



# Speech

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Cr Helene Cameron, Mayor  
Friday 9 January 2015, 7.30pm  
Point Lonsdale Primary School, Learning Common

## **Point Lonsdale Civic Association AGM 2015**

President Fay Agterhuis, Secretary Jasper Coghlan, PLCA Committee, members, my fellow Councillors, ladies and gentlemen... thank you for inviting me here this evening.

I am sure you will agree that it has been a very active 12 months in Point Lonsdale and indeed across the Borough of Queenscliffe.

Tonight I want to share with you a summary of the main Council achievements in 2014. I'll provide an overview of some of the key activities that Council is currently undertaking. I'll talk through some existing and foreseen challenges that we face. And I'll also provide an outline of projects that Council will be focusing on for the remainder of this financial year.

To begin with I'm going to concentrate on responding to those matters most pertinent to Point Lonsdale and those that the PLCA has raised with me ahead of tonight's meeting.

At the conclusion of my formal remarks, if there is anything else you're keen to know about or understand better, please let me know during the question time at the end; and I'll do my best to satisfy your enquiries.

### **Key Topics**

#### **Point Lonsdale Lighthouse Reserve**

Council formally resolved to request preparation of a detailed feasibility and financial analysis of Option 2 (Landscape Improvements) as presented in the Point Lonsdale Lighthouse Reserve Discussion Paper as well as the items identified by the Project Reference Group.

The consultants are expected to provide the detailed feasibility and financial analysis for Council to consider in March 2015.

Keeping the community informed is a high priority and encouraging participation in future stages of the project will be considered at that time, together with future opportunities for community contribution.

### **Bellarine Community Health**

I met with Bellarine Community Health yesterday to share my concerns on behalf of the community regarding the security of tenancy at the Tolliday units, and the lack of community consultation and transparency regarding proposed relocation of residents for a period of time.

At the meeting the CEO John Fendyk expressed an interest in attending an upcoming PLCA meeting to improve communication between BCH and the wider community, and to respond to your questions directly.

### **Point Lonsdale Surf Life Saving Clubroom Development Taskforce**

Member for Bellarine Lisa Neville recently chaired the first taskforce meeting with the Point Lonsdale Life Saving Club and the Borough of Queenscliffe to progress the shared priority of identifying a suitable site for a future clubroom development.

In determining the appropriate next steps, the group has agreed to meet in January to explore opportunities together with the aim of clarifying the necessary project management considerations for the Club and Council.

There is a genuine desire from everyone involved to achieve an optimal outcome which serves the growing needs of the PLSLSC, the immediate needs of Point Lonsdale residents and the broader aspirations of the entire community.

### **Springs Carpark (Lawrence Road Carpark Redevelopment)**

As part of the Country Roads & Bridges Program, Council has undertaken to redevelop the carpark in Lawrence Road that serves the Springs Beach access area. The purpose of this work is to improve the functionality, safety and visual amenity of this popular beach access area.

At the end of the public exhibition of the plan, there were thirty six written submissions received. The majority of the submissions (60%) indicated support for the redevelopment but indicated concern at the

perceived reduction in the number of parking spaces. The remainder of the submissions supported the project but provided feedback regarding the advertised concept plan.

Following the public consultation process, the concept layout plan was revised to take into account the community feedback, suggestions and issues identified in the submissions. As a result, the number of parking spaces available in this popular parking area has increased to 29 spaces while providing safe movement around the area for all users. Council endorsed the revised plan at the December Council meeting and officers are now preparing to call tenders for the construction works.

### **DEPI (DELWP) repair works**

Significant coastal repair works have been scheduled for local beaches to take place in early 2015 after the busy summer period in the Borough of Queenscliffe.

This comes after powerful winter swells around the Queenscliff coastline undermined a section of seawall at Shortlands Bluff.

Council and the former Department of Environment and Primary Industries now Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) undertook investigations that found approximately 25-40m of the masonry sea wall needed repair works.

For OHS reasons during construction an entire section of the wall will need to be demolished and rebuilt.

Due to the time to do the works (approximately two months) the works will commence after the January school holidays during what is normally stable weather patterns.

Signs and temporary fencing will be erected during January 2015 so there may be minor inconvenience to foreshore users.

The works are part of a package of \$320,000 to be invested into coastal infrastructure management from the DELWP Coastal Environments Program into the Borough of Queenscliffe this financial year.

The funds will enable us to commence three identified key fragile coastline priority projects to protect our iconic foreshores and sea walls

at Queenscliff and Point Lonsdale.

In addition to the Shortlands Bluff works, two other projects include \$100,000 for the construction of a rock revetment at the end of the Point Lonsdale Sea Wall underneath the bowls club and \$50,000 for investigations and repairs to the Point Lonsdale Sea Wall.

### **Dog Beach Works**

Officers are working with the Bellarine Catchment Network and the community to monitor and measure the sand erosion at Dog Beach, to establish reliable data on nature's action and our intervention.

One aspect of this project has been the establishment of a Fluker Post to encourage everyone to take photographs and then have them posted on a publicly available website.

In addition to this, the sand fence installed near the toe of the dune is being trialled as a means of trapping water borne sand with the objective of increasing the sand reserves on the beach and protecting the toe of the dune.

### **Stage 3 of the Point Lonsdale Revitalisation Project**

The grant to complete the final stage of the Point Lonsdale Foreshore Master Plan – Stage 3 Village Park Upgrade was secured late last year. In preparing the Master Plan, it was the clear preference of the Community Reference Group, Department of Environment & Primary Industries and Council to relocate the amenity block to the southern boundary of the park against the Bowls Club boundary and move the picnic BBQ area adjacent the playground area.

This would unite two of the main uses of the park, allowing parents clear sightlines from the BBQ area to the playground, instead of the park being divided by the existing amenity block into two separate visually non-linked areas.

In summary, the Point Lonsdale Revitalisation Stage 3 Village Park Upgrade works includes;

- removal of the old toilet block,
- relocating the BBQ area into old toilet block space, with direct line of

site to playground and sea views. Initial thoughts include a shelter and additional picnic tables.

- new amenities block with disabled facility, baby change facility, cubicles large enough to get changed in and an outdoor beach shower.
- Implementing the Foreshore Tree Plan which includes the planting of 20 new trees.
- Weed removal & new planting of existing garden beds (Village - Loch St)
- Granitic sand path on foreshore between Kirk Road pedestrian crossing and beach shower opposite Kerleys Real Estate.
- Renewal of foreshore picnic tables and install bin enclosures (Village to Loch St)
- Finish bluestone wall works at bottom of Village promenade ramp and Albert Street stairs.

A concept plan will be produced this year which will be subject to community consultation as per Council policy.

### **Tree Removal**

The she-oak tree located in the Point Lonsdale foreshore area immediately north of the Point Lonsdale Bowling Club has been removed for the following reasons:

As outlined above, the third stage of the foreshore revitalisation plan includes relocating the existing amenity block to the area immediately adjacent to the Bowling Club and requires the removal of this she oak tree to accommodate the change in the location of the public toilets.

Over the last 2+ years, the Point Lonsdale Bowling Club has raised concerns that the she oak tree drops needles onto their recently completed synthetic bowling green. The synthetic green is becoming discoloured and concern has been raised by the club about the long term impact on their green as result of the acidity of the needles.

Removal of dropped needles from the synthetic surface, particularly after a northerly wind, is problematic both in terms of maintenance of and possible damage to the synthetic surface. The matter has been raised on

a number occasions by the club, both verbally and in writing.

### **Point Lonsdale Accessible Playground Equipment**

The second State Government grant secured last year is for making the playground more accessible for mobility impaired children. The proposal, subject to community consultation, is to retain the existing combination unit adding low level ramp access, increase the number of swings including rubberised access to the disabled swing, and the addition of some new fully accessible play equipment (birdnest swing, spinner & boat) including rubberised access.

The intention is to match into the existing natural environment and timber combination unit were possible.

### **Council Community Consultation Processes**

We are taking a proactive look at the methods and practices used to improve our community consultation. It is something at the forefront of our minds across all areas of Council. Last year we adopted a Community Engagement Policy which included your contributions and feedback.

I am pleased to say we will be continuing to focus on reviewing and improving the way we communicate and problem solve together to better understand community expectations and deliver more meaningful outcomes.

The Borough Bites bimonthly newsletter will continue to be sent to all households. You can now also register to receive the monthly Snapshots e-newsletter via email on our website. We are also planning to review our social media platforms this year to expand the range of ways we share information, encourage feedback and seek community input.

### **Year in Review**

Council has just finished its second year serving as Council and this past year has been both rewarding and challenging. We have taken significant steps towards improving the way we encourage, listen and respond to community ideas, feedback and concerns.

The 2013-14 Annual Report demonstrates a vast improvement in how Council reports back to the community. It provides a far greater level of detail about Council's activities and is proving to be a valuable reference tool for community organisations.

2013–14 has been an exceptionally productive year, with 83% of Business Plan Priority Actions completed and a further 17% in progress. This equates to 42 priority actions and 23 capital projects.

If you have not had the opportunity yet to view the Annual Report, I really encourage you to have a look at it. It is a user friendly report that has generated positive comments from those who have accessed it on our website.

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To follow is a snapshot of some of the highlights of the past year.

- The Point Lonsdale Foreshore Revitalisation, of which the second stage was completed in time for the Christmas period.

This includes the stunning look out platform and two Disability Discrimination Act compliant ramps to provide all-abilities access to the promenade and beach, another set of steps, beach huts and BBQ facilities.

Seven hundred thousand dollars in federal and state government funding was obtained to be able to implement stages 1 and 2 of the foreshore revitalisation works.

I must take this opportunity to quickly thank the project reference group members who have significantly assisted with determining the scope of this project. Their support, over many years of planning, has been truly fantastic. I also thank the Point Lonsdale community for their input through the consultation programs and also for their patience during the construction works.

And now back to the highlights...

- The new Hesse St roundabout.
- Completion and official opening of the redevelopment of the Monahan Centre.
- Council won the prestigious Coastal Building and Design Award at the 2014 Victorian Coastal Awards for the Point Lonsdale Foreshore Revitalisation project.

- New roundabout constructed at the corner of Admans Street and Point Lonsdale Road, Point Lonsdale.
- Undergrounding of powerlines at Point Lonsdale.
- Significant volumes of environmental weed (almost 130 tonnes) have been removed from foreshore areas such as Bunny Woods, the Narrows and along Ocean Road. Much of this work has been done in conjunction with partners such as Conservation Volunteers Australia, Bellarine Catchment Network, Swan Bay Environment Association, our primary schools and a number of community organisations.

### **Plans for the future**

Some of the projects that are currently on the table and that Council will be progressing in the first half of this year include...

- As outlined in the Council Plan 2013-2017 and the current Council budget, Council is investing in a 'future plan' or master plan **for all three** of the Council managed caravan parks:
  - Golightly
  - Royal Park
  - And Queenscliff Rec Reserve and Victoria Park, which are considered as the one property.

The master plan will be completed as one project across all three sites to ensure a holistic approach to caravan and camping within the Borough.

The reason for the master plan is to conduct a detailed audit of the caravan park operations and to explore opportunities for increasing revenue and improving amenities.

- Funding was secured in 2014 to develop a plan for the future use of the Fort Queenscliff Precinct. The project will progress over the coming weeks and community consultation will commence shortly.
- The Borough of Queenscliffe Council will introduce a bin based green waste service on 1 July 2015 following endorsement of the



initiative at the September Council meeting.

This comes after extensive community consultation and a household green waste survey which indicated strong community support (63%) for the bin based service. The bin based green waste collection will replace the bundled green waste collection service after 30 June 2015.

A detailed implementation plan is currently being finalised and further information will be provided over the coming months.

Some of the challenges and opportunities that Council is either currently working on or is planning to address include:

- Continue lobbying for a shared pathway from Point Lonsdale to Ocean Grove (discussions are continuing with CoGG and this is on the G21 regional trails priority list)
- Explore funding opportunities to upgrade residential street lighting with energy efficient lamps as part of our commitment to reduce carbon emissions
- Return Police staffing levels so we have a permanent presence in the Borough
- And we will continue to advocate for 'one' Point Lonsdale by seeking a change to the Borough of Queenscliffe Municipal Boundary.

Just quickly, I'd like to comment on Council's financial management. The 2012/13 audit results highlighted an overall continuing positive movement by Council in working towards long-term financial sustainability. The Borough of Queenscliffe was assessed as low risk in terms of the Victorian Auditor-General's definitions and assessment.

The 2013/14 audit results, which are expected to be confirmed by VAGO in February 2015, indicate that the Borough will maintain a low risk assessment for overall financial sustainability. Queenscliffe has reduced its current level of outstanding debt to \$647,000.

The Borough of Queenscliffe continued to meet each of the elements of internal control required by the Victorian Auditor-General, supported by Council's Audit Committee, which comprises four independent members and two Councillors.

Council is very mindful of our financial capacity. The Borough relies more heavily on rates income than other councils, with rates providing 50% of operating revenue.

Council has had significant success in attracting funds for community facilities and infrastructure from state and federal governments, thereby reducing the financial pressures on local ratepayers. A total of \$3,351,990 in grant funding has been received in 2013/14 which is a significant increase (\$789,500) on the previous year.

Council commenced the planning process for the 2015/16 Budget in December and is working through the emerging issues in relation to Federal and State Government policy and funding that may impact on the Borough of Queenscliffe over the coming years. As always, we will continue to examine any new potential revenue sources to minimise the impact on rate revenue.

Lastly, I'd like to point out some of the upcoming community consultation programs that you can be involved in:

- The camping and caravan park master plans
- The accessible playground at Point Lonsdale
- Point Lonsdale Revitalisation Project Stage 3 – Village Park Upgrade
- And the draft budget and business plan for 2015/16, which will be in May.

I encourage you all to participate in these and other consultation opportunities as they arise.

The importance of good working relationships and project partnerships between community, Council and other levels of government continues to underpin everything we do.

Again, thank you for having me here tonight. On behalf of Council, we look forward to working with the Committee and the Point Lonsdale community throughout the year and for the remainder of this Council term.

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