

Mt Victoria Historical Society Inc

ANNUAL REPORT

2018-19

Once again, Mt Victoria Historical Society has had a good year, though quieter than some. We have been challenged by having only four committee members for much of the year which, quite apart from not always meaning we achieved a quorum for committee meetings, limits our activities. We can still report a number of achievements for the period from July 2018 to June 2019, however.

Newsletters

We delivered our planned four newsletters for members, with articles on Mt Victoria connections to the Women's Suffrage Petition and the 1918 Flu Epidemic timed to recognise those anniversaries; and on the histories of 10 Queen Street and 38 Austin Street. I'd like to give special thanks to historian Michael Kelly (and MVHS member) for contributing the last two articles.

Events

We organised four events for members over the year, including:

- Following the AGM, an illustrated talk about the history of one of our smallest streets, Stafford Street, by Jo Newman. The booklet produced as a result of the extensive research was also available.
- Author and historian, Jane Tolerton, shared her research on the intrepid and dedicated New Zealand nurses in World War 1 and hosted us in her Victorian home.
- Our third Victorian picnic in honour of Mary Taylor was held in March at the Mt Vic Lookout – unbelievably, another beautiful day and everyone had a fun afternoon tea and delicious afternoon tea. (Do join us for afternoon tea next time, even if you choose not to come in costume!)
- A guided walk led by Alan Olliver through the Town Belt to the Fever Hospital, with a talk, tour and afternoon tea there provided by the SPCA. Some little-known paths were trod and stories told.

We intended to participate in the Mt Vic Treasure Hunt but, after this was moved because of potential bad weather, found we did not have enough committee members to run our 'stand'.

Heritage advocacy

In terms of advocating for Mt Vic heritage protection, we wrote to Council objecting to the proposed demolition of 69 Hawker Street, and also raised again our concerns about its neighbour No. 71 (next door to the monastery). In addition, we provided information to the team working for a nearby resident opposed to the demolition. We also opposed the demolition of 4 Armour Avenue and its replacement with eight townhouses, largely because we felt the density was out of keeping with the heritage character of the street, and understand this has now been reduced to six.

The committee made a formal submission in April this year to WCC on its *Planning for Growth* scenarios, stating that we do not support higher buildings in Mt Victoria or the removal of the protection of the character in Mt Victoria. (Our formal submissions can be found on our website.)

Membership Matters

At the end of the 2018/19 financial year, membership of the Society stood at 44 (30 paid), which, counting family subscriptions as two, gave us a total of 63.

This was no improvement on the previous year. We know people value Mt Victoria's heritage but continue to struggle to build our membership and get the message across that the Society is a significant player in ensuring its protection. We have researched it, promoted it and fought for it since 1996 but evidence of support for the Society itself is often important if battles are to be fought. To this end, we are revising our brochure and planning a mailbox drop early in the new year.

Other

David Lee left the committee in March this year and has been very much missed. We wish to thank him for all his work over the years, including writing submissions, organising and contributing to events. In fact, David continues to ensure our Embassy panel is cleaned, inside and out.

We particularly also wish to commemorate the untimely death of our Treasurer for many years, Sue Watt. As we wrote in the newsletter near the time, Sue contributed in many more ways than just as a superb Treasurer on whom we relied for many years. She also contributed to every other aspect and participated enthusiastically in our activities.

One of our earliest members), Edna Ashenden, (who also featured delightfully in our oral history project) also died this year after a long life.

Conclusion

Lastly, I'd like to thank the committee for the past year: Jane O'Loughlin, Alan Olliver, Colin Carr and David Lee for their efforts.

Thank you, members, for your support. Do spread the word about the value of joining Mt Victoria Historical Society – members can be as passive or involved as they wish!

Joanna M.A. Newman
Convenor

September 2019