

This is about community working together.

I am proud to be the President of the Barwon Heads Association, we have over 200 active members and usually lobby on planning and traffic matters. Some times we feel we are representing the older demographic in town, but this year there have been a number of issues which have brought out everyone old & young.

- The town boundaries
- 9 Bridge Rd
- Planning application 135 Tait's Rd, and
- The Barwon Heads Structure Plan
- The proposed closure of the library.

The library has brought together a wide range of people who have talked, collaborated, drank coffee and tea, attended Council meetings and united in our efforts to keep the library open. We have formed strong friendships.

We thank CoGG and the library corporation for creating this opportunity for us to come together to identify what we value; and to work together to protect that. We now have more people who know and trust each other to continue to work for the library and to also lobby for other things in Barwon Heads that will undoubtedly arise in the future. We have no doubt that the 'decide first and then consult model' will be replaced with a different one for future decisions. And we warn you all to be very wary of on-line surveys and filling in random forms at the local library.

Mrs Hay, set up the first Barwon Heads library behind the Anglican church many years ago. She would have been proud of us all. We believe that Barwon Heads Community Library has been operating on the grounds of our local primary school for almost 40 years. It came into being when a group of very active school council members lead at the time by the president Dr Taffy Jones decided that Barwon Heads needed a community library – one to serve the school and the wider community.

We are now faced with the new concept of social equity and financial imperatives across the whole of the municipality. We wonder how the new developments have been encouraged to proceed at such haste in Armstrong Creek and Ocean Grove with no infrastructure in place or the means of providing it. Surely developers should be required to contribute to infrastructure including libraries and new schools and the financial modelling should not rely on established communities subsidising the new ones. I have researched the concept of social equity in infrastructure planning – it is an unknown. I wonder how the under performing CoGG will manage with this.

The submission that went to the Administrators last week, from the Save Barwon Heads Library team was so professional and took so much energy and work. Not only do we want the library to stay open we want it to be better and to improve. We want to be the model for the “local community library”, that can be followed by all the other communities in Geelong. Maybe we can include the “community library” in the Library Corporation vision, rather than the Taj Mahal concept they are currently working towards. Smaller community based libraries don’t carry the same depreciation requirements and wont take up most of the allocated funding on power and cleaning. We expect to work closely with the council to continue to

protect and grow the library and other community facilities in Barwon Heads.

Thank you to Mandy & Colin Bridges, Bronwyn McIntye, Karen Firth, Jenny Wallace Smith, Natalie Lewington, Annabel Gil, Rebecca Martin, Rebecca Kennedy. Also Daniel Vella the Principal of Barwon Heads Primary School – in a very hard place in his first week.

Thank you also to our representatives in Parliament and their support teams; they have all lobbied for us and for the libraries to remain open.

Lisa Neville has provided wonderful support in Parliament and in the press; her team Kim, Ian & Lindsay have manned the phones, listened, supported and guided us; she has been in constant contact with the decision makers and has encouraged us to participate and stay with the “underwhelming” consultation

Sarah Henderson has been available to all who rang and her staff Dean and Robyn have been very helpful and supportive, it was lucky for us that she attended the BHA meeting at the time the announcement was made to close our library, so she was informed from the beginning of our fight

Simon Ramsay has listened to our concerns and wrote one of the best letters to the local press.

Thank you all for a wonderful bi-partisan effort.

Lastly I thank the Administrators in particular Laurinda Gardner for the way she has listened and handled this matter.

This is the beginning of our long term plan to retain and improve the Barwon Heads Library, please stay involved and interested. Thus fight is not over it has just begun.

Thank you

Sandy Gatehouse
President
Barwon Heads Association