



From the Office of the Mayor

**Councillor
Ted Cassidy PSM**

The Infants' Home Ashfield

It was one of those beautiful afternoons in the gardens of an Inner West icon of community care The Infants' Home, Ashfield that Anna and I had the honour of representing Council at the Annual General Meeting of the Home, established in 1874.

This was not your ordinary AGM, as The Infants' Home has dedicated itself to supporting children and families from all over NSW for more than 133 years. Today it supports over 1,000 children and 700 families through its childcare, parenting and early intervention services.

Under a marquee on the lawns, surrounded by gracious historic buildings, the gathering of donors, supporters, staff and board members were treated to a number of addresses. The current President Gillian Hirstman and Chief Executive Officer Jennifer Evans outlined the vision of the organisation – 'Expecting the Remarkable' – giving us an insight into the care and dedication of the staff of The Home.

A special privilege was hearing the reminiscences from one of the early recipients of care, Marian Young who is 85 years old and told us about her and her sister's first 4 years living at The Home. She told of her father's lifelong thankfulness when he was able to find a place that would care for her and her twin sister after their mother died in childbirth in a new country.

While The Home's service delivery has changed and is now focused on early childhood education, early intervention and family support services, Marian's story reminded us of the importance of laying down the basis for strong and healthy development in the early years of childhood. An interesting program is the fathers and children playgroup held every 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month from 9 – 11am at The Home.

The Hon. Linda Burney MP, first Aboriginal woman to hold a seat in the NSW Parliament, was a guest speaker and shared an inspirational address about the Federal Government's recent Apology made to the Aboriginal people. Linda told us that the 'telling of Aboriginal history' and 'the owning of it' were important for our nation to mature.

As proof that this historic and trusted organisation is moving with the times, one of their staff – Wendy Foote PhD – is off to Canberra on secondment to assist the Federal Government with the development of the National Framework for Child Protection.

Ashfield Council has always been a supporter of The Home. Only recently we donated funds for the purchase of a trailer to transport equipment for the 'Red Bug in the Park' playgroup program held every Monday, 10am – 11.30am in Ashfield Park.