

2020

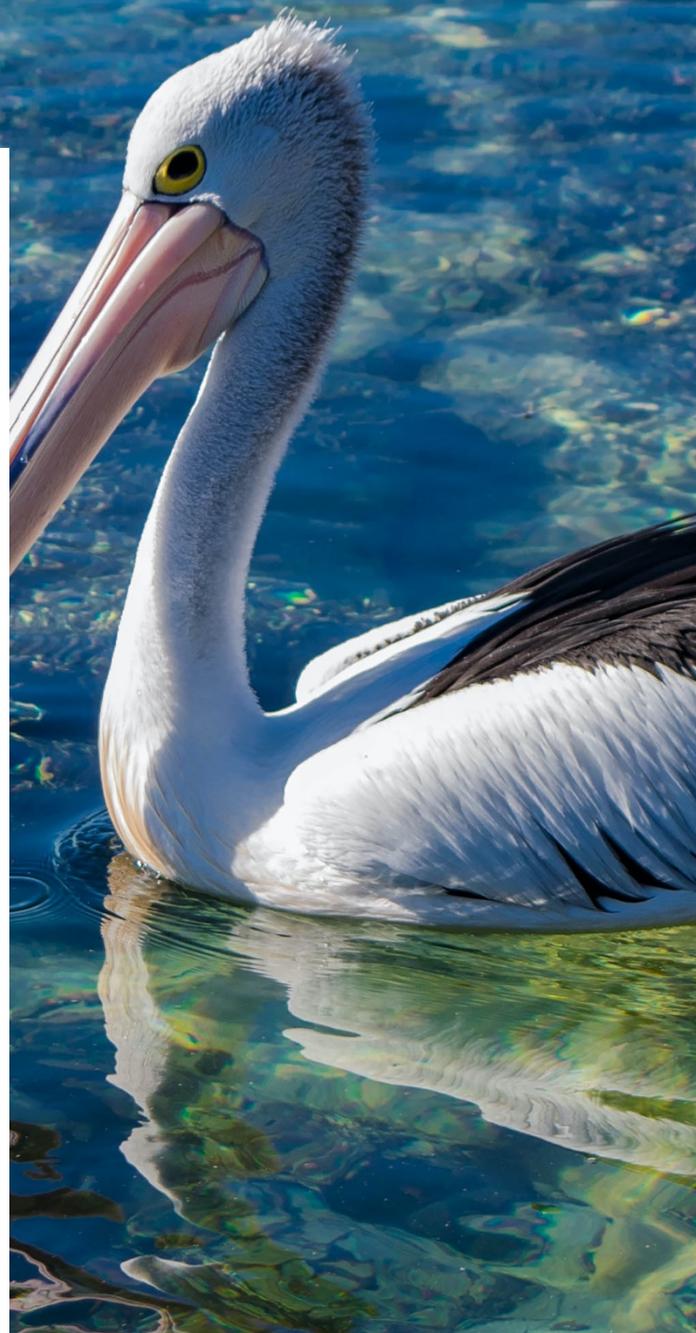
**COMMUNITY
RESPONSE
SURVEY**

**FROM THE VINCENTIA COMMUNITY,
REGARDING THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITY
CONSULTATIVE BODY**



JUNE 19

**Vincentia Ratepayers & Residents Association
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A NOTE FROM THE COMMITTEE

Dear Vincentians,

Firstly, we would like to thank you for taking time to respond to our 2020 Community Response Survey. The response rate was excellent and shows that you, as a community care about both the place in which we live, and the importance of transparency and continuous improvement in how that place is represented to Local Council.

Our Community Survey has enabled us to gain an accurate picture of how you feel about what the VRRRA does, and how it can better represent your needs in the future.

This 2020 has been a challenging year, but your feedback presents us with opportunities on how we can better work together to realise our common goals of making Vincentia the best possible place to live, work and visit!

As a committee, we have taken the time to reflect on your feedback and the themes that arise from it. We know that the way to improve as an association, is to also improve the clarity with which we communicate future aims and strategies of VRRRA and the consistency in which we execute our messages. The following document highlights the main results of the survey, the key areas to focus on, and recommendations on how to achieve this. Importantly, though, we have already started to implement actions arising from those recommendations!

- We have already commenced using an e-voting system, for those can't attend meetings, and for those motions that are imminent and need action before a bi-monthly meeting;*
- We have created electronic membership applications to streamline the joining process;*
- We are developing a code of conduct for how our meetings are run, to ensure they are both accessible and a safe forum for people to raise issues in;*
- We have started trialling videoing conferencing in our committee meetings, with a view to expanding it, if there is expressed interest, so that more people can access our bi-monthly meetings;*
- We have the started the process of designing a strategic plan for Vincentia, with input to follow from key community organisations, the local residents and businesses, landowners and Council.*

Plus, more actions are on the way! It is important to recognise that this is a journey – not a 'quick fix' – and together we will not lose sight of the critical ports of call.

From here we plan to:

- Identify further opportunities that will have an immediate impact*
- Develop an action plan on the key issues that we need to improve on in the medium to longer term*
- Follow through and communicate these plans and the results to you*

The VRRRA Committee remains absolutely committed to following through on these issues as they are fundamental to improving the way we work together.

Thanks again for your feedback.

VRRRA Committee, your Community Consultative Body 😊

Survey Results Report

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Prepared for: Vincentia Residents & Rate Payers Association

Submitted: 31/05/2020

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SURVEY OBJECTIVES

The 2020 VRRRA survey has been designated the first, or initial survey, in a possible series, to further define and create milestones and objectives for the Vincentia Ratepayers & Residents Association. As a community consultative body, both representative of the local residents and a conduit for interest groups to connect with Council; it is essential we are reflecting community issues in an impartial and cohesive way. This initial survey, sent only to those residents who have subscribed to receive information from us via email, whilst being a designated sample group, is something we are able to both garner current impressions from and can further build on for future continuous quality improvement.

PARTICIPANTS

The total number of individuals participated in the survey:

- 55

Number of members of VRRRA

- 18

Number of non-members

- 35

Did not answer the question

- 2

METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted using SurveyMonkey. 6 questions were asked, with 4 follow-on questions, depending on response.

VRRRA collected two forms of data:

- *Qualitative*: Qualitative data included the follow up questions and any open text inputs that allowed participant comments.
- *Quantitative*: Quantitative data was derived from single-answer questions (yes/no), and multiple choice; no ranking metrics were used, but general frequency terms were collated.

Appendix A contains the complete list of questions.

RESULTS

The following is a compilation of the survey results as well as the subsequent opportunities that have arisen from the feedback. The results are broken down via question with recommendations listed at the end document.

Question 1 & 2

Question 1 asked how many respondents were current members of the VRRRA, with Question 2, asking the likelihood of the respondent becoming a financial and voting member this current year.

Q1 Response:

- Number of members of VRRRA: 18 (31.5%)
- Number of non-members: 35 (63.6%)
- Did not answer the question: 1 (3.63%)
 - 2 respondents who were not current members indicated they were likely to become a member in the next 12 months
 - One respondent who answered YES to being a current member, didn't answer this question

Q2 Response:

- Number of respondents likely to renew their membership: 18 (31.5%)
 - Of this 17 were current members
- Number of respondents unlikely to renew their membership: 21 (36.8%)
 - No respondent who answered No to this question was a current member of the VRRRA
- Respondents who didn't answer the question: 18 (31.57%)

Question 3

As a follow-on to a negative response to Question 2; Question 3 asked if the respondent was NOT a member or may not renew your membership; what might encourage them to join or renew VRRRA/VRRRA membership?

- 20 respondents skipped this question, of that 17 were current VRRRA members
- 32 respondents used the free-text input option to list reasons that may increase their likelihood of joining the VRRRA.
 - These responses generally fell into 5 general categories:
 - The VRRRA needing to have greater strategic activities and input into Council decisions (3.12%)
 - The VRRRA needing to collect a larger collection of community viewpoints, that considers the wider socio-economical demographics of the area, this way they are truly representative of the Vincentia Area. Some respondents felt that as an association, the VRRRA wasn't fairly representative of all viewpoints (50%)
 - Respondents needing a clearer idea of what the VRRRA does, its structure and purpose and place in Vincentia as a CCB (25%)
 - A greater focus on the environment in Vincentia and the Bay & Basin area and the issues that impact on it (3.12%)

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- More engaging and inclusive meeting formats, including suggestions for more flexible style of meetings (i.e. not everyone can attend meetings, but many would still like to be able to input into decisions) (12.5%)
 - The remaining responses (6.26%) were positive acknowledgements of the respondents' intent to join the VRRRA

Question 4 & 5

Asked if respondents regularly attended VRRRA meetings. This was a single answer question with a yes/no response; and a further follow-on (Question 5) for negative responses that asked what could encourage respondents to attend the bi-monthly meetings

- 18.51% of respondents answered YES, they attend meetings on a regular basis
- 81.48% of respondents answered NO, they did not attend meetings on a regular basis

It is important to note here, that data is not completely reflective of those that attend semi-regularly; with the single input answers not allowing for this option.

- 22 respondents skipped this question
- 31 respondents used the free-text input option to list reasons that may increase their likelihood of attending the bi-monthly meetings regularly.
 - These responses were similar and fell into the some of the general categories as listed previously in Question 3 with a couple of differences:
 - Increase in strategic activities and input into Council decisions (6.25%)
 - Wider collection and representation of the community and its diverse viewpoints (37.5%)
 - More information of what the VRRRA does, its structure and purpose and place in Vincentia as a CCB (25%)
 - 28.1% of respondents either didn't know about the meetings and when they were on, or were unable to attend but wanted a change to the meeting format to be more inclusive and flexible
 - 3.15% of respondents wanted a more interesting and less council works focused agenda and speakers

Question 6

A single input (yes/no) question that asked if respondents had ever been part of a VRRRA Driven Project.

- 19 respondents answered YES
- 32 respondents answered NO
- 4 respondents did not answer this question

NOTE: For future surveys, it would be useful to tease out this question to understand what respondents understood to be a 'VRRRA driven project' and what their level of participation was in this; otherwise, as a data point, this gives little information.

Question 7

As a follow on to a negative response, Question 7 asked if the respondent hadn't ever participated in a VRRRA driven Project, what might make them volunteer

- 28 respondents skipped this question, (of that, 13 had answered NO to the previous question)
- 23 respondents answered this question
 - Responses fell into two categories:
 - 1) Either respondents didn't know about projects, what they entailed or how to join in on them (39.13%)
 - 2) Or respondents felt the scope of projects (again, we don't have a clear idea of what exactly respondents felt WAS a VRRRA-driven Project) were too narrow and didn't take the wider Vincentia Community into consideration (56.53%)
 - 3) Remaining responses were individual reasons for not participating in projects, i.e. health reasons, transport issues, etc (4.34%)

Question 8

Asked the respondent what they liked about the VRRRA. Responses were generally positive, with feedback including:

- That the VRRRA was a 'Voice to the Council'
- It is a 'positive group with the purpose of working to improve the locality'
- A respondent noted 'the wonderful work done by VRRRA volunteers'.
- That the VRRRA was 'informative'
- That the VRRRA 'seeks to represent the Vincentia community in an open manner - in accordance with the CCB Guidelines and its Constitution. And that this approach was 'preferable to other groups that operate on an invitation basis'.
- Another respondent noted the 'Interesting guest speakers talking about local concerns.'
- 'Being listened too by council'
- That 'there have been positive changes in the VRRRA and the committee has embarked on some projects that will benefit the community such as the new playground at Plantation Point.'
- The 'willingness of people to put in an effort on a voluntary basis'
- That the VRRRA 'theoretically provides the opportunity to share ideas and ways to improve Vincentia for all residents.'
- 'Community awareness, maintaining and upgrading our town facilities and public areas. Taking responsibility and advocates for what is best for our town.'

Some constructive criticism included:

- A lack of ‘community consultation’
- That even though it is good to have a ‘diverse representative community group to promote interests of the whole of the population,’ a number of responses were concerned that the focus of the VRRRA was too narrow and not representative of the whole community.
- There were also some concerns about the lack of focus on the environment

Question 9

Asked respondents If there is anything they liked least about the VRRRA, what were some suggestions that might address their concerns

This was a multiple-choice question, with 3 optional answers:

- 1) The meetings dates/time and format does not encouraging [sic] attendees participation
- 2) Guest Speakers are not always about Vincentia related matters only
- 3) Having to pay \$10 per annum membership fee

- 76.03% of respondents skipped this question
- Of those that responded, 76.92% noted 1) *meetings dates/time and format does not encouraging attendees [sic] participation*
- Whilst 38.46% selected 1) in addition to 2) *Guest Speakers are not always about Vincentia related matters only*
- One respondent selected 3) *Having to pay \$10 per annum membership fee*

Question 10

This was the final question in the survey, it was an open-text input, that simply gave respondents the opportunity to list any other concerns they may have that the VRRRA could address

- Almost half (49.09%) of the survey respondents answered this question, however of that,
- Most issues raised were consistent with those mentioned in the previous open-text inputs from Questions 3, 5 & 7, and in addition to that the following points were raised:
 - That it would be useful to have a clear differentiation/delineation between the VRRRA and the CCB as many other associations/CCB groups do.
 - That as a CCB, the VRRRA should incorporate representatives from the Bayswood community.
 - There needs to be a clear statement about the relationship of the VRRRA and its subsequent CCB status and the sub-committee of Collingwood Beach Preservation Group

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- That the VRRRA is suffering from an image problem. It doesn't clearly show all the positive things it does for the community, and rather the perception is that the VRRRA 'represents narrow views in certain instances'
 - That there needs to be a consolidation of the various interest groups in the Vincentia area, so that the CCB is reflective and consistent of all viewpoints

RECOMMENDATIONS

The VRRRA's purpose as an association is two-fold, with obvious cross-over in its intentions:

- 1) As the Shoalhaven City Council (SCC) recognised Community Consultative Body for the Vincentia area, it follows the *Guidelines for Conduct of Community Consultative Bodies* (2016) when dealing with Council-related matters. The SCC defines a CCB as having
 - a. Geographic boundaries covering an area with a common interest (i.e. a community of interest)
 - b. The general support and confidence of the local community to:
 - i. disseminate information
 - ii. facilitate discussion
 - iii. communicate collective views of the community to Council.
 - c. Representing the residents and ratepayers within the CCB area.
 - d. Complying with the adopted 'Guidelines for the Conduct of Community Consultative Bodies'.
 - e. Is formally recognised by Council as a CCB.

As the VRRRA, the association's goal is to:

- 1) Provide ratepayers and residents in Vincentia with a forum to discuss issues of concern and communicate the collective views of the community to relevant authorities including local, state or federal government or to other individuals and organisations as appropriate.
- 2) Advocate for improved public facilities in Vincentia and seek grant funding from local, state or federal government to support such facilities.
- 3) Obtain and disseminate information relevant to the Vincentia community.
- 4) Encourage the involvement of the community in the decision-making processes of local, state and federal Governments that impact on Vincentia.

Whilst in the CCB meeting component of the VRRRA, ‘All residents, ratepayers and other persons within the CCB community such as onsite holiday van owners and business owners are entitled to attend’ it is obviously beneficial for residents to also want to join the VRRRA for a number of reasons:

- It helps to bring diversity and different points of view into the association
- Helps to boost funds via annual membership (\$10/yr. annual subscription). This helps to defray costs associated with running meetings and hosting events that are often paid for personally by the committee
- Helps the VRRRA reach a wider audience in Vincentia, facilitating a greater understanding of all aspects of collective viewpoints.

There are a number of observations offered by respondents as to how we can be a better CCB and association, and whilst a lot of them are contradictory, and we can’t meet all wants and needs... there are some key objectives we can put into place to ensure we are growing as an organisation and continuously improving how we represent the Vincentia area and those that abide within its bounds.

Below is a list of different objectives we will be discussing and implementing over the next 12-month period.

	OBJECTIVES & GOALS	Importance
1	Trial different methods of VRRRA meetings and voting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • i.e. informal (as recommended by CCB guidelines) • working group methodology; • utilizing online voting; • using video conferencing (i.e. Zoom etc) • having clear meeting protocols that communicate the responsibilities of facilitators and attendants alike 	High
2	Disseminating information and connecting on more diverse communication platforms and through a variety of mediums; or alternatively leveraging current platforms (Facebook and website, paper-based etc) to engage with more residents	High
3	A clear identification of the difference between CCB meetings and VRRRA Meetings to minimize any confusion/unclear processes	High
4	A membership drive geared to inform and promote the VRRRA, both as an association and a community consultative body. This is to help: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness of the VRRRA and its role in the community, • Increase awareness of current projects and future opportunities • To clearly and transparently show the VRRRA’s role as a collective voice to Council for Vincentia 	Medium

5	<p>An assessment of all sub-committees of the VRRRA and their roles in reporting back to the VRRRA, with the purpose determining if their scope is accurate and current or if it needs to be adjusted. This includes a clear delineation of sub-committee roles in reporting to the VRRRA or CCB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were a number of recommendations of widening the scope of Collingwood Beach Preservation Group, to include ALL beaches in Vincentia. This is pertinent for two reasons: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) It will allow due process to be assigned to any/all dune or beach management issues that may be raised (i.e. silt overflow through to Moona Moona Beach; replacement of paths adjacent to Chinaman’s Beach) 2) The current Collingwood Beach Preservation Group manages the ‘Hold my Hand’ campaign that runs across all beaches and streets in Vincentia, thus the scope of ‘dune/beach management of Collingwood Beach’ as a sub-committee isn’t comprehensive enough • An alternative option could include the creation of individual waterway/fore-shore sub-committees for the other beaches in Vincentia to ensure that they are also monitored and there are systems in place for following up issues that occur in these spaces. <p>These are the sorts of issues that must be resolved in a timely and proactive fashion if the VRRRA seeks to be transparent and representative of the Vincentia Community</p>	High
6	<p>Processes for ensuring guest speakers are purposeful and interesting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This could be appointing a committee member/s or creating a sub-committee to plan and source guest speakers from the Vincentia (and Bayswood) area to speak about what is happening in the community. • Guests could be sourced from other interest groups about their current focus (i.e. Vincentia Matters, Vincentia Village Chamber of Commerce, sports clubs, Rural Fire Service, other hobby/crafting/specific focus groups) • This will also help engage and connect socially isolated individuals and help promote aspects of our community that make it interesting and unique 	Medium
7	<p>Discussion re a creation of calendar of events or sub-committee to start investigating this;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As an association (VRRRA) it is important for members to connect outside of bi-monthly meetings; and whilst it may be limiting in this 	Medium

	<p>current socially restrictive environment, it is important to plan for a time when groups and gatherings will once more be allowed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These could be fundraising, specific interest groups or simple meet ups/gatherings; this follows on from and builds on point 6 	
8	<p>A creation of a clear strategy for the Vincentia and its future;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building on the Place Score survey report, the VVCC strategic plan and community responses to concerns and issues. This can feed into the SCC plan to create an overarching Bay & Basin Strategy for growth and development and ensure Vincentia doesn't get forgotten and left behind. • A Sub-committee has already been created for this, and further promotion of this committee, could help to ensure wider participation from local residents, businesses and community groups. 	High

APPENDIX A – Survey Text

The questions asked:

- Are you a member of VRRRA?
- How likely are you to renew your membership in the up-coming year?
 - If you are not a member or may not renew your membership; what might encourage you to join or renew the VRRRA membership?
- Do you attend VRRRA Meeting on a regular basis?
 - If not, what can we do to encourage you to attend VRRRA-CCB bimonthly meetings?
- Have you ever volunteered to participate in a VRRRA driven project?
 - If not, what might encourage you to volunteer
- What do you like about VRRRA?
- If there is anything that you like least about VRRRA, please make some suggestions as to how we could address your concerns
 - The meetings dates/time and format does not encourage attendees [sic] participation
 - Guest Speakers are not always about Vincentia related matters only
 - Having to pay \$10 per annum membership fee
 - If other, please provide us with suggestions about how we could address your concerns and any other comment that in your opinion will make us a better VRRRA for all in Vincentia.