

WATER'S EDGE

PORT GEOGRAPHE LANDOWNERS ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED NEWSLETTER
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WHAT THE CHAIRMAN SAYS (*Jeff Priest, Chairman*)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thank you to all those members who attended the Association's 7th Annual General Meeting on 4 August, 2008. This year we were privileged to have as our guest speaker Mr. Cleve Flottmann, Civil Engineer Maritime at the Department for Planning and Infrastructure; Chairman of the Port Geographe Consultative Committee and Project Manager of the Port Geographe Seagrass Study.

The message from Cleve's address was not to expect any re-configuration of the groynes (if that is found to be the solution to the annual seagrass problem) for at least 18 months to 2 years until the seagrass study has been completed.

Your Committee has resolved that in future AGMs will be held on the first Monday in October to enable those who "go North" for winter and others who do not appreciate going out on a cold, damp winter night, the opportunity to attend.

YOUR COMMITTEE

After a fair amount of cajoling I accepted nomination to be Chairman of the Association for a further term and was happy to accept, especially as there is now a full complement of 8 Committee members. It is intended that the members will each be given a portfolio in order to further spread the workload.

Jeff Priest	Chairman	Telephone 9754 1938
Bob Godridge	Vice Chairman	
Jane Sparkes	Secretary	
Gail Priest	Treasurer	

Committee Members	Peter McClurg	Simon Sparkes
	John Valentine	David Bateson

DIFFERENT STROKES FOR DIFFERENT FOLKS

An interesting observation of human nature has been how those residents affected by the sand and seagrass by-passing and consequent odour and noise by-passing for 7 weeks of the year and those residents affected by the subdivision south of Layman Road from which there is day in, day out noise, dust and cracking walls from 7am to 5pm Monday to Friday and from 7am to 12pm on Saturday since 2006, have handled the situation.

For one group at least the end is nigh and hopefully for the other group, and indeed the whole community, a solution will soon be found soon.

WHO KNOWS?

At the Shire Council Meeting held on 10 September, 2008 Councillor Ian Stubbs (a resident of Geographe) asked the following question to the person most of us would know as the "Shire Engineer":

Q. To the Director, Community Infrastructure – in relation to the Port Geographe work, what has been done to resolve the starting time dispute of the Port Geographe works? What has been done to overcome the sea weed, dust and odour and all the other nuisance being imposed on the people of Wonnerup as a consequence of this year's works program?

A. The question will be taken on notice.

A little frightening that the officer responsible does not know the answer to these basic questions.

But then this is the same officer who said (in writing) that if the Association wanted lighting put in on the Marina boat launching ramps –**SHIRE ASSETS** – that the residents of Port Geographe would be levied with another Specified Area Rate (SAR) to pay for it. He also advised (again in writing) that if the Association and residents have a problem with state of a particular property, then the **Association's Committee should go and tell the owner to tidy up the properties, remove illegal structures and get into compliance with the Shire's Town Planning Scheme.**

No mention of why the Shire will not take responsibility.

WHO CARES? WE ALL DO

Your Committee has arranged to meet with the Joint Venture Group and the Shire as to landscaping of the new subdivision. Land owners in that area will be required to pay a Specified Area Rate (SAR) to cover the Shire's cost of maintaining the landscaping.

It is also essential that the Committee keep a close watch on the canal flushing and this aspect of the Committee's function needs to be ramped up as we do not need another Vasse River at any time in the future that is in perpetuity. Most certainly we do not need a further SAR for the Shire to maintain a mechanical flushing system.

As you can see it seems SARs are the flavour of the month and will be required for landscaping, further improvement in Port Geographe and the maintenance of the canals including all coastal works as they relate to Port Geographe. At a rough guess about \$1500 / \$2000 per annum on top of your rates.

Your Association is in need of people power so it is members who are required for your Association to deal with such matters you cannot do it by yourself. Our membership is currently 38% of rateable property.

Your Committee would appreciate feedback from PGLOA members as without such input it is difficult to gauge just what is required. You only need to pickup the telephone at any time, 7 days a week and talk to the Chairman on 9754 1938 – too easy.

Finally it is perhaps important that we relate the various matters touched on within the limitation of this Newsletter, to the Hon Troy Buswell, MLA's letter.

Jeff Priest
Chairman

IS IT YET ANOTHER ELECTION PROMISE?

(With the permission of the writer, following is a verbatim copy of a letter Mr Troy Buswell, MLA, Member for Vasse, sent to selected voters during the run up to the recent State Elections.)

"I write to provide you with an overview of my position in relation to the Port Geographe Development and ongoing issues associated with the project.

I would firstly like to declare that I am resident of Port Geographe, and have had a long standing involvement with the area from my earlier days on the Shire of Busselton. In relation to Port Geographe it is my view that we have some short and medium term considerations that need to be addressed.

Short Term – It is important to ensure that the Developer continues to fulfil their obligations in terms of the sand and seagrass wrack bypassing operations. Specific issues in relation to these annual beach works that I have been and intend to continue to focus on include:

- * The timing of the works to ensure that beach access and amenity is restored both east and west of the marina.
- * Noise related issues associated with the bypassing operation which has for too long been hand balled from the Health Department to the Department of the Environment and the Shire of Busselton. Proper enforcement must occur to ensure that local residents are not subject to noise levels exceeding those normally set for a residential area.
- * The possibility of altering the discharge area on Wonnerup beach to be either further to the East or further out to sea especially when the bulk of the seagrass wrack is being pumped, as over the last couple of years retained seagrass in this area has impacted upon both the beach and water quality at Wonnerup.
- * To assist in the restoration of the Wonnerup beach possible use of Geofabric groynes to supplement the existing rock groyne fields should be considered, especially given their successful use in the vicinity of the Busselton Jetty in recent years.

It is also important to make sure that adequate testing occurs in relation to air and water quality monitoring. These are fundamentally important issues that must be addressed to ensure public health is not jeopardised.

Water quality monitoring will be of increased importance as the new canal system is linked into the development which will lead to a significant change in the flows of water into and out of the canal system. Whilst this the extensions to the development have been modelled and properly planned, the monitoring is important to provide a safeguard to residents and indeed all users of Port Geographe.

Medium Term – It is important that the seagrass study which is currently being conducted is then used to provide a basis for a full and thorough examination of revised groyne structure not the desk top Brief and all too dismissive examinations that have been used thus far.

This testing must consider not only the impact of any new groyne field on the accumulation of seagrass and movement of sand the two issues impacting beach amenity on both sides of the development, it must also consider the impacts of any changes in groyne structure on water quality within the marina.

It is my view that this testing should be conducted on behalf of the State Government who would then have to accept any responsibility for implementing any changes to the groyne field recommended by the testing of alternate groyne structure. This responsibility would extend to design, approval, construction and of course arranging in conjunction with the developer and the Shire suitable funding arrangements.

Whilst people may have differing views in relation to Port Geographe it is clear that the magnitude of the sand and seagrass bypassing operations is far greater than was ever anticipated and is unsustainable. Accordingly there is a need to focus our energies on achieving the best new design for the groyne field and delivering a sustainable long term outcome not only for the resident of Port Geographe but for the broader community.

Please also note that following the election a Liberal Government I will assume Chair of the working group and give an undertaking that it will be a much more open forum committed to working for the people of Port Geographe and the broader Busselton Shire not to protecting the Governments position.

I welcome in feedback and comment that you have in relation to the situation at Port Geographe or for that matter any other issue."

(Signed : Troy Buswell MLA, Member for Vasse)

WHAT THE PROJECT MANAGER SAYS (By Rhys Kelly, Development Manager, QUBE Property Group Pty Ltd)

Residents will have noticed that the bund that was separating Stages 1 & 2 of the development from the existing Port Geographe Marina has now been removed. This has resulted in a combined total of approximately 900 metres of canals being added to the existing system.

Residents should be aware that due to construction of the pedestrian bridge, the canals within Stages 1 & 2 are closed to the public for the time being and the appropriate notice to mariners has been issued. Construction of the pedestrian bridge is continuing with completion due to occur in December this year.

The Port Geographe Joint Venture is pleased to advise that Titles were issued for the 60 lots in Stages 1 & 2 early in September.

Landscaping within Stages 1 & 2 has also been completed recently and this area is now open to the residents of Port Geographe to enjoy.

Construction of Stages 3 & 4 is well progressed with construction of these two stages due to be completed in October, 2008. Once Titles have been issued for these two stages, a further 74 residents will become part of the growing community at Port Geographe.

CONSERVATION RESERVE, LAYMAN ROAD (By Peter Hanly, Regional Planning Officer, SW Region, Department of Environment and Conservation)

In line with the 1990 Minister for Environment's Conditions of Approval for the Port Geographe harbour development, the Port Geographe Joint Venture (PGJV) has agreed that the land on the wetlands side of the new Layman Road alignment will be ceded to become a conservation reserve which will be vested within the Conservation Commission of WA.

Waterbird Study Facility

The PGJV will also contribute funds towards the construction of a waterbird study facility as required in the Ministerial Conditions of Approval. This will be established on an ex-pasture site near the eastern roundabout on Layman Road.

Other commitments given by the developers are that the waterbird study facility site will be filled to the required floor level and stabilised such that it can support the waterbird study facility, and sewerage, power and telephone infrastructure to the building site will be provided. The proponents have also committed to providing a carpark and toilet facility at the entrance to the study facility.

The Landscape Buffer

A landscaped buffer of 25 metres minimum width is to be provided along the length of Layman Road and is to include a suitable fence so that the potential impacts upon waterbirds from straying pets is avoided.

The land transfers and earthworks for the landscape buffer and study facility site are in progress.

DID YOU KNOW?

That the water depth under the pedestrian bridge will be maintained at some 2.8m.

CANAL POLICY SUBMISSION

After lobbying the Shire for about 2 years, it has finally put a Draft Local Planning Policy "Private Jetties and Boat Lifting Structure Policy" out for public comment.

A couple of the salient points made in the Staff Report to Council on 13 August, 2008 were:

1. "the DPI is satisfied with the policy and has indicated that it will not issue a license for jetties and boat lifting structures until an applicant has approval from the Shire.
2. All boat lifting devices and structures will require planning consent from the Shire. A prerequisite of any consent is compulsory consultation for mechanical boat lifters with nearby landowners and affected community groups."

The Association made a submission which in part offered the following comments to the Draft Policy:

"The Association has considerable difficulty with the proposal to allow the use of mechanical boat lifters. Whilst the Committee understands the logic and intent behind the proposal, it still believes that it is flawed for the following reasons:

1. In relation to the size of a large number of the subdivision's lots and their individual canal frontage boundary width, an eight metre boat is quite a large vessel when, when lifted, will create a problem with the visual amenity of neighbouring residents.
2. The assumed lifting height of vessels is based on the premise of a mean sea level of 0.114A2.HD. The Association can assure you from experience that the water level in the canals during winter is quite often well above the canal wall at heights of around 1.2m to 1.3m AHD. If vessels are left in mechanical boat lifters with their keels at the suggested height of 0.7 AHD, there could well be a number of vessels floating off the structure and / or floating away to damage themselves or other people's property.
3. Owners of canal front properties may lift their vessels above the regulation height in anticipation of current or future bad weather and high tides and then leave them at that height until they next want to use the vessel. This will create an ongoing visual amenity problem".

"The Association strongly believes that the current ability for residents to use floating boat lifting devices satisfies the reasonable requirements of wanting to lift their vessel clear of the water to avoid the need to anti-foul the vessel without the need to create further compliance or safety issues for either their vessel or anyone else's property".

To date a report following the closing of public submissions has not been before Council for adoption of the Policy which will then require an Omnibus Amendment to Town Planning Scheme 20 to become L A W law.

TRIVIA TIME - Actual call to Customer Service Call Centre –



Caller – I deleted a file from my PC last week and have just realised it. If I turn my system clock back two weeks will I get my file back?

Operator - +/!//***/zzz/^^^!!