

President's Musings 2010

In the role as President of the Castlecrag Progress Association, I am honoured to be able to contribute to our colourful history by striving to make our community a safer, more environmentally aware and beautiful place in which to live. Castlecrag is entering the next family generational cycle, and in this issue I wish to discuss areas which are of interest to all in our community, and some which are perhaps misunderstood: Development and the CPA, the Castlecrag Fair, and our relationship with Willoughby Council. We welcome your further thoughts, comments and ideas.

Development in Castlecrag

All development applications for Castlecrag are forwarded by Council to the Progress Association for comment. We have a policy on the manner in which we review these applications, and you can read it on the CPA website. We assess these applications against the Willoughby Local Environmental Plan (WLEP) and the Willoughby Development Control Plan (WDCP). As a voluntary organisation, we rely on the community to also identify developments of concern.

Under our assessment, if we consider a proposal to be inappropriate by not demonstrating compliance with, or a suitable design alternative to achieving the intent of the WLEP and WDCP, we strongly advocate change through Council and through Court proceedings as necessary.

Local Development is capable of being categorised into three types:

Commodity Builders— are attracted to Castlecrag by good capital growth, desirability and exclusivity. They promulgate the right to unrestricted development at all costs, and then defend the right to object to any other development. They quickly sell and start again, or move on. They are a minority within our community. We attempt to demonstrate to them the benefits of working within the constraints and opportunities offered within Castlecrag, and how they can create better solutions which may enhance the return to themselves and the community.

Family Builders— understand the intrinsic values of Castlecrag and actively want to participate in the community, and to build a family home blending with their environment. Many of these people are unsure how to proceed with the development process, often erring on the safe side. These applications are in the majority, and we rarely need to comment on them. These are the people we welcome and would like to assist more within our community. They are Castlecrag's future.

We continue to engage with this group, assisting by organising council presentations to explain the DA process. We will also be inviting new and young, experienced and award-winning and local architects to give talks on their work—open to the community to meet designers in a relaxed informal setting.

The Megastars— people with more experience who engage the best architects and consultants and produce award-winning renovations, extensions and new homes, not always on large properties. Sometimes this group seeks our thoughts and comments, and we often write to council supporting their design solutions. Again, great community members and we welcome assisting them as required.

The Fair

Our biennial fair, to be held again next year, entails monumental organisation by community members and the CPA. If you have thoughts, comments, or can offer assistance, please contact us.

Council Relationships

Our strong relationships with our ward councillors, mayor, other councillors and senior staff are very important and will be used to foster support for new community projects such as The Welcome Pack, The Gateway Project and a Community Nursery.

These, and ongoing projects such as traffic issues, require working closely with our council and state member. Success depends on their continuing confidence that we speak for the whole community. So, please, join your local community group, **The Castlecrag Progress Association**. Become an active member, or a listener, but get involved.

James A Fitzpatrick