

# Port Geographe Landowners Association Inc

## PGLOA Office Bearers 2018-19



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## News Bulletin of the Port Geographe Landowners Association – July 2019

**This issue covers re-zoning, finished floor levels, beach movements, Keel Rte, street lighting, speeding boats, and nomenclatural changes.**

### Re-zonings

BCC has now approved the re-zoning of the last remaining undeveloped blocks in the Marina – Village precinct. They are now *residential*, rather than *mixed commercial and tourist accommodation*. With changing economic parameters, all parties involved supported the change, details of which were covered in April's *Waters Edge*. They mainly affect undeveloped lots owned by Qube Property and Heath Developments. A map of the affected lots is reproduced for your easy reference

PGLOA made submissions which were well received by BCC, and appreciated by the developers. In essence we supported the rezoning proposals, but argued for maximum retention of pedestrian access to facilities within and around the Marina. This is likely to result in a pedestrian promenade between Port Lane and the boat ramps. We also opined that Block 585, owned by BCC and forming the core of the “village concept”, should remain in community hands. This lot is now zoned *residential* but we

understand that Qube will not seek to purchase it because the fill material does not meet the geotechnical specifications for residential development. With these changes we hope to see some action on most of the wastelands.

### Block Levels at Port Geographe

Although the re-zonings are approved, the vexed question of finished block levels remains unresolved. So-called *greenfields* developments (as distinct from *infill* developments) should conform to *SPP 2.6 – Coastal Planning*, This requires addressing a one-in-500 year inundation event (which amounts to 2.9m AHD), and predicted sea-level rise in 100 years (taken as 0.9m). This amounts to finished floor levels (FFL) of 3.8m above present mean sea level. This is certainly threatening ongoing developments at Port Geographe, as it will affect the commercial economics of developments, even those currently underway. Basically we want to see developments on these wastelands that have lain idle for more than a decade.

PGLOA has made formal submissions on two occasions, arguing that FFLs at 3.8m AHD is an over application of the precautionary principle, and not in accordance with observational facts. Final approval on the structure plans rests with State Planning Commission, who will consider any recommendations on FFLs by BCC. We now detect a touch of understanding and empathy by BCC, who may advocate a compromise between the existing level of 2.6m and the guidance level of 3.8m. We don't yet know what the final determination will be, but we hope sanity prevails for the betterment of Port Geographe.

## **Landscapes, Lights and Lawns**

Periodically we review the landscaping of Port Geographe and make a formal submission to BCC with requests to include them in forthcoming works programs. Sometimes our requests gain traction, such as the recent landscaping around Layman Road, Lanyard Bvd and the western foot bridge approaches. We note this year's budget includes works at the eastern footbridge and further tidy-up around Bathers Beach and the old western groyne. We appreciate these positive moves, and commend BCC on such initiatives. But sometimes our suggestions are ignored or even summarily dismissed.

One such dismissal is the failure to countenance the resurrection of reticulation in the median strip of Keel Rte. This street was one of the first residential developments and is the heart of residential Port Geographe. The reticulation was installed by the developer, but was turned off several years ago by BCC on the valid pretext of saving scheme water. Now that the area can be serviced by the new groundwater bore at Newport, we see no reason why the system cannot be re-commissioned.

We know BCC does not like median strips, but the fact remains that it is there and won't go away. With further neglect it will degenerate into a sandy weed strip, or worse it will be treated with the BCC Engineering Division's favourite top dressing – chipped wood waste.

After repeated requests, BCC has agreed to a technical and financial assessment.

## **Street Lighting**

BCC has a budget provision for replacing all 45 of the "historic" street lights in Port Geographe with lights that are compliant with Western Power specifications. These are the black "gas-light" poles installed by the original developer. Cost of replacement is \$118,000 over two years.

Evidently they are ageing, and being non-compliant, will not be serviced by Western Power. Accordingly they continue to be serviced by BCC allegedly "great cost". Maintenance of the new poles would be much reduced and done by Western Power.

We have asked the obvious question of BCC – could \$118,000 be better spent on other works around Port Geographe? We received a polite but somewhat dismissive "no". Apparently the money will come from the bonds lodged by the previous developer. We still cannot see the justification.

## **Fencing the wetlands**

We recently became aware of a proposal to put a fence on the bund on the southern side of Layman Road at Port Geographe. It involves the construction of a high fence on the elevated ridge on the southern side of Layman Road over a distance of more than 2km. The bund lies on land owned by Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions, who manages the wetland of the Vasse River on the other side of the bund. The purpose of the fence may be to keep feral animals out of the wetlands.

With no public airing it has taken us by surprise. We regard it as an ill-conceived and foolish concept that will create adverse impacts on the aesthetics of area. It would look eliminate the attractive vista over the wetlands.

We believe that the bund is ideally suited for a dual cycle-foot path which would enhance the engagement of visitors and residents with the

wetland, which after all, is a public asset. Such a path could link with existing cycle and pathways and the nearby pedestrian bridge over the canal, thus creating a wonderful loop with elements of natural appreciation and adventure. We have conveyed our concerns to the Minister for the Environment, and await his response.

## Locality Nomenclature

PGLOA has long sought its own locality name so our identity is not submerged by *Busselton* or *Geographe*. BCC has for some time been looking at rectifying some of the anomalies in names and boundaries of localities throughout the entire City of Busselton. New terminology will have to pass through the Geographic Names Committee. The City Fathers are in support for our precinct to be known officially by our eponym *Port Geographe*. And it will correspond to the SAR-paying area. It will happen soon.

## Eastern Link and Ford Road

Along with many others, PGLOA has campaigned for Ford Road in preference to the Eastern Link as one of the main entries to Busselton. This is because it would give Port Geographe, and indeed all East Busselton residents, better access to westerly and southerly destinations. We graciously lost that campaign.

We understand BCC is expecting Australian Government environmental approval any day now, and are ready to commence work immediately. We are told there is budget provision of \$160,000 over two years to recommence environmental surveys to prepare the case for Ford Road sometime in the future.

## Coastal Works

In May the Department of Transport released another periodic update on the management program within the Port Geographe Coastal Management Area, for which our SAR is deployed. The release noted the substantial improvement in the length of sandy foreshore at the Western Beach, and the “strong accretion over the last four years”, to which we would add

over the last 80 years. DoT declines to offer a view when sand bypassing will occur.

Sand and wrack had again accumulated in the entrance channel, requiring the dredging and disposal of 50,000m<sup>3</sup> of material. This confirms our view dredging is likely to be an annual requirement, which it is for other small boat harbours on the west coast of WA.

Wonnerup Beach was the site of a major sand nourishing program designed to “balance the sand eroded” over the past winter, and give “increased coastal protection”. DoT declines to give quantitative data on the quantity and location of this erosion. Some 25,000m<sup>3</sup> of sand was spread over one km of this fast accreting coastline. Justification is not substantiated.

## Speeding Boats

We have managed to get action from marine section of Department of Transport to arrest the growing incidences of excessive speed and unsafe practices in the marina and canals. This may well result in the installation of monitoring cameras.

## PGLOA Annual General Meeting

The AGM is set for 7.15 pm Monday 16 Sept 2019 in the Busselton Volunteer Sea Rescue building, Geographe Bay Rd. All SAR-paying landowners are invited to attend,

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. Contact myself or Peter Brinsden if you are interested in joining the Committee. It can be rewarding!

With compliments of the Chair of PGLOA



Dennis Gee

2 July 2019



Locations recently re-zoned at Port Geographe