



# MORNINGTON PENINSULA RATEPAYERS' & RESIDENTS' ASSOC INC.

## AND McCRAE ACTION GROUP

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Secretary: Alan Nelsen: 5982 3821  
Treasurer: Debbie Peters 5982 2528  
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## Newsletter – April 2019



### *FROM THE PRESIDENT*

The Association held its Annual General Meeting last November and the following were elected:

President: John Cain                      Secretary: Alan Nelsen              Treasurer: Debbie Peters  
Committee Members: Jane Clarke and Margaret Bottari

I look forward to working with the new committee in 2019. This year again promises to be another busy year of protecting the lifestyle and advancing the interests of ratepayers and residents. The comment is often made that the **Peninsula is not suburban Melbourne** (with its wall to wall buildings, bitumen and concrete) and that is why we live here.

The State election held in November saw the members for Mornington David Morris and Hastings Neale Burgess returned with reduced margins. Labor's Chris Brayne MP won the long held Liberal seat of Nepean with a swing of about 13% on a two party preferred vote previously held by the retiring Hon Martin Dixon.

### **PENINSULA NEEDS MORE PROTECTION**

Both the Shire and our local politicians need to step up to stop the incremental development creep which is threatening the special beach character and rural environment of the Peninsula.

The Peninsula News reported last October that while Nepean MP Chris Brayne appeared to admit that the previous Labor government did not pay much attention to the Peninsula. He said he would **"fight for the things that keep our peninsula the special place it is"** and **"fight to keep the Green Wedge, and ensure all inappropriate development is halted before they gain too much traction"**.

We hope that Chris is able to influence both the Shire and Government to do more to protect the peninsula from inappropriate development.

### **WE FIGHT TO PROTECT THE PENINSULA**

We have long advocated and lobbied for protection of the foreshore, beaches and environment of the Peninsula. This has included supporting the Shire with its refusal to approve inappropriate developments at VCAT on 5 or 6 occasions. We have also lobbied to preserve our foreshores and beaches with submissions to the government, the Shire and the authorities such as the Victorian Coastal Council and the Coastal Climate Change Advisory Committee.

## **NEXT PUBLIC MEETING**

**2 pm Monday, 29 April 2019**

**Location: Rosebud Library Meeting Room.  
McDowell St, Rosebud.  
Melway Map 158 Ref D12).**

**Public welcome to attend**

## *PROTECTING THE CHARACTER OF YOUR AREA*

### **It affects what can be built next door to you.**

The Mornington Peninsula Planning Scheme is the regulatory document which sets out the requirements for new developments. It is a complex document of over 1300 pages and contains both the state and local council requirements. If you are lucky your residential area may have a Design Development Overlay which identifies specific requirements relating to the design and built form. This may include a limit on the height and the number of storeys (e.g. two or three).

A new development must also recognise, support and protect existing or preferred neighbourhood character, cultural identity, and sense of place. Neighbourhood character refers to the qualities that make one neighbourhood distinct from another, and encompasses a range of physical components of the built environment, architectural style, street width and layout, vegetation, fence height and style, and so on. Every urban place has a neighbourhood character.

The problem with neighbourhood character is that it can be a subjective judgement and is often a matter of debate with Council planning applications and at VCAT. The Shire is currently undertaking a Neighbourhood Character Study of its residential areas with a view to developing a set of guidelines that will help protect the existing character or provide for the transition to a preferred future character.

Our Association has made a submission as we are concerned with extent of the loss of trees and vegetation on the Peninsula. We have noted over recent times that builders are bulldozing the whole site and not leaving any vegetation, presumably just to make it easier for themselves.

## *NEXT YEAR'S RATE INCREASE*

The increase in the residential rates component of your bill for 2019-20 has been capped at 2.5% by the State Government.

Up until now and including the 2018 revaluation, property valuations occurred every two years and were carried out by the council. From 2019 valuations **will be conducted annually** and by 2022 the Valuer-General will be the sole valuation authority which will provide valuations to councils and the State Revenue Office.

## *UNDERSTANDING YOUR RATES*

Understanding how your rates work is not easy. Generally it is not understood by the community so do not feel alone. We would not be surprised if many councillors do not understand how the system applies.

The rate rise set by the Government applies to the total revenue to be received by the Council from the residential rate charge. If you are unlucky and the value of your property has increased more than the average increase in property values across the shire then you will pay more than an increase of 2.5%

However if you are lucky and the value of your property has increased less than the average increase of all properties across the shire then your increase will be less than 2.5%.

There are four items which make up your annual rates bill:

- 1. A residential rate charge** which is based on the Capital Improved Value (CIV) of your property, that is, on the value that the Council estimates your house and land are worth.
- 2. A Waste Service Charge** which covers rubbish bin collection, disposal, street sweeping, footpath sweeping plus street and drain litter collection. This charge does not come under the government's rate cap.
- 3. Fire Services Levy.** This is not a Council charge but is collected on behalf of the Victorian Government and replaces the fire services levy which was previously included in your house insurance. There is a fixed charge component and a component based on the value of your property set by government.

The levy for residential property for 2018-19 is a fixed charge of \$109 plus 5.8 cents for every \$1,000 your property is worth (i.e. the CIV). If the value of your property is \$500,000 then you will pay \$109 + 500 x 5.8 cents = \$138

- 4. Optional Green Waste Bin.** If you have chosen the optional of green waste bin which is collected fortunately then the additional cost for 2018-19 is \$135.

## *A BETTER LOCAL GOVERNMENT*

Our Association is supporting Ratepayers Victoria for its call for a State Royal Commission or failing that a parliamentary inquiry into "Improving the quality of local government" **to allow all stakeholders** to have their say before the new *Local Government Bill 2018* is reintroduced into State Parliament.

There is something is seriously wrong with the current system of local governance in Victoria. This is evidenced by the repeated examples of dysfunctional relationships between Councillors and officers, poor quality decisions, poor quality service delivery and lack of accountability,

Almost every day we are confronted with complaints about the local government in the daily press or on television. There are over 4,000 complaints a year to the Ombudsman and Local Government Inspectorate which is the second highest for a sector of the public service in Victoria. The recent annual report of the Local Government Inspectorate which indicates that complaints they are receiving about Councils is increasing by 14% a year.

Victorian local governments achieved an average overall Council performance score of 59% (56% for rural Councils). This means that more than 40% of the community is dissatisfied with their Council's performance. We also note that almost 25 per cent of all jurisdictional approaches to the Victorian Ombudsman are about local government. These figures strongly suggest significant underperformance by Victorian Councils.

This does not include complaints dealt with by Councils themselves.

## ***A MORE EFFECTIVE RESOLUTION OF COMPLAINTS***

Our Association in conjunction with Ratepayers Victoria has proposed that there be a more efficient process for dealing with complaints about councils, Councillors and officers if there is not a satisfactory resolution at council level.

It is totally confusing as to who the complaint should be addressed as there are **seven different government organisations** which deal with complaints or have an overview role of Councillor or Council staff behaviour. This is an unwieldy and highly inefficient organisational structure involving duplication of the same functions within different organisations.

To avoid confusion there should only be one point of contact for the community to deal with an unsatisfactory resolution of complaint to a Council and this should be to **a dedicated Local Government Ombudsman** (similar to the Ombudsman for Insurance, Energy and Water, Public Transport, Telecommunications, etc.).

If the Local Government Ombudsman becomes aware that a complaint is a possible breach of the Act then the complaint should be referred by the Ombudsman to IBAC for investigation of misconduct and breaches of the Act. The Local Government Investigations and Compliance Inspectorate to be totally separated from Local Government Victoria and relocated under the IBAC Commissioner.

The cost to the community for this change will be minimal because it is only a relocation of existing organisations and staff, and does not involve the introduction of a new organisation.

## ***MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS***

- **TRAFFIC LIGHTS AT ENTRANCE/EXIT TO ROSEBUD HOSPITAL.** We wrote to VicRoads requesting that a crossing with controlled traffic lights be installed at the Rosebud Hospital entrance instead of a basic pedestrian crossing and indicated that the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council supports our request. We are still waiting on a response.
- **SHIRE COUNCIL MEETING PROTOCOL.** The Council proposed to revise its procedures for meetings open to the public. We made a number of suggestions for improvement and supported Nepean Ratepayers concerns that if the Chief Executive Officer refuses to include an item on the agenda that Council does not have the ability to deal with the matter. This clause was satisfactorily amended but none of our other suggestions were adopted.
- **PROTECTING STRATEGIC AGRICULTURAL LAND IN MELBOURNE'S GREEN WEDGE.** 70% of the Shire is zoned as green wedge. We received an email from the mayor, **Cr David Gill** advising us that the State Government is engaging the community on protecting strategic agricultural land in and is proposing to hold a number of workshops and there is an online submission form which residents can complete. For more information see: <https://engage.vic.gov.au/protecting-melbournes-ag-land>
- **HELP SHIRE TO ENHANCE CAPE SCHANCK.** Mayor David Gill held a Community Meeting on Friday 29 March 2019 to discuss ways to enhance Cape Schanck .He said we would love to hear your ideas for community infrastructure in Cape Schanck to provide community benefit for overall social wellbeing, and encourage healthy, active lifestyles.
- **OPTIMISATION OF SHIRE'S SPORTS FIELDS.** The Shire has released a "Sports Capacity Plan" and requested comment by 29 March. The Shire says participation in sport across the Shire has grown rapidly in recent years; this has led to many sports fields in the Shire being used either at, or

in excess of their capacity. The Plan will provide Council with a framework to optimise use of existing sports fields and a plan for future growth and demand in field-based sports across the Shire.

- **KAUFLAND SUPERMARKET DEVELOPMENT AT MORNINGTON.** The Minister for Planning Richard Wynne MP has removed the decision-making power from your elected Councillors to an Advisory Committee he has appointed. The state government and not the Council will now consider an application for the major 4,000 square metre development on the gateway site to Mornington  
A 20-metre-high and 60-metre-long advertising sign on top of the building will permanently dominate the 'green' gateway skyline of the entry into Mornington. The current plans envisage minimum landscaping and turning the 90-metre setback into a 430-vehicle car park with less than a 20-metre strip of landscaping.  
The Committee agreed that the Shire's position as outlined on its website be supported.
- **UPDATE ON ROSEBUD POOL.** The Shire has only been able to obtain a commitment of \$3 million in funding from governments when it had an expectation that it might receive \$15 million so the size of the pool had been reduced from 10 lanes to 8. Also, the depth of the pool at the shallow end has been reduced so that it now does not meet the Australian standards for a competition pool. We believe this means that in a competition those at the shallow end of the pool cannot dive in but must stand and be tagged.

## ***MEMBERSHIP REMINDER (AND NEW MEMBERS)***

Annual membership fees of \$5 per person are now due for 2019. **If you have not paid your membership fee for this year please complete the reminder notice below and return to us with the relevant fee.**

We do not have a joining fee and joining members only have to pay the \$5 annual subscription per person

## ***TREASURER'S REPORT***

Treasurer's Report - 1/11/18 to 7/2/19

Bank Balance 31/10/2018	\$2,278.67
Income	\$ 225.00
Expenses	\$ 129.88
Funds Available	<u>\$ 2373.79</u>

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### **MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP 2019**

I wish to renew my membership of the Mornington Peninsula Ratepayers and Residents Association Inc

Title.....First Name..... Family Name.....

Residential Address.....Post Code .....

POSTAL ADDRESS(if different from above)..... POST CODE .....

TELEPHONE..... EMAIL.....

I enclose my remittance to **MPRRA** covering:

Annual Subscription (\$5 per person)	\$.....
Donation	\$.....
Total	<u>\$.....</u>

Signature of Applicant ..... Date.....

Make cheque payable to: Mornington Peninsula Ratepayers and Residents Association

For direct debit please contact the Treasurer [debpet@gmail.com](mailto:debpet@gmail.com) or phone 5982 2528

Send completed form and remittance to: **MPRRA**  
PO Box 4087, Rosebud, Vic. 3939