

NEWSLETTER
Barwon Heads Association October 2013

Special Meeting
Monday 21st October 7.30pm
Barwon Heads Community Hall

“Special Meetings” are held to change the constitution.

The recent government changes to the standard model for incorporated associations means we have had to remodel our constitution to suit our own needs. Our Treasurer Geoffrey Waits has put considerable work into revising and adapting our constitution which is posted on our Web page. These changes need the ratification of our members.

Our 2013 AGM was held on a dark rainy night in the beautifully presented Mulloway Room, At The Heads.

Our guests were our key-note speaker, Elaine Carbines CEO of G21, John Fendyk, President Ocean Grove Community Association and Howard Dean Ocean Grove Association Committee. Also present were Bernard Naphthine President of the Traders Association, David Littleton Vice President Trader’s Association and Vicky Strachan, President Barwon Heads Arts Council.

2013-14 Executive

Four nominations were received and the elected executive was: Judith Brooks, President, Sandy Gatehouse, Vice-President, Geoffrey Waite, Treasurer and Richard Hastings Committee. We would like others to join the Committee, we especially need a Secretary (see below). The Treasurer’s report and President’s report presented outlining expenditure, achievements for 2013, details of our varied program and foreshadowing future challenges. Both are now available on our website and have been sent to members.

Guest speaker

Our guest speaker was Elaine Carbines the CEO of G21 who, with her trademark intelligence and enthusiasm, outlined the structure, purpose and challenges faced by G21. She explained G21 as a regional alliance between state and local government, business and community organizations. G21’s purpose is clearly stated: to improve the lives of people within the Geelong region across five council areas. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of G21 is their commitment to consultation to inform priorities and projects through their eight Pillar Groups.

These cover Arts & Culture, Economic Development, Education & Training, Environment, Health & Wellbeing, Planning & Services, Sport & Recreation and Transport. Each pillar has an average of twenty-five key decision makers and experts within the eight categories. Elaine left each of us with the G21 Report To The Region February 2013. It is impressive to note that the G21 model was one of only ten being studied by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. (OECD) The Chair thanked Elaine for her presentation and especially for coming out on such a wet and wintry night.

Where to from here for the BHA?

Our Special Meeting will be an ideal opportunity to review the activities of the BHA for 2014. This is especially important in regard to our diminishing resources.

It will also be an opportunity to discuss the idea of a community secretary position. This could entail a paid position of a skilled person to fulfill the needs of several groups. If community groups could contract out secretarial services it would make a significant difference to the sustainability of all groups in our community.

Geelong's Latest Hot Topic

Along with some 78,000 voters the BHA committee supported our former Mayor Keith Fagg in his attempts to introduce more governance, transparency and proper community consultation to our local council. We have been concerned about the lack of clarity around processes for community grants. At our July 16th meeting we asked direct questions about the ward councilors community grants program. In attendance were the Mayor, our Ward Councillor, the CoGG CEO, and the Manager of Infrastructure and Engineering Services. We were told that the grant process was equitable, broadly discussed among councillors and details were provided in the annual budget. It is clear now that the former Mayor and the editor of the Geelong Advertiser, along with many members of the community, do not believe this is a satisfactory process.

New Approach Needed for 2014

It may well be that after legal inquiry and a formal investigation the Minister for Local Government, Minister Powell, is satisfied with the governance procedures of the CoGG and we will be left with the status quo. If that is the case it is important that community groups assert their concerns with process and in consultation with their ward councilors, find ways to have a new approach for 2014. It disturbs many that \$300,000 is being spent on lights for the Village Park when only \$20,000 has been put aside for a footpath renovation when we have elderly residents breaking their bones falling on uneven and deteriorating footpaths. This is not to imply that groups should be pitted against each other, but that we need to find a way for the whole community to be satisfied with the grants program.

www.barwonheadsassociation.com

Judith Brooks
President