

MANLY COMMUNITY FORUM

A community led monthly newsletter for Manly residents

May 2024



Repair to the Spring Cove heritage wall sometime soon

Staff from Council, National Parks & Wildlife Service, and the Catholic Church (the Landowner of the Spring Cove Estate) met this week to discuss the reconstruction of the heritage stone wall that collapsed and spilt into Spring Cove in the recent deluge. Engineers will prepare plans for a long-term solution for approval by Council and National Parks. Given that this is the third time the wall has been damaged by stormwater flowing from the top of the site it will take at least 12 months to prepare, submit and gain approval for the plans before any construction commences.

In the meantime sedimentation controls will be installed and the walkway will remain open for access to Collins Flat.

AGENDA

- Council updates
- Night at the Barracks 2024
- Council Budget
- Manly Town Hall
- Manly Life Saving Club update

NEXT MEETING

**MONDAY 20 MAY 2024
7PM MANLY YACHT CLUB**

Chair: Cathy Griffin

secretary@manlycommunityforum.com

Beachwatch testing reprieve

Under the current Beachwatch program, Sydney coastal councils, including the Northern Beaches, do not share the costs with the NSW Government, but regional councils do. Beachwatch monitors 97 swim sites within 14 local government areas in the Sydney coastal area at no cost to Councils. Proposed changes were designed to make the system equitable.

Northern Beaches Council was involved in some pre budget brinkmanship with the State Government over continued funding for the Beachwatch program and this week the State Government agreed to extend the funding for the program for 12 months while the Councils and State work out an equitable way to fund this important program.

The NSW Government 2022-23 budget provided \$18.5 million over 10 years to deliver the Universal Beachwatch Partnership Program statewide and support all NSW councils to be able to opt in from July 2024.

OUR NEXT MEETING IS ON MONDAY 20 MAY AT 7PM AT MANLY YACHT CLUB

Not reimagining Manly Town Hall

Council has been typically unimaginative in its attempts to 'reimagine' and resolve the issue of the future use of the former Manly Town Hall by asking a consultant to write a report which was discussed in Confidential Session at the last Council meeting.

The consultants were tasked with exploring the feasibility of transforming the space into a 350-seat fully flexible area, a 100-seat theatre, and an 80-seat cinema. However, the projected costs to achieve this would likely amount to many millions of dollars, a sum for which the Council has no current or projected budget.

We now look forward to the edited report to gain insight into the proposed business model.

The former Manly Town Hall will continue to serve as the workplace for a limited number of Council Staff and as a venue for the Mayor and Councillors to hold occasional meetings for many years to come.

The Manly Community Forum is asking for greater transparency about the costs of maintaining the former Manly Town Hall as a location for approximately 100 employees and also asks Council what its intentions are for its ongoing use long term, given the reputed poor state of the current internal office spaces.

Manly Community Forum acknowledges the work of Cllr Bingham for pursuing this project and we will continue to support her in her efforts.



Positions Vacant

During the Budget discussions at the May Council meeting, it was mentioned that out of the 27 Ranger positions, there are currently nine vacancies. Additionally, among the 16 Parking Officer positions, there are five vacancies, and out of the nine Compliance Officer positions, four are currently vacant.

Manly Life Saving Club renewal

Council has confirmed \$4million in the budget for the MLSC but the design of the new building remains contentious, particularly the size and scale of the new proposal. The current ground floor footprint is 452 sq metres, plus 159 sq metres for outdoor craft storage, totalling 611 sq metres. Although not yet published on the Council's Your Say page the proposed new footprint is 667 sq metres with the outdoor craft storage removed. The proposed first and then second floors also adds to the height and bulk but there appears to be no additional space offered for the public amenities.



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Council Budget 2024/25 'Have your Say'

Out of the 14 Councillors present at the May meeting, only seven agreed to exhibit the four documents used to manage the Council financial activities. The remaining seven were apparently unhappy with the extent of the impending rate rises and failure of the Council to 'cut costs'. The drafts of the Delivery Program 2024-2028, Operational Plan 2024/25, Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP) 2024-2034, and Asset Management Plans 2024-2034 are now open for public comment for 28 days. The results of the consultation will be reported to the Council at the next meeting in June, just in time for the beginning of the new financial year.

Over the past few years Council has been impacted by some significant and costly events. COVID required reprioritisation of funds ultimately costing \$41 million, six natural disasters cost \$14 million, but \$7 million was recouped from the State and Federal Governments, and an increase in the Emergency Services Levy which is now at \$3.1 million per year. At the same time inflation increased by 16.8% over the last three years – more than double the 7.2% increase in rates income.

The 2024/25 draft budget outlines a total expenditure of \$526 million, with a \$101 million capital works program. Within this program, \$40 million is allocated for asset renewal to enhance asset conditions and decrease ongoing maintenance costs. \$61 million will be used to introduce crucial new assets to the community.

Other expenditure includes a \$12.1 million investment in upgrading Council's core operating systems, \$2.1 million in loans will be repaid, and a new \$10.45 million loan is proposed for the Warriewood Community Centre project and \$4 million has been allocated for the Manly Life Saving Club.

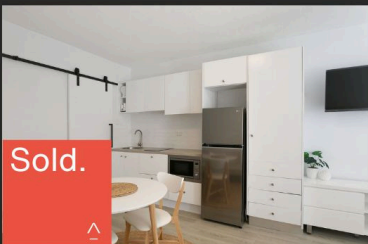
These budget papers predict an Operating Deficit before Capital Grants and Contributions of \$5.8 million.

IPART has authorised a potential 4.9% maximum increase in rates in 2024/25. This increased income forms the basis of the draft budget. The average residential rate might rise by \$79 under the 4.9% rate peg. However, IPART recommends councils address the historical discrepancy between the rate peg and inflation levels through the special rate variation process, which is reflected in the draft 2024-2034 Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP).

Council is contemplating a scenario that involves a \$20 million income boost in the 2025/26 financial year (year 2 of the LTFP) which is likely to necessitate a substantial rate increase, possibly around 10% or more. This rate increase will likely be in the FY25/26.

Read the documents and Have Your Say online on the Council website.

THE AGENCY




Sold.

4/2-4 Pine Street, Manly

1 1

A real flyer on the lucrative holiday rental market, this light-filled studio apartment is styled and furnished to earn income without having to spend a cent.

Sold by Jake Rowe!




1/92 Bower Street, Manly

4 3 2 1

House-like in both proportion and appeal, this whole floor designer apartment showcases intimate ocean views from Fairy Bower surf break and ocean's horizon.

Contact Jake Rowe

Jake has a wealth of knowledge and experience selling properties in the area. He has sold over 500 properties in the local area over the past 20 years. If you are looking for an agent with an exceptional track record, along with honesty and integrity, look no further than Jake Rowe.



Jake Rowe
jakerowe@theagency.com.au
0414 612 546

Experience sells

Signs of the time

How long do we have to wait for the Council to replace or install way finding signs in Manly? The Community has been waiting for the 'Sign Audits' and the implementation of the recommendations to be completed along East Esplanade, Marine Parade and in other important high visitation areas. Whilst some street signs have been replaced, we notice that other signs just simply disappear or remain rotting and deteriorating in place. There doesn't appear to be a line item in the Budget so we can only hope that some money is allocated to ensure people know where they are and have all the information they need to get where they are going.



Brickbats and Bouquets

- **Brickbat** to the blokes who cant find their way to the public toilets and think its ok to urinate, often in groups, in the gardens of the apartments across the road from The Office on East Esplanade. Stop it!
- **Bouquet** to Council for the new, very fancy toilets almost completed at Little Manly Point Park.
- **Brickbat** to Council for cancelling the Taste of Manly. Last year's effort was heavily criticised for the long queues to get into the white picket fence venue on the Corso, but that should not mean outright cancellation of the event this year. On the upside, some money may have been saved.
- **Bouquet** to Council for reversing the decision to make the Senior Citizens parking area a commuter carpark. The Seniors welcomed the return of more appropriate parking restrictions to their carpark, allowing them attend the Centre during the day to participate in their activities.

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