

Welcome Progress on Collingwood Beach Dune Vegetation Management Plan (CBDVMP)

In relation to the on-going development of a CBDVMP, on 21 November 2017 the Strategy and Assets Committee of Council carried a resolution to, amongst other things, adopt the following:

- a. Recognise the final draft recommendations and proposed management and communication methods compiled by the Collingwood Beach Dune Vegetation Reference Group (Chaired by Allan Baptist) as a broad framework on which to build and utilise as a reference document.
- b. Develop two trial sections at Collingwood Beach beachfront, each of approximately 50 mtrs in length, to be monitored over a two year period:-
 - i. Section One will be a damaged and denuded section to be revegetated in accordance with an agreed plan and with appropriate plants (not of the banksia species) in accordance with the five management objectives of the "Baptist" draft recommendation. The first stage of restoration will include the cutting down and spreading of dead wood on the selected site in recognition of its value as habitat.
 - ii. Section Two will be a current vegetated area of Banksia species to be trimmed progressively over time to provided filtered views of the Bay.
 - iii. Identifies location for one viewing platforms in accordance with Manly Hydraulics Laboratory's report; and
 - iv. Includes a monitoring and evaluation program during the two year trial implementation period.
 - v. The aim of the trial is to show good foreshore management.
- c. Prior to any implementation of the trial:-
 - i. A Management plan for the two sites be developed;
 - ii. Pictorial records will be made of the beachfront from the land and air in order to have a means of measurement of outcomes;
- d. All existing signs regarding tree vandalism will be removed from Collingwood Beach and a new signage program developed in the new Tree Vandalism policy.
- e. All Management planning and assessments of the Trial to be managed by:-
 - i. Council staff
 - ii. Reference Group - Community members; Bruce McKenzie, Noel Ross-Kelly, Dawn Thompson and Barbara Liddle
 - iii. Councillors –
 - iv. Jo Gash, Kaye Gartner, Patricia White, John Levett, Mitch Pakes and other interested Councillors.
- f. A strong engagement and communication strategy be established with identified stakeholders including a program of public consultation and education throughout the trial period and ongoing. Explanatory signs should be erected to encourage the local community to take ownership of the plan.

A robust Shoalhaven Tree Vandalism policy is to be rolled out across the Shoalhaven.

While the details have yet to be worked out, the VRRRA welcomes this progress and thanks the efforts of Councillors Gash, Gartner, White, Levett and Pakes together with Bruce McKenzie, Noel Ross-Kelly, Dawn Thompson and Barbara Liddle for working in good faith to find a sustainable solution to this contentious issue that has divided the Vincentia community for several years.

Bayswood at Centre of Disability Inclusion Budget Approvals

We are most pleased to advise that Council has approved one of the VRRRA's submissions to the development of Council's 2017/18 Delivery Program and Operational Plan (commonly referred to as the Budget). The approved submission is for improved disability access for the five entry and exit points on the shared pathways between:

- the corner of Coaster Circuit and Moona Creek Road, Bayswood;
- the Leisure Centre and Bayswood; and
- the Berry St end of the shared pathway (near the water treatment plant).

Of particular importance to the success of this submission was the provision of community benefits that support Council's recent adoption of a Disability Inclusion Action Plan. Council approved funding for the improved five entry and exit points as part of the 2017/18 budget at the Council Extraordinary meeting held on 13th August 2017. It is hoped that the Council and VRRRA can share experiences from the implementation of these actions and perhaps they can also be implemented across other CCB areas.

There has been a lot of work by the Council and numerous government agencies to analyse the details of the five entry/exit points in the submission and develop an engineering outcome. On 3 November 2017, two of the VRRRA committee, Angela Johnstone (the "Bayswood Buddy" for the submission) and Bob Pullinger met with the responsible Council Officers, Phil Critchley from the Assets Department and Megan Birmingham from the Natural Resources Department to "walk the talk" of the five entry and exit points and turn the proposal into an engineering solution.



The meeting sought to "make good, make safe" disability inclusion actions by sharing the understandings of the various Council Departments, Government Agencies and other parties involved in the development of the existing pathways that connect Bayswood to other locations around Vincentia, (e.g. developers of the Bayswood estate, Bush Fire Services, Assets and Works Department, and Planning and Environmental Department).

Phil also commented on the need to avoid waste by ensuring the work program eliminates duplication of set up costs (e.g. to avoid bringing the equipment for hard surfacing from Ulladulla on more than one occasion). This was most interesting and showed the complexity of detail that requires attention to avoid waste that can be caused by rushing towards part solutions. The community representatives appreciated the leadership demonstrated by the Council staff with the sharing of knowledge.

Phil identified a need to place priority on re-engineering the access points near the Leisure Centre and in Berry Street. The likely engineering outcome identified by Phil and Megan is minor but will provide a wide hard stand to accommodate the disability inclusion provision for ease of use by electric scooters, as well as walking and cycling use. These two entry/exit points have much in common and will share set up costs. Assuming all goes according to plan the upgraded entry and exit points will be operational before the end of this final school term.

It was also interesting to see and discuss safety aspects, which communities may sometimes perceive Council are reluctant to address. e.g. how often have we walked around a pot hole or inappropriately positioned bollard that would cause inconvenience or possible harm for a rider of an electric scooter? The community is strongly encouraged to report such items in need of maintenance to Council on 44293111 – making Council aware is the first and most critical step to “make it good, make it safe”.

The VRRRA also thanks Councillors Gash and Gartner for their advice and assistance in progressing the improvements in the five entry/exist points.

Angela Johnstone will report at its next VRRRA General Meeting on progress with improvements to the five entry/exit points. She will also advise about an opportunity to hold a community moonlight spot light tour of the environment adjoining the Coaster Circuit to Berry St.

Elizabeth Drive Pedestrian Refuge

The success of the VRRRA submission on improving entry/exit points on the Bayswood pathways has raised the importance of action on another related submission that the VRRRA has put forward to Council over the past two years. This relates to the installation of a pedestrian refuge at or near the corner of Elizabeth Drive and Berry St. Electric scooters, pedestrian and cycle traffic from Bayswood to Vincentia need to cross Elizabeth Drive at Berry St to access the Round the Bay shared path. In holiday season, the traffic on Elizabeth Drive is constant and crossing the road safely becomes problematic.

This need for a pedestrian refuge should also be considered as an important action for Disability Inclusion. Whereas monitored pedestrian movements have previously been insufficient to justify a pedestrian refuge, the Disability Inclusion aspects now create opportunities that have not previously existed. The VRRRA will continue to lobby Council on this matter.

Progress on Projects in Vincentia/Bayswood

1. Shared Pathway Bridge over Moona Moona Creek

Council is currently seeking tenders by 28 November 2017 for the construction of a new shared pathway bridge over Moona Moona Creek. Potential tenderers had an inspection visit on site on ? . The VRRRA understands that construction will not commence on site until April 2018 (after the Easter holidays) but will be completed in the first half of 2018.

2. Pacific City Park Vincentia (Bayswood)

While the contract has been awarded by Council for the relocation of the children’s play equipment at the Pacific City Park in Bayswood, the VRRRA understands that minor problems with sourcing necessary supplies by the successful contractor has delayed the commencement of the park until April 2018.

3. Shared Path Vincent and Twyford Streets

While Council has not yet commenced the tender process for the construction of this section of the shared path, Council’s revised 2017/18 budget statement still includes \$300,000 for this project to be spent in 2017/18.

The Future of Your Community Consultative Body?

As we come to the conclusion of 2017, it may be timely to consider the future operation of the Vincentia Ratepayers and Residents Association (VRRRA). There has been a long and proud history of the VRRRA and its antecedents working on behalf of local residents and ratepayers.

According to our historic records, it is almost 64 years since the formation of the original Vincentia Ratepayers Association (formed in 1954) with the objective of operating with other organisations to promote the social and physical progress of local citizens and to work with Council to improve facilities in the area. That association subsequently became the Vincentia Progress Association in 1966 and then the VRRRA in 1987. More recently, the VRRRA has also been recognised by the Shoalhaven City Council as the Community Consultative Body (CCB) for Vincentia and Bayswood. Community consultation through CCBs is recognised by Council as an important component of responsible decision making.

Times have changed significantly since the association operated with a separate Ladies Auxiliary (later an independent 'Ladies Club') but the overall objectives have remained similar – to improve the welfare of locals and amenities in the area. The associations lobbied hard for many years for the provision of many facilities that we now take for granted including:

- the Community Centre;
- the Vincentia Village shopping centre;
- paved roads (some with gutters) with street lighting;
- sewerage and improved stormwater drainage;
- walking/cycling paths;
- public toilets; and
- recreation facilities in nature reserves.

More recently, the association has campaigned for (amongst many other things):

- installation of a water fountain and exercise equipment at Plantation Point Reserve;
- improved drainage for the bicycle path along the Wool Road;
- improved disabled access to Collingwood Beach and the shared path from Bayswood;
- addressing the erosion at Collingwood Beach due to storm water discharge;
- reinstallation of garbage bins along Collingwood Beach;
- extensions of the Round the Bay shared pathway; and
- improvements to the public space at the Burton Street mall (Vincentia Village).

Throughout the long history of the associations, the interest and involvement of locals has waxed and waned. There have been periods when membership has declined, attendance at meetings has fallen and nominations for committee positions have been hard to find. Occasionally contentious issues arise that split the community and make the work of representative bodies harder to progress.

The last 3 years has seen the VRRRA committee strive to be more engaging and transparent as a CCB for the community. To this end the VRRRA:

- has established a Code of Practice;
- has made changes to the constitution for the benefit of members;
- has made VRRRA membership immediate and automatic to any Resident or Ratepayer subject to a membership fee; and
- now conducts meetings as CCB meetings and it is not necessary to be a VRRRA member to vote on community issues (note that it is necessary to be a VRRRA member to vote on constitutional matters of the VRRRA) declared the VRRRA to be your voice in Vincentia and as such endeavours to fairly allow all views to be represented.

The ability of the VRRRA to successfully represent the Vincentia community depends critically on the involvement of residents, ratepayers and other persons in the local community. If you value improvements in the amenities and facilities of the local area, please consider becoming actively involved as either a member or committee member in 2018.

The VRRRA will be seeking nominations for its 2018 committee during December and January, for appointment of the new committee at the Annual General Meeting in February 2018. The following provides a brief summary of what the committee does and what is involved in each committee position.

The committee controls and manages the day to day affairs of the association in accordance with the constitution and often represents the association in its dealings with other bodies (such as Council). The committee receives information about local issues which it disseminates to residents as well as maintaining the VRRRA website and community noticeboard and publishing a bi-monthly electronic newsletter. Regular (bi-monthly) general meetings are conducted to provide a forum to discuss issues of local concern. The committee records the community concerns and communicates them to relevant authorities (normally Council).

The committee is elected from members and comprises four office-bearers and up to 5 ordinary committee members. The office-bearers and their main responsibilities are:

- president - convenes and chairs committee and general meetings;
- vice-president - convenes and chairs meetings in the absence of the president;
- secretary - keeps minutes of all appointments to the committee, names of members at a committee or general meeting and minutes of all proceedings at committee and general meetings, and manages in-coming and out-going correspondence;
- treasurer - collects all money due to the association and makes authorised payments and ensures that the correct books and accounts are kept showing the financial details of the VRRRA.

Ordinary committee members participate and vote at committee meetings and may be authorised to perform the roles of the office-bearers.

A number of the existing VRRRA committee have held positions for several years and new persons on the committee would be most welcome. The current president and secretary do not propose to re-nominate for these positions in 2018.

Nominations for the 2018 VRRRA committee must be made in writing (the nomination form is available on the association's website vrra.org.au) and must be received by not later than 7 days before the 2018 Annual General Meeting (scheduled for 15 February 2018). In accordance with the VRRRA Code of Practice, members will be advised by e-mail of details of nominations as they are received.

Becoming a Committee member is a rewarding and satisfying experience. Apart from being directly involved in matters that help or benefit the community, it offers the opportunity to meet interesting people and forge new friendships.

Please consider becoming involved. Should nominations for the 2018 committee not be forthcoming, it may become necessary to wind-up the association. This would be a very sad outcome for a body that has in various forms successfully represented the Vincentia community for over 60 years.

Our Next Meeting

Our next meeting is on Thursday 14 December 2017 at 7.30pm at the Vincentia Community Hall in the Coles car park.

Not a VRRRA member? It doesn't matter for the consideration of local Council related issues. Everyone is welcome and if you are a ratepayer or resident of Vincentia, come and have your say.

Why not join the VRRRA? It is only \$10 per person per year. Membership application is quick and easy. It can be done on the night or online by going to our website www.vrrra.org.au. For information contact the secretary: vrrra.ccb@gmail.com.

Input for Future Newsletters/Community Notices

Do you have any issues/news or community notices that you want circulated in the Vincentia community in future Newsletters?

Do you want to respond to something in a previous Newsletter?

If so, please send your contributions to vrrra.ccb@gmail.com and we will consider its inclusion in future publications. Articles of no more than one page including photos are preferred. You do not need to be a VRRRA member to contribute, but the VRRRA reserves the right to determine whether an article will be included.