

Shoalhaven City Council Familiarity Tour

On Friday 18 November 2016, the new Shoalhaven City Mayor, Amanda Findlay, Councillors and senior council staff made a familiarity tour to a number of Community Consultative Bodies (CCB) in the Bay and Basin area. Councillors and staff met with representatives from the Vincentia Ratepayers and Residents Association Inc (VRRA), the recognised CCB for the Vincentia area, as well as representatives from the CCBs for Huskisson, Hyams Beach and Basin Village. The VRRA was represented by its President, Pete Gaffey, Secretary, Johanna Pullinger, and Treasurer, Peter Livingston.

The delegation met with the VRRA representatives at the Holden Street boat ramp and discussed a range of local issues. Dr Gaffey noted that upgrading the Holden Street public toilets to provide for inclusive access was a high priority for the VRRA. The group also inspected the proposed site for inclusive access to Collingwood Beach and a viewing platform with covered seating. This proposal is currently the subject of an application from the VRRA for a grant under the NSW Government's Community Building Partnership 2016. A decision on the application is expected in December 2016.

While the Mayor and Councillors were politely receptive of VRRA proposals and suggestions, no new commitments were forthcoming. The VRRA representatives were however impressed by the immediate action taken by Carmel Krogh, Director of Shoalhaven Water, to notify her staff of an unpleasant odour apparently emanating from the pumping station at Holden Street.



NSW Legislative Council Endorses Dune Vegetation Management at Collingwood Beach

On 17 November 2016 the NSW Legislative Council unanimously passed a motion put forward by the Hon Paul Green affirming the importance of maintaining native vegetation across coastal areas and supporting community engagement to protect the Collingwood Beach dunes with appropriate vegetation.

The motion acknowledged that the prime purpose of the draft dune vegetation management plan currently under consideration by the Shoalhaven City Council is to secure views from the shared pathway across the 1.5 kilometre beachfront between Susan Street and Moona Mona Creek.

Mr Green was pleased that the motion received unanimous support and he thanked all his colleagues, including the Greens, and in particular Mr Justin Field MLC, for their support. Mr Green went on to say, "It is of paramount importance to allow the pruning of vegetation, which does not affect the resilience of dunes as the remaining vegetation assists in mitigating erosion during storms."

Mr Green concluded, "I now call upon Shoalhaven City Council to progress the proposal and adopt the amendments proposed by the Collingwood Beach Preservation Group."

The motion endorses the vision communicated by the Minister for Planning Rob Stokes when he visited Collingwood Beach on 24 May 2016 and met with members of the Collingwood Beach Preservation Group (CBPG). The Minister viewed the vegetation on the dunes, discussed the science behind dune resilience, and subsequently wrote to the CBPG summarising the current status of coastal reforms. The Minister confirmed that Councils need to balance the environmental and stability benefits of vegetation on dunes against the visual amenity for adjacent landholders, in consultation with local communities.

The CBPG notes that given the significant amount of money and time the Council has already spend on developing the Dune Vegetation Management Plan, now is the time for Council, as prompted by the NSW upper house, to move ahead with the plan already prepared and not spend more of ratepayers' time and money on a new plan.

The CBPG has studied the issues related to dune resilience at Collingwood Beach. Based on literature endorsed by the Office of Environment and Heritage in the Coastal Dune Management Manual, and historical evidence, the CBPG concludes that views can co-exist with a resilient dune system. The CBPG has published a video that highlights the particular circumstances of Collingwood Beach and the video can be found at: www.collingwoodbeachpreservation.com.au

Repairs to Collingwood Beach Shared Pathway

Council workers were hard at work last week to repair the Collingwood Beach shared pathway which had been uplifted by the roots from the adjacent Banksia trees and creating a safety issue. Banksia limbs had to be pruned right back so as to allow access to the heavy equipment. As can be see from the photos, not a simple grind and smooth job but a major reconstruction exercise. In the end a job well done as the new replacement section blends in seamlessly with the existing pathway. The Banksias which caused the problem were left in situ so it does raise the question as to when and if it will be necessary to repeat this exercise. The VRRRA wonders whether a cost benefit analysis has been performed to compare the on-going cost of repairing the path to the cost of removing the cause of the damage, that is removing the banksias that are too close to the path.



Future Defence Force Leaders Training in Jervis Bay

For the past two weeks there have been a number of squads of second year recruits from the Australian Defence Force Academy undertaking Leadership Development Training in the Jervis Bay area. You may have noticed groups of recruits from the Army, Navy and Air Force in full kit and uniform making their way around the foreshore of Jervis Bay. We understand that these training exercises are likely to become regular events in Jervis Bay over a two week period each November.



Super Moon

On 14 November we experienced a 'super moon' when the Full Moon coincides with the closest approach to Earth (also called perigee). The moon appeared bigger and brighter than usual, corresponding with larger tides. If you missed it, the next one is due on 25 November 2034.



Drinking Fountain

Shoalhaven Water has completed the installation of a drinking fountain at Plantation Point. Well done Shoalhaven Water - we appreciate your efforts to improve facilities in the area and encourage the refilling of drink bottles rather than use of disposable plastic bottles.

Little Blue Dinosaur Road Safety Signs

The Little Blue Dinosaur road safety signs have been reinstalled around Vincentia in time for the holiday season. The Little Blue Dinosaur organisation seeks to educate and protect pedestrian children from the ever present danger associated with roadways and motor vehicles.

Many thanks to the Collingwood Beach Preservation Group for installing the signs.



Whales Playing in Jervis Bay

November has seen numerous whales enjoying a playful break in Jervis Bay before completing their migration south.

It seems that more and more whales are entering the Bay each season delighting both locals and tourists.



Pedestrian Refuges Along Elizabeth Drive

The VRRRA had contacted the Shoalhaven City Council in October to consider the installation of pedestrian refuges along Elizabeth Drive, in particular near Berry St, Vincentia.

Council has recently responded that it is aware of the pedestrian demand along Elizabeth Drive, particularly during the summer months. Council's Traffic Unit are arranging for pedestrian surveys to be carried out at the following locations along Elizabeth Drive during summer 2016/17:

1. Burrill St / Jervis St (adjacent to the Caravan Park)
2. Elizabeth Drive / Berry St.

Some years ago Council adopted the Bay and Basin Traffic Study which identified the potential need of future pedestrian upgrades at these locations. The ultimate solution identified for these intersections is upgrading the current intersections to roundabouts which allow for improved pedestrian safety on all legs of the roundabout, in addition the local road roundabout treatments would reduce vehicle speeds which will also be important given the very long stretch of Elizabeth Drive.

Council staff been monitoring these locations for potential grant funding opportunities over the years. Alternative treatments at these locations are pedestrian refuges, however, construction of these facilities do affect traffic flow, particularly when right turning vehicles waiting to turn right generally doesn't allow through traffic to pass due to the reduced road width. The purpose of the pedestrian surveys over the coming summer period is to update Council's current crossing strategy city wide, and surveys are also required to confirm that demands warrant upgrade works in accordance with guidelines.

Any upgrade of pedestrian facilities and/or intersection upgrades is dependant of grant funding nominations.

Our Next Meeting

Our next meeting is on 15 December 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 \$5 per person for the year. Membership application is quick and easy. It can be done on the night or online by going to our website www.vrrra.org.

Further information contact the secretary: vrra.ccb@gmail.com.

Special Resolutions on VRRRA Objects and Constitution and Resolution on Code of Practice

Our next meeting on 15 December will also consider two Special Resolutions to amend the VRRRA Objects and Constitution and an ordinary resolution to adopt a Code of Practice. These resolutions are the outcome of lengthy process of consideration that was instigated by members to ensure ethical and transparent conduct by the VRRRA Executive Committee and to ensure its conduct is always representative of its members.

The first Special Resolution seeks to update the Objects of the VRRRA that have not been reviewed since the VRRRA was registered as an incorporated association in 1990.

The second Special Resolution proposes two changes to the VRRRA Constitution. The first change is to simplify the process for the application for membership and remove the role of the Executive Committee in the approval or rejection of applicants. The second change is to limit Office Bearers to a maximum of three consecutive terms.

The ordinary resolution proposes a Code of Practice that will provide guidance on the conduct of meetings, the operation of the Executive Committee and the conduct of elections and ballots.

Only VRRRA members will be able to vote on these resolutions as they relate to the operation of the VRRRA as an incorporated association.

And remember the saying, "Those who turn up make the decisions."