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11 April 2021

Dr Clare Allen
General Manager
Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
Cc Mayor Pinson

RE: BHPA briefing for new PMHC CEO, Dr Clare Allen

Dear Dr Allen,

Given this is your first meeting with the Bonny Hills Progress Association (BHPA) we consider it appropriate to provide you with a brief introduction to Bonny Hills, our organisation; and to summarise the issues and opportunities facing Bonny Hills and our dealings with Council on these matters.

Bonny Hills is a coastal village of around 3000 people located 25km south of Port Macquarie. The Community Plan for Bonny Hills – recently developed by the Bonny Hills Community-Council Action Team (CCAT) - provides a concise description of the village and the issues and opportunities it faces, as well as an agreed Action Plan for the coming years.

BHPA is a voluntary organisation with a primary charter of safeguarding the Vision that the Bonny Hills community has agreed (described in the Community Plan). Membership is based on households. We are in regular contact with 10% of Bonny Hills households via email and we have just under 700 followers on <https://www.facebook.com/BonnyHillsProgressAssociation>.

Historically we have sought grants (around \$200k raised over the last 8 years) and worked with Council staff to deliver priority projects; as well as raising community concerns and suggesting opportunities as they arise. Our website describes in more detail what we do and how we operate, www.bonnyhills.org.au.

You should ask your staff about our relationship with Council but while there are exceptions, from our perspective it is generally respectful, frank and well informed.

Hereunder we describe more significant and/or current issues within the four Community Plan Themes to give you a flavour of how well we and Council have, or have not, worked together.

Regards

Roger Barlow, President

Maintain and enhance village character

- DRAFT Reserves MasterPlan – this has been a highly successful partnership gaining considerable Community traction
- Beach and waterways integrity- sewage releases from the Wastewater Treatment Plant and from an overloaded/aging sewerage system; and stormwater volume and quality issues are hot issues at present given recent rainfall events. This is one area where we would like to develop an effective partnership with Council staff to improve the flow and understanding of information to the community and work towards possible solutions.
- Paraglider access to Bartlett’s Reserve – this has been a running sore with the adjacent residents for many years now due to perceived safety issues on the beach below, and damage to the flora on the slope running down to the beach. A recent major slip in this area has rekindled the angst. It would be fair to say that communication with Council staff on this issue has been less than transparent.

Maintain natural environment

- This is stated to be one of the main reasons residents come to live in Bonny Hills. Continual erosion of the natural assets by development is a major concern to the community, with the promise of offsets being regarded as a bad joke. A project to quantify the value and extent of these assets has only just begun in consultation with Blayne West. This will provide a more strategic basis for evaluating future development options.

Roads and pathways safety

- The state of Ocean Drive through Bonny Hills and increased traffic volume has long been of concern to residents, to the point where many consider that a bypass is the only long-term solution. And there are some serious intersection issues particularly around the “Top Shop”.
- The dangerous intersection at the junction of Houston Mitchell Drive and the Pacific Highway is a hot issue and we have a project team consulting with all levels of Government to address short term solutions while working towards an overpass longer term. Some progress has been made with a reduction in speed limit but much more is needed.
- Pathways prioritised as needing work in 2019 as part of Community Planning have yet to appear in Council’s Operational Plan which begs the obvious question.

Future Growth

- Immediate concerns centre around the impacts of future developments on residents, tourism and our natural assets. Those as front of mind are:
 - The planned light industrial area at the corner of Ocean Drive and Houston Mitchell Drive – the main issues being containment of runoff of industrial effluent, inadequate width of vegetation screening on Ocean Drive, uncertainty about management of the environmental areas, unsightly construction on a main gateway, and access on a busy intersection.
 - Area 14 will entail a massive increase in impermeable surfaces which will mean greatly increased runoff most of which will flow into Duchess Creek and out onto Rainbow Beach. Even now with increasingly erratic large rainfall events flows are large and erosive. There are also concerns about the quality

of stormwater entering the creek and of the releases during significant weather events.

- We are informed by Council that a misconception by our community is that the WTP will not be able to handle the increased sewage load from Area 14. However the loads will certainly exceed design expectations if the stormwater cross connections and leaks in the older parts of Bonny Hills and Lake Cathie are not fixed.

CCAT

- This group was made up initially of around 15 residents from Bonny Hills including 4 reps from BHPA. CCAT was highly successful in developing the Community Plan (CP), though numbers dropped off, being mainly comprised of the 4 from BHPA.
- Since then, CCAT has not met and follow- up on the CP Actions has lapsed or been picked up by BHPA.
- We have had a number of discussions about what the role of CCAT should be going forward v that of BHPA, but Council has yet to come to grips with this leaving CCAT in continual limbo.
- BHPA is concerned about an apparent disregard of the CP in preparing Annual Operating Plans.

Grant Funding Opportunities

Going forward we are planning to obtain grants for adult exercise equipment, renovations to our Community Hall, and for public art/sculpture.

And finally, a heads up: there are a couple of developments proposed within Bonny Hills that we will be keeping an eye on as we anticipate reactions from the Community, some negative from adjacent residents and some positive given the likely opportunities.

One is the proposed enlarged Medical Centre in Ngamba Place, and the other is a proposed subdivision in Jungarra Cres where the existing Medical Centre is located.

RB

11/04/21