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Chairs Report AGM 2019

This past year has been full of challenges, expansion and renewal across our district, and for those who live work and play here it’s made the journey somewhat more interesting than we’d have envisaged. Upgrading works to infrastructure is always welcomed, but it’s not always the big things that deliver the most joy, and that is something we will continue to highlight and promote as your Community Council going forward.

I want to start by acknowledging and thanking the ACT Government for their ongoing support of us and the voluntary nature of the work we do for our community. The financial support we receive ensures the way we connect with you continues to happen with as few roadblocks as possible and provides us with the ability to consult on the big issues (Kippax and BTC master plans, Network 19) as well as the small ones.

I also want to thank some very important people who have not just contributed to the work we do on your behalf, but their commitment to keeping this Committee running smoothly. To Matthew Halstead and Martyn Stiles, thank you for your contribution this year and our best wishes for what comes next in your lives. To our outgoing Treasurer Mary van de Graaff a massive thanks for your efforts over the last few years, we hope to see you back amongst us soon.

The largest thanks goes out to our outgoing Deputy Chair Damien Haas. For the last 14+ years Damien has served the Belconnen community through this council and in his Public Transport Canberra role. He has advocated on so many issues; too many to list but his forte has certainly been in planning and public transport issues. Damien’s work on our annual budget submission to government has been outstanding and he leaves massive shoes to fill. He leaves us to join the ACT Government as an advisor to Minister Steel on Light Rail Stage 2, a project which there is no one in the territory better suited to and we wish him all the very best in delivering that and maybe hastening Stage 3 to Belconnen.

To our remaining committee members can I offer my enduring thanks for the support you provide to this community and me through your efforts and hard work. You are the best team of volunteers I’ve had the pleasure to work with and look forward to continuing that commitment over the next 12 months. To our new committee members Clayton Browne and Greg Lloyd welcome and thanks, in particular to Greg, for hosting tonight’s meeting. Please give them a rousing round of applause.

Rather than reflect on the year that’s been (you can read all about what we’ve done on our Facebook page and website) I want to turn your attention to what’s in front of us.  
We have a commitment to deliver the last 6 Street Libraries to our district and be the first to offer this important community resource in the territory. Our thanks to Street Libraries Australia and the suburban communities in our district for the enthusiasm to get this done!

Our next major project will be to engage with the design students at the University of Canberra, to deliver options for our tired Benjamin Way medians and wider precinct. After 50 years of maintenance the grand boulevard once imagined by the original designers has fallen by the wayside and it’s time that we assisted government to revitalise our town centre in innovative ways.

We also want to build on our relationship with UC, as one of our most influential precinct partners. The thousands of students, staff and visitors to their ever-growing environment means we need to be more strategic on how we engage with each other; they are a vital part of this community and we are committed to ensuring they continue to be an active voice on this council. So tonight, we are announcing our intention to offer an ongoing position on the BCC Committee to ensure there is continuity and participation for UC Canberra.

Finally, on behalf of your committee can I thank each and every one of you who have participated either in face or electronically over the last 12 months. It has been intensely gratifying to receive the passionate (and often direct) feedback from this community as well as those outside of it on so many issues. This is the most important work we can offer you and without your participation it would be a bit of an echo chamber; please continue to keep that feedback coming using whatever channel suits your needs.

I thank you all for helping to keep us the “Jewel in Canberra’s Crown” and remember if you live, work or play in our district, then you belong!

Sincerely  
  
  
Glen Hyde