

THE STRANGEST COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE

Commemorative plaques are recognised world-wide as very effective means of celebrating the historical significance of a site as it relates to a particular personality, activity or event. The plaques program uses either a wall, pavement or small plinth as the medium of display and the communications strategy supports the plaques program with printed material in the form of brochures or booklets, council website historical research references and in some cases audio material in the form of CDs or mobile phone accessible material from the council website.

In well developed heritage tourism areas such as England and the USA, the management of communication of history and heritage is well developed through local government supported by the local historical society, community groups and periodic groups such those associated with centenaries.

In the Sydney Metropolitan Area, there is a huge variation in commemorative plaques programs, in terms of their management, funding and range of personalities and activities recognised. The City of Sydney, North Sydney and Willoughby all have detailed programs that celebrate local history. Manly Council is in the process of clarifying its program, while it has an extensive range of pavement plaques that have been established for some years.

In the case of the Warringah Council, there are less than 6 commemorative plaques, compared to more than 100 with most councils and for many years, there has been no budget to fund the installation of plaques. However one of the 6 has no duplicate elsewhere and this is the plaque on the eastern side of the intersection of Harbord Road, Pittwater Road and Warringah Road. The plaque commemorates the occasion on 8 April 1974, when Premier Sir Robert Askin recognised the 1000th set of traffic lights in New South Wales. Warringah Council may have a small number of plaques but of its select few, one celebrating traffic lights has got to be unique.