



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Sydney & Northern NSW Branch News

May 2016

In highlighting Lady Crewe's dilemma in the last update I foreshadowed my own – for a long time it has been impossible to know the proposed route of the tunnel for the stage 3 M4 to M5 link of the Westconnex project. Very recently I discovered a map with streets on it, and to my horror the route is directly under our house in Newtown. Elizabeth Farrelly (SMH April 27) called it *a war on inner Sydney and city dwellers*. It feels like war – and the attack is blatant and brutal. The city is not a marginal seat – so we have no champions in State or Federal governments - present and future. Mayor Moore seems unable to protect the city from tree-lopper Baird. I heard from a very senior heritage professional that the Westconnex project is the most devastating episode for heritage in decades. The environmental impact statement states that there will be no filtration required on the exhaust stacks. Astounding.

At a time when our governments sanction mining our AAA rated arable lands that potentially pollute our water supplies and now the Baird government has introduced the Biodiversity Conservation Act which has all the right words in the title and yet it portends an assault on biodiversity, it will worsen climate change and wreak havoc with our fragile flora and fauna. I cringe at what is to come: Ill-considered, unstoppable and without vision.

Our third event this year was a talk by Gareth Collins, President of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, his topic: *The Landscape of Roads*. Gareth was recently appointed President of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) and we welcome the opportunities to work in concert with them.

In Sydney we are enjoying many exhibitions with a garden bent: the Florilegium publication that marks the 200th anniversary of the Royal Botanic Garden, Sydney was a highlight for me. The publication was supported by AGHS and the text is by our Society's long-term supporter and hero, Colleen Morris. Intended by the author as a book to be dipped in to and out of at whim – I read it cover to cover and found it a very well constructed historical record that happens to be exquisitely illustrated by very talented botanical artists. The exhibition at the Museum of Sydney opens soon and we are offering our members the chance to enjoy an exposition and guided tour of the exhibition by Colleen Morris – check our website for details.

I recently received an email from a member who was very heartened by our advocacy position. We will attempt another broadside against the proposed extension of the AGNSW and the assault it represents on the Domain and RBGS. So, If you have any suggestions you would like the committee to consider, please feel free to contact me – we do appreciate the feedback.

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