



Point Lonsdale Civic Association Inc.

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Representing Point Lonsdale Residents since 1910

NEWSLETTER

29 September 2014

Meet the Candidates Meeting – 7 November

PLCA and the Queenscliffe Community Association are jointly holding a State election "Meet the Candidates" meeting on 7 November. Lisa Neville (Labor) and Ron Nelson (Liberal) have agreed to participate and other candidates for the seat of Bellarine will be invited along with one representative from each party standing for the upper house in the Western Victoria Region.

This will be an opportunity to ask candidates about a range of State and local issues such as the future of the Point Lonsdale and Queenscliff Lighthouse Reserves. The meeting will be at 7.00pm on Friday, 7 November at the Point Lonsdale Primary School. More details will be published prior to the meeting.

Point Lonsdale Lighthouse Reserve

Status of Council Deliberations

On 19 September the Borough issued a media release advising that the Council will formally consider the community consultation outcomes and detailed suggestions from the Point Lonsdale Lighthouse Reserve Project Reference Group and consultants before deciding what action to take. The matter will be considered at the Council's October Ordinary meeting (22 October).

Project Reference Group Meeting

The Point Lonsdale Lighthouse Reserve Project Reference Group met on 5 September to consider the results of the community consultation process and to develop a recommendation on which of the four options should be subject to further consideration. The Reference Group consists of 10

community members with one being a PLCA representative. Also participating in the meeting were the Mayor, Cr Helene Cameron, Cr Sue Wasterval, Council officers and consultants from Planisphere. The Reference Group had been provided with a report on the outcomes of the community consultation, which was subsequently published on the Borough website. A copy of report can be found here:

http://www.queenscliffe.vic.gov.au/images/PLLR_Community_Consultation_Outcomes.pdf

The following categories of survey responses were covered in the report:

- Survey responses (842 surveys)
- Submissions (43 submissions)
- Newspaper cut-out slip (77 received)
- Petitions (1,084 signatures)
- Friends of the Point Lonsdale Lighthouse Reserve Facebook Page (no details of analytics data provided)

The report noted that multiple forms of response were provided by some. It states that “in total, feedback was received from 1,641 individual people/organisations, either in one or multiple forms, with 256 people/organisations providing feedback in more than one form”. The Planisphere consultants observed that the response was extraordinarily high for a community survey of this nature.

It was clear from all categories of survey response that Option 3 (eco-accommodation) and Option 4 (spa and boutique accommodation) are not supported and that Option 2 (landscape improvements) is the preferred option. This conclusion is supported by the following outcomes:

- 68% of complete survey responses nominated Option 2 as the 1st preference
- 58% of submissions stated “no commercial development” and 51% stated “landscape improvements only”
- The newspaper cut-out published by PLCA rejected Options 3 and 4
- The petition was in support of Option 2 with environmental enhancements
- A huge number of likes and supporting comments were posted on the Facebook page which is “Dedicated to keeping the Point Lonsdale Lighthouse Reserve in public hands, stopping all commercial development and enhancing environmental attributes of the site”
- 12.5% of complete survey responses nominated Option 1 (no change) as the 1st preference, 11.5% nominated Option 3 and 8.0% nominated Option 4

The community members of the Reference Group were asked to vote confidentially for one of the following “to progress to detailed planning and feasibility analysis”:

- Option 1 (no change)
- Option 2 (landscape improvements)
- Option 3 (eco-accommodation)
- Option 4 (thermal spa and boutique accommodation)
- None of the Options should progress to detailed planning and feasibility analysis

It was announced that all votes were in favour of Option 2. At the same time the Reference Group members strongly urged the Council to consider a refined version of Option 2 and proposed a process to ensure community engagement and support for the final plan. The Reference Group members subsequently provided more details in writing to the Council about the general process proposed plus both short term and medium term improvements to the Reserve. The Reference Group also recommended starting a community engagement process to determine the appropriateness of National Park status for the Reserve and the surrounding area (see more on this below). The full text of the communication from the Reference Group to the Council can be found here:

<http://www.lonsdalelighthousereserve.org/a-new-vision.html>

As well as the details provided by the Reference Group, PLCA provided additional input to the Council on an enhanced version of Option 2 based on resolutions passed by members and feedback at meetings. The PLCA President wrote:

It is our belief that our members wish to see the site preserved and maintained for future generations and in this context wish to see interpretive works undertaken to highlight the unique qualities of such a significant site.

As part of this thinking research as to protections under historic sites, national park status and management should also be investigated.

The historical, environmental, maritime, indigenous, military, social and navigational need to be celebrated.

Interpretive signage, improved roads and pathways, a more orderly parking area, picnic and BBQ facilities, improved access to the lighthouse, a ship viewing area and information, weed management, toilet upgrade (a new toilet and shower block) and maintenance, removal and /or maintenance of Toc H buildings and graffiti removal are all high on the agenda.

The community is emphatic in its view that new building works are not part of the project.

Finally, the Reference Group recommended to the Council that it continue to operate in order to provide input to the Council on the future of the Reserve, but also suggested other similar process options. The Borough subsequently has confirmed that the Reference Group has concluded in accordance with its Terms of Reference but also advised that it up to the Council to determine the future process for the Lighthouse Reserve project.

National Park Option

One option under discussion in the community is the declaration of the Point Lonsdale Lighthouse Reserve and surrounding area as a National Park. PLCA has met with the Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA) to understand the pros and cons of declaration as a National Park. VNPA has demonstrated particular interest in the Point Lonsdale Lighthouse Reserve and concern was expressed about potential Council developments in the reserve in its comprehensive review of coastal development published earlier this year (The Coast is Unclear – the uncertain future for nature along the Victoria coast).

A National Park option is described in the submission made by Andrew Sutherland to the Historic Places Investigation discussed in the next section of this newsletter. Andrew is a member of the Lighthouse Reference Group and has been active in various efforts to protect the future of the Reserve. Andrew also participated in the PLCA meeting with VNPA. A copy of his Historical Places submission can be found here: http://www.veac.vic.gov.au/submissions/published/8648-HP_Subs_NOI_0021_Andrew_Sutherland.pdf

VNPA has made a statement on the Lighthouse Reserve which includes the following: Deciding the most appropriate type of protection under the National Park Act is complex and would require considerable amount of community and expert input.

The VNPA statement can be found here and includes a link to the “Coast is Unclear” study: <http://vnpa.org.au/page/publications/nature-news-hub/point-lonsdale-lighthouse-reserve>

The PLCA Committee supports the recommendation to the Council made by the Reference Group to start a community engagement process to determine the appropriateness of National Park status for the Reserve and surrounding area. PLCA will seek input from members on the National Park option as appropriate and in the light of the Council’s decisions regarding the Reserve at its October meeting.

Historic Places Investigation by VEAC

Earlier this year the Victorian Government requested the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) to undertake an investigation into Historic Places on public land in Victoria. The role of the VEAC is to conduct investigations that are requested by the Victorian Government relating to the protection and ecologically sustainable management of the environment and natural resources of public land. By co-incidence, this includes investigations regarding whether a particular area should be declared a National Park. VEAC must provide a report on the Historic Places Investigation to the Minister for Environment and Climate Change by March 2016. The deadline for public submissions in the first stage of the investigation was 8 September.

PLCA has made a submission to VEAC regarding the Point Lonsdale Lighthouse Reserve and surrounding areas which PLCA considers to be an historic place in terms of the Investigation. The submission urged (1) greater controls to prevent large scale commercial development in historic places, (2) greater enforcement of the requirements of management authorities responsible for historic places such as the Borough, and (3) greater scrutiny of the expenditure of income generated from historic sites.

The key submission by PLCA was made under the heading “Halt Inappropriate Development on Historic Place”. PLCA submitted in relation to the Point Lonsdale Lighthouse Reserve that a development such as a boutique accommodation and thermal spa, or indeed any form of accommodation or restaurant, should not be allowed to proceed on the Point Lonsdale Lighthouse Reserve until after the Historic Places Investigation has been completed and recommendations considered by the Minister for Environment and Climate Change”.

A copy of the PLCA submission can be found here on the VEAC website:

http://www.veac.vic.gov.au/submissions/published/8644-HP_Subs_NOI_0017_Point_Lonsdale_Civic_Association_Inc.pdf

PLCA sent a copy of its submission to the Council and asked whether it had made a submission to the Historic Places Investigation. We have been advised that no submission was made after consideration of the Terms of Reference of the Investigation. However, the Borough has provided PLCA a copy of a letter it wrote to VEAC “the purpose of which was to clarify some of the information provided in the PLCA submission”. The Borough outlined the various planning considerations applicable to the Reserve and provided details of the process it is undertaking to determine the future of the Reserve.

As mentioned in the item above regarding the National Park Option, Andrew Sutherland also made a submission to VEAC (see copy of submission via link in previous item). Andrew’s extensive submission contains a very interesting and detailed description of the historical nature of the area including a large number of photos and graphics. His submission outlines site management options for the Point Lonsdale site and highlights deficiencies in the roles of Committees of Management of such sites.

Lawrence Road (Springs) Carpark Redevelopment

The Borough has received State Government funding to redevelop the carpark at the beach access in the Springs area (at the end of Lawrence Road). A community information session was conducted on 11 September to seek community ideas regarding the redevelopment. The meeting was quite vocal about the inadequacies of the consultation process, particularly the fact that notice of the information session was published only one week before the information session. Members can find such notices in the public notices section of *The Echo* and members will be advised of such notices by PLCA if they are published on a timely basis.

It is planned that the final design will be completed by mid-December with construction to commence in mid-March and be completed by the end of April next year. Submissions regarding the design from the community must be submitted by Friday, 10 October with the final plan to be circulated for information.

Three options have been developed with the consultation being about option 3. The three options are outlined in the PowerPoint presentation made at the information session. A copy of the presentation can be found at the Borough website here:

<http://www.queenscliffe.vic.gov.au/infrastructure-and-development/roads-driveways-and-footpaths/projects/item/lawrence-road-carpark-redevelopment-2>

This link also leads to the brochure about option 3 that is also displayed on a sign in the carpark.

Works to be undertaken with current funding includes:

- Formalisation and connection of the existing shared pathway with a clear separation from the carpark

- Realignment of the existing pathways and construction of a new pathway to separate pedestrian movements from vehicles
- Provision of disabled parking
- Provision of passenger drop-off zone
- Provision of clear entry/exit points
- Provision of a one-way vehicular loop with 60°-90° parking
- Augment existing revegetation works

Additional works to be undertaken at a later stage includes:

- Upgrade existing access ramp
- Provision of a shelter with tables, benches, water fountain and interpretive information boards
- Provision of elevated timber boardwalk and viewing platform integrated within the existing rock beaching

A number of concerns were expressed at the information session regarding matters such as bike and path links, park entry and exit points, car parking and beach access.

Members concerned about any aspect of the redevelopment are urged to make a submission to the Borough or communicate their concerns to PLCA for inclusion in a PLCA submission. The PLCA submission will also reflect a number of the concerns expressed at the Borough information session.

Submissions must be received at the Borough office by 4.00pm, Friday, 10 October 2014.

Design Award – Point Lonsdale Foreshore Development

The Borough of Queenscliffe Council has won the Coastal Building and Design Award at the 2014 Victorian Coastal Awards for the Point Lonsdale Foreshore Revitalisation project. The project was recognised for highlighting local features both natural and built, using well researched materials, using sensitive and innovative design and ensuring high level of construction supervision. As well as congratulating Council staff and the contractor, the Mayor, Helene Cameron acknowledged the contribution of the community representatives on the Point Lonsdale Main Street Community Reference Group.

The challenge for the Council now is ongoing maintenance of the area such as tidying up blown bark mulch, weeding and general presentation.

Borough Community Engagement Policy

Following a review of community comments on a Draft Community Engagement Policy, the Council endorsed a Borough Community Engagement Policy at its meeting on 24 September.

A copy of the Policy can be found here:

[http://www.queenscliffe.vic.gov.au/images/Appendix 8 Revised Community Engagement Policy.pdf](http://www.queenscliffe.vic.gov.au/images/Appendix_8_Revised_Community_Engagement_Policy.pdf)

It is pleasing that four of the matters submitted by PLCA have been included mostly word for word in the final Policy. One of these is the need to improve community engagement with Point Lonsdale residents in the City of Greater Geelong. On the other hand, it is disappointing that two key matters raised by PLCA were not included in the Policy itself but appear to have been “referred to Council for future consideration”. The first of these was the concern that the Policy makes no statement on how community engagement outcomes are to be used in Council decision making. The second matter was the need for detail to be included in the policy regarding the role of community reference groups.

The Council also resolved that feedback should be provided to those who made submissions regarding the Draft Policy.

Emily Street Flood Protection Works Update

In part based on submissions from PLCA, the City of Greater Geelong is undertaking flood protection works near Emily Street that includes a weir with floating gates; an automatic, remotely monitored pump roughly to the West of the temporary unit on site presently; and a new pedestrian bridge (incorporating the weir) where the existing one is situated over the outlet channel to Lake Victoria.

Following some delays to the expected start date, works have now commenced on this project.

Surf Club Clubhouse

A resolution was passed at the Annual General Meeting of the Point Lonsdale Surf Life Saving Club that the Club rebuild a new clubhouse on the Club’s present site on Ocean Road. Having investigated many options it was decided that the only feasible option is to demolish the existing building to allow the construction of a new clubhouse. It is expected that the new clubhouse will be of similar size to the present clubhouse.

A key remaining issue is the extension of the long term lease of the Council owned block next to the clubhouse which is used for training and storage of rescue equipment. The Borough has indicated that it wishes to see this block when the lease expires in 2025.

The Club’s President, Michael Doery, has provided the following comment to PLCA regarding the present situation: “Whilst we are disappointed with the time it has taken to consider a range of sites and in particular the Borough’s position with a relocation, it is now time for us to work with the Council to negotiate a lease that allows us to redevelop a facility for the benefit of all Point Lonsdale Residents. We look forward to developing a community asset that supports our water safety and emergency services objectives.”

Bin Based Green Waste Collection

At its meeting on 24 September the Council resolved that Council officers undertake all necessary action required to introduce a bin based green waste collection service on 1 July 2015, collected fortnightly on Fridays (most likely using a 240 litre bin). A potential cost of \$47 excluding GST per annum was discussed with the actual cost to be determined as part of the budget process for 2015/16. This decision was taken on the basis that 63% of surveys returned (51% response rate) supported the introduction of a bin based green waste collection. When non-responses are counted as a "yes", 81% of ratepayers supported the introduction.

Fort Queenscliff Precinct Tourism Plan – Open House Session

The Borough of Queenscliffe Council in conjunction with the Department of Defence, has commissioned the preparation of the 'Fort Queenscliff Precinct Tourism Plan'.

The purpose of the plan will be to identify possible future tourism opportunities at the Fort to support and enhance the local economy. As part of the plan's preparation, a community open house session will be held on Saturday 11 October.

The Community Open House session will provide an opportunity for community members to speak with the project consultants (TRC Tourism) and offer their thoughts about possible directions on the consultant's preliminary ideas for tourism development at the Fort.

Members interested in learning more about the plan are encouraged to attend the open house session:

Community Open House
Saturday, 11 October 2014
10:00am to 1:00pm
Queenscliff Town Hall
Learmonth Street, Queenscliff.

Member Feedback to PLCA Committee Welcome

The PLCA Committee meets regularly between General Meetings and welcomes feedback from members on any Point Lonsdale matters, particularly those covered in this Newsletter. If you wish the Committee to be aware of your views on any of these matters, please contact the Secretary via email or post at the addresses shown on the letterhead above.

Jasper Coghlan
Secretary
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