

# Port Geographe Landowners Association Inc

## PGLOA Office Bearers 2017-18



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## News Bulletin of the Port Geographe Landowners Association - November 2017

Welcome *Waters Edge*. It goes to members and landowners via an expanding mailing list.

### The SAR Issue

Once again we have been mostly engaged on our campaign against the unfairness of the Specified Area Rate (SAR).

In a recent letter from PGLOA to the City of Busselton (CoB) pointing out the unfairness of the SAR, we asked the specific question – “why should non-canal lot owners pay the SAR?” The answer from CoB was breathtaking in its irrelevance and banality – “to prevent and control algal blooms in the waterway!” We are not aware of any historical incident of algal blooms in the waterways, or any formal assessment of such a risk.

In response to a subsequent letter asking specifically why CoB was meeting its community obligations by using our SAR funds, we were astonished by the statement “the State agreed to take on full responsibility for costs in return for City making available all funds held in

the Waterways Management Reserve Fund (WMRF), and continuing to raise and make available the SAR money”

This may well be what CoB agreed to, but we can be sure it is not what DoT demanded. It would be of no concern to DoT where the money came from, so long as CoB somehow met its obligations. So CoB fulfills its obligations by continuing to tax us.

In a pre-election meeting with Mayor Henley and senior executives of CoB, we again stated our demands: (1) reinstatement of the CoB community contribution, (2) cap on drawdown of the WMRF, (3) strategic review of SAR. We formed the impression that the Mayor considered the SAR funds to be “insurance against a natural disaster” and that “any reduction in SAR would increase your rates”.

The Mayor just does not get it! Port Geographe is not a gated private estate. It is a public asset.

In our repeated engagements with CoB we get the same stonewalling answers. The inability or unwillingness of CoB to address the core issue prompted us to publish the Open Letter to the Mayor, Councilors, aspiring Councilors and Executives of the City of Busselton in the Friday 13 October edition of Busselton – Dunsborough Times. That open letter can be seen on our website ([www.portgeographe.com.au](http://www.portgeographe.com.au)), and will be the platform for our continuing media campaign.

PG residents may also have seen several letters to the Editor of the BD Times on the SAR issue.

## **Our Email distribution List**

There are about 650 rateable lots in the Port Geographe precinct. But we only have 170 ratepayers on our email list. Naturally we would value additional membership, but on the SAR campaign an equally important imperative is to expose the unfairness of the SAR to a wider audience by way of increased the email distribution list.

Please check with your friends and neighbours and if they are not on our list, invite them to contact us on: [portgeographeloa@gmail.com](mailto:portgeographeloa@gmail.com) . Tell them this story:

*“You are happy in your Port Geographe home with its pleasant outlook over the parks and waterways.*

*You may or may not realise that a significant component of the payment for your block has been ploughed back into building of the PG canals infrastructure: canal walls, groynes, trailer park, roads, reticulation, launching ramps, toilets, parks, beaches and the like.*

*Then after completion, - all \$30 million worth of it – it was handed over to the then-Busselton Shire to manage as a public facility for all of Busselton, plus visiting mariners, whale*

*watchers, fishing boats, marina lessees, and other such recreational folk. They all use it free of charge.*

*The original sea groynes, as approved by the Shire, presented a problem with foreshore management, so the State chipped in a further \$28 million to rectify this for the City. But still no monetary input from the City!*

*Department of Transport (DoT-being the State authority for ports and harbours) has taken ownership of the port entry channel, and now carries out annual dredging. It picks up about 85% of the cost, and invoices CoB for the remaining 15% as their community contribution for keeping the channel open.*

*However the City, after spending in excess of \$30 million on their lavish new premises and a similar amount on the foreshore upgrade (without application of any SAR), and blinding itself to the fact that PG is now a public facility, meets its obligations from the accumulated SAR payments which you have contributed over the last 20 years”.*

Help with the campaign against this unfair tax by writing to the newspapers and giving you views to councilors.

## **PGLOA Annual Subscriptions**

The PGLOA AGM set the annual subscriptions for 2017-18 at \$25.00. We invite you to renew or apply for 2017-18 membership. There are two ways you can pay:

1. Direct Debit to PGLOA, BSB 036123, Account No 186479, giving surname and initial as Reference.
2. Send cheque for \$25.00 to Port Geographe Landowners Association Box 1456, Busselton, 6280.

Attached is a Membership renewal / Application form. If you are an existing current member, and you are paying by direct debit, there is no need to use the attached form.

You only need to use the form if you are a new member, or if you paying by post. Send the completed form to PO Box 1456, or scan and email to [portgeographeloa@gmail.com](mailto:portgeographeloa@gmail.com)

## **Ford Road**

We have advocated the merits of Ford Road over the Eastern Link proposal of the City of Busselton, with mixed results.

We have pointed out to the Council Engineer, CEO and Mayor that their own document sent out for tender for the major traffic study in November 2011 listed Ford Road as the primary target. Cost estimates in that study were given \$6M – \$8M, not \$20M as quoted by Mayor Henley in a local paper.

We have pointed out that West Street encounters just as much water and wildlife as would Ford Road as a causeway with adequate drains. Ford Road is already a gazetted road and does not impinge on the RAMSAR wetlands.

If Ford Road was constructed with the outlet to Bussell Highway opposite the turn off to Nannup, it would divert all local traffic to the east of the CBD away from Peel Terrace and the Causeway Road junction.

Tourist traffic coming into Busselton from the north, east and south would have direct access to caravan parks, foreshore precinct and Jetty area, without having to pass through the CBD.

Ford Road meets a whole-of-Busselton approach, as well as benefiting the residents of Port Geographe. The Eastern Link will not.

We urge you to join the groundswell of public opposition to the Eastern Link. Talk to your friends about the benefits of Ford Road, and make your feelings known to Councilors

## **DoT Waterway Management**

The Annual Update from DoT was received on 15 Sep 2017. In summary the report was positive, noting the accumulation of only 12,000m<sup>3</sup> of wrack on the western beach, compared with 100,000m<sup>3</sup> in previous years. We know this can vary from week to week and from storm to storm, but the signs are encouraging.

Following the “sand nourishing” program at Wonnerup earlier this year, the beach profile is coming to equilibrium. But despite recent port channel dredging, further dredging is required to keep the channel open.

We understand from DoT that the same dredging contractor is engaged for Mandurah, Halls Head and Port Geographe, and this is an annual cycle of works. It can therefore be inferred that the circa \$300k annual CoB contribution from the WMRF that holds our SAR money will be destined to channel dredging in perpetuity.

The question why SAR ratepayers are the only local sector paying for dredging of a public port channel, remains unanswered.

## **A Failed Scam**

A good tale on which to finish. Our Treasurer Simon Denney reported an attempted email scam from a group in Queensland. It sought immediate payment for an outstanding (but fictitious) invoice. The scam attempt was unsuccessful because of alertness of Simon. But we believe a couple of Busselton associations were targeted in a similar manner and lost considerable funds.

We wish you a great Summer.  
With compliments of the Chair of PGLOA

Kevin Strapp  
1 November 2017

Attach: Membership form



**Port Geographe Landowners Association Inc.**  
**Application / Renewal for Membership**

Membership of the Port Geographe Landowners Association Inc. is open to all landowners including home owners living within the Port Geographe development. If you pay a Special Area Rate for Port Geographe as part of your Council rates then you are eligible to join.

I/WE .....

RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS.....

.....

POSTAL ADDRESS (if different to the above).....

.....

BEING THE OWNERS/RESIDENTS OF.....

.....PORT GEOGRAPHE, 6280

Telephone:----- Mobile:.....

Email:-----

I/WE WISH TO APPLY FOR MEMBERSHIP OF THE PGLOA AND ENCLOSE PAYMENT OF \$25, BEING THE MEMBERSHIP FEE FOR THE 2017/2018 FINANCIAL YEAR UP TO THE 30<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

..... (SIGNED) ..... (SIGNED)

..... (DATE) ..... (DATE)

If paying by direct debit: BSB 036-123 Account No 186479. **(Please give surname and street for reference.** If paying by direct debit there is no need to fill out this form.

If paying by post, please send your \$25 cheque with this form to Port Geographe Landowners Association Inc, PO Box 1456, Busselton. 6280.

New applications should use this form so we can keep our records up to date.