

CATHO CHRONICLE

CATHERINE HILL BAY PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

ESTABLISHED 1901

DEDICATED TO PRESERVING THE HERITAGE VALUES OF CATHERINE HILL BAY



CATHERINE HILL BAY MASTERPLAN DUE NEXT YEAR

Lake Macquarie City Council has committed to deliver a draft Masterplan for community and recreational facilities in Catherine Hill Bay within the next twelve months.

This will include the areas around the Surf Club and old Bowling Club site. Planned facilities include new playing fields & other sports facilities, a community building, a coastal walkway, a new surf club building and children's play areas.

We understand from recent enquiries with Council that selection of the consultant to complete the draft Masterplan has not yet occurred. The Progress Association has been assured by Council that the local community will be consulted on the Masterplan prior to the drafting of the document.

The Catherine Hill Bay Progress Association looks forward to participating in the community consultation process in the development of the Catherine Hill Bay Masterplan.

IN THE AUGUST ISSUE...

CATHO MINER TO BE EVICTED FROM HOME AFTER 50 YEARS

LANDCARE UPDATE

MOONEE BEACH WALKWAY

MEMBERSHIP FEES NOW DUE

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Clay Sweetman Images
www.claysweetman.com

Catho miner served eviction notice after 50 years

Catho resident Joey Warren has been served an eviction notice from the home he's lived in for over 50 years by property developer Wallalong Land Developments Pty Ltd.

Mr Warren's house, in an area historically known as Sawmill Camp to the north of Middle Camp at Catherine Hill Bay, was built by his grandfather over one hundred years ago and has remained in the family ever since.

Catherine Hill Bay was originally a "company town", with the majority of the miner's houses built and owned by the mining company. Some other houses were built by mining families on company land, particularly in Sawmill Camp and other places with colourful names such as "Federal City" and "Slack Alley".

Coal & Allied decided to transfer the majority of the company-built houses to individual title in the 1960s and sell them to the miners in occupancy. For the privately built houses, Coal & Allied's policy was to remove them as they became vacant.

Wallalong Land Developments Pty Ltd bought the Coal & Allied land to the north of Catherine Hill Bay in 2017. This includes the land under Mr Warren's house. They intend to subdivide and proceed with a 210 lot residential development of land in the Middle Camp area.

Now well into his seventies and in poor health, Mr Warren has been served a 90-Day Notice of Termination requiring him to leave his house and deliver vacant possession of the land.

Mr Warren has been given the option to "remove the building within the 90-day limit", by 5pm 30th September 2021. Given Joey's health and the fact that the house is over 100 years old, this is all but impossible.

"All I want is to remain in my home," Mr Warren said. "This is my castle."

Mr Warren was the Chief Fitter & Turner at the coal mine until it closed in June 2000. Over the decades he has repaired and improved the family house, including installation of a water septic system.

The Tenants' Union of NSW is representing Mr Warren in his dealings with the property developer. Occupancy of his house by Mr Warren fits the criteria for "protected tenancy" and this status arises out of historical legislation in NSW. The Tenants' Union of NSW has urged the developer to pull back from trying to evict Mr Warren and let him continue to live peacefully in the house that has been in his family for over 100 years.



Update on developer subdivisions in Catherine Hill Bay

Subdivision of lot 4 into 4 lots

Lot 4 is the land behind Middle Camp on the north side of Flowers Drive that runs up to the Cemetery. This area is often referred to as Slack Alley. This land forms part of the remnant Coal & Allied Lands in Catherine Hill Bay acquired by Wallalong Land Developments Pty Ltd in 2017. In February this year, Lake Macquarie City Council granted consent to Wallalong Land Developments Pty Ltd to subdivide the land into 4 large lots. The developer's intentions now that approval has been achieved are unknown.

Subdivision of Lots 1 & 2 into 210 lots

Lots 1 & 2 are the lots to the north-west of Middle Camp acquired by Wallalong Land Developments Pty Ltd in 2017 when it purchased the remnant Coal & Allied land in Catherine Hill Bay.

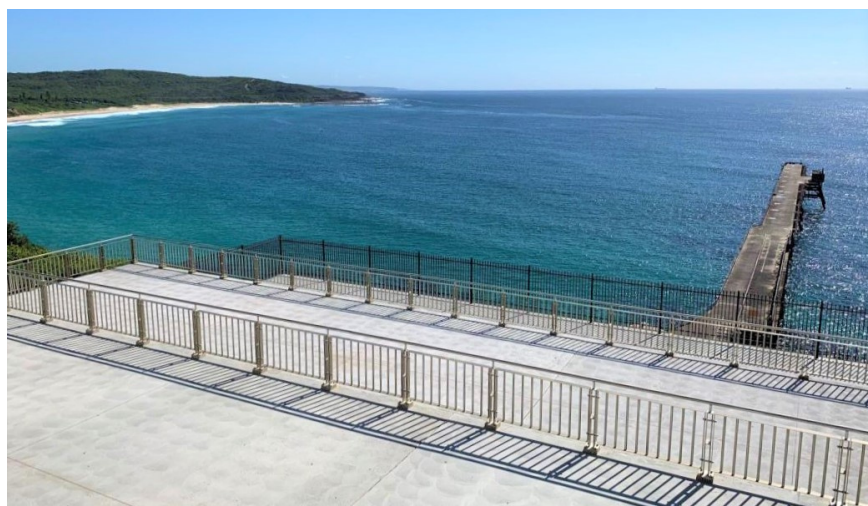
Coal & Allied's proposed subdivision of this land into 222 lots received State Government concept design approval in 2012. A development application, lodged in November 2017, for approval to carry out the subdivision is currently under assessment by Lake Macquarie City Council. Recent activities with regard to this application suggests that a determination may be anticipated during the last quarter of this year.

Delta Electricity rehabilitation works

Delta Electricity has now officially completed rehabilitation of the headland area comprising the former Catherine Hill Bay coal preparation plant, coal bin and coal stockpile areas. The completed rehabilitation works include the capping of the former coal loading bins to create a new whale-watching platform overlooking Catho Jetty.

Drone footage of the completed works can be viewed here: **[drone footage](#)**

There are plans for the platform to be connected via a public coastal walkway from the Catho Surf Club, then continuing onto Moonee Beach. The Progress Association is making enquiries about the likely timing of public access to the whale-watching platform and will keep the community informed as more details become available.



Moonee Beach Walkway

Construction of the Moonee Beach Walkway by NPWS is all but complete. NPWS has allocated \$180k to construct the walkway, which runs from Hooey St in the Beaches Estate down to the beach.

The pathway type is a boardwalk constructed of recycled materials, with the advantages that it minimises erosion and the impacts on flora and fauna.

A number of community members have expressed concerns about the safety of the current design. Specifically, the 80cm width is considered too narrow for people to pass each other on the path, the steps are of unequal dimensions, and there are no handrails. It is understood that new pathways at other similar locations are typically 120cm wide.

On 21st July 2021, our State MP Yasmin Catley attended Moonee Beach to meet with locals to discuss their concerns about the walkway design. Ms Catley walked down to the beach via the new walkway to get first-hand experience of the issues discussed at the meeting.

Ms Catley has committed to raise the matters directly with NPWS with the aim of getting them addressed.



Catherine Hill Bay Progress Association – an overview of its role and workings

The Association was formed back in 1901 and is the oldest functioning community association in NSW. The role of the Association has changed over the decades as Catherine Hill Bay has changed from an active coal mining township to a State heritage listed Cultural Precinct (one of only two in the State). Further, with the development of the Beaches estate to the south of the old township has led to a significant increase in population, changing demographics and introducing new residential models in CHB.

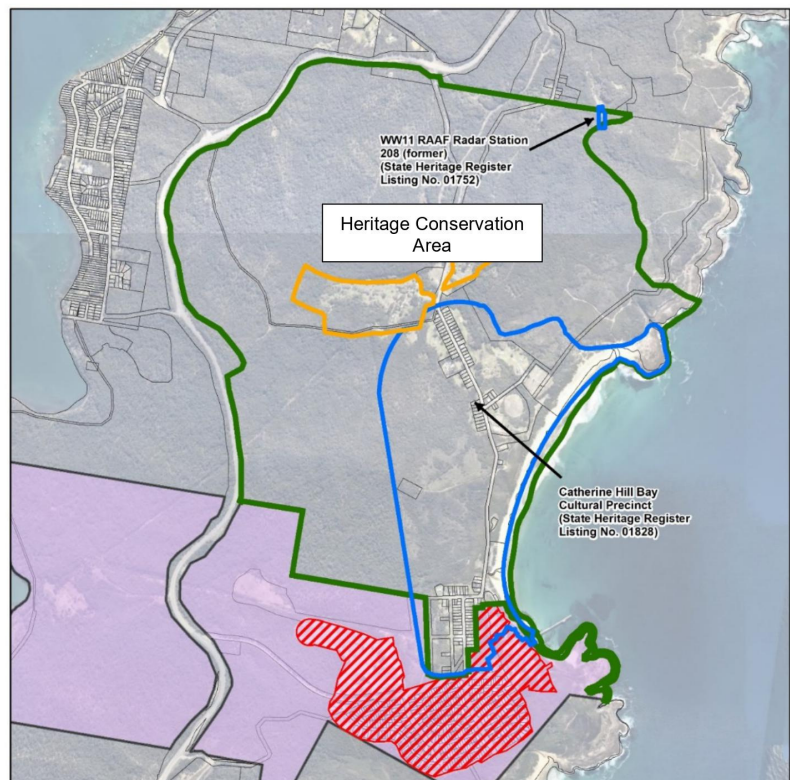
These changes presented the Association with some hard decisions. The most difficult decision revolved around membership. Should Association membership be open to the entire CHB community (potentially ~2,000 residents) Or should it be limited to its traditional base being residents within the heritage precinct of “old Catho” (a few hundred residents).

In addressing this issue, the Association was guided by the objects of the Association, as stated in its Constitution, which are “...to work for the advancement of the Catherine Hill Bay Cultural Precinct community and environment.” The Association was concerned that opening membership to the wider community was an unacceptable risk to the Association being able to meet its constitutional objectives and ensuring preservation of the heritage values of CHB. After much debate, the Association decided to restrict membership to residents of the Cultural Precinct. Please refer to image of State list Cultural Precinct in blue below, as well as LMCC's declared Heritage Conservation Area in green (NB: the State and LMCC declared areas are different but overlap).

Whilst only members of the Association can vote and join the Executive, this in no way precludes participation in the activities of the Association by residents and friends outside the Cultural Precinct. Our General Meetings, which are held 4-5 times each year, are open to all and all are welcome. The Association encourages presentations from non-members at its General Meetings. Anyone interested in making a presentation, should send details to the Secretary for the Executive's consideration. Please note that only members can place, and vote on, a motion at a General Meeting.

Whilst there may be a small group with vested interests who do not wish to preserve the heritage values of CHB, it is clear that the overwhelming majority of the broader CHB community do and wish to retain State heritage listing of “Old Catho” and its values.

Your Association will continue to work to preserve these values and looks forward to the continuing support of the entire CHB community. The Association also welcomes the opportunity to build relationships with community groups from areas adjacent to the Cultural Precinct.



Membership renewals are now due!

A reminder that membership fees are due from the 1st July each year.

Are your membership fees up to date? If you're unsure, then probably not ☺ Feel free to send an enquiry to the accounts email to confirm your financial status.

The membership renewal form is attached to this newsletter email. Please email membership forms to **accounts@catherinehillbay.org.au**. Thank you to all our members and friends that have already renewed their payments.

Catho Chronicle Mailing List

If you would like to receive future editions of the Catho Chronicle by email, or would like to submit stories or photos, please email us at:

newsletter@catherinehillbay.org.au

Landcare Update

Join us on the first Monday of each month. Please call ahead to Carmel on 0438 499636 to check the time of day. Bring your sun safe gear, water and if you wish, a snack for afterwards while we chat! Please note that landcare activities will be suspended during Covid lockdown periods.

The dunes in front of the car park are mostly weed free now, and we'll return to the north side of the beach path next.

The Landcare Resource Centre over at Teralba is being rebuilt - the demountable buildings have gone, and building is underway. So no Green Team visits this year, either. However there are still plant sales by phone order.

Did you know

... that Catherine Hill Bay has a rich sporting history. Sports such as soccer, football, tennis, cricket and vigoro all featured in the life of Catherine Hill Bay. Not to mention fishing, swimming and of course surfing!

Currently there's a tennis court in Middle Camp which was built by the community on land to the east of the houses in Flowers Drive. This land was once owned by Coal & Allied, but is now owned by property developer Wallalong Landholdings Pty Ltd. They have refused the community access to the court and clubhouse.

At one time there were four tennis courts in the Bay. One of these was the "Excelsior". Built by the men of the town behind the Bay School. This was a "private club" as the men didn't want the women to play. To prevent the women from playing, they set a membership fee



"I think it might have been five pound a year, which was a lot of money," long-time resident William Spring said. "And the women couldn't afford to pay that. But then as time went on there was not enough men to play," Mr Spring continued. "Like sometimes they'd turn up and there'd only be three or four. So, they decided to allow women to come in and play and they let the women play as all women singles or doubles, women to women. Or then sometimes they'd play mixed doubles, whatever suited them."

Mr Spring has fond memories of this court as he and his parents lived in the clubhouse during the Depression years. "My father had grown up in the town but he went into Newcastle and got a job with Burnley's Buses. My father met my mother on her way to work on the Newcastle run. I was born in 1929, then in 1930, the government in their wisdom, decided they would try and get rid of the private buses and put in a system of government buses. Well, they couldn't just force these people out of business. They had to be a bit sneaky so what they did, they imposed a seat tax of five pound per seat on every seat in every bus. Of course, the bus operators couldn't pay it and they went broke."

"By this time, Dad was a part time driver with Burnley's but he lost his job and they couldn't pay the rent. So, they did a midnight flit one night, it wasn't night time it was over a weekend. He got a mate of his that had a lorry to come and load up the furniture and prior to that he'd contacted his mates that still lived out here at the Bay that used to play tennis on the old Excelsior tennis court up in the edge of the bush behind the school."

"They gave him permission from the club to go and try and do the place up so that it would be livable and we could live in it rent free providing we maintained the court. So that's what we did. We shifted out to the Bay, went into the club house."

"When we first moved in it only had tin shutters for windows. Had a piece of brattice across the middle of the room to divide it up into two rooms. They'd gone out to Nords Wharf or Cams Wharf and they'd found an old jetty and they pulled the jetty apart and got the planks and brought them back and laid them down on the dirt to make a floor. So that's what we had."

"Mum and Dad used to roll it [Excelsior court] and mark it and keep it in good nick. I was allowed to ride my trike but I had to stay outside the white line boundaries of course because that's where they played tennis. They didn't want any grooves in the court. So, I used to ride round and round and round in the outside boundaries of the court."

"Even though we were living virtually in this hut or hovel, you know, it was nothing. You'd wake up in the morning and you'd hear all the births chirping. The kookaburras would be laughing around because they'd only be about twenty yards away in the bush and you'd hear all these bird sounds."

"It would be great if we could retain our one remaining tennis court."



Billy Spring on his trike, 1930

**For more details check out our website:
www.catherinehillbay.org.au**

and the various Facebook pages for the latest news and great photos:
www.facebook.com/CathHillBay
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