fremantle

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www.freo.org.au

FREMANTLE FOREVER AWARDED

The FREMANTLE FOREVER group, established to get better boundaries for Fremantle during the local government amalgamations, was awarded the Premier's Australia Day award for outstanding contribution to the local community. Mayor Brad Pettitt presented the award to Fremantle Society President Henty Farrar during the Australia Day celebrations on the Esplanade Reserve.

Fremantle Forever grew out of the Sock It Colin! Campaign, initiated by the Fremantle Society, and was a bipartisan and apolitical group from all levels of the community who collaborated closely with the City of Fremantle. The group of concerned community members opposed the proposal by the state government to force the Cities of Fremantle and Melville to amalgamate to form an enlarged City of Melville. Fremantle Forever was a positive campaign suggesting alternative and more logical boundaries for a larger City of Fremantle.

The group led a campaign to support smart boundary reform with Fremantle as the strategic centre. They were successful in the marketing and events they coordinated and reached a massive audience. This campaign ultimately led the state government to change its original proposed boundaries so that Fremantle would be retained as a local government area.

At the time of January 2014 award, Fremantle Society President Henty Farrar said "We can all feel very pleased with the collaboration and collective effort over the weeks and months of the campaign. It is particularly nice to have the community effort recognised in a very public way as it was with this award."

The thousands of signatures on the petition to Parliament taken up during the campaign were presented by the Member for Fremantle during the June sitting.

It all began with this poster!

- Roel Loopers

FREOPEDIA
QR CODE HERITAGE TRAIL

In the 2013 edition of the Fremantle Society newsletter we reported on the launch of the Freopedia project; a collaborative effort to install printed metal plaques on buildings and other significant sites in Fremantle which enable visitors to learn the history of some of Fremantle's people and places. Scanning the QR code on the plaque with a code reader will connect people to a relevant electronic article available on the online encyclopedia Wikipedia.

Freopedia is a joint effort between the Society, Wikipedia editors (the many people, mostly in Perth but also all around the world, who painstakingly write detailed and accurate articles), the Wikimedia Foundation (the international non-profit organisation that runs Wikipedia), and Wikimedia Australia (the Australian chapter of the Foundation). The plaques have been installed by Fremantle Society volunteers and also by The University of Notre Dame Australia and the Fremantle Port Authority.

The Society has installed over fifty plaques so far, all over the City, with another dozen already printed and awaiting installation. For the most part the plaques have fared well, with only a couple falling foul of vandalism and a couple more becoming hard to read due to salt-laden air and sunlight; generally the latter are mounted horizontally and the vertically mounted ones remain in good condition. The Fremantle Port Authority produced their own, made from different material, but these have not been in place long enough to determine how they'll serve against the elements. We continue to investigate the process of printing and installation and may use a different technique for round two.

There are a number of options for people looking to find (and scan) the QR codes. BID (who funded the first round of plaque production, with the exception of the blue Port Authority ones) produced a tourist map in May this year showing the locations of about three dozen of the plaques. This is available from the tourist information bureau in Kings Square. A new map, showing the rest of the new plaques, is being produced by the Society.

There are also about 140 other Fremantle-related Wikipedia articles waiting in the wings. All they require is a bit more editing, and so we're now looking for more people to help work on and proofread these articles. It's really very easy... On Wikipedia, every article has an edit tab. Anyone can click on this and add to the article (you don't even have to log in first, except for the most controversial articles and Freo doesn't really have any of those). Once you're editing an article, you can make any changes to it that you see fit, and then press 'save' in order for your changes to immediately be visible to the rest of the world. One important thing to note however is that all material in Wikipedia must be thoroughly referenced – citing published sources is the only way to ensure that the quality of the articles remains high. After an edit to an article has been saved, other editors will be notified and may modify the contributed text to further improve the article (or remove the contributions all together, in the case of spam or gross inaccuracies).

To find out more, come along to the next Fremantle Society dinner, or Committee meeting, and ask Sam or Henty or Roel all about it.

- Sam Wilson

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FREMANTLE'S EXCITING FUTURE

There is a lot of anticipation about Fremantle's future, with State Government soon announcing the new boundaries of the local government reform, with the hope that the alternative boundaries suggested by the City will be accepted. It would more than double Freo's population and that is a good thing.

New retailers have opened in the city and more will open soon, and the New Edition bookshop will re-open in High Street, so there is a sense of optimism entering Fremantle. This is partly due to new incentives where the city gives cash grants of up to $ 10,000 to new retailers coming to Fremantle. The new Be Part of the Story website is also a great tool to promote businesses, culture, events, etc. and a good initiative by the City of Fremantle.

Some small to medium developments have started in the East of the city along Queens Victoria Street, and the substantial residential development Heirloom by Match of the former Fort Knox, Dalgety&Co woolstores, will enable hundreds more people to live in the inner city.

The announcement that the Hilton hotel group will open a four star hotel in the Point Street carpark development is also good news for retailers and tourism. Already the Hougoumont Hotel in Bannister Street has opened, Quest hotel is developing in Challenger Harbour, and they will also manage the new short-term accommodation four storey building to be built on the corner of Pakenham Street and Short Street. That development will start later this year. Good signs that our city is progressing and growing.

The stagnation of the Kings Square development is a worry though, as it appears hard to get major anchors to lease office space, and State Government is reluctant to commit to the Housing department moving to Fremantle. It is crucial for Fremantle's future that development of our city square starts as soon as possible to create confidence and entice more development in the CBD.

The refurbishment of the Married Quarters cottages at Cantonment Hill by the Department of Defence will commence in August and State Government will also start work on the Warders Cottages in Henderson Street. The money they have allocated for the latter though is not anywhere near enough of what is required and Fremantle could well have the dilapidated buildings as an eyesore for many years to come.

The expected final draft of the planned Victoria Quay development by Fremantle Ports has been delayed without explanation. It was supposed to be released by the end of March but has not been forthcoming.

There is still a lot of improvement required on community consultation, as many Freo residents have become disillusioned with Council. That needs to be addresses with urgency. Councillors rightly expect to be treated with respect, but that will only happen if the community does not feel ignored. Council needs to explain its decisions better and without spin, and it needs to learn to listen better to the concerns of the residents.

I believe it is right to feel optimistic about Fremantle's future if we can achieve better collaboration between council and community groups. Team- work, as in the Fremantle Forever amalgamation campaign, shows that if we respectfully work together we can achieve better outcomes for the common good. *- Roel Loopers*

Below: Freo residents tour Fort Knox as part of the Heritage Festival

THE FIGHT FOR J SHED

The community opposition to the Sunset Events proposal for a micro brewery and outdoor music venue which the Society argued was out of scale for the area and disrespectful to the historic significance of Arthur Head, as well as being inconsistent with the defined designation of the Class A reserve, is far from done. Certainly nothing has happened on site that would indicate the implementation of the now Council approved long-term lease proposal.

The lease is proposed over 1,500 square metres - 185 square metres of the interior of J Shed and 1,315 square metres of the surrounding part of the Class A reserve.

As with any proposal to lease parts of a State reserve such as Arthur Head recreation reserve, the local authority must first obtain the approval of the Minister for Lands for approval to grant a lease. In the case of the J Shed proposed bar and entertainment venue, this approval has not yet been granted.

In the Society's February submission to the Minister, we made the point that the "recreation" component of the designated purpose of the Class A reserve, means that the land use is preserved for public recreation, that private or restricted public access uses are by their very nature, prohibited from operating on such designated land and that that the wider public's recreational use of the area is protected by its Class A status.

The Society submitted that a venue of the scale proposed, with the discretions for expansion provided for by Council approval, would in all likelihood also be detrimental to the general public's enjoyment of the recreational aspects of the Arthur Head public reserve.

The Class A reserve status and the designated purposes offer the highest level of protection for much valued, if sometimes underutilised, public places like the Arthur Head reserve.

We called on the Minister to protect the general public's current and future use and enjoyment of this Class A reserve by rejecting the Council's request for approval to lease an area of the reserve for a bar and related music venue.

As at 12 May, the Council had not sought that approval.

- Henty Farrar

HERITAGE FESTIVAL WRAP UP

The Fremantle Heritage Festival was huge this year. There was so much in the program that it was impossible to attend all the things one wanted to go to! Perhaps the City should look into making it a two-week festival if there is to be so much on offer.

The Fremantle Society organised six events and the favourite was the Club Crawl that attracted over 100 people. Well done Don Whittington and Ron Davidson!

The tour of the former Fort Knox, Dalgety & Co wool stores, which will be developed into residential apartments, was also well attended with many people saying they would have loved to spend all day there to explore the building and take photos. A big thank you is due to developers Match for accommodating our tour.

Some of the Society's other events unfortunately suffered from low participation, with the exciting Amazing Place Race seeing less than 40 people join in. However, the positive side of it was that there were families and people of all ages taking part and having fun answering clues and re-discovering Freo.

The Cafe.Discovery.Cycle bike tour with President Henty Farrar toured past cafes off the beaten track and as out of town as the Fibonacci Centre in Blinco Street. Other events included the introduction to the Freopedia QR code project by Gideon Digby, and a story telling circle where Chamber of Commerce CEO Tim Milsom, artist Ian de Souza, and Fremantle Foundation CEO Dylan Smith, all shared their amazing stories and connection to Freo. A big thanks to them as well!

The coordination of Heritage Festival events, the distribution of programs, and the way the Festival is promoted, are of concern to the Society. We believe the Festival coordinator needs to make organisations aware of duplicated events and clashing dates. Some of the similar events could have become collaborations between organisations, others could have been rescheduled to a different day or time to avoid a clash. We see this as the role of the Festival coordinator because individual organisations are not aware what events will be offered until asked to proof read the program draft.

Even more disappointing is that once again the Festival programs were not distributed to households, nor was the program printed in the local newspapers and the Society sees that as unacceptable. To rely on the internet, City website, or Facebook is not enough and the City's festival and marketing departments should be providing community groups, like the Fremantle Society, with better promotional support to attract attendance at smaller events, not just to those organised by the City.

None of the Society's events would have happened without the support of volunteers – thank you to those who gave their time. It would be wonderful to see some new faces taking an active role in various aspects of the Society, so please keep an eye on emails from the President which will keep you informed of opportunities to get involved – many hands make light work and sharing your love of Fremantle with others can be a rewarding experience!

-Roel Loopers

PIONEERS' LUNCH

It's a fitting tribute to the senior members of the Fremantle community that every year at this time the City hosts a significant event in their honour. MC Garry Carvolth advised attendees that the Fremantle Pioneers' Lunch is the longest running continuous mass community commemorative event in Australia. The 30 May three course sit down lunch was the 85th such celebration. The Pioneers' Lunch is held annually at the time of Western Australia Day (formerly Foundation Day) to commemorate the foundation of the State and to acknowledge Fremantle's pioneers.

It is open to people aged 60 and over who have lived in the City of Fremantle area for 50 years or more. Although some of the almost 200 attendees weren't born when the event was inaugurated at the centenary of the State, there were several people 90 years or older celebrating birthdays on the day.

It has become somewhat of a tradition that Australia Day Citizenship Award recipients are invited to attend and raise the flag at the commencement of the Pioneers' Lunch. Henty Farrar was attending in the capacity of representative for the Fremantle Forever campaign, who, along with under 25 Nikki Wormald and Fremantle Citizen of the year winner John Alberti, were recipients of the 2014 Citizenship Award.

With grace, the speech by the Mayor, flag raising, and a music maker, along with the very engaging MC, there was the amazing tradition of the cutting of the cake. This magnificent, themed, three tier cake, surmounted by the State's black swan emblem, was created this and every year "since before the time of the America's Cup" by the charming Dot Farrington, an amazing achievement – thank you Dot.

- Henty Farrar

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WARDERS COTTAGES RESCUED?

The W.A. Government's announcement to put $2 million dollars into the restoration of the Fremantle Warders' Cottages will fall well short of what is necessary to reactivate these magnificent, old convict structures in the midst of our City. Why should a world class visitor destination have to tolerate such disrespectful treatment of such prominent State owned heritage property?!

The tiny and inadequate revolving fund announced by Premier Barnett for heritage buildings state wide is a very disappointing effort towards protecting our built heritage for the enrichment of future generations.

The Fremantle Society and community have asked the Government for years to protect the integrity of the work and to keep the repair and recovery of all the cottages as one project and for our local Council to be charged with the responsibility to pull it off.

Was Fremantle Council's recent decision to turn down the offer of a 50-year lease on the Warders' Cottages next to the Fremantle Markets an act of greed or business acumen? Whatever it was, the result is that the eyesore that is the pitiful state of the Henderson Street cottages is set to be part of the Fremantle landscape for many years to come. Is it too late for a community collective of small investors to step in and take them on and get the job done?

- Henty Farrar

Below: Fremantle Society's 'Shame' protest at the Warders' Cottages