

# Port Geographe Landowners Association Inc

## PGLOA Office Bearers 2017-18



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## News Bulletin of the Port Geographe Landowners Association – June 2018

Welcome *Waters Edge*. It goes to members and landowners via an expanding mailing list. As can be expected SAR, seawrack and sand dominate this issue, along with Ford Road.

### The SAR Issue

If you own a block of land in the Port Geographe precinct, you pay a special area rate (SAR) for the express purpose of financing waterway and coastal management. Rather than going into the background of the SAR and elements of the unfairness campaign which we commenced way back in 2014, this Newsletter summarises some of the recent actions by PGLOA pre and post the Council Elections.

Suffice to say that protocols consequent on the new management agreement between Busselton City and Department of Transport has evolved into a situation where all our SAR contributions seem destined to be going into dredging the entry channel of a public facility – a port. And the community via the City rates makes no contribution to waterways and coastal management. Moreover the State has access to

accumulated funds in the Waterways Management Trust, which has about \$3.6M.

The core of our unfairness campaign went out as a one-page letterbox flyer in December 2017, under the headline banner *Others go out to sea for free whilst we at PG pay the fee.*

This flyer, amongst other hard-hitting points, reiterated our campaign objectives, principal amongst which is the reinstatement of the 25% community contribution matching our SAR contributions.

This flyer provoked a response from the City administration that went on a nit-picking exercise, and completely ignored the core issue. Again we had to state that we are the only sector in the City of Busselton having to pay solely for the maintenance of a major public asset.

But we are encouraged to note that it also brought an attentive ear, and some understanding of our grievance, from a number of councillors including the re-elected Mayor Grant Henley. We express our appreciation to Grant for the fruitful and harmonious relationship we have developed.

We look forward with anticipation to the development and the adoption of the City's 2018-19 Budget and Work Program.

I urge all landowners to have a look at the interesting exchanges between PGLOA and City of Busselton, which are on our website [www.portgeographe.com.au](http://www.portgeographe.com.au),

## **Sand and Seagrass Wrack**

A further update on coastal management of sand and seagrass wrack was issued by Department of Transport (DoT) on 6 March 2018. This involves monitoring coastal processes, and undertaking bulk material movements, where deemed necessary. Activities are confined to the designated coastal management area (PGCMA), in which we remind you, we all have a financial obligation, and therefore a pecuniary interest.

In summary the DoT update noted a net increase in sand accretion on the Western Beach, and a net depletion of sand on the Wonnerup Beach. To achieve a balance it announced further dredging of sand from the channel to be deposited at the western end of Wonnerup Beach, augmented by imported sand along the eastern tract of the beach. This work is nearing completion.

Overall the various updates from DoT indicate a much better by-passing performance of the reconfigured groynes, and significantly reduced levels of seagrass wrack accumulation.

On the basis of the DoT reports, the PGLOA committee has adopted a view that no further

works of a by-passing nature should be undertaken along the coastal strip for which SAR money is used, until natural processes have come to new equilibrium as identified by annual reviews of the foreshore state by DoT. We consider this will take about four years after groyne re-configuration. However we also advocate the merit of assisting the natural build-up of sand against the western groyne. We have conveyed these views to DoT.

Evidently this is not a view shared by some living in close proximity to the Western Beach. We are certainly empathetic to those that feel affected by the periodic build-up of wrack. But we note that much of the agitation comes from residents lying along the afore-mentioned PGCMA, but not in the SAR-paying area.

We welcome the recently announced joint review of sand and wrack movements along the coast by the City and DoT over the 2018 winter. We seek to be involved in some way. It seems this review will focus solely on the PGCMA. This review will look at options in relation to waterways, entrance channel, and Wonnerup and Western Beaches.

But we must also remember that seawrack accumulation is a general feature along the entire Geographe Bay coastline because of proximity to one of the largest seagrass meadows in WA. The location of wrack can, depending on weather conditions, be both static and dynamic, with material arriving and passing in just a short time. This is strikingly evident with the inconvenient accumulations of wrack in the vicinity of the Jetty after the mid-May storm.

Notwithstanding our view to let coastal process equilibrate over a reasonable period of time, it is becoming increasingly evident that the channel will require annual dredging.

We understand the same dredging contractor is engaged for Mandurah, Halls Head and Port Geographe, and this is an annual cycle of works. This brings us back to the SAR issue. It can reasonably be inferred that the circa \$300k

annual 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 remains unanswered.

## Ford Road

PGLOA has entered into the debate on the relative merits of the Eastern Link (EL) and Ford Road (FR) – preferring the latter.

We enter the debate because we are affected. Port Geographe residents (and indeed all of eastern Busselton) would be better served by an alternative route to the sporting and light-industrial complexes, and other areas to the southwest. Also Layman Road (which bounds our precinct) is becoming increasingly busy. These are not self-serving reasons because it is clear that Ford Road is a holistic solution to the overall Busselton traffic problem.

An expensive traffic study (estimated \$100,000) in 2015 by Arup Consultants did not recommend the Eastern Link as the best option. But all subsequent studies have been directed at the Eastern Link only - we suspect by prescriptive terms of reference.

PGLOA has lodged with the EPA a formal appeal against their ruling that the Eastern Link was “acceptable”. This may result in a full Public Environmental Review (PER) being required for the EL, which would in turn give more time for a proper debate.

It is significant that on 11 April Council voted to defer final decision on the Eastern Link until all other options have been thoroughly investigated.

In consultation with other interested stakeholders, we make the following points:

- EL does not remove traffic from CBD
- EL is not fully costed
- EL will destroy iconic Busselton entry
- EL will sterilize undeveloped land
- EL will destroy mature trees
- EL with many roundabouts will slow traffic

- EL may impact historic Victoria Square
- FR only requires perforated causeway
- FR removes caravans and trucks from CBD
- FR has less environmental impacts than EL
- FR is already gazetted road
- FR gives walking access to Ramsar Reserve
- FR doesn't physically impacted Ramsar Res
- FR is better road-safety option

There are many instances on the Busselton wetlands where man-made structures enhance birdlife diversity.

## Our Email distribution List

There are about 650 rateable residential lots in the Port Geographe precinct. But we have only just over 170 on our email list. Naturally we would value additional membership, but an equally important imperative is to expose to a wider audience the SAR and other issues, by way of increasing the email distribution list.

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

## PGLOA Annual General Meeting

The AGM is set for 7.15 pm Monday 10 Sept 2018 in the Busselton Volunteer Sea Rescue building, Geographe Bay Rd.

There will be a call for nominations for office bearers closer to the time. Some long-serving committee members will be retiring so we need some new fresh people to carry on the work.

Enjoy the winter – now that it is here  
With compliments of the Chair of PGLOA



Kevin Strapp  
1 Jun 2018

