

MORNINGTON PENINSULA RATEPAYERS & RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION INC.

Reg. No. A0034245B.
PO BOX 4087, ROSEBUD VIC 3939

Newsletter – February 2014

President Alan Nelsen 5982 3821 Deputy President Roger Lambert 5975 3033
Secretary-Treasurer Margaret Wilson 5986 4159
Committee: Ian Morrison 0437 460 668 Paul Smith 0408 615 770

Email contact: alanne@ihug.com.au



THE MPRRA'S FUTURE

The MPRRA and the McCrae Action Group will continue in 2014.

At the November 2013 AGM it was agreed that the current Committee should continue for a period of three months (to 28th February 2014) and bring a recommendation on the future of the MPRRA to the members at the February meeting.

The interim Committee meeting was held in January and to ensure that the MPRRA can continue in 2014 indications of interest in nominating for committee positions have been received as follows :

President: Alan Nelsen is prepared to continue if no further nominations for president are received.

Secretary: Ian Morrison

Treasurer: Graeme Morrison

Ordinary Members of the Committee:
Debbie Peters and Graham Harder

WE ARE ENCOURAGING FURTHER NOMINATIONS

While we have received some nominations, **members are encouraged to nominate** for the above office bearer positions, deputy president and the three ordinary members of the committee.

An election will be held at the February public meeting.

To lessen the work load on members of the committee, it is proposed to put a recommendation to the members that:

- the new committee meet every second month instead of monthly, and
- the number of public meetings be reduced from four to three with consideration being given to one of the meetings being an informal get together such as a BBQ or other social event.

WE NEED YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT

We are one of the few organisations on the Peninsula which attempts to make the Council accountable.

Our experience over the last few years is that the Council is arrogant, lacks transparency, spin is getting worse and it needs an organisation like ours to monitor the accountability and financial responsibility of Council.

WHAT OUR ASSOCIATION DOES

The Mornington Peninsula Ratepayers and Residents' Association Inc. is now in its 18th year having been incorporated in 1996. The Association is a non-profit organisation and is non party political.

Our Aims and Purposes

The purposes of the Association are to:

- (a) Protect and advance the interests of ratepayers and residents of the Mornington Peninsula Shire;
- (b) Maintain and secure our way of life;
- (c) Consult with other established organisations and groups for the mutual benefit of all people on the Mornington Peninsula;
- (d) Make representations to Council and all levels of government.

What we do and some achievements

We fight to keep rates increases as low as possible. Despite our efforts, rates have increased by 100% over the last 10 years. This is more than three times the increase in CPI.

Highlight areas where the Council is inefficient and wasteful. For example, we lobbied for Pelican Pantry at Hastings to be franchised and this saved \$400,000 per year. We also ensured Council did not waste any more on the proposal for the Philip Island Ferry which is a State Government Responsibility.

Successfully made submissions at the recent Victorian Electoral Commission in support of multi-member Wards to help ensure better representation for all ratepayers and residents.

Successfully lobbied the government, the RACV and other agencies to ensure that Peninsula Link was toll free for residents.

Work with other community groups to help preserve the character of the Peninsula which we all cherish and enjoy.

Make submissions to VCAT, the Council and various government agencies in an endeavour to make the planning system fairer and simpler.

Support ratepayers and residents by providing advice, writing letters, and speaking to councillors on your issues.

Informing the general community by endeavouring to get comment and letters published in the local and Melbourne daily newspapers.

We have represented ratepayers at VCAT hearings by objecting to out-of-character, multi-storey developments on the Southern Peninsula. We are not opposed to development, but believe it should comply with the local character of the Peninsula.

Highlighted deficiencies which has led to changes in Council policies and procedures, and together with others, helped initiate the tape recording of Council meetings to improve transparency.

Encouraged planning for the development of the Shire's townships which allows for growth but retains the character of the township.

WE SUPPORT a new Aquatic Centre for Rosebud but believe it should comply with the Government's *Victorian Coastal Strategy* and be located on one of the 10 inland sites considered by the Shire so that the Rosebud and Port Philip Bay foreshore reserve is not compromised.

With the assistance of Heritage Victoria gained Heritage Listing for the Rosebud Sound Shell.

GOOD NEWS FOR McCRAE RESIDENTS

2-4 Wattle Place, McCrae

The McCrae Action Group opposed the 3-4 storey development and appeared before VCAT at the Hearing for 2-4 Wattle Place which is at the rear of the McCrae Plaza shopping centre. The Hearing was held for 2½ days in October 2013 and a further day in December 2013.

Overall we are very pleased with the Tribunal's decision which is a win for the residents of McCrae:

- A reduction in height of the building so that it should generally not exceed 8 metres (i.e. two storeys).
- Although the permit is for 15 dwellings it does not require a commercial business on the ground floor which would increase traffic and parking in Wattle Place.
- Some architectural aspects are disappointing, however overall we cannot complain. In this regard the Tribunal Chairman stated:
 - There may well be better architectural solutions than the one currently presented to the Tribunal, and that is obviously a matter about which opinions will differ. However the task of the Tribunal is to determine whether the outcome required meets the planning scheme.
 - The reduction in height and corresponding significant reduction in bulk means that the built form is not out of scale with McCrae,

THE SHIRE LET US DOWN AGAIN

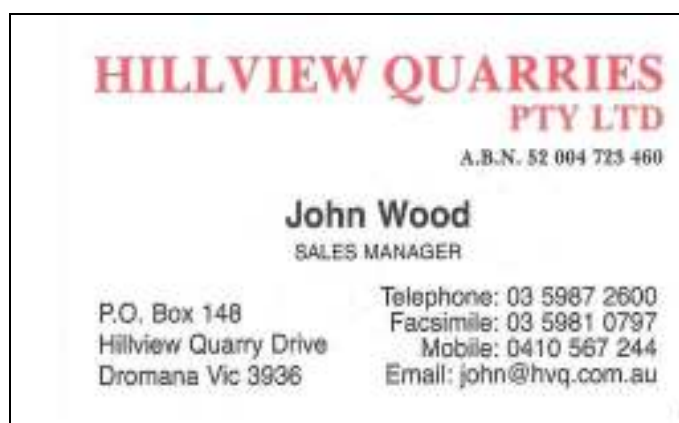
The Shire's performance with this development was a disgrace!

Originally the Shire officers approved this development. Fortunately, we were able to lobby the Council and the decision was overturned.

We also met the Mayor and asked for an 'A' team to be provided at VCAT. The Shire administration **ignored** the Mayor and it was very disappointing that only a '**C**' team was provided.

The Shire did not provide any expert witnesses to support the case and Shire staff did not show up at any time over the hearing.

In addition to the McCrae Action Group, fortunately four or five local residents made excellent and diverse presentations, including one concerned resident who engaged a professional planner. The McCrae community **owes these people a great deal for** ensuring McCrae (and many of the Shire's other townships) retains much of its local character which many of us appreciate and enjoy.



YOUR RATES INCREASE NEXT YEAR

Every second year the Council is required to re-value your property.

The Shire has said in its four-year plan that rates will increase by 5% from June. The plan does not say whether the fixed component of your rates will also be increased.

However, this year the Council is required to re-value all properties. This means that there will be some winners and losers.

If the value of your property has increased by more than the average increase across the Shire you will pay more than 5%.

However if the value of your property has not increased as much as average increase across the Shire, then you will be lucky and pay less than 5%.

Once again we will be making a submission to the Shire's Budget Hearing and trying to keep the rate increase as low as possible.

HOW ARE YOUR ROADS?

Did you know that the shire spent \$13 million (40%) less on roads, bridges and other infrastructure last year than it proposed in its 2012-13 Budget?

Despite the significance of this reduction there was no mention of this by the Mayor or CEO in the explanatory section in the front of the Annual Report. With such a large variance it would be expected that this would **feature prominently** in the Annual Report.

Instead they hid it on page 180 of the 190 page report where very few people would find the answer.

Part of the reason why they did not spend on roads etc is that they had to find \$8 million to pay for the purchase of Rosebud Central properties in Wannaeue Place.

We asked the Shire how they paid for Rosebud Central and instead of giving us the answer we were told to look in the Annual Report. It took us some time to find the answer which could easily have been explained by the Shire.

The fact that they did not make this public is just **another case of deceitful behaviour of the Shire administration** which unfortunately happens all too often under the management of Dr Michael Kennedy.

SOUTHERN PENINSULA AQUATIC CENTRE

The MPRRA has consistently **supported** a pool for Rosebud, providing that it is sensibly sized. However we are **opposed to it being located on the foreshore reserve**.

Our foreshore reserve is already being lost to development which needs to be sited on the coast such as: lifesaving and yacht clubs; car parks; boat ramps and trailer parking; and by erosion of a number of the Peninsula beaches with Portsea getting most publicity.

There are over 150 public swimming pools either council or privately owned in Victoria which are located inland which proves that a pool does not need to go on the foreshore.

The Shire paid \$8 million for Wannaeue Place primarily as an alternate site for the pool when it received a report from one of Australia's leading engineering firms which said it would cost an extra \$3-5 million to build on the foreshore.

However the "ruling gang of 6" voted on 9 December 2013 to build the pool on the foreshore.

SAVE ROSEBUD FORESHORE

A number of concerned groups has formed to "Save Rosebud Foreshore" reserve from the development of SPA which will be the largest development on a foreshore reserve on the whole of the Victorian coast

including Port Phillip and Western Port Bays.

Our Association is supporting the group which is being led by the Nepean Ratepayers Association.

Organisations like the Clean Ocean Foundation, SPIFFA, Save Tootgarook Swamp, Friends of Rosebud Foreshore Reserve, Blue Wedges, the Port Phillip Conservation Council, the Victorian National Parks Association, Friends of the Earth, and Peninsula Speaks have previously indicated their opposition to locating the pool on the foreshore reserve.

You can view the "Save Rosebud Foreshore" Facebook page on:

<https://www.facebook.com/saverosebudforeshore>

Also please support our petition by clicking on

<http://www.communityrun.org/petitions/save-our-fabulous-bay-foreshores-and-coastal-reserves-from-inappropriate-development>

WHAT AN EMBARRASSMENT

Shire pays \$8 m for Wannaeue Place for the pool and then finds it is cheaper to build on the foreshore.

Why wasn't this analysis done before the site was purchased and \$8 million of our rate money spent?

Cr Gibb is now saying that Rosebud Central in Wannaeue Place was purchased for strategic purposes with the option of locating the pool at this site. **What rubbish!** This comment is typical of Cr Gibb who often distorts the facts. (Many in the community saying he wants to build the Taj Mahal monument on the foreshore to satisfy his ego.)

Rubbish Cr Gibb. Dr Michael Kennedy said he had to buy Wannaeue Place (for the pool) because the Council was tearing itself apart over the location of the pool on the foreshore reserve.

Nepean Ratepayers Association has suggested that Dr Kennedy **purchased Wannaeue Place on a "whim"**. Yes, \$8 million of our money spent on a whim.

The Shire has also refused our request to provide the report which indicates the "strategic" purpose for which the site was purchased.

Some councillors have confirmed there was no report.

So we asked again under FOI for a copy of the report and this was also refused. Now we have lodged a complaint with the government's Freedom of Information Commissioner.

NEXT PUBLIC MEETING

2 pm Monday, 17 February 2014

CHANGE OF LOCATION

**Dromana Old Shire Offices
315a Point Nepean Road, Dromana
(Melway Map 159 Ref F7)**

Notice of Meeting enclosed

Postal Print No. PP 343046

0016. Newsletter of the
Mornington Peninsula
Ratepayers & Residents'
Association Inc.
PO Box 4087
Rosebud Vic 3939.

**SURFACE
MAIL**

Postage Paid
Rosebud
VIC AUST 3939

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Some of you have waited until the future of the MPRRA was clearer, but now annual subscriptions are overdue. A Renewal Form has been included with this mail out for you to use if you have not already paid your renewal fee. You may post the completed form and remittance to the address above, or lodge with the Secretary at the meeting on 17 February 2014.

Remember – only financial members may vote.