

MAYOR DEB HUTCHIN's SPPECH, BMAC 25th celebrations, 12/4/2016.

Thank you, Ruth.

It is a pleasure to be here this evening to mark this important occasion.

I would like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land, the Cameraygal people on whose land we now stand, we pay our respects to Elders past and present.

This evening is one of those wonderful occasions where we get to celebrate the unique way that we do things here in Lane Cove. There wouldn't be many councils that could say that a community group hosted a celebration of a Council Advisory committee but here in Lane Cove this is just another example of how closely our community and Council work together and in this instance it has been a partnership from the very beginning.

As Mayor of Lane Cove it is hard to believe there was ever a time that we didn't have an active plan for managing bushland in Lane Cove. It is now such a big part of what we do at Council that it really is a credit to everyone involved since the formation of BMAC 25 years ago. Your expertise, your commitment and your perseverance has helped ensure regular funding and staffing has been allocated to the active management of Lane Cove's bushland.

And the results are clear.

Our 90 hectares of bushland are not just a backdrop to the busy lives of Lane Cove residents. Thanks to volunteers, contractors and staff who help regenerate the bush, upgrade tracks, study flora and fauna and share their knowledge with the community, we actively enjoy the bush in Lane Cove.

As residents we explore it, we learn about it, we value it and we CELEBRATE it. Bushland events are part of almost every Festival program. Bushland features heavily in our Captured Photography Competition. And of course is one of the most popular stands at the Village Fair.

Bushland is now such a key part of the look and feel of Lane Cove that over the years there has been a significant increase in Council and grant funding for bushland programs. For example, in addition to significant Council funding, over the past five years Lane Cove has secured over \$1.1million in grant funding for local projects.

This is a fantastic achievement and one that further supports the objectives of the Bushland Management Advisory Committee who have helped to identify priorities from the *Plan of Management for Bushland in Lane Cove*.

There is no doubt that the success of the Plan, and indeed of BMAC, is underpinned by the combined expertise of local residents. Whether you are experts in your chosen fields or experts in your patch of Lane Cove, we as a Council have valued your input into the ongoing management of Bushland in Lane Cove.

Thanks to you, we have a wealth of knowledge at our fingertips. To be able to seek your advice and input into future projects and to work with you to guide the direction of bushland management has been, and continues to be, an extremely valuable process.

I would therefore like to thank everyone involved in the Bushland Management Advisory Committee for their contributions over the last quarter of a Century.

I would like to extend that thank you to the Lane Cove Bushland & Conservation Society as a whole. Through your formal roles on BMAC to your active involvement throughout the rest of the community, thank you for all that you do.

Thank you also for hosting tonight's celebration.

I mentioned earlier that it was hard to imagine that 25 years ago we didn't have BMAC. It is therefore so important that in 25 years time we have an equally enthusiastic and informed committee to help continue the legacy that has been established over the last quarter of a Century.

Initiatives such as Every Child a Bush Experience and Bush Kids are an important part of ensuring the next generation is just as passionate and informed about our local bushland. Afterall, they are now experiencing the wonderful benefits of an active bushland management program with the increasing presence of Powerful Owls, Microbats, Echidnas, Bandicoots and Lyrebirds. Here is hoping that their close proximity to bushland inspires a sense of wonder, respect and connection the same wonder, respect and connection that has inspired so many of you to be so actively involved in the management of bushland in Lane Cove.

On behalf of Council I would like to officially acknowledge a successful 25 years of Lane Cove's Bushland Management Advisory Committee. To all involved, I thank you.