

## **Speech to Council Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008**

Chairperson: Any further General Business? Councillor FLESSER.

Councillor FLESSER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to talk about the operations of the Northgate Ward Liveability Committee. I am very pleased about the operations of the committee for the Northgate Ward that manages the Lord Mayor's Suburban Initiative Fund. We get about \$120,000 per year that is distributed throughout the ward for very, very worthwhile projects.

The current makeup of the committee includes Mr Brian Hannan, who is a businessman from Nundah; Sue Meehan, who is an environmental activist from Kedron; Michael Frawley is a young bloke from Banyo, a young community activist; Elizabeth Grace is a very active member of Nundah Rotary, the Golden Years and Northgate Ambulance – the former federal member for Lily – and I must say that Elizabeth is the most active member of the Liveability Committee, and I appreciate the work that she puts into it; Mr Michael Peters was on the committee, but he has had to move away because of work commitments, and the committee has decided to appoint to the committee Mr Jim Smith of Banyo, who is a very active member of the Nundah Lions and also the Nundah Sub-branch of the RSL. We certainly welcome Jim Smith on to the Northgate Ward Liveability Committee.

There are a number of new Councillors here who have suddenly inherited their discretionary funding in their wards. Just something about Northgate Ward. We are quite lucky that the Northgate Ward Parks Trust Fund is quite flush at the moment. About \$500,000 came into the trust fund just under two years ago because of a large residential development at Banyo. The Liveability Committee has not had the need to dip into funds for parks projects, and I know a lot of other

Councillors are not in the same position as that. I feel sorry for you.

What it means is that –

*Councillors interjecting:*

Councillor FLESSER: I am happy to share with neighbouring Councillors. If a neighbouring Councillor has a parks idea, in accordance with the rules, then I might be happy to look at any proposals they have. So, we have been lucky, and we have been pretty frugal, I suppose, in the way that we spend money, particularly focusing on local committees and local sporting clubs and so on.

Probably the best project that the Northgate Ward Liveability Committee funded clearly is the smoke alarm, the home smoke alarm project. I have spoken before in this Council Chamber about how that operates. I think the committee is actually up to about giving away 1,400 smoke alarms to Northgate Ward families. So we have distributed 1,400, and Madam Chair, I am pleased to say that I have been personally delivering those smoke alarms –

A Councillor: Sure you have!

Councillor FLESSER: I have. Residents are very, very appreciative of the efforts of the Liveability Committee to fund the smoke alarms. The reason that the Liveability Committee initially funded the smoke alarms is that tragically about three years ago there was a house fire at Virginia where two people lost their lives, and it was clearly because there was no smoke alarm installed in that home. So, that is one of the very strong reasons why my Liveability Committee supports it, and I would encourage other Councillors to take up smoke alarm projects as well. I know that Councillor CAMPBELL has recently done so, and I know that former Councillor BRYANT had and also Councillor HINCHLIFFE.

Just yesterday I was delivering some of the smoke alarms, and I gave one to a lovely resident at Northgate who lives not far from where I was raised. It is a great idea for Councillors to get out and meet their constituents and talk about local council issues, and she actually remembered when I used to wander up the street a long, long, long, long time ago when I was a snowy-haired boy, so you can imagine how long ago that was!

*A Councillor interjecting:*

Councillor FLESSER: I had long blonde hair.

Some of the other projects that the committee has been funding over the last couple of years include putting money into the local festivals, especially the Nundah Village Festival, and the Zillmere Multicultural Festival, and that was held last weekend. I appreciate that other Councillors have certainly been contributing to the Zillmere Multicultural Festival. That was a great event last Saturday.

The Liveability Committee has been keen to get local people involved in projects where they meet their neighbours, so one of the best projects we have been doing is movies in the parks. I know that most Councillors have been conducting movies in the parks. We are doing probably about three or four of them a year, and we have two movies in the parks coming up – one in September and one in November.

*Councillors interjecting:*

Chairperson: Order!

Councillor FLESSER: Some of the other projects that we are involved in include mural projects on a Council building; women's safety seminars up at the Golden Years Centre – the women's safety seminars have been very, very popular, and it is particularly relevant in my ward because some of the bikeways that have been targeted when some untoward things have happened to women, and on some of the bikeways around Northgate –

*Councillors interjecting:*

Chairperson: Order! There is too much noise.

Councillor FLESSER; – the women’s safety seminars have given women who have attended some great ideas on how to keep safe when they are out walking in Northgate Ward. So that has been excellent as well.

A lot of the junior sporting clubs especially in the ward have benefited from small projects. I must say that the Liveability Committee has been keen to promote lots of small projects rather than large one-of big dollar items, and I would recommend that all Councillors take the same sort of approach, because it is best to spread that money around throughout their ward.

Some of the other projects that we have funded include the World Wetlands Day recently at Nudgee Beach; and a rather large lighting project at the Banyo-North Sydney Rugby League Football Club. There are other projects including Scouts and junior sporting clubs – if they need equipment, they know that they can contact me or one of the members of the Liveability Committee, and if it is for a small amount, we are pretty free in making sure that we give a bit of a helping hand to those sporting clubs and Scouts organisations and so on.

So, Madam Chair, just in summing up, I am very proud of the work that Northgate Ward Liveability Committee is doing, and I look forward to working with them, with the new member Jim Smith, to providing real initiatives to help community groups and people in Northgate Ward make their lives just a little bit better. Thank you.