

## Minutes

BHA Meeting 15<sup>th</sup> February 2016 at Barwon Heads Senior Citizens Centre

Chair: Sandy Gatehouse

Apologies: Sarah Jackson, James & Luki Weatherly, Noel Calvert, John Burke, Hamish & Frankie McGowan, Margaret Pockock

Attendees: BHA Committee: Judith Brooks, Richard Hastings, Paul Fox, Jeremy Gaylard, Geoffrey Waite

John Romeril, Peter Oakley, Kay Schapper, Jenny Wallace-Smith, Brenda Miles, Austin Paterson, Ros Paterson, Brenda Reidy, Michael Palmer, Trish Clayton, Christine Sheedy, Stephen Paterson, Sue Filby, Rick Schoff, Julie Shaw, Ann Waite, Warwick Manderson, Kathy Manderson (and another person whose name I cant read)

### **Item 1 VEC discussion**

Sandy advised the meeting that the Committee plans to put in response to the preliminary report. We have emailed our members and have encouraged discussion and for people to put in their own submissions. We strongly believe that CoGG will be a better place if more residents are actively involved, and this the perfect opportunity for active involvement and discussion.

We support the review of council boundaries and the preferred option A.

*The VEC's preferred option is a four-ward model with three three-councillor wards and one two-councillor ward. This option responds to submissions that described the municipality as naturally falling into four distinct areas: the northern suburbs; the suburban centre including the CBD; southern residential and semi-rural areas; and the Bellarine Peninsula, grouping Barwon Heads and Ocean Grove together. The model accommodates the uneven growth expected in specific parts of the municipality and keeps localities and townships intact where possible, such as Clifton Springs, Corio and Belmont.*

- Barwon Heads will be part of a Bellarine Ward, which will provide us with opportunities to work with other Bellarine groups on matters of mutual interest. Impacts of population growth, tourism, climate change, traffic, shared educational resources, public transport, and public health.
- We support a multi councillor ward with 3 councillors elected on the proportional representation model to represent the ward.
- We don't support allocation of discrete areas to each Councillor.

### **Item 2**

#### **Removal of Native Vegetation in Barwon Heads**

We have been disturbed by the removal of indigenous vegetation on private land in Barwon Heads. A number of examples were discussed including in Carr St, Warrenbeen Crt, Stephens Pde and Ewing Blythe Drive. We have witnessed significant change over the last 5 years, but there is a strong community

expectation that certain areas are protected. There was discussion about the role of the Council and strong endorsement from the meeting that the Council should have a role in protecting Indigenous and old vegetation. Those present were surprised that this isn't the case.

Sandy Gatehouse and Judith Brooks attended the Council meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January, Sandy asked questions relating to the role of Council and where residents should go to ensure the protection of indigenous vegetation. We are surprised when the Council advised that there is no apparent requirement for planning permits to remove precious indigenous vegetation on private land, which is less than .4 of a hectare.

Neighbour in Warrenbeen expressed concern about significant removal of vegetation & moonscaping of an adjacent block. Covenants were put on the sub division, which need to be understood and enforced. Not sure whether vegetation is protected.

This is a serious matter for the community – we are allowing individuals to remove indigenous vegetation. The meeting supported an urgent request to the Council to undertake a Landscape Assessment Study for the Ewing Blyth/Golf Links /Bridge Rd and Warrenbeen Court residential areas and apply an overlay to protect the existing character and vegetation.

The risk is exacerbated every time a block of land in Barwon Heads is sub divided.

### **Item 3 Other business**

#### **Landscaping of Hitchcock Ave**

At the 27<sup>th</sup> January CoGG meeting Judith Brooks on behalf of the BHA, the Traders and Senior Citizens for completion of the streetscaping/landscaping project in Hitchcock Ave – we understand it has been referred to estimates for funding. There is considerable concern about the poor quality of the footpaths and regular falls by young and old.

#### **Pedestrian project about to start**

We plan to invite Vic Roads to March meeting to discuss the timing and implications to traffic flow.

#### **Over development in Barwon Heads becoming a bad pattern**

VCAT – Judith has been to VCAT re over development of site in Taits Rd  
Need policy of revegetating with natives.

#### **Speeding Drivers**

We have received a letter from a resident in Margate Street advising of excessive hoon driving in Margate St.

### **Barwon Water pump station (1939 Barwon Heads Rd)**

One of our members identified this as a concern in our February Talking Heads article. We have now received a very colourful design from Barwon Water for a very blue one-eyed octopus mural to be painted on the very ugly building at the entrance to town. We asked those present at the meeting (23 in total) to write their comments on the back of the Barwon Water letter and we have sent it back. There was general agreement that this is not an appropriate treatment for this site, which is an isolated ugly building in the middle of a rural landscape. We all agreed however that there is an urgent need for beautification.

Main reasoning for not liking the mural that was circulated:

- will provide another diversion on an already dangerous road
- not appropriate for the site
- does not enhance the welcome to Barwon Heads in any way
- wrong location for this mural, which would be more appropriate in the primary school.

There is an expectation that Barwon Water develops a proper vegetation plan, with mature and native trees and plants being planted to hide the ugly building. There is also an expectation that these trees will be properly watered so that they grow.

## **Part 2**

### **Our Guests - Bellarine for Refugees**

Margaret Griffith Chair & Austin Paterson Deputy Chair spoke to our meeting. They introduced the group, and discussed its many roles:

- To advocate, attend demonstrations, and work with the broad network of combined refugee action groups.
- To provide practical help with its partners the churches & Diversitat. (examples of activities include the Family Day that was organised during the recent school holidays.)
- The main project is Seeking Refuge – project to assist the 300 refugees living in Geelong with temporary protection visa applications. Recruiting and training volunteers and volunteer lawyers to assist refugees to prepare for and complete the 50 page application. Currently fund raising for the \$80,000 required for interpreters.

Profile of Geelong Refugees

Countries of origin – Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Sri Lanka.

There are Lots of families of mothers with small children, low income.

There was gentle and warm discussion. Margaret & Austin were encouraged to keep up the good work. They meet on last Tuesday of month at Starfish.

