

# Naremburn Amenities Development Association (N.A.D.A.)

24 September 2010

*The following information is excerpted from 'The Naremburn Story' by Eric Wilksch, published to commemorate Australia's Bicentenary in 1988. Eric Wilksch was President of the Naremburn Progress Association from 1960 to 1990.*

The Progress Association called a public meeting for 6 May 1947, with all local bodies, to discuss a Public Hall for Naremburn. It was resolved that an Association be formed for this purpose, under the sponsorship of the Progress Association. On 21 May the inaugural meeting was held at the residence of Mr & Mrs A. D. Faunce in Garland Road, and the Naremburn Amenities Development Association was duly formed. Within a week a constitution was drawn up and Council was petitioned to appoint the Association under the provisions of Section 527 of the Local Government Act. The Chief Secretary was also petitioned at the same time for the Association's registration as a Charitable Organisation. Naremburn Branch of the R.S.L. also put their weight behind the Association and combined with it for a number of fund raising functions.

Foremost of the objects of N.A.D.A. was a Public Hall, also a Children's Library, Public Gymnasium, Baby Health Centre, places for recreation, etc. House parties, card parties and the like, carnivals, balls, dances, novelty functions and so on became regular events to raise money for the objectives. The first big carnival was held on 26 January 1948 on Hallstrom Park and, as a result of this highly successful function, the carnival became an annual event for a number of years. Musical groups also offered their services.

In 1949 Council was petitioned to secure a suitable site for a Baby Health Centre. N.A.D.A. was advised within two months that three sites were considered, which included Nos 7 and 9 Central Street. No. 7 was regarded by the Department of Public Health as a suitable position, although it considered that a Baby Health Centre was not necessary for Naremburn at that time. However, Council was urged to resume the two properties nominated for future amenities for the area. In November 1950 Council advised of the intention to acquire the properties. (No. 7 was resumed for a Maternity and Infant Welfare Centre, gazetted 17 April 1953.)

The need for a Children's Library became obvious and avenues for such a facility were explored. In 1954 the Congregational Church was approached to use the lower hall but this was not considered appropriate by the Church. Advice was received in 1957 that Council's Works Committee would inspect the premises at No. 9 Central Street on Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> October as it has become vacant. At the inspection it became obvious that the building was totally unsuitable for restoration as a library and would have to be demolished to enable a new building to be erected. This decision was received with great joy. Plans for a Children's Library were drawn up by Mr Roche, Council's Health and Building Inspector, and £3,500 was provided in the 1958 estimates. However N.A.D.A. considered that the building would better fit its environment with a pitched roof (instead of flat) and that the building should be slightly larger. The Association was happy to pay the additional £500. This plan enabled inclusion of two committee rooms and a more attractive roof. The building was commenced in May 1958 and opened on 18 October 1958. It was so sited that when a Baby Health Centre was eventually built, the space between the two buildings would become the forecourt to the hall, to be built on ground at the rear. Council assurance was that a hall would soon become a reality, as plans indicated. The Council of the day recognised the magnificent efforts of N.A.D.A. and named the building in large letters on the front wall, N.A.D.A. CHILDREN'S LIBRARY.

As the years rolled on and Council's officers from that time left the scene, plans and promises for a hall were 'lost'; the Cinderella Suburb was once again relegated to its position out in the cold.

**The N.A.D.A. Children's Library:** This was the first of a designed complex of buildings which included a Baby Health Centre and a Public Hall. The Library was opened by Mr Ray Maher, M.L.A., the local member, on 18 October 1958 at 9 Central Street.

From its inception, all work relating to the staffing and local administration of the library was carried out by members of N.A.D.A. Besides generous monetary contributions to ensure that the building was appropriate for its purpose in the community, many of the furnishings were selected and procured by N.A.D.A. Suitable tables for study use, heating, kitchen accessories, free standing display shelves, portable dais, wall decorations and the

like were contributed by the Association. A tireless worker, Mrs Vi Wilksch, besides donations of furniture, was always available with transport to the many fund raising functions. 'Ral' and Ivy Faunce were also organisers of many of these 'evenings' but the whole group was a fine example of regular member participation.

The President, Ald. A.D. Faunce, worked tirelessly to ensure supplies of appropriate books were regularly maintained. A Reference Library and Study Room were established with many items donated by members. Miss Joan Raynard (later as Mrs G Warren) was the Secretary during this time. Library attendants were voluntary workers and Association members. Local children soon became attached to them, cementing permanent friendships. These attendants were Mrs Iris Cox, Mrs Elva Raynard, Mrs Eva Cole, Mrs Ivy Faunce and Mrs Joan Warren. Mrs Cox had undergone special Librarian training.

Soon after the establishment of the Central Library at Chatswood, complete control of the Children's Library was assumed by that body. Librarians from there also staffed the Naremburn Library, and the volunteer librarians, some of whom had undertaken special training in that field, were dismissed. With children losing their favourite and friendly confidantes, attendances waned and soon the library was available for only one short period per week. As time rolled on and Council became more deeply involved in community welfare programmes, the library building was impressed for these pursuits and a diminished library was conducted from the adjacent Baby Health Centre.

In 1986 development commenced on the buildings to enlarge the accommodation and enable better functioning as a Neighbourhood Centre. The fervent hopes over eighty-five years for a Public Hall on the site died forever with the new development. It is sad to record the destruction of the dreams of pioneers and toilers for local community welfare. It is, however, necessary to record their hopes and contributions, many of which have been erased as subsequent, perhaps ill-informed, administrations act unaware of the hurts imposed by removals and transformations.

**The Baby Health Centre:** One of the original visions of N.A.D.A., and of the Progress Association, was a Baby Health Centre. Council, in its wisdom had, as a result of N.A.D.A.'s representations, resumed two cottages (Nos 7-9) in Central Street, for a Baby Health Centre and Children's Library. Despite early setbacks when the Department of Health considered such a Centre was not necessary at Naremburn, continuing efforts by N.A.D.A. were finally successful and Council proceeded forthwith to plan the Centre in conjunction with the Department. As with the Children's Library, Frank Roche, Council's Chief Health and Building Inspector, drew up the plans. The site, the old cottage and land, the estate of the late Jane Westerland, was procured for £805. Estimated cost of £5,000 and £375 for fittings, with a subsidy of 75% from the Department, was adopted for the 1960 estimates. The sponsors for the appropriate motion were the Naremburn Alderman, Faunce and Brain.

Final completion enabled the Centre to be opened on 13 May 1961, and N.A.D.A.'s second vision was fulfilled. The Minister for Health, W. Sheehan, M.L.A., appointed the Speaker and local Member, Ray Maher, M.L.A., to perform the opening of the Centre because of his own inability due to previous commitments. Those present included mayors from neighbouring municipalities, W.M. Jack, M.H.R., local Federal Member, Dr Grace Cuthbert Brown, Department of Maternal and Baby Welfare, Miss D Watson, Department of Health, Sister Byrne, sister of the Clinic. Council was represented by Aldermen and Officers of the Council led by Ald. Faunce representing the Mayor. Many local residents also attended. Ladies of N.A.D.A. prepared refreshments, happy in the knowledge that the third vision, a Public Hall on land reserved for that purpose at the rear of the two now completed projects, was a foregone conclusion. But it was not to be. A quarter of a century later, and a complete change of Council's composition, and the hall was no longer a consideration. Instead, a completely modernised and greatly enlarged facility, a Community Centre incorporating the two original buildings, was developed on the site, and opened on Wednesday, 16 September 1987.