

OCEAN GROVE & DISTRICT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER.

July 2004

Committee News:

Jo Hawthorne has agreed to be Chairperson for the coming year. Jo can be contacted on 5256 2221

The committee has been active on behalf of the local community, with planning well in hand for the next public meeting to be held on Wednesday 14 July when the guest speaker will be Ms. Lisa Neville MLA – Member for Bellarine.

2004/05 MEMBERSHIP FEES DUE NOW !!

Could all members please note that our new financial year began in March 2004 and as such the annual \$5 fee is now due.

If you are not on our list as being "financial" members, this will be your last newsletter.

Please help the association to continue it's good work for you and our community, we are all unpaid volunteers and so we need funding to cover printing and stationery costs and hall hire for meetings.

Mr. Roger Grant CEO Geelong Otway Tourism, Mr. Barton Van Laar from Geelong Otway Tourism and Mr. Paul Drake from the Ocean Grove Traders Association came and spoke to the committee on 5 May 2004.

Roger and Barton spoke about many issues relate to tourism in our local area.

They spoke about how tourists benefit all of the Geelong Otway Tourism areas through spending at accommodation venues, restaurants and by creating employment etc.

They also made the point that every retail business is a part of tourism industry, but often do not realise it.

The committee has applied to the newly appointed Bellarine Tourism Officer to have a tourism workshop as soon as possible.

Paul Drake From the Ocean Grove Traders Association spoke about the "Ocean Grove Street Life Program".

This group have some very exciting plans for the local shopping area and these plans have the full support of Ms. Lisa Neville MLA for Bellarine, our local COGG councillor.

The Traders Association will be making their own announcements, as plans are finalised.



NEWS FROM YOUR SUB-COMMITTEES:

Two committee members attended a public forum on “**Strategy for Children and Families**” that was presented by COGG. A draft plan should be available late 2004.



The Shell Road Reference Group. This study is well underway with many local sporting clubs and interested people involved in the study.

Traffic Sub-committee. Tenders have been let for the intersection of Hodgson Street & The Parade, you will have noticed work has just started. The committee raised several issues about the design, which we hope have now been addressed.

We are trying to ensure that for all future traffic issues, that COGG and Vic Roads consult with the committee so that a community consultative process can take place.

COGG Council Meetings – the committee always endeavours to have a representative at every council meeting so that any issues relating to Ocean Grove can be discussed and then decide if any further action needs to be taken by the committee.

Please contact Jo on 5256 2221 if you would like to attend a council meeting on either 2nd or 4th Tuesday of the month. Your support would be appreciated.



Our representative on the **Barwon Coast Trail Strategy group**, reports that plans for this strategy plan for walking and cycling trails and future linkage with other trails is well in hand.

Rates. COGG rates notices will be sent out shortly.

Councillor Heather Wellington has met with several committee members to discuss ‘rates issues’.

We are very grateful to Bob Cooke who always keeps his eye on matters relating to council rates and keeps the committee well informed.

THE OCEAN GROVE CUP IS BACK!



**This popular event is up and running again on
5 March 2005.**

A board has recently been formed to manage this event, with representatives from various organisations. These representatives were recently invited to attend a Rotary Club weekly meeting to hear their plans (including our committee).

On race day, volunteer helpers will be needed – so keep this date in mind.

PUBLIC MEETING WEDNESDAY 9 JUNE 2004.

Kay Rundle CEO – City of Greater Geelong was the guest speaker at a recent public forum.

Ms Rundle addressed the meeting on the Council's role in governing, its vision for the future, the business plan and budget for 2004/2005 and current progress on issues relating to Ocean Grove. She emphasized that her role was to listen to the community.

Ms. Rundle spoke about the COGG Budget items for 2004/5 for Ocean Grove:

- Redeveloping Neighbourhood House \$50,000
- Continuing Street Life program for traders \$10,000
- Upgrading gateway entrances \$30,000 – Grubb/Shell Rd, Grubb/Bellarine Peninsular and Orton/Wallington.
- Support for Ocean Grove Cup, Senior Citizen's Club and Youth Information Service \$26,000
- Structure plan and traffic study – approx \$80,000
- Other expenditure includes: upgrade of court fencing at Ocean Grove Tennis Club; funding of lifesaving program at Ocean Grove; street constructions of Hodgson St. and The Terrace intersection; Governors Place Private scheme; continued funding of Peers Cres wall.
- Hours have been increased at the Customer Service Centre. It is essential that the Centre is used as numbers continue to drop.
- Additional staff member to be employed by Otway Tourism for representation on Bellarine. Cost \$50,000.
- Funding of shuttle bus between Ocean Grove and Barwon Heads; \$15,000.
- Bellarine Leisure needs study (expect result by end of year to be included in 05/06 budget); \$130,000

Questions were taken from the floor:

Question: Issue of Council spending on Sporting facilities in Ocean Grove (compared to Geelong – Skilled Stadium)...why do we have sports grounds but no facilities? The Leisure Needs Study will take too long to get anything on the ground, ie a long lengthy process.

Response

Of the \$10m spending on Skilled Stadium, \$2m is from COGG. The Shell Rd Reserve has been an issue for years (previous Bellarine Council put money aside but there was a dispute that caused delays). Shell Rd is high priority but still requires that the Council process to be undertaken.

Question: Disappointed that nothing is in the budget, as Soccer players have nowhere to change. Can something temporary be done in the meantime, especially now the Ring Road has been funded COGG no longer needs the \$100k fighting fund?

Response

\$50k of the Ring Road money will go towards the Traffic Study for Ocean Grove.

Question: Ms. Rundle was questioned about the Ocean Grove Recreation Reserve and also why there was no disability ramp at the RSL. Also mentioned that despite several requests the Table Tennis Club have not been included on the COGG website

Response

Taken on notice – will be answered via Jo Hawthorne (association president)

Question: What percentage of our rates comes back in services? Comments about Council services not being 'user pays'. How can we be sure valuations are accurate? Rates have increased from \$1440 to \$3000 in 2 years...queried why the valuation was much higher than he paid for the house.

Who do we go to change the wealth tax?

Response

Agreed that rates are not user-pays but are in fact a wealth tax. As far as valuations, Kay explained the different valuation methods CIV=Capital Improved Value....this is what Council use to levy rates Site value=which is basically land only, and NAV=Net Annual Value, which is based on what rental you would receive. She encourage us all to have a

good look at the valuation on our rates notice and if not happy, to query it with Council. As far as changing the system, COGG went to the State Govt in an attempt to change the legislation. We should ask Lisa Neville at our next public forum about the issues. Kay also mentioned that 30,000 ratepayers actually had a decrease in their rates. New "hardship" provisions will be introduced and COGG will be sending a letter to any ratepayers that have had more than 100% increase in rates.

Question: The 4.3% average increase in rates. For an average CIV in 04/05 of \$244k property, the increase would be 4.3% but if CIV increased by more than 54% then rates increase would be more than 4.3%. The range of increase is 80-644%

Response

Council legally needs to tell the community how much more is being collected in rates (ie. 4.3%)

Other questions summarised:

Issues of concern were:

- Street cleaning
- Road upgrades & maintenance
- Potholes
- Footpaths
- Sports facilities (incl multi-purpose complex)
- Weed control & tree planting
- Lack of street signs
- Swimming pool

Response

An extra shift of workers has been put on to address street cleaning. Roads are an issue for the whole of the Municipality and expenditure increases a little each year. Funding policy for footpaths has changed from 100% to 50% private charge. The issue of weed control was taken on notice.

Street signage is a massive COGG expenditure issue, Kay will get back to us on the priorities for Ocean Grove.

Swimming pool issue also difficult as Newcomb pool was built in the previous Bellarine boundary, however there is a long term plan to have another pool on the peninsula.

It was acknowledged that Ocean Grove needs facilities but it always needs to be balance with providing facilities in central Geelong that will be for all to use.

Question: About the Orton St drainage problem and lack of response from COGG.

Response

Kay said a letter tracking system was being introduced to hopefully address the issue of customer response.

Question: It was disgraceful that a street was built without any disability access to any property and that answers from COGG staff were terrible.

Response

Point taken.

Question: What would you do to see debacle like Orton St never happens again?

Response

Has reviewed what happened and will take back tonight's comments.

David Withington summarised concerns and acknowledged that good work is being done.

The themes coming from the community were basically:

- Rates (controversial system – community needs to address and not leave to Council alone)
- Sporting facilities
- Infrastructure maintenance issue
- Engineers/staff generally seeming to not be communicating well enough