



THE ENTRANCE PENINSULA

COMMUNITY PRECINCT

ENCOMPASSING: THE ENTRANCE; THE ENTRANCE NORTH; LONG JETTY TOOWOON BAY; BLUE BAY; SHELLY BEACH & MAGENTA
www.theentranceprecinct.org

The Wyong Shire Councils' Mayor, Bob Graham's, presentation 21st February, 2012 at 7:00pm on "Challenges And Opportunities Facing Our Shire"



Bob Graham

The Chairperson of TEPCP, Vivienne Scott, gave Bob a warm welcome and stating that Bob needed no introduction as he had been a Wyong Shire Councillor since 1999, Deputy Mayor four times and Mayor five times.

Bob began his presentation by reminding those present that the most important thing for Council in 2012 was that this is an election year. He urged everyone to be very careful when deciding who to vote for. When the present Council was elected in 2008, seven of the ten Councillors elected were new. Some of these new Councillors had not bothered to investigate what was involved and the time needed to be set aside for Council business.

He told us that when he was considering standing he asked the last Shire President and the Shire's first Mayor, Tony Sheridan, what was involved in being a Councillor. He was told that first you had to put every Wednesday aside for Council business. Some of the Councillors elected this year could not make this time commitment and as a result an unfair work load has had to be assumed by the other Councillors.

2012 Council Election and Mayor Referendum.

This year you are going to get a lot of people, in the coming Council election, promising the world. If you know any of these people who want to put their hand up, and that's great that they are, they have to remember that they will need the support of five other Councillors to keep all the promises they make to get to Council.

Bob then told the meeting that the other important event taking place in conjunction with the Council Election was a referendum asking the Shire are they in favour of having a popularly elected mayor for a term of four years. At present there is a Mayoral election every year by Councillors. It takes you three months to settle into the job and before you know it you are thinking about the next election. This takes your mind off the big picture. The proposal gives the Mayor the opportunity to settle into the job and do the job for four years. It does not matter that the Mayor may not be in the majority party. At present Council has three Labor Councillors, two Liberal, one Green and four independents. I know some parties believe that their party should rule Wyong Shire Council. This will never ever happen. No party will ever get six candidates elected. As a result they have to form a coalition. The Mayor can work in with these groupings and maintain order and good governance. With this proposal you get to choose the Mayor not the elected Councillors. If it passes this year it will not come into being until the 2016 election. It will mean we will still have ten Councillors, five in each ward, plus a popularly elected Mayor. As with all referendums a case for and against will be forwarded to the electorate so you will be able to make your decision then.

State and Federal Funding

The next thing Bob talked about was the State Government. It is not easy for the new government, the coffers are dry and they have to try and get money in to keep the promises they have made. Some people think it's great that Barry O'Farrell's team came in with sixty-nine seats but it is very difficult for the Premier to corral sixty-nine members and deliver all the promises. He has made the statement that it is going to take two elections before he has enough money to deliver everything he wants. Having said that they have made the promises and we expect them to deliver.

Let me go now to the Federal Government. There is not three levels of government only two, Federal and State. I love the Council, I love being Mayor, but Council is only an agent of the State Government. They can change things as they like and take our powers off us. As an Independent I am in a good position to see what I can get out of the Federal Government. It is very hard to deal with the Federal Government in this climate.

Council is going to talk to the Minister for Regional Funding and the only way we will get something is to frame it in such a way as they see votes in it for them. You can not ask for a hell of a lot, about four or five things at the most, because you need to stress the most important items.

The Central Coast Highway through The Entrance Peninsula

Now let me turn to your local area, the Entrance Peninsula. Before we get anything done The State Government have to have something done with The Entrance Road. We all know that. I believe The Entrance Road is a much bigger problem than the Pacific Highway through Wyong. The problem is, as I said earlier the State Government is broke. The only way to fix it is to spend a hell of a lot of money and they have not got a hell of a lot of money. It worries me about what they might do, such as making a twenty-four hour clearway which would ruin the Long Jetty shops. This is not what Council wants as Council is trying to encourage business.

Long Jetty Village Centre

Council is working on the Long Jetty village centre. I get nervous about this. Council has to get with the people and find out what they want in the area. I don't want people to think it is a lay down misère. We need the ideas, we need to build up and get something happening that is a blueprint for the future. You have to remember that the land is owned by private enterprise so Council can not force them to do what it wants. Coles owns the Long Jetty Hotel and the land behind that. I believe that in the future they will have great ideas for that. There is a proposal to put a village shopping centre there facing the lake. I do not know if anything will come of that so I urge the business owners and residents to get their ideas into Council. You are the people who live there, you know what you want.

Development

The other site Council is working closely with is Lakeside Plaza. Great ideas and it would be great to get something going there. They are proposing something tall with plenty of space around it and I think that may be the way to go. I hope they do their marketing before they dive in at the deep end and I will tell you why: we have about three hundred vacant units at the Entrance. Some developers really blow me apart, they are millionaires, they come into my office with these ideas of what they want to build and you say to them; "Have you done any marketing?" and they say "err no". A good example of this is the development on the corner of Coral Street, they build and they go broke because they can not sell the property. Another example is my mate Darcy Smith who owns the timber yard in Long Jetty. He came in with a proposal to build units there ten stories high. I asked him if he had done any marketing, with all the vacant units in The Entrance will people go to Long Jetty first? As you know nothing has happened there.

Wyong Shire is in urgent need of development. There are no new DA's coming in. We have to get things happening. The unemployment in the fifteen to twenty four year old age bracket is forty percent. We need to get the young people working so they are too tired at the end of the day to get up to mischief. They have to get work, and the way to do this is to get development.

Liquor Outlets and the application to sell liquor without food at Fisherman's Wharf

The owners of Fisherman's wharf are applying for the right to sell liquor without food. This will come before Council next Wednesday night and Council will be opposing this with a very strong letter to the Casino, Liquor and Gaming Control Authority. The last thing we need is another liquor outlet right opposite The Entrance Hotel. Bob urged TEPCP to support Council by writing to the Authority opposing this application. The chair advised Bob that TEPCP had not receive notice of this application and that we had opposed the new liquor outlet in Long Jetty. Bob advised that when these types of applications come before Council it has to have very good reason for opposing it because the developer will take Council to the Land and Environment Court. If Council loses it does not get it's conditions of accent, so Council has to be very careful how it handles these applications.

Bob gave examples of how Council has to be very careful because of what type of development is allowed in each case. If a developer wants a liquor store and knows the zoning will not allow it, he could say he wants to put in a office development and asks for the DA to be changed to allow it. When the zoning is changed he can then say "Oh I've changed my mind - I now want to build a liquor store, which is allowed under the zoning."

Bob was then asked by Jim Price about the application by Fisherman's Wharf to close off the observation deck. He advised that nothing had happened yet and that Council staff were currently looking at it.

Application for Boarding House in Long Jetty

He then spoke of his concerns regarding DA 1062/11, 509-517 The Entrance Rd, Long Jetty, proposal to convert the motel into a boarding house. The Department of Housing is already using it for emergency accommodation. Council will want to know who is going to live there and how is it going to be controlled, before considering the application. Bob advised that if TEPCP want to come along to speak when the matter comes before Council we are more than welcome.

Tuggerah Lakes

Bob provided TEPCP with copies of various reports into the opening of The Entrance channel (see attached) and advised that over the years four or five reports had been received on opening the lake to the sea. They all said the same thing: IT WON'T WORK! The State Government spent another \$100k into another investigation with the same result: IT WON'T WORK! The lakes are higher than the sea; the water would run out about 500m leaving mud flats at low tide. Another idea was to put an entry in at Budgewoi and let it run out at The Entrance. Only about one percent of water in the lake runs out to sea.

The biggest problem Council has is that they have been named lakes. They are not lakes but lagoons. They are too shallow to be called lakes. People try to use the example of other lakes up and down the coast and none of the examples match what we have in Tuggerah Lakes. We have a problem, but Council is working on it. Back in 1988, when I was the Member for The Entrance, one of the promises I made was to save Tuggerah Lakes. In my ignorance at the time Council received \$13million and what Council did was spend it around the foreshores, prettied things up, put in the fishing platform at North Entrance, dredged Terilbah Island and the mainland and created two islands up north. The effort did nothing to improve the lake because we were not addressing the problem. The problem is up in the catchment where the creeks run into Wyong River and Ourimbah Creek.

When we received \$20million from the Federal Government, it had to be spent up in the catchment on stream bank restoration and you will not see any improvement for ages until it stops the sediment run off into the lake.. There is a lot of money being spent on the lakes and it comes from a lot of pots. There is

Federal and State money, money from Caravan Parks and the Stormwater levy. It has taken all these years of settlement around the lakes to make them the way they are. It was not that many years ago that sewerage was by septic tanks and that used to flow into the lake. There is a lot to do and it is not going to improve overnight.

Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP)

Bob commented on the Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP) that has been years in the making. Coastal Management covers the entire NSW coast and it is something that the State Government should be looking after. Wyong Shire has done its bit, and Council adopted the plan last December, 2011. People who live on the ocean front are "all at sea" as to what their property values are, because of the CZMP. When it has been accepted by the Minister, Council will be able to cover the issues and notify residents affected.

Development in the North of the Shire.

The north of the Shire is begging for development. Council wants to see more "Seniors Living" and Council is pushing for that. With senior folk you do not have to find them a job, they have a set income and you get employment growth through the construction of their properties and further on when they are living there and spending money in the area.

Art House

Council is supporting the development of an Art House in Wyong. That is all well and good however, we have the DA, we are shovel ready, all we have to do is find the money. State and Federal money is the only way we are going to be able to fund it.

Ourimbah University Precinct

Council wants to turn Ourimbah into a university town with accommodation for students etc that will generate employment in the area.

Porters Creek Wetlands

Porters Creek wetland is the biggest freshwater wetland in NSW. It is fed from all around Warnervale. What Council wants to do is harvest water from the wetlands and pump it into the Wyong River above the weir. Pumping it into Mardi Dam and then take it up to Mangrove Dam. This project needs State and Federal support.

Central Coast Mariners Development

Bob advised that one of the developments that was happening was the Mariner's development at Club Tuggerah. Bob told the meeting that he is on the board of the Mariners and that they are spending \$30million on the development. He advised he inspected the progress yesterday in the company of Wyong Shire's General Manager. It includes a twenty-five meter pool; a hydrotherapy pool; eight five a side soccer fields and 2 seven aside fields. Five aside football is enormous in Europe, and the fields here are already booked out on four nights of the week.

The development proposes a main football field with a three thousand capacity grand stand. That will be supported by an additional seven fields eventually for all codes not only soccer. We are talking with the Hilton Group to put a hotel there, together with an office block that hopefully will include a medical centre specialising in sports medicine and every thing else. It will bring a lot of employment to our area. The completed complex will be the only one of its kind in the southern hemisphere.

Issues arising from questions:

- ❖ The perception that the weed harvester is not fully utilized 5 days a week as a number of Long Jetty residents have noted that it has been sitting idle for many days;
Bob commented that there was a great demand for the Harvester on all three lakes. Funding restraints precluded new equipment at the moment. He would investigate usage.
- ❖ The stench from the weed in Tuggerah Lake at Long Jetty has turned tourists away and affecting the livelihood of rental property owners – request for urgent action to clean up the weed.
Bob had covered this in his presentation
- ❖ The dangerous situation at Tuggerah Parade caused by the very heavy traffic, speed limit and unevenness of the road resulting in vehicles using the road to veer dangerously in order to avoid the bumps where potholes have been filled
Bob advised he would have it investigated.
- ❖ The noticeable decrease in recreational fishing caused by the indiscriminate commercial fishing and resultant reduction in fish in the lake - recommendation to put restrictions on or ban commercial fishing;
Bob advised that when the State Government banned commercial fishing on Lake Macquarie all the commercial fishermen moved to Tuggerah Lakes and it was now over fished. It is being investigated.
- ❖ Recommendation to reduce the nutrients coming into the lake by Council putting more effort in cleaning out the gutters and drains;
- ❖ The need to investigate the dangerous situation in Duffy Lane as vehicles are using the one way traffic as a two way lane and parking illegally in the lane;

TEPCP has lodged Online Service requests for formal responses to these issues from Council

Vote of Thanks

At the conclusion of the presentation TEPCP's Chairperson, Vivienne Scott, thanked Bob and wished him every success, in the coming local government elections, should he decide to stand for another term.

(Q1): When council trialled a second channel opening at The Entrance in 1985 it produced a string of positive results for the lakes such as greater tidal exchange, a quicker subsidence of floodwaters, improved water quality and the flushing out of sediment and dead seagrass. No negative effects were detected. Has that experiment been dismissed? What does council make of those findings today?

In 1986, a second mouth for the existing entrance channel was trialled. This was not a second channel. It closed naturally within six months and no difference was made to the lakes system.

However, at the advice of coastal engineers, a dredging program was then started to keep the channel open as much as possible. Several subsequent studies have backed the idea of dredging to improve flushing of the lakes. If a second channel was forced to remain open there would be more erosion and a build-up of sediment in lower areas of the estuary and channel.

(Q2): What are the specific environmental concerns involved with construction of a permanent breakwall at The Entrance?

The change from an estuary to a marine environment would:

- Change the species of local fish and might attract sharks
- Develop mangroves around the edges of the Lakes.
- Increase the risk of the noxious aquatic algae *Caulerpa taxifolia*, getting in.
- End prawning, as sandbanks are flushed away
- Boost sand loss from North Entrance beach
- Increase the smell when additional mud flats are exposed
- Reduce bird nesting habitat and some bird species
- Boost the risk of flooding at Berkeley Vale

(Q3): We understand that of the 41 breakwalls in operation on the east coast of Australia that more than 90 per cent of them are overwhelmingly successful. Can the geography of The Entrance and Tuggerah Lakes be so unusual that it would render a breakwall here ineffective?

They may have provided navigable channels, however those channels and entrance bars are always changing and can be hazardous.

There are 61 breakwall structures on the NSW coast – all State owned and mostly inadequately maintained because there simply isn't enough money. The channels are also experiencing significant erosion. Almost 100 years after the Swansea channel breakwalls, Lake Macquarie is still not stable, which is shown by recent bridge subsidence and erosion.

The construction of a breakwall in the Brunswick River during the 1960's failed to save the small township of Sheltering Palms from being lost in the 1970s owing to beach realignment.

Construction of breakwalls in estuary mouths **does not** remove the need for maintenance dredging. Nearly all Northern NSW breakwall entrances have required dredging to either keep them open for boating or to remove sediment from shoals formed in the lower estuary.

The Tuggerah Lakes

The Tuggerah Lakes are, on average, about 15-20 cm higher than mean sea level. A breakwall would drop average lake levels and bring more extreme tides.

Owing to the nature of the Lakes system (wave dominated lagoon) the "flushing" effect from the ocean is minimal and therefore breakwalls would be ineffectual unless a very wide (removing Nth Entrance peninsula) opening was constructed. The current daily "flushing" of the lakes is about 1 per cent of the total lakes volume. If a more permanent entrance was constructed (i.e. twin breakwalls), the volume of water being "flushed" would only improve by 1 per cent (unless the opening was significantly wider as mentioned).

For the Tuggerah Lakes estuary, significant flushing comes from its large catchment, pushing water out through the lakes entrance. For this reason, it is vital that we invest in stormwater improvement to ensure any stormwater entering the Lakes system is clean.

Modelling (Walkerden and Gilmore, 1996) has clearly demonstrated that a second entrance situated in Budgewoi Lake would not result in any major benefits to its water quality and in fact, it would only add an additional 1 per cent “flushing” to the Lakes system.

Sand would tend to build up on one side of the training walls and be permanently lost from the other. Sand circulation would be disrupted, further eroding North Entrance Beach. Just like Sheltering Palms, Coastal Engineers suggest that the residences along Curtis Pde would most certainly be lost owing to the readjustment of the North Entrance beach.

A wider and deeper entrance will allow for considerable ocean swell to enter the estuary. This would eventually erode all the sand shoals between The Entrance Bridge and the ocean. This, in turn, would increase flooding at The Entrance and in Tuggerah Lake. It would also see an end to any prawning or wading near Memorial Park.

To construct and maintain the twin breakwalls, a road will need to be built from Karagi Point on the northern side of the channel to the breakwalls. This will effectively increase major flood levels in the Tuggerah Lakes as the floodwaters will have to be discharged between the breakwalls. At present, the northern sandspit is washed away during large floods, creating a very wide discharge channel.

The drop in average Lake levels and increased tidal range would result in more mud flats around the edge of the lake, causing increased odour problems.

Fish habitats and marine bird foraging areas would also be affected.

The costs are enormous: cost estimates prepared in 2004 indicate that building twin training walls (possibly with major channel dredging) would cost \$40 million (Patterson and Britton). The costs would be considerably more in today's terms.

Ongoing maintenance would cost an additional \$100,000-\$200,000 a year. Replacement costs would average approximately \$1 million per year. Maintenance dredging **would be** required.

The cost of dredging was \$1 million for the dredge and currently \$319,000 per year to operate (including plant replacement).

[\(Q4\): Trial breakwalls built of sand bags have been successfully implemented elsewhere. Given that they are cheaper than permanent structures, and could be quickly dismantled \(cut the sand bags open\) if need be, are they worth a go?](#)

Advice from Coastal Engineers states that sandbags (no matter what size) are not able to withstand oceanic forces. Large rock breakwalls can be moved during big storms. If this happened, the sandbags would be dislodged from the structure and moved around by the ocean, they would be hazardous. There are no sandbag breakwalls on the NSW coastline for this very reason. Sandbag structures do work for other purposes (dune stabilisation) but NOT on the open coast

Cost is relative – a trial sandbag exercise is still likely to cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Why a trial couldn't work in Tuggerah Lakes if sandbags were appropriate for that environment:

Currently, a large rock platform exists in the mouth of The Entrance Channel which restricts the depth of the channel. If a trial breakwall was constructed using sandbags, no conclusive results would be produced because no more water would be able to enter or leave the channel unless the rock platform was removed. If the rock platform was removed it would not be a temporary trial – it would have permanent and irreversible effects. Since any breakwall structure (temporary or permanent) would require ongoing dredging, there would be no benefit of a trial.

[\(Q5\): We've reported that in Dawesville, WA, a shallow lake and clogged channel was saved by the construction of a man-made channel. Could a similar project work in Tuggerah Lakes? Why? Why not?](#)

Comparing The Entrance and Tuggerah Lakes to Dawesville is a bit like comparing apples and oranges, as there is a totally different coastal process occurring on the west coast of Australia as opposed to the east coast. Coastal processes vary greatly within the NSW coastline.

Dr Malcolm Robb, the Manager Water Science, WA Department of Water said the

Peel Harvey estuary covers almost 20,000 hectares and is comprised of the Peel Inlet and Harvey Estuary along with numerous contiguous wetlands.

This large shallow estuary area was connected to the ocean by a natural channel running through the town of Mandurah. The previous extensive wetlands were artificially drained (over 4000 kms of drains). As a result of nutrient discharges from largely agricultural sources the estuary became eutrophied leading to complete ecosystem collapse. Extensive blanketing macroalgae blooms were replaced by the toxic blue green algal blooms.

The engineering solution was to cut a new channel to the ocean at Dawesville at the junction of the Peel and the Harvey. The intent was to increase marine exchange and reduce the residence time of nutrient rich waters in the estuary. This action did in fact reduce both toxic blue greens and nuisance macroalgae in the estuarine portions (very limited range). However, the problem has now been pushed further upstream. The "engineering solution" did not address the cause, it only addresses the symptom and the impact of the channel was very limited.

Our Lakes are not in a critical condition and there is still time to intervene in nutrient reduction from the increasingly urban catchment.

[\(Q6\): Our readers are continually asking for a commonsense approach to fixing the lakes, and the commonsense approach usually involves opening the lakes - in one form or another - to a greater inflow of seawater. Isn't that a sound philosophy?](#)

As stated in response to the above questions, opening the entrance or constructing a second entrance WOULD NOT deliver the perceived benefits to the lakes system and given the potential detrimental effects that are predicted, it would be irresponsible to construct a breakwall or second entrance.

[\(Q7\): Any other misconceptions or urban myths about the lakes that you'd like to put to bed?](#)

No

[\(Q8\): What benefits have the lakes derived from the Tuggerah Lakes Estuary Management Plan \(TLEMP\) to date?](#)

The EMP is based on sound science. We know what will and won't work. Council has only recently received (10 December 2008) the signed contract from the Federal Government for the \$20 million funding commitment for the implementation of the Tuggerah Lakes Estuary Management Plan. As such significant works can now commence. In the meantime, significant rehabilitation of Saltwater and Tumbi Creeks have commenced stormwater treatment works have finished in Hamlyn Terrace and Berkeley Vale with more to come; Terilbah Channel has been dredged to allow boating access. Now that we have significant funding from the Federal Government, significant works will improve the Lakes.

[\(Q8\): We note that the TLEMP is due for "review" in 2010, and that a new plan is to be drawn up for 2011. What would need to happen in order for a trial breakwall and/or pipeline to become a high priority for further investigation in our lakes?](#)

It would have to be proven to work despite all evidence to date that shows that they simply won't.

Council does not support the construction of breakwalls because of the potential problems outlined above. It will continue the current program of annual dredging and placement of sand onto The North Entrance Beach as the best "soft engineering" solution currently available. This work is aimed at maximising the tidal interchange of water between the Tuggerah Lakes and the ocean, and minimising the likely closure of the channel.