

Barwon Heads Association
Monday May 18th 2015
Senior Citizens Centre 7:30pm

MINUTES

Chair Judith Brooks

Apologies John Burke Graham Wallace Smith Grant Pocock Richard Hastings Michael Palmer.

Attendees BHA Committee – Judith Brooks, Sandra Gatehouse, Geoffrey Waite, Paul Fox, Jeremy Gaylard
Brenda Miles, Virginia Ronaldson, John Romeril, Muffy Borthwick, W Bechult, Di Dower, Clara Oakley, Philip Bade, Peter Oakley, Jenny Wallace Smith, Bernard Naphine, Bill Westhead, Anthea Merewether, Marg Pockock, Anne Waite, Maurice Alexander, Julie Shaw, Rick Shoff, Trish Clayton

1 Treasurers Report. Geoffrey Waite outlined our recent expenses and reported funds of \$1,900 in our account.

2 Guest speaker: The Chair welcomed the Hon Lisa Neville our local State government representative and the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water. Lisa gave a detailed overview of the recent state government budget and took a variety of questions which she answered in depth.

Lisa spoke about improvements to the wages and conditions of the Ambulance services and a commitment to funding a MYCA unit for the Bellarine, at present they are in Lara. She also highlighted the budget's large investment in education; capital works, Godski funding to disadvantaged schools, working towards restoring TAFE funding, additional firefighters, 24 hour career fire fighting based at Ocean Grove and a Regional Jobs fund co-investing in regional communities and new industries to create jobs. The budget offered encouragement for business to re-employ workers who have been made redundant and an emphasis on local content, local procurement component for all major projects.

Of interest to Barwon Heads residents was Lisa's news on transport services. Regional rail services will increase in peak hour to every 10minutes, non-peak every 20 from 1st of July. There will be better bus services & connectivity on Bellarine as well as considerable funding towards a pedestrian safety upgrade in BH. For those interested in our fragile coastal environment Lisa mentioned a new marine & coastal act formed after a community conversation about who manages the coast, how can it be simplified, what programs should be put in place, and how do we protect assets for future generations. Lisa mentioned that the water supply in Geelong had decreased from 74% this time last year to 58% this year. She is very aware of the need to secure water supplies for local communities across the state. Lisa was also very pleased to

have met the UN representative on Climate Change for discussions about the Andrew's Government views leading into Paris conference.

Questions :

When will Public Transport Improvements be introduced? - will be introduced from 1st July. Lisa agreed there was a poor alignment of trains and buses. Regarding the Regional Rail Traralgon to Melbourne? Hasn't commenced because no new trains.

What exactly is a MYCA unit? – (high intensity ambulance unit) capacity in Bellarine needs to be improved (poor roads BH to Geelong).

Defibrillators. How many do we have in BH? – Bernard Napthine suggested an audit. Where are they located, who has access. Number in town, we should register so we know where they are. Lisa will take on board.

COGG - concern about loggerheads between Premier and Mayor of Geelong -doesn't help broader community. Lisa replied that there was tension between the Mayor and the State Government even though the contestability of ideas was a part of the political process. The government won't and don't support the Pier, don't support inconsistent views regarding the CBD, want to deliver GPAC, new Workcover building, want CBD vision delivered quickly. Substantial issues we disagree on.

Police - Do we have enough police for pairing? - A speaker congratulated the government on opening up and improving policing but wanted to know if there was enough police for pairing – Lisa informed us that this rule only applied in the urban areas and not the regions.

What are the government plans for water storage in the Geelong Region?- Lisa acknowledged that views on water very important, lacking proper storage but we don't need another dam for Geelong. How do we maximize water resources in Victoria? We are lucky in that we have significant water resources and water grid. The government is currently reviewing how we can best use this? We need to be smarter about water.

What measures is the government prepared to take about Climate Change? – A speaker outlined that local sustainability group encouraged locals to install solar panels; however still have to pay for electricity that we use. Would government consider nationalizing and taking over electricity companies? Local groups looking at better deals. How can Powercorp be better influenced? Lisa replied that the government won't rebuy assets. Noted that the national renewable energy target now 33 thousand gigawatts which had been agreed on but was lower than the past target. Victoria has said to CTH that we want to set higher standard. (CTH sets the base) Lots of job potentials in renewable energy. Vic Gov preparing renewable energy plan. Looking at reverse auction for excess electricity.

The Spit - concern about over use – camping by ballot until two years ago. Significant growth in use of the Spit. Can use of the Spit be looked at in the future? Current system includes city of Greater Geelong, Barwon Coast, etc. Lisa talked about detailed infrastructure and that at present there was no coherent approach. Wanted a new shared understanding going forward.

What are you doing about Camping Fees? - Previous government talked about increase of fees for use of parks. Before Easter the government removed fees for basic camping sites, looking at keeping the level of increase to a minimum, but increases has already been calculated in forward estimates of Parks Vic funding so difficult to cut back at present.

What are you doing about the impact of development? - Do you see with 96,000 visitations to the area that the environment will have a restriction on development to

keep numbers down and restrict development for safety? Lisa stated that the 12 apostles was the biggest tourist attraction in Victoria and the government was committed to improving toilets and walking tracks but no greater development. Lisa was aware of the need to better manage high-risk fire days, with limited egress and access. But she again reminded us that all governments believed fire risk and action taken was a community responsibility.

Are you interested in a greater eradication program for feral animals? Yes, well aware of the problem of feral animals, government to continue the foxes program, also cats in national parks the biggest issue – ongoing funding. Land care facilitator program been refunded. Public land conservation being encouraged, and advice on how to manage pests on farmland.

Was Lisa aware that the Friends of Bluff were dismayed that the BHF & NC would be getting lease of precious crown land and that Friends of the Bluff were worried that secondary dunes/coastal land use by football club puts it at risk?

This was in the context that Barwon Coast had previously managed this area of land and had always erred on side of environment.

Lisa replied that the Football Club was functioning in this area and unless there was a big donation of land and funds it would continue to do so. The club had been asking for better lease arrangements for some time and Lisa was facilitating discussions to advantage the club's interests with Barwon Coast. Lisa argued that there was a need to get the balance right between caravan users and football/netball club.

Did Lisa know there were serious concerns about tensions between the football crowds and caravan parks users?

The speaker explained that football attendees and cars, mess, using campers chairs, bringing in grog. Will need to be handled delicately. Speaker recognized that there were poor club rooms, poorly designed and never worked and that the club was always meant to be a public facility but not used as such. The speaker felt for people who work at Barwon Coast having to cope with football attendees who were at times difficult. Lisa replied that shared use worked at Queenscliff and was committed to finding a way for the two groups to work together at Barwon Heads.

What are your views on coal stream gas mining? Lisa said the government has argued for a moratorium on coal stream gas. She believed that the proper process of parliamentary and scientific reviews would point to the right path. What are impacts on unconventional gas fracking?? USA experience has been disturbing. Want to get it right before proceeding. Will look at ground water impacts and consider the USA examples.

What can you do about the Geelong Star fishing factory? – Lisa went to rally on Sunday regarding the Geelong Star which is based in Geelong. This is the factory fishing factory we thought we had got rid of. What can we do to stop this? How can we continue the momentum to stop this ship? State government lobbying Federal Minister to stop this ship. Currently fishing in federal waters. Damaging local fishing industry and ecosystem. Lisa suggested we write to Sarah Henderson and the Federal Minister. Fisheries Minister is Barnaby Joyce. Form letters have less impact than individual letters. Send individual letters. Need enough response to keep the interest up in people's minds.

What can be done about the skydivers being distractions for motorists at the Barwon Heads Local Airport? – there is concern that divers and planes are causing distraction to drivers on BH road and is becoming increasingly dangerous. Shadows come over the car and you think you are going to hit them. Aircraft very low over

road coming in to land. What needs to be done at airport intersection? Speed limit currently 100kph past the airport. Lisa informed us that her office was having conversation with the airport. No current issues before council or government. No control because it is a private airport. Vic Roads has classified the BH Rd and Blackrock Rd it as a black spot.

The Chair informed the meeting that the BHA had contacted the parachute organization and would start a conversation with them.

In view of the time the chair called a halt to questions.

The Chair thanked Lisa for attending our meeting and for her detailed outline of issues affecting Barwon Heads and answering so many questions with in depth knowledge. The meeting very much appreciated her attendance.

Next meeting Monday 15th Juneth 2015

Senior Citizens Centre.

Meeting ended at 10: 00pm. Tea and refreshments were served.