

TRACING HISTORY



Green Ban Arts Walk

page 10

Green Bans anniversary looks to the future

Photo: Louise Anderson



Residents walk through history

BY NICHOLAS JORDAN

Residents and history buffs walked along Easy Sydney streets last weekend to celebrate the anniversary of the historic Green Bans movement.

The artists and original members of the 70's movement, who collaborated to create a nostalgic tour of the movement's important sites, spent last Saturday emphasising the importance of the Green Bans movement to Sydney's past and its future.

Jack Munday, who led the NSW Builders' Labourers Federation (BLF) to prevent affordable housing and heritage sites from being developed, said Green Bans history must be remembered because of its political

significance.

"It's important that we keep alive these real human stories of what could have been a disaster if it wasn't for the action," he said.

Jo Holder from Cross Arts, who co-organised the event, said the BLF's struggle in the 70's had a huge social and political impact.

"It influenced the introduction of the Heritage Act and the Environmental Protection Act and a new court - the Land and Environment Court," she said.

"Most important, it enshrined in law that communities have a say.

"Last decade we have seen an erosion of these principles. Erosion of community consultation... these have to be constantly defended."

Deigo Bonetto from Bigfigpress, who helped set up the historic walks, said the Green Bans movement was crucial in integrating community consultation into the government planning process.

Mr Bonetto said the empowerment of community consultation that came out of the movement has lost its significance today.

"The way community consultation is taken in development applications is tokenistic."

One of the surviving protestors of the movement, Joe Owens, said he was shocked at the lack of action the current government has undertaken to revive what was achieved by Green Bans.

"The Labor party nowadays, you never hear anyone talk about the Green Bans," Mr Owens said.

"It's a bitter disappointment that the Labor government, under Gillard, hasn't done more to change the laws again."

Mr Bonetto said the artistic project celebrating the history of Green Bans was designed to peep the memory of the movement and its message.

As part of the event, the organisers aim to continue the memory of Green Bans beyond the walks and galleries by distributing a map of the movement's history.

Mr Bonetto said the map is an "ongoing facility for people of the community to come and experience the history of the green bans movement".

Ms Holder said: "We will be asking for people and community to give feedback about what should be protected."

"The art project will stop but we want people to still do the walk."

CITY NEWS

11 AUGUST 2011 p1 & p-10