

MINUTES ABCA MEETING 2/12/2019

Apologies : Julie Pickett and Andy Harris

TREASURER'S REPORT – Ian Caruthers

7th October – 30th November 2019

Previous balance: \$7,400.48

Current balance: \$6,997.17

+ Reserve cash account \$7,968.57

Total = \$14,965.74

+ Residual donations of \$129.50 made towards flag poles after they were paid for.

PRESIDENT UPDATE – Steve Fortey

Bob Picketts land offer – for Bob to donate his land, access to the few acres he's offering needs access via council land which is designated COSS land. Bob's offer is conditional on the release of that land for community use.

Bob is trying to establish if the COSS land is included in Central Coast Council's current biodiversity strategy.

The ABCA received a letter from a member of the Coastal Open Space System (COSS) Committee, Barbara Wills, against Bob's land offer. Bob would like the opportunity to show Barbara around the land to ensure her opinion is informed of all issues.

Despite some Councillors being in support of the offer their hands are tied by a lot of red tape.

Steve said that we've found a good lawyer that may be able to package the offer better to Council.

Bowtell's caravan park 2017 DA

56 manufactured homes + couple of caravan park sites on the lake shore.

At an October meeting with Council the developer was given a month to come back with answers to concerns regarding flood risk and ecological impact on the environment.

Developers have now been given another extension of 1 month to come back with answers.

Foreshore Redevelopment

ABCA asked Mr Harry Nour, Project Engineer for Avoca Beach Foreshore Works, if the community could do a working bee for an hour or so on a weekend morning to assist with removing rocks from the sand. Harry said it would be best to let the contractor finish their rock removal work first and then re-evaluate.

ABCA also enquired when the promised bike racks would be installed. Harry said he is organising for them to be installed on the far western end in next couple of weeks.

He also said that proper new bins have been manufactured and are about to be installed on the foreshore.

Copacabana resident Elaine Norling voiced her disapproval of the foreshore redevelopment citing nowhere to hang your towel, less showers, can't see skillion due to 5 Lands Walk sign, bin position, provision of dog bags is incongruous to a beach that doesn't allow dog walking at southern corner.

AVOCA PEDESTRIAN SAFETY COMMITTEE REPORT – Virginia Riley

The committee met recently with the lead engineer and head of Central Coast Council Traffic department to discuss the list of safety hazards the committee had submitted via local member Adam Crouch.

Council representatives explained their team of engineers had gone through all of our concerns and discussed with us in detail possible solutions, costings, impacts etc. for each of them. Funding and unfortunately fatalities determine what major projects can occur but it was reassuring to hear them taking a proactive approach to many of our smaller issues like improving parking in front of the scout hall.

The committee expressed the need for a safer crossing on Cape Three Points Rd near Ascot Ave, particularly for school children accessing the school, as a matter of urgency. To our delight Council confirmed they have already commissioned surveyors to measure traffic and pedestrian volume data at this crossing with a view to possibly installing a pedestrian crossing here.

They are also currently working on flattening the big centre hub where The Round Drive meets Cape Three Points Rd to improve pedestrian access, especially for prams and wheelchairs, across this dangerous intersection.

Ben Thomas, the new principal of Avoca Beach Public School, was also present at the meeting and raised some pedestrian safety issues occurring with traffic at the school. Council engineers have agreed to meet with Ben to see what can be improved.

A NEW APPROACH TO AN AVOCA COMMUNITY HALL – Steve Fortey

Avoca scout hall is an ideal picturesque location to possibly extend the building, raise the roof and make it more serviceable.

Peter Oliver, scout leader, said the hall is on Crown land and is available for community and commercial hire. Scouts need more space and will evaluate options, costing and researching grant funding for community use and extension.

Parking is an issue. Peter suggested improvements to parking structure to increase number of cars, changing from horizontal to perpendicular parking. Many different users like Like Minds customers, fitness participants, market days and fishermen.

Ian Caruthers said the ABCA asked to have Avoca be part of the Central Coast Council's Parking Strategy to focus on strategic planning for the whole of the village, especially the beachfront. Council has now gone very quiet and won't respond to questions on where this is at.

Community funding could be available via combined funding with government and scouts.

Scouts would run the hall but a couple of members of ABCA could sit on board managing the hall.

Lions Club is custodians of the grassed area to the south with bbq and shelters.

There is a website for crown land and what it has been reserved for. In 2017 NSW government and Darkinjung council made changes to stop companies using crown land for no rent after Auditor General was scathing of crown land management.

NEW PROPOSAL FOR WINNEY BAY BUSH TRAIL - Heather and Joy from Copacabana community

5 Lands Walk masterplan from 2012 stated the intention was a bush trail through Winney Bay. Under GIPA (Freedom of Information) their actual intention was not to do a bush trail but a formal vehicle access. When you read through the documents in council and EIS (Environmental Impact Statements) it was a 3m wide concrete road and retaining walls leading to a destination cantilevered whale carcass bridge suitable to host weddings and markets.

Their intention was the catalyst to open up the whole coastal area, later Endeavour Dr etc. and this was adopted in 2012.

The clifftop of Winney Bay is COSS land and there is an endangered ecological community of grasslands which encourage other animals in that area.

The funding was stopped and now we have an \$875,000 stairway to nowhere.

Community of Copacabana have formed a committee of 35 people and in consultation with the indigenous community have outlined they want a bush trail from the top of the stairs to Captain Cool Lookout with disability access to be placed in the 2020/21 construction plan of management.

Other requests include pedestrian access from Del Monte, recycling bins, bubbler and a plan of management for that area to protect these endangered ecological communities and remove the bitu bush.

They want the bush trail to be built using sustainable materials and non intrusive safety fencing. Council have removed the vegetation that previously prevented people from going near the cliff so now have exacerbated the danger and hence the need for safety fencing.

CLIMATE CHANGE MOTION – Angela Kennedy

Angela raised this motion for our government leaders to take urgent action on climate change. Seconded by Lea Lawler.

Angela is disappointed by our State and Federal govts lacking in their approach to mitigating climate change.

Today there are farmers protesting in Canberra on chaotic water management and bushfire in Batemans Bay down south.

In Madrid today the UN are having a climate conference. The UN secretary is calling on the leaders to take a more concerted approach to climate change.

The latest IPSOS poll asked what people are most concerned about – the answer was the environment.

By the end of this century our climate will have increased temp of 3°C with intensified droughts and fires.

Vote was unanimous support for the following motion:

In the wake of increasing environmental instability the ABCA communicates the following statement to our government leaders:

Lisa Matthews, Mayor Central Coast Council

Adam Crouch, Member for Terrigal, NSW Legislative Council

Lucy Wicks, Member for Robertson, Federal Parliament

Senator Deb O'Neill

Avoca Beach, like many communities in Australia, has been impacted by extreme weather conditions. In 2016, an ocean storm devastated the foreshore; and in recent weeks, extreme bushfires and damaging winds have threatened lives, homes and the environment.

Already, there are signs of a climate change footprint driving these kinds of extreme events. Scientists are confident that climate impacts will become even more intense and more frequent due to climate change.

The community applauds the Central Coast Council for acknowledging the climate crisis and urges it to proceed actively to implement its recently adopted Climate Change Policy.

The Avoca Beach community calls on State and Federal governments to recognise that there is an urgent need for action.

It is vital that stronger government policies are enacted to limit carbon pollution; develop sustainable, renewable energy sources; and that plans and funding are in place to make Australia resilient to the impacts of future bushfires, droughts, floods and other extreme climate impacts.

In particular, this would include an effective drought policy being put in place and increased funding for firefighters.

FIRE UPDATE – Councillor Jeff Sundstrom

Jeff has had a long association with the fire brigade through many years working as a volunteer fire. He explained fires are a little like floods and will always come through in the same locations based on the topography. However that's changed now, fires are more intense and there's more of them. This motion speaks to improving our knowledge and the need for more resources.

The fire currently raging at Gospers Mountain is bigger in area than all of the fires combined in NSW last year. It has taken a group of 5 ex fire chiefs who no longer have political affiliations to stand up and make this matter heard, Greg Mullens being one of them. It's more difficult for the current commissioner, Fitzsimmons, to make these claims because he doesn't want to lose his job.

You need to look at how fire brigades are structured, funded, equipped. Some people think we need to double firefighters. On the coast we have 2 branches – the community fire brigade and then the retained firefighters who get paid when they fight fires and paid employees.

With the increasing rate of fires the demand on people who are volunteering is increasing. This risks burn out and people may eventually fail to turn up. We need more trained people available, maybe volunteer and maybe paid, and increasing the retained earnings for when fire fighting is needed.

In the last few weeks there has been talk of increased funding. NSW has a labour expenses cap. A few more stations have opened up but they fall under the cap, so there are more stations with fewer firefighters. There are less firefighters now than there were in 2008. Resources are tight and there are more fires.

Lea Lawler explained her son is an electrician and retained firefighter. He cannot work at all in his electrician business now as he's constantly fighting fires.

Fires in northern hemisphere are now overlapping with fires in southern hemisphere so resources are stretched even tighter as we cannot share equipment, especially fire fighting planes.

SEISMIC TESTING OFF OUR BEACHES - Kristy McQueen

Asset Energy have been given a permit to explore for petroleum gas off our coast from Newcastle to Sydney.

The permit has been granted by federal govt, all our local councillors and state government opposed this seismic testing which kills plankton and damages marine life by sonar interference and will lead to us having oil rigs off our coast.

Save Our Coast is helped run by David Abrahams and they have alerted this issue to the Senate who have extended the time to object to 16th December.

www.saveourcoast.org.au and a facebook page Save Our Coast / Stop Seismic Testing

ANZAC MEMORIAL – Steve Fortey

ABCA has requested approval from Central Coast Council for a small garden 2m x 2m with a feature rock and a little plaque as a focal point for the dawn service.

Gary Hoare, surf club member and ex serviceman has been running Anzac ceremony for 15 years in Avoca which has rapidly gained popularity. Gary wants a dawn service without RSL interference but has RSL approval for the memorial garden.

Plan has been drawn up and Council have approved it this week and this may happen in the next month.

The garden faces towards the surf club and flag poles. The total cost is \$3,200

Business sponsor has pledged \$2000 + flag pole leftover money (\$129.50) so we still need around \$1,000.

The ABCA will send an email out to members offering them the opportunity to make a \$50 donation to this community venture.

Motion that this association covers any shortfall up to a cap of \$1,000.

Steve raised motion to vote on ABCA paying for ANZAC memorial.

Robert Burns seconded. Motion passed.

BANGALOE STUD DEVELOPMENT – Graham Murray

Situated between Avoca and Kincumber just past Higher Ground Café (old Lizottes). Bought by Living Choice Australia (who build retirement villages) for \$12.4 mil.

This is a 24 hectare property in our beautiful hinterland. It is part of our catchment, empties into Saltwater Creek/ Avoca lagoon and is the lungs of our area.

Traffic on Avoca Dr will be impacted and it is already overloaded.

The DA for 210 manufactured homes, over 55s with swimming pools etc. hasn't gone into council yet but they've delayed it to go in close to Christmas, a popular developer tactic when people are distracted.

For now we are pre-empting what is coming and raising community awareness.

Main construction access is via Picketts Valley Rd through a green corridor which links Kincumber Mountain and Bouddi national park.

Picketts Valley has undergone zoning changes, parts that were zoned 7C3 for scenic rural protection are now zoned E4.

The market value for the planned development is \$800,00 per dwelling.

More info: www.picketts.com.au or www.facebook.com/kpvcag

Graham swims regularly at Terrigal and has noticed it getting more filthy due to overdevelopment.

Ian Caruthers raised a similar Land & Environment court case in Berry case of a rural area fighting overdevelopment and the DA was knocked back by Council.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Ridgway Road – Ian Caruthers

\$70 mil funding for roads have been announced included Ridgway Rd to improve the drainage.

Council is taking new approach to road maintenance and drainage. In the past Gosford Council would allow these assets to deteriorate to a below acceptable standard. The new system is called a 'sore tooth program' which means those roads won't get as dilapidated, intervention will occur sooner.

Bob Pickett's Land Offer to be discussed at next Council meeting – Lea Lawler

Lea Lawler notified that Bob Pickett's land offer is mentioned on page 316 of council's upcoming meeting in relation to the Council's Draft LEP (Local Environment Plan). The meeting is this Monday 9th Dec at 6.30pm .The meeting is open to members of the public and will be held at Council's Civic Centre located at 49 Mann Street, Gosford. Avoca FC are encouraging all members to attend to show support. Council received 334 submissions about Bob Pickett's land offer and 328 were in support.

Avoca Ping Pong – Virginia Riley

Scout leader Peter Oliver has agreed to clear space at the scout hall to permanently store 4 ping pong tables for community use (at a small nominal fee) and scout use. We are now seeking donations of 3 reasonable quality collapsible ping pong tables, bats, balls etc and hope to get some games up and running by the Christmas holidays. Contact hello@pingpong.org.au to register interest to play or donate equipment and www.pingpong.org.au for more information.

Beach rubbish clean ups – Virginia Riley

About five years ago a small group of locals used to run monthly rubbish clean ups at Avoca beachfront and report findings to the Australian Marine Debris Initiative database. Due to family illness this stopped and she was wondering if anyone else would like to run it again. A large amount of bags and gloves were donated by Clean Up Australia.

Councillor Jeff Sundstrom volunteered to run the beach clean ups and took the bags and gloves. If anyone is interested to help please contact jsundstrom@centralcoast.nsw.gov.au

