



PORT GEOGRAPHE LANDOWNERS ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED NEWSLETTER

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

PROBLEMS OF SEAGRASS WRACK AND SAND BYPASSING

The ongoing saga of finding a workable solution to the seasonal build up of seagrass wrack surfaces again with the community being presented in the past 3 weeks with 3 Options for the 2009 bypassing works for its comments via the Port Geographe Working Group of the past, now being the Port Geographe Community Consultation Forum (PGCCF).

It appears that the Port Geographe Consultative Committee (PGCC), which is comprised of all the various professionals involved with the Port Geographe coastal works and the subdivision itself, were not prepared to make any decisions on the 3 Options until they had the community's view on those Options via the Forum.

The Forum, under the Chairmanship of The Hon Barry House, MLC, Member for the South West, is not a decision making body but a Forum for representatives to hear and comment on proposed coastal works at Port Geographe.

Briefly the 3 Options were:

By-Passing

1. Works to start 1 September and finish 15 October
2. Works to start 13 September and finish 31 October
3. Works to start 11 October and finish 8 November

Basically, the community is divided into 2 schools of thought:

1. That the seagrass wrack should be collected from the beach during the winter months as it arrives onshore with a completion date of 15 October.

Experience has shown that there is a question of practicality involved with this Option.

2. The second school of thought is that a start date of 11 October with a completion date of 8 November should be trialled and this is the view of your Association.

It was always intended that the Four Year Coastal Works Program was to be pliable in order to trial the various factors involved to achieve the best possible outcome as to the coastal problems of Port Geographe.

As members would know, the results of the study of seagrass winter movements around Geographe Bay will be completed this year with, hopefully, recommendations being made in 2010 by the coastal engineers as to re-configuration of the Port Geographe groynes. The current professional opinion is that any re-configuration may not negate the need to continue with the current bypassing works to some degree.

Has the time arrived for the State Government to stand up and make some serious decisions as to the way forward in resolution of the Port Geographe problems on behalf of the community?

Whatever those decisions maybe that old saying applies – "You can please some of the people some of the time, but you can't please all of the people all of the time".

More could be said as to the coastal works, however, that is not possible within the confines of this Newsletter.

My article in our April Newsletter bought the usual tirade of abuse from a non member resident in Wonnerup who, amongst other things, called the Association "audacious" whilst accusing our members, some of whom live their lives in the inconvenienced area on the beachfront, as "enjoying (living in the Port Geographe Development) at the expense of the adjoining residents". This person, seemingly unable to read what was actually said in the Newsletter, added his own evocative word in an email sent to a cast of thousands. It begs the question, why and for what reason?

That's about all the community needs to move forward positively together.

This Association does not step away from nor apologise for questioning what is truth and what is unsubstantiated and will continue to provide what it believes is professional, truthful and balanced information which, it is hoped, will help lead to a satisfactory solution FOR ALL CONCERNED of the ongoing problems of amenity and other issues.

Clearly this view tends to upset some folk, however, there is little point to this Association should it not stand up to be counted.

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH BROCHURE ON PORT GEOGRAPHE HYDROGEN SULPHIDE

The Department of Health (DOH) is currently finalising a community brochure which will answer questions about possible minor health effects of hydrogen sulphide emissions from sea grass in the Port Geographe area and about management measures.

The brochure was requested by the Port Geographe Community Consultation Forum and will be tabled at its meeting on 7 August 2009. The brochure will then be distributed and be available at the following website which already contains the DOH *Port Geographe Sea Grass Hydrogen Sulphide Assessment of the Human Health Risk and its Management – April 2009*:

http://www.public.health.wa.gov.au/2/881/2/topical_issues.pm

CANAL FLUSHING

At this time, there have been no adverse findings that your Committee is aware of as to flushing of, nor water quality in the canal system.

LANDSCAPING

The Association continues to write to the Shire regarding the unacceptable standard of maintenance of some reserves, median strips and road verges together with the lack of road signage.

Some of these issues have been outstanding for some 12 months due, it would seem, to lack of management where staff have left and the requests have not been passed on for attention by other staff members. Coupled with this is the cry of there being no funding available for the works to be carried out.

Of more recent days there seems to be change and we look forward to an improvement.

PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

We have, over the past 6 months, been contacting the developers politely asking the question of when is the bridge to be completed, the answer being next month which, as you know, never arrives.

The vandalism which has occurred is quite remarkable with security fencing having been knocked down and bridge railing removed. There has even been a car deliberately driven into the canal next to the bridge.

There have also been construction problems such as large rocks being left in the canals together with scrap steel from the bridge construction.

The Association has written to the developer seeking completion of the works in order for the bridge to be opened.

Finally it should be noted that in the planning stage there were those in the community who did not want any bridge at all over the canals.

THE WATER'S EDGE

To this time, after 4 years, neither the Association's Committee nor the Chairman have received any adverse comments on the contents of the Association's Newsletter from members. Conversely the Association has received supportive comments and cash donations.

As Chairman I would be delighted to hear from members first hand by telephoning (08) 9754 1938.

JETTY BUILDERS

Jim Scott of Scott's Marine and Management in Mandurah is currently taking orders for jetties to be built in this area as it is not economical to bring the barge down without enough jetties to construct.

Jim's mobile number is 0409 285 988.

(The Association is not endorsing Scott's Marine and Management, but merely providing information to its members).

COMMENT (from Troy Buswell MLA Member for Vasse)

Over the past 6 months I have been reviewing a number of issues with my Ministerial colleagues and relevant agency heads in relation to the issues of Port Geographe.

In recognising the need to bring the relevant Government agencies and community groups together regularly, the Port Geographe Community Consultation Forum has been established with representation from Department of Planning, Department of Environment, Department of Health, Busselton Shire, Port Geographe Action Group, Port Geographe Landowners Association Inc., Port Geographe Business Association, Wonnerup Residents Association and the Developer.

The Forum's initial meeting was held on 30th April and these meetings, chaired by the Hon Barry House MLC will be held monthly with the intended purpose to address the short term and long term issues surrounding Port Geographe.

I have the upmost confidence that the discussions, information exchange and concerted focus of the Port Geographe Community Consultation Forum will significantly progress the ongoing issues pertaining to Port Geographe and that the PGCCF will provide the essential conduit between the State Government, the Shire of Busselton, the local community and the developers.

MARINE OFFICERS IN THE SOUTH WEST AND PORT GEOGRAPHE MARINA AND CANAL SYSTEM

After an extraordinary wait of 5 months, the Hon Minister for Planning, John Day, MLA has finally provided information as to role of the 2 additional Regional Transport Officers (RTOs) to the South West, bring the total to 4.

"RTOs conduct a variety of duties involving compliance, education and co-ordination of activities relating to various modes of transport. One of the duties is to conduct marine safety patrols around the region both in vessels and on land based maritime sites, such as boat ramps and popular ski areas. The Port Geographe Marina is one of the sites where both land and water based marine safety patrols are conducted by RTOs to monitor and enforce maritime regulations.

When both new RTOs are fully trained and authorised, it is intended to rotate the 4 officers between our Bunbury and Busselton office (2 in each) so that we have a better capacity to respond to transport issues when they arise around the region."

(The Minister advised that would occur in June, 2009.)

"The officers have recently been provided with a designated marine safety patrol vessel, allocated from the DPI's marine section in Perth. They also have access to 3 vessels located in the region and managed by the Department for Fisheries. This arrangement is currently under review."

REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICERS' NEW EMAIL ADDRESS

In the April Newsletter we provided what we had been told were the correct contact details for the South West's Regional Transport Officers. We apparently got it wrong so here is the latest information provided to the Association:

Bunbury.RTOOfficers@transport.wa.gov.au

NEW ENTRY MARKERS

It has been proposed that 4 new navigation markers be located to mark the entry from the canals to the Marina.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, MONDAY, 5 OCTOBER, 2009

time and venue to be advised

TRIVIA TIME -

Why do pharmacies make the sick walk all the way to the back of the store to get their prescriptions while healthy people can buy perfume, make up and toys at the front.