



Point Lonsdale Civic Association Inc.

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Representing Point Lonsdale Residents since 1910

April 2020 Newsletter.

COVID-19

During this current COVID 19 crisis, it's important that we all become leaders and lead by example. We live, work and go to schools in a caring community; a Borough known for its sense of community, caring spirit and kindness to all.

This is what makes us special, and that identity and holding true to that identity, is even more critical now as we work to support each other to manage the uncertainty of the pandemic that is COVID19.

Queenscliffe and the broader 3225 is still a small community but one with an unusually high proportion of over sixties. Those members of our community who are older or frail may not be able to stock up on essentials as easily as others, so please just buy what you need - that includes pharmacy medications. There is plenty for everyone!

Many of our local shops are trying to look after local shoppers to ensure we have enough. Please also respect them during this difficult time. A simple thank-you will go a long way.

We must also make sure those who are in isolation are looked after, so if you know someone in that situation ask them if they need any help. Also check in on neighbours, in particular those who live alone, to make sure they are okay. Be a good neighbour. A phone call, or an offer to shop will social isolation. The sound of another voice over the telephone is one of the most welcoming sounds and your kind words have untold benefits for those in isolation and missing regular human contact.

Our *latest advice* is that all enquiries should be directed to DHHS on 1800 675 398, as the state has activated it's State Relief Plan.

<https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/emergency-relief-packages-for-victorians-who-need-it-most/>

Latest information here: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>

Furthermore, vulnerable people now need to register with DHHS via the Corona Virus hotline on 1800 675 398.

Nearly all community groups, community spaces, leisure groups, and sporting clubs, have closed. This won't be forever, and as soon as they are able to they will resume normal activities. Our own Association has postponed meetings for the foreseeable future, and sadly, our Neighbourhood House also closed.

It's also important we do our best to support our local businesses who now have been hit hard with a down-turn in business due to the virus, and a slower autumn/winter trading period. Many of our artists, and creative folk will find it especially tough, so it's important to support them as much as we can. The Borough remains a great place to live and together we will get through this if we look out for one another.

Queenscliffe Hub project.

The seventh Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting for the \$5.75 million project was held on the 21/2/20 at the new community hub complex in Kensington Road, Leopold. PLCA representative Michelle Jepson attended the meeting. Main points include:

- Discussion of the possibility of other groups having access to the common area besides the 3 existing tenants (Museum, Library and Visitor Information Centre). The possibility of also having ratepayer facilities available on weekends was also discussed.
- A briefing from the newly appointed architects (Kirsten Thompson Architects), who are currently looking at space requirements for each of the tenants, also took place. Early consensus is that the only way to fulfil the space needed is for the new Hub building to have a second storey.
- The project functional brief has now been completed and the Project Control Group, which includes PLCA member Andrew Sutherland, are meeting regularly. One option put forward by the architects is to keep the existing building and utilise the existing basement under part of the museum building.

At its February meeting Queenscliffe Council received and noted an Officer's report on the progress of the Queenscliff Hub and resolved to endorse the operation on the Hub on a seven day a week basis, endorse the potential operation of a limited range of Council service functions from the Hub and the associated ongoing use of Council's funds for this purpose. The Officers report also included the possible use of the facility by community groups which accords with PLCA's recent submission.

Harbour Precinct Update

The Fishermen's Wharf rebuild is almost complete with a new small craft launching ramp being constructed within the former boat builders slipway facility, a new maritime building near the slipway, an extensive landscaped grassed area at the rear of the wharf with new tree plantings and construction of a harbour walking trail linking to the larger marina facility. An especially pleasing aspect of the new wharf is the use of timbered walkways and boat fender facilities, which were features of the former boat harbour mooring facilities. Residents of the historic Fishermen's Flat precinct are pleased with the final wharf design and sea vista, which greatly improves what was for many years a derelict and unloved harbour area at the rear of Beach, Bay and Bridge Streets. However, a harbour user has raised some concerns recently about the wharf's untreated steel sheeting, which it is claimed could lessen the expected service life of the wharf.

Better Boating Victoria are also finalising their concept plan for an expanded rebuild of the boat launching facility in Queenscliff, the latest plan includes new boat launching lanes, new hard stand areas for boats and trailers, improved mooring pontoons and water approaches to the heavily used facility. Once completed the government funded assets will be transferred to Queenscliff Borough Council, however boat launching fees which previously provided a revenue stream for Council, will no longer be charged.

The Point Boulevard Pedestrian Safety.

It was recently brought to the Association's attention, the upsurge of vehicular traffic using the recently completed The Point Boulevard as a feeder road.

The increase in traffic has now in turn made crossing the road quite dangerous particularly for children making their way to local schools.

CoGG describes Point Boulevard as a collector road, to provide the main means of access for residents to Shell Road and Bellarine highway. The operative words are "access for residents". Unfortunately, Point Boulevard has become common access for non-resident drivers, to use it as a short-cut. Those vehicles span the full range from large trucks/semi-trailers, to motorbikes. Also, having long straight stretches, the road is attractive to hoon drivers.

The state of the road as it stands, is not suitable for a residential area that also incorporates an aged care facility (Arcare), a large retirement village (The Breeze), large Park/recreation areas, and extensive walking and cycling tracks. All residents and visitors must cross Point Boulevard to gain access to all facilities available in the area, including school children making their way to and from schools. We overwhelmingly supported a petition to CoGG for the installation of combined speed humps/pedestrian crossings (similar to that at the Point Lonsdale village) for the safe crossing of Point Boulevard.

It is now up to our Geelong Councillors and CoGG staff to approve and install them. The petition was lodged with COGG during the week ending 21 March.

Council Land for Sale Murray Rd, Queenscliff.

Following a recent subdivision, the Council-owned land at 61–75 Murray Road contains two lots; Lot 1, approximately 9,509 square metres in size, and Lot 2, approximately 6.045 hectares. Lot 1 was put on the market late last year. We understand the land is now under contract. As we go to press we are unsure of the sale price. See here: [Murray Rd Land](#)

Point Lonsdale Surf life Saving Club – Ocean Road Clubhouse Rebuild.

The Association is pleased to see the Point Lonsdale Surf Life Saving Club's rebuild starting to take shape after a long period of searching for the right site, planning, design and fundraising work. The new 2 storey clubhouse building, on their expanded Ocean Road site, will be constructed by Geelong based Lyons Construction. The impressive new headquarters will allow ongoing life-saving coverage of one of Australia's most dangerous swimming beaches. At their Labour Day long weekend sod-turning event PLSLSC acknowledged funding contributions by State and Federal Governments, significant local donations and Queenscliffe Borough Council's gift of residential land valued at some \$800,000. Local MP Lisa Neville mentioned the QBC land donation was part of a deal with State Government, which included future funding for other local projects.

Positive Developments on Protecting Point Lonsdale's Rich Maritime and Defence History.

For many years the PLCA has been actively promoting better heritage recognition for the maritime and defence structures around the Point Lonsdale Lighthouse Reserve. You may recall that in early 2017, the Reserve was one of only two sites in Australia shortlisted for National Heritage assessment by the Commonwealth Government. In September 2017, the Australian Heritage Council invited public submissions on the Reserve's National Heritage attributes and the potential inclusion on the NH list. In response, a community group facilitated via Deakin University, prepared a detailed submission covering the Reserve's extensive military and maritime history dating back to the colonial period (refer <http://www.lonsdalelighthousereserve.org/pt-lonsdale-national-heritage.html>). This comprehensive submission covered many subjects such as: colonial development; defence history; the evolution of the lighthouse; shipwrecks; maritime rescue; indigenous heritage; and notable people associated with the site. The submission also emphasized Point Lonsdale's strong historic linkages with Point Nepean, the Queenscliff Headland, South Channel Fort and Swan Island.

Concurrently, the Federal Minister for the Environment was also requested to ask the Australian Heritage Council to undertake a "thematic study" of integrated defence structures around Port Phillip Heads. Letters in support of this proposal were provided by the PLCA, together with Sarah Henderson MP, Greg Hunt MP, Lisa Neville MP, and other local community organizations such as the Queenscliff Community Association and Queenscliff Environment Forum. Under S.324H of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (the EPBC Act) the Minister can determine specific "heritage themes" for an assessment period for the National Heritage List. These are subjects which the Minister considers should be given priority. The Minister does not take advantage of this authority very often, indeed from 2013 to 2018 only one theme was initiated which related to deserts and benevolent & other care institutions (a curious linking).

Fortuitously, in the 2018/19 Federal budget, the Minister allocated an \$80,000 Protection of National Heritage Grant to the Federation of Australian Historical Societies to undertake a thematic study of the early defence of Australia. However, the Minister significantly (and logically) expanded the scope to cover two areas of study:

1. A thematic study of the early defence of Australia, i.e. nineteenth century east coast, and
2. A thematic study of the significance of the defence fortifications and installations of Sydney Harbour and Port Phillip Bay (including a review of the heritage values of Point Nepean, Shortland Bluff/Fort Queenscliff and Point Lonsdale).

This massive research project has been managed by Professor Don Garden from Melbourne University and he has now finished the prodigious feat of pulling the review together. In an impressive collegiate effort, some 600 pages of research were written by a variety of contributors and the two study papers can be accessed via the following link: <https://www.history.org.au/advocacy/>

Professor Garden has recently submitted the study to the Australian Heritage Council which will now assess whether National Heritage is appropriate. The report recommends that due to their outstanding heritage significance for the nation, the Port Jackson Defence Group and the Port Phillip Defence Group be assessed as part of a proposed priority assessment list (PPAL) for the National Heritage List (refer pages 8-10 in Paper No.2).

Within the Port Phillip group, Point Lonsdale is singled out for mention not only because it is representative of twentieth century fortifications, but also because of its crucial role in Port Phillip's maritime and mercantile history and in defence and civilian communications.

Don Garden's research reflects the recent decision by the Victorian Heritage Council which, in December 2019, significantly increased the protection and recognition of the Point Lonsdale headland, expanding the heritage area to include all the land and infrastructure from Rip View to the Winterley Road gun emplacement. The new area is now formally identified on the Victorian Heritage Register as the "Point Lonsdale Maritime and Defence Precinct". Queenscliffe Council support was both very welcome and essential for the area to achieve the highest Victorian heritage classification. The VHC determination is attached.

Professor Garden's report is now with the Australian Heritage Council which will assess whether National Heritage is appropriate but it is too early to say what the result will be. Of course, the creation of the "Three Headlands" heritage zone at Port Phillip Heads would be a great result for both sides of the Bay, resulting in better protection and recognition plus improved sustainable visitation opportunities. The assessment phase is a bureaucratic process so the timing is somewhat uncertain as the EPBC Act does not specify exact periods for review activities. Supporters of the proposal are hopeful of getting the assessment moved along quickly and are seeking advice on how this can be facilitated. As further updates are provided, the PLCA will keep you posted.

(Thanks to PLCA member, Andrew Sutherland for providing this update – Editor)

Destination Queenscliff Update

Destination Queenscliff Concept Plan for Shortland's Bluff including a new stepped design for the historic Bull Ring, 9 coastal cabins, Hesse Street plaza, new kiosk, office/administration, caravan park amenities, public toilets, heritage memorial walk, foreshore green and a vastly reconfigured car park where Ocean View Car Park currently sits. In response to the release of Hassell's third concept plan for the site, which includes 19 new design elements, and a recent rezoning of the site which did not include a public process, community groups, including PLCA, made submissions and sought and were granted a meeting with Council's CEO Martin Gill.

Following the meeting the CEO indicated he would be reviewing all public submissions and putting an options paper to Council and Canberra (who are jointly funding the project) in coming weeks. One of the options he will include will be to separate out the Shortland's Bluff component including Ocean View Car Park and Bull Ring elements with a view to establishing some form of committee (with no Council role) to manage a design and engagement process.

Combined Bellarine Community Associations Update:

Our sister organisation in Portarlington, the Portarlington Community Association, has advised as a result of a recent VCAT decision, which appears to be suggesting that property owners in zones designated as appropriate for intensive development not only may subdivide for 4x4 developments, but they must do so! What this means in a practical sense is that VCAT rejected the application because it was not "intensive" enough!

The Case is here: <https://preview.tinyurl.com/vlumw5h>

Update on Bellarine Peninsula Distinctive Areas Landscape Legislation.

A fact sheet has been prepared about the DAL's process on the Bellarine, here:

http://www.plca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Bellarine_DAL_fact_sheet.pdf

In closing we would like to remind all of our members and friends that all of our Member meetings are postponed until at least October – we were going in to our winter recess anyway. We will advise via our normal channels when our next meeting will be.

Please stay safe, and remember to look out for your neighbours. Additionally, there seems to be a larger number of people in 3225, so the house that may be usually empty next door may well be occupied.

These are challenging times. Please stay safe, and above all heed all the rapidly evolving Government warnings.

David Kenwood - President, Point Lonsdale Civic Association.