasting impact on South Yarra.

Planning issues also involve much of the MSYRG committee's time. We continue to maintain and update information on the MSYRG website about how members may go about approach a planning objection. This is an invaluable resource to the community and members as we understand only too well how daunting and complicated the objection process can be. It is a great resource and if you are concerned about a planning application, we would strongly encourage you to use the web site resource as a first step.

In addition, we continue to monitor and provide early warning "ALERTS" to members of planning applications that may impact properties in their immediate neighbourhood. This allows members to explore a planning application and commence preparation for an objection before the 14-day advertisement period. As we said planning objections are often quite complex and, in many cases, require professional support to provide advice and to prepare an objection. The early warning that you receive as a member could assist you in preparing a more compelling and successful objection. Where a planning application has significance for the wider South Yarra community, the MSYRG does from time to time consider lodging objection. This year the MSYRG has lodged an objection to a planning amendment application for 93 Park Street – the St Arnaud development. While the MSYRG supports the redevelopment of the site, it is with the qualification that the heritage aspect of the building is preserved. The most recent application does not appear to be in line with full preservation of the red brick facade, and the MSYRG has lodged an objection to the City of Melbourne along these lines.

We continue to work toward raising the profile of the MSRYG to community partners and stakeholders and in particular local government. We attend the regular Lord Mayor meetings for residents' groups. It gives us an opportunity to place a resident's perspective about topical issues the Lord Mayor wishes to explore. This has included this year public nuisances, pedestrian safety, e-scooters and planning.

The MSYRG also continues to attend the metro rail meetings. While the Anzac station is far from finished, and we may be forgiven for thinking that it will never be completed. We are assured there is progress each week.

The question everyone asks is whether the 58 tram will return to its original route on the completion of the metro rail works. Rumours abound. We have made several enquiries through different channels of government and the answer is at this stage, there isn't a confirmed answer. The advice we have been given most recently is that while the metro rail construction contract requires that the tram line to be reinstated, a decision as to whether the tram returns will be made when the works are completed. We are aware that some members are keen to see the tram return, and others would prefer it remains on its current route. Rest assured that when, or if, we have an opportunity for consultation, we will be asking members to provide their input that we can put before government.

We have also made numerous representations to Victoria Police regarding noisy and speeding vehicles in the neighbourhood. To be fair, this issue is not confined to South Yarra and we probably fare better than many other inner city neighbourhoods. However, our representations have borne some progress. You might recall in a Bulletin earlier this year that Victoria Police has invited residents to report the time/location and number plate of hooning noisy vehicles to Victoria Police. If a vehicle is reported multiple times, the police do have the option of asking the owner of the vehicle to attend a testing facility to check if the vehicle noise levels are within prescribed limits. It does not entirely address the issue, but it is progress. We will continue to look for opportunities to make further representations through the coming year.

The MSYRG has also initiated multiple meetings with the public events team at the City of Melbourne. Since Covid, the number of public events in the area has increased and we did not feel that the impact on residents was sufficiently considered by City of Melbourne

in terms of the permit conditions they granted. The City of Melbourne delegates notification of events to the organiser as part of their event permit conditions. We have highlighted to the events team that we don't believe the minimum notification requirements are reaching enough of the residents, and often without sufficient detail (eg road or traffic impacts) as it would relate to a resident vs a wider member of the public. We have also raised that in our view, the permits need to better consider the impact and often protracted time frames of event bump in and bump out. In particular, road closures and resident parking. We have made some progress, but continual engagement will produce better outcomes for residents. In our discussions, there are two aspects which have come to light which are worth highlighting today. The first is that all notifications have a contact number of the organiser – they are required to be available for calls and complaints for each event in the lead up to and during the event. When we send out a Bulletin notifying you about a forthcoming event, we make sure that the organisers contact details are on the Bulletin. Do make contact with them if you have an issue. The organiser is required to include details of any complaints in their post event summary to the City of Melbourne. Secondly, events at the Myer Music Bowl are under the control of the Arts Centre rather than the City of Melbourne. As a result, the impact of these events is not considered by the City of Melbourne unless they also operate on City of Melbourne property. If there are issues that arise out of a Myer Music Bowl event, the appropriate avenue of complaint will be the Arts Centre and the State Government.

In terms of connecting with our community the MSYRG hosted a successful get together and boule evening on a perfect summer evening earlier this year.

We have also been working with the City of Melbourne neighbourhood liaison Kimberley Pierszchalski about how we can build a better neighbourhood platform for the community to come together on a social basis. I'm pleased to say that the first South Yarra Coffee Club was held last week and was a great success. With the help of many neighbourhood partners, and the MSYRG being just one, the plan is to trial a number of small informal gatherings to allow people in the neighbourhood to come together and mix. Watch the Bulletins for updates as to the next South Yarra Coffee Club and if you are interested, follow it on Instagram for more direct updates.

Our email Bulletins are a vital way in which we communicate with you about important updates and activities. We have sent 55 Bulletins out in the last year – that is an average of approximately two per week and a vital way of keeping you informed.

If you have specific issues, we always welcome emails. So, keep them rolling in if there is something you would like to put before the committee.

And to all of you, our members, you are why our committee give their volunteer hours. Thank you for your commitment through membership and your support. Please encourage others in the community to join the MSYRG, the annual fee of \$40 is very modest and the funds go toward supporting our operating costs such as website maintenance, secure database management and the systems to generate Bulletins etc.

In the last year, our work has been focused on building our profile, acting as a conduit to local government, preserving and protecting our streetscape and neighbourhood character, and to build a sense of community by supporting the development of platforms for coming together and sharing this great place to live.

I am absolutely honoured to have supported the South Yarra community, but I have done so in the company of a dedicated and hard-working committee. From James Syme, as Vice President, who will now capably lead us into next year as President – congratulations James on your election as our new President - I know the MSYRG is in good hands. To Pam Dethridge our Treasurer who can't be here today but makes sure all our dollars are well accounted for. Jan Armstrong-Conn our secretary who drives all the communications either replying to the many emails, issuing Bulletins, or keeping our meeting agenda and minutes in

order, and Anne Rosso who works quietly and tirelessly with membership and creating the planning alerts that are invaluable to our members. Also, Phil Lukies who works on our social media and website. Along with Andrew Bennett, Liz Allwood, Michael Butcher, and David Parker it is a formidable team that have given much of their spare time to keep the MSYRG wheels turning. Thank you to all of the committee for their support to me as President and you as a community.

And finally thank you as members. Your support in attending our events, your engagement and input is invaluable and much appreciated. The next year will be exciting. We know South Yarra is special. The MSYRG will be continuing to work hard toward making sure we keep this area a fantastic place to live.

Thank you.

President, James Syme spoke also about the Poolman House Objection which was successful when the developer withdrew the application. As the incoming President James Syme plans to continue applying the focus in the four pillars.

Guest Speaker - St Martins Youth Theatre Nadja Kostich, Artistic Director and CEO of St Martins Youth Arts Theatre.

Nadja's leadership over the past seven years has produced five major public projects and performances that have won six prestigious industry awards, with a further six nominations. Nadja spoke about how St Martins sees itself as part of the South Yarra neighbourhood. She then shared some of the history of St Martins which started as Melbourne Little Theatre at the Kiosk in Fawkner Park and then moved to the current site which then was St Chad's church. Many famous theatrical people had their start at St Martins: George Fairfax, Pamela Stephenson, Julia Blake naming a few. Irene Mitchell, actor, and director played a significant role at St Martins and this performance space is named for her. In the '80's she organized a Moomba float which won an award. A plaque under the old pepper tree where her ashes are, commemorates her involvement.

Currently there are over 17 workshops a week for 5–18-year-olds - reaching more than 200 young people per week, some of whom have significant barriers to participating in the arts. Their aim is to support the next generation of Victorian artists, giving them training and life skills as well. St Martins is the beating heart whilst many of the youth workshop and adult public performance programs are in other suburbs. They launched GENE TREE in November 2022. It was highly successful and awarded interactive performance adventure through The Botanical Gardens involving children and teenagers from many suburbs. Their next major performance will be at Abbotsford Convent in 2024

The last 3-4 years have been challenging for St Martins, but it plans to continue on the site. One new innovative activity is the renewal of the garden area: 'digging our roots in with a new garden.' It is part of the "Melbourne Pollinator Corridor". Volunteers are very welcome to help with digging, weeding, and watering and feel free to pop by and check out the garden.

St Martins has just been awarded a \$50,000 match funding grant from Creative Partnerships Australia for its Young Changemakers program for kids who have socio economic and other barriers to accessing the arts. The grant is called Plus1 and all donations to St Martins up to \$50,000 will be matched from now on. St Martins will reach out to the community in the next few weeks.

Guest Artist: Jackson, who is 16 years. Jackson started in the Young Changemakers programme and St Martins has been the foundation for his artistic journey over the last eight years. Exclusively for the MSYRG AGM, Jackson then sang and played on his keyboard a

couple of jazz standards and accompany himself on the keyboard: 'What You Won't Do for Love' and 'Lullaby of Birdland'.

The Meeting was then declared closed.

SOUTH YARRA COFFEE CLUB

- meets on the second Wednesday of each month, 2-3 pm at a different cafe each month. No booking required; just show up. It is run by local volunteers and welcomes you to a warm or chilled beverage where you can meet other locals informally and get to know your local baristas.

2024 Wednesday 10th February: Venue TBC
