

In this uneasy time of 'post truth' and 'alternative facts' there are many daily events and media generated opinions that are testing our capacity to make judgments, and creating uncertainty about what to believe - what is real, what is perhaps a 'little white lie', and what is just plain wrong.

The fabric of our society is being bombarded by information overload, and tested by an excess of disproportional influence by loud minorities with vested interests in questionable outcomes – and I expect that some readers might label me in that category!

Recently the fabric of the so called Lloyd Rees Bandstand in Lane Cove Plaza was in need of repair, and questions were asked by **In The Cove** about its heritage status based on facts that need to be clarified or questioned.

'The Lloyd Rees Bandstand or Rotunda is a Lane Cove icon. You may or may not be aware that the heritage status and location with the Lane Cove Plaza has been hotly debated over the years. This leads to the question – why is the bandstand not on the Lane Cove Heritage List?

In 2008 there was an outcry when the bandstand was not included in the Lane Cove Plaza redevelopment plans. In 2009 the Lane Cove Council tabled a Heritage Report prepared by Dickson Rothschild Heritage Report (May 2009) which noted that the bandstand is regarded as historically, aesthetically and socially significant for Lane Cove.'

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'If you describe something or someone as an icon, you mean (that it or) they are important as a symbol of a particular thing' (Collins Dictionary definition).

The late Lloyd Rees is an iconic figure of Australian art who made a financial contribution towards a water feature to be part of the original Lane Cove Plaza plans designed by the late Harry Howard, an iconic landscape architect. His intention was for this to be created by the late Robert Woodward, an iconic Australian sculptor who designed many splendid water features (El Alamein fountain and Darling Harbour spiral among them). Unfortunately the Council of the day canned the idea as a public safety risk and so the Lloyd Rees funds were redirected to the Harry Howard conceived 'bandstand' (with some design input from another local architect).

Lloyd Rees Bandstand has, I believe, received the iconic label by default. Many in the Lane Cove community (myself included) regard this structure as more of a carbuncle than icon! The LRB is significantly altered from its original concept, has very poor acoustic qualities, dated and clunky construction details with fragile fabric, and has been unfortunately raised by some to what many would see as an undeserving status of heritage significance.

The time has come, approaching 50th anniversary of Lane Cove Plaza in 2023, to replace the dated and languishing LRB. A new 'iconic' performance structure should incorporate updated technology and materials in a form that is less demanding of maintenance, is more complementary to the current Lane Cove Plaza context and performance needs, and more visually appealing - and perhaps better suited for occasional kids' play that happens in the predominant periods between events.

I am confident that Lloyd Rees would be very supportive of having his name and legacy realigned with such an iconic gesture, and would expect that there are many readers who would agree.

Jon Johannsen



Dr. Edward Higginbotham Heritage Report June 2009