

WATER'S EDGE

PORT GEOGRAPHE LANDOWNERS ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED NEWSLETTER

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WHAT THE CHAIRMAN SAYS (*Jeff Priest, Chairman*)

HAPPY NEW YEAR - As we head into 2009 in earnest, I, on behalf of your Committee, wish you and your family a bright and prosperous year ahead.

So what's new? In a nutshell – nothing except that the Association now has an email address as shown above. Please feel free to contact the Association by email on any matter relating to Port Geographe and immediate surrounds.

Port Geographe is still a great place to live, quiet and peaceful. The dolphins still pay a daily visit and some boat skippers still don't know port from starboard as they continue to wander from one side of the canals to the other.

Of concern are the local lads jumping off the pedestrian bridge in the canals, however, I hear tell that the Police have handed out a few warnings as should parents as there is a risk of incurring injury from such a practice.

Apparently questions have been asked as to the safety of the bridge and some aspects of its construction. We will keep an eye on this issue and advise in our April edition.

With the prevailing southerly winds which always occur in summer in the area, there was a particularly bad sand storm on the evening of Monday, 5 January, 2009. As it was occurring your Committee was in its usual quarterly meeting discussing what can be done about the current lack of dust suppression which is a condition of subdivision.

Emails were sent to the Project Manager around midnight and the water trucks were again working early on the Tuesday morning. Follow up discussions with the Project Managers also took place that same morning.

Let us hope that there will not be re-occurrence of this unsatisfactory episode again this summer.

Of interest, the canal for Stages 3 and 4 of Phase 2 (the new subdivisions) has been opened up in the past few weeks and the movement of water is now quite swift on the incoming and outgoing tides.

The by-passing of the seagrass and sand was completed within the seven weeks timeframe using both trucking and pumping with a tidy up of seagrass which came ashore after the completion date.

I also hear that the developers may have formulated the Works Program for 2009. Hopefully it is not just the same old, same old that is without any trialling of adjustments to the trucking and pumping program or adding length and height to the groyne at Wonnerup.

I am still of the view that the State Government should be ramping up the resources required to resolve the coastal problems as it is beyond the capacity of the Busselton Shire's community to do so.

In finality I would again ask that Port Geographe ratepayers join the Association and ring me on 9754 1938 at any time, seven days a week and tell me what you think should be happening in the locality.

When you find yourself with a Specified Area Rate (SAR) which could be around \$1,500 per lot on top of your Shire rates, it will be too late.

OUTSTANDING MEMBERSHIP FEES

It is disappointing to note that many members have not yet paid their 2007/2008 Membership Fees. Accounts were sent out with the October Newsletter and given that the Association is a not-for-profit, volunteer run body, it cannot continue to provide services to members whose fees remain outstanding. It's not just a matter of money, it's an indication of support, interest in your community and your own well being.

If you are one of these members, please pay your fees now. It is only \$15 come on now! If you wish you can make a deposit direct to the Association's bank account: BSB 036 – 123 Account No. 18 6479.

LANDSCAPE MASTER PLAN

On 13 January, the developers will present to the Committee an overview of the proposed Landscape Master Plan for Phases 1 and 2 of the Port Geographe development.

One can only admire the landscaping work carried out at the corner of (old) Layman Road and Marine Terrace by the developers.

Those who buy properties in Phase 2 (i.e. south of the Pedestrian bridge) do so in full knowledge that they will have to pay a Specified Area Rate (SAR) for the maintenance of landscaping.

Most members will remember that in 2004 the Shire tried to impose the same SAR on owners in Phase 1 for landscaping, however, that was defeated by people power as it was not one for the conditions of purchase, although the SAR for the maintenance of waterways was.

I will advise you of the outcome of the meeting with the developers in our April Newsletter.

FULL TIME MARINE SAFETY OFFICERS

After much urging from your Association over the last eighteen months or so, the State Government has now appointed four Marine Safety Officers to cover the South West of the State. As we understand the position, one will be stationed permanently in Bunbury and another in Busselton.

They will be equipped with laser speed guns and will target the canal system.

The officer in charge is Brad Wilson, Regional Transport Officer, South West and he is stationed in Bunbury. Brad's phone number is 0409 687 385.

I had the pleasure of meeting both Annie and Brad as they introduced themselves to boaties leaving the Marina boat ramps on 13 December, 2008 and we look forward to less boats speeding and better water safety in 2009.

For those who don't know – the speed limit within the canal system is 5 knots and no wash. This can be equated to walking pace. If you are fit and can't walk and keep up with a boat (preferably on land!) , then the boat is speeding.

Another one for those who don't know is that if you tow people on boards or rubber rings behind a boat in the canals, this is regarded as water skiing and is subject to a hefty fine for skiing outside a designated waterskiing area.

For the sake of completeness we have again written to the Minister for Development and Infrastructure asking for us to be advised of the Marine Safety Officers' duties and contact details and suggest that you keep your Skipper's Tickets handy and that should you have a jetty on the canals, it complies with the conditions of the licence approval.

Jeff Priest, Chairman

COMMITTEE PORTFOLIOS

At its October Meeting your Committee appointed the individual members to undertake various portfolios, i.e.,

Jeff Priest	Chairman	Shire Liaison, Public Relations and Landscaping
Bob Godridge	Vice Chair.	Water Quality and Waterways
Jane Sparkes	Secretary	Secretariat and Administration
Gail Priest	Treasurer	Treasury and Newsletter
Simon Sparkes	Committee	Membership
Peter McClurg	Committee	Coastal Management / Works
John Valentine	Committee	To be allocated
David Bateson	Committee	To be allocated

It is hoped that by allocating the workload through the Committee it will provide the individual members with a goal and also disperse some of the tasks previously handled by one or two people.

WHAT THE DEVELOPER SAYS (by Philip Anderson, Project Manager, QUBE Property Group Pty Ltd)

Just as 2008 has seen a number of key milestones in the Port Geographe project achieved, 2009 promises to be an exciting time at Port Geographe.

2008 saw the opening of the first new canals at Port Geographe in over a decade with 60 new canal lots in the presold stages 1 & 2 being constructed and settled. The new alignment of Layman Road was also constructed and opened to public traffic and works on the new Pedestrian Bridge linking the eastern and western sides of the development substantially commenced.

In January 2009 we will see the completion of construction of the Pedestrian Bridge creating a pedestrian link from west to east across the development and into the marina complex. Construction on site is now focused on the finishing touches to the bridge. Balustrades, lighting, fenders and navigational signage are presently being installed with landscaping of Public Open Spaces at the bridge approaches to follow.

2009 will also see the settlement of a further 74 lots in stages 3 & 4. Construction of these lots was completed in late 2008 and titles are presently being sought by the developer. These new canals were opened up to the existing canal and marina system in late 2008 adding approximately 700m of new canal to Port Geographe.

Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4 result in a total of 134 new lots being added to the Port Geographe community with a number of these purchasers indicating they are well progressed towards commencing construction of residences on site.

In 2009 construction will also commence on stages 5 & 6 of the development with completion of the further 72 lots in these stages anticipated in the second half of 2009.

We trust you have enjoyed the festive season and wish you all the best in 2009.

DID YOU KNOW?

Thanks to the generosity of the Shire of Busselton, which kindly donated the cost to provide an up to date list of rateable properties in Port Geographe, we can now tell you that as at 8 December, 2008:

- * There are 578 rateable properties within the location of Port Geographe
- * The increase in rateable properties between August 2007 and December 2008 is 29
- * 112 of the reateable properties are owned by just 3 companies
- * There are now 6 more streets in which Titles have been issued, i.e. Masthead Loop, Port Lane, Navigation Way, Burgee Cove, Headstay Cove and Waterline View
- * Out of the 208 properties whose owners are members of the Association, only 5 changed hands between lists of rateable properties supplied by the Shire

WHAT ONE OF OUR NEWLY ELECTED COUNCILLOR SAYS (by Bernie Masters, Councillor Elect, Shire of Busselton)

Because I have been out of Parliament for 4 years, I am not as up to date on the various 'solutions' that have been put in place or are underway since 2005, however, I remain greatly concerned that the current annual cost of sand and wrack bypass exceeds \$1 million. This is unsustainable in the medium and long term.

In April 2004, I made the following statement to Parliament which I still believe provides the most likely technical solution to the sand and wrack bypass problem:

"I believe that the only long-term solution to the weed accumulation and sand erosion problems west and east of the groyne field may be to truck in some 150 000 cubic metres of sand to infill the western side of the western groyne. This would allow natural processes to create a beach that would extend to the seaward end of this groyne. This beach alignment may then be the only way that the dead seagrass accumulating on this western beach over winter can be moved offshore, by the change in wind and wave direction that occurs as the weather patterns change from winter to summer.

In subsequent years, this would also allow sand to be dredged from the edge of the western beach for bypassing to the eastern beach where erosion has resulted in the total loss of foreshore dunes.

Should this solution be the best or only practical way to return these beaches to their former state, then the cost of providing sand to the western beach and buying a dredge to keep the mouth of the harbour open would be at least \$2 million. Under this scenario, I believe that the

State Government, by virtue of its initial approval for the project, should accept responsibility for at least 50 per cent of this cost."

While some of the details and numbers may need revising as a result of what we have learnt over the past 5 years, the need for the State Government to accept some financial responsibility in solving the problem remains.

As I have been elected to Council, I will seek a detailed briefing from State and Local Government officers to bring me up to speed on all Port Geographe issues.

CANAL POLICY SUBMISSION (by Bob Godridge, Committee Vice Chairman)

As mentioned in our October, 2008 Newsletter and after a fair amount of lobbying by your Association, the Shire of Busselton has finally adopted a Local Planning Policy ("Private Jetties and Boat Lifting Structure Policy") for the construction of private jetties and boat lifting devices which will now be part of Councils Town Planning Scheme No. 20.

Information was collected from residents in the Mandurah canal systems to establish what facilities worked best there and what were the issues with the various types of equipment available so that Busselton could try to avoid the pitfalls that they have encountered due to a lack of a Jetty Policy for a number of years.

Your Association met with Shire staff several times to debate to various issues of safety, amenity, compliance and structural requirements of the various types of boat lifting devices available and desirable in our canal system.

As a result of all this work and the presentation of a very impressive visual scenario to Councillors, we are pleased to advise that Council has adopted a Planning Policy for jetties and boat lifting devices that does not allow for mechanical boat lifters which have the ability to lift the vessel above the height of the canal wall.

From all of the inquiries your Association has made it is certain that if mechanical boat lifters were allowed to be installed on canal properties private jetties, there would have had a number of disputes between adjoining owners over the visual amenity impact of the boat and lifter as well as safety and compliance issues for residents and the Shire staff to deal with.

Any canal frontage resident who wishes to keep their boat out of the water whilst having located alongside their jetty can still do so with the installation of a floating Easy Dock type system or with the use of a Air Lift system. Both of these types of boat lifting devices will comply with the new Council Planning Policy and will not impinge on their neighbours' visual amenity or create a safety issue.

TRIVIA TIME - Due to recent economic conditions and the rising cost of electricity, gas and oil, the light at the end of the tunnel has been turned off.

We are sorry for any inconvenience.