

JULY 2020 NEWSLETTER

We hope you are all staying well and safe in these difficult circumstances and looking out for yourself, your families and your friends.

In spite of the restrictions the dedicated committee team has, like the broader community, found ways to keep getting on with the job at hand. Thank goodness for Zoom and the similar platforms which have allowed us to continue our meetings and actions.

Our Annual General Meeting which is planned for August with guest speaker Gary McPike from Barwon Coast is on hold while we see how the Covid-19 situation continues to unfold.

We have been busy on a number of issues.

DELWP Bellarine Distinctive Areas & Landscapes (DAL)

<https://engage.vic.gov.au/distinctive-areas-and-landscapes-program/bellarine-peninsula>

This is the Association's top priority and we believe of vital importance to the future of Ocean Grove & the wider Bellarine. We have made a submission as part of the DELWP consultation process. Our submission was emailed to all Association members and can be found at: <http://www.ogca.com.au/documents.html>

We are now about to enter the crucial phase of the DELWP process. Our submission along with submissions from many other community groups across the Bellarine had an overall consistent theme that the Government should immediately impose permanent settlement boundaries around all Bellarine towns in their current locations with no more opportunities for further outward expansion of towns.

The Association is calling on the State Government to deliver on its strong & clear election commitments to protect the Bellarine's environmentally significant & attractive rural landscapes & its townships from further inappropriate development & urban sprawl.

We are particularly concerned that speculative developers & landowners are continuing to apply strong pressure on the Government and Council to allow development of further green field sites on the Bellarine, including the Oakdene winery land and other land to the west of Grubb Rd on the major entrance into Ocean Grove.

The facts are that there is about 15 years of existing vacant housing growth land that has already been approved for development available inside the existing Ocean Grove settlement boundary which provides for ample growth in our popular town. There should be no more opportunities for further urban growth around our town beyond what is already approved. Further growth beyond the existing boundary will, we believe, destroy

the surrounding environmentally significant & attractive rural landscapes which form so much of the character of Ocean Grove.

The Association's on-line "Enough is Enough" campaign has already been signed by over 4200 people which clearly demonstrates the wider community's support for permanent town boundaries in their current location! The on-line "Enough is Enough" campaign is still open for people to sign up via the link: <http://chng.it/44MPprTqrJ> and we encourage those with similar views who haven't yet signed up to please do so.

We will continue to engage with DELWP and concurrently lobby state government Members of Parliament.

Proposed Amendment to the Greater Geelong Settlement Strategy

Linked with the DAL Process has been the proposed amendment, by Council, to the Greater Geelong Settlement Strategy Amendment C395. This is a broad ranging change to the existing Settlement Strategy across many parts of Greater Geelong. One aspect was to no longer designate Ocean Grove as a growth centre and to retain the town boundary as it currently stands. We have actively supported this position and like the DAL this drew land developers immediate responses. Developers want the land to the west of Grubb Road, the land east of Banks Road and the strip of land to the north between the current Oakdene housing development and the Bellarine Highway to be included in the Ocean Grove Town Settlement Boundary.

Council have said that the Bellarine has had a disproportionate share of the region's population inflow over the past few years. Council said Ocean Grove has already done the bulk of heavy-lifting on accommodating growth. Council have specifically designated the areas to the west and north of Geelong City as preferred development areas. This negates the need for any more broad-acre residential land in Ocean Grove beyond that which is already approved and in progress in Ocean Grove within the existing Ocean Grove Settlement Boundary.

The Amendment was referred to an Independent Panel which provided its report to Council. We will continue to lobby in support of the Council position on the town boundary and see this as directly linked to the DAL process. Our position in both cases is completely consistent and we want the existing town settlement boundary locked now and not subject to yet more and seemingly endless reviews and studies. There have been enough studies and investigations – lets get on and make the decision.

Community Solar and Battery Bulk Buy Program

This very successful initiative, in co-operation with 100% Clean Bellarine, was led by one of our Committee team – Suzie Brown.

We partnered with Mondo (the commercial arm of AusNet) and local solar installer City to Surf Solar to promote opportunities to the community and businesses and to provide a value for money offering for solar and/or battery installations. Almost 500 people attended across four community forums held at the Shell Road Pavilion in February.

Overall, to date, 45 households have accepted quotes with installations already under way by City to Surf Solar. The 45 quotes have a combined total of 220kw of solar and 86kw of battery storage. We hope to relaunch the opportunity again post Covid-19.

As an additional outcome of the program we expect to have about \$14,000 to put towards a renewable energy, community benefit based project or projects. If you have any ideas on potential projects please email us on ogcommunityassn@gmail.com we would love to hear from you.

Kids "ISO" Art Competition

We ran this in March/April during the school lockdowns to offer kids some fun and concurrently provide, through prize vouchers, some \$ spending in some of the local business. We were, as always, generously supported by Ty at Driftwood and the Dollar Shop kicked in as well. We awarded 25 prizes overall across a number of age groups up to the age of 12. If you would like to see some of the artwork please go to the gallery on our facebook page.

Continuing Issues and Efforts

We continue to be involved in a number of on-going infrastructure related issues including:

- **The proposed upgrade of Grubb Road and Tuckfield St by Regional Roads Victoria (RRV)**
 - This major work is not yet funded by the State Government and continues in the planning phase. However the Federal Government has committed \$5m for interim improvements. RRV have advised that they are currently developing options for what can be done with the \$5m before coming to the community for input.
- **The Ocean Grove Principal Pedestrian Network (PPN)**
 - This Council project is now at the stage where Council will be required to consult with the impacted landowners on a Special Rates Charge or Charges before making any final decisions.
- **Council Elections – 24 October 2020**
 - We hope to run a Candidates Community Forum on 14 October in the lead up to the 24th October Election - similar to the forums we ran for the last Council and Federal elections.
 - We will see what our Covid-19 options might be closer to the date.
- **Entrances to Ocean Grove**
 - We hope to kick off shortly, in cooperation with Ocean Grove Rotary, a process to gather ideas from the community on how we can make the entrances to Ocean Grove more attractive rather than drab black and white signs.
 - We will work with the community, Council and RRV on this and we have already had some very early preliminary discussions with Council and RRV.

Opportunities to be Involved

We are always on the lookout for new blood and new ideas on the Committee team. You might care to join the Committee for a short period or you might want to be involved in some way in a particular issue that is close to your heart.

The Committee meets once per month on the first Wednesday of the month a 7pm – currently we are using Zoom but we will move back to face to face meetings as soon as it is safe and sensible. If you would like to “sit in” on a Committee meeting just send us an email at ogcommunityassn@gmail.com and we will get you into the Zoom or face to face meetings.

Phil Edwards Chairperson on behalf of the Committee of the Ocean Grove Community Association Inc.

For your Community Association to be useful we always need:

- Your ideas – what do you think our community needs – please tell us.
- Your concerns – what are the issues in Ocean Grove – please tell us.
- Your help – please join us as a member of the Association (one off fee of \$10) and get involved.
- Encourage others to join the Association.
- You to follow us on our Facebook page.
<https://www.facebook.com/oceangrovecommunityassociation/>

How to Contact us

- **Email:** ogcommunityassn@gmail.com
- **Website:** www.ogca.com.au
- **Facebook:** follow us and share on our Facebook page - Ocean Grove Community Association <https://www.facebook.com/oceangrovecommunityassociation/>