

EUROBODALLA SHIRE COUNCIL

PUBLIC FORUM

All members of the community who have registered have been advised that they have a **maximum of seven minutes** to put their case.

Ordinary Meeting of Council on **10 September 2019**

Name	Subject/Comments
Public Forum – 9.30am	
Robyn Lack, Long Beach Community Association	PSR19/025 Coastal Wattle Management, Long Beach Community Consultation Outcomes
Reina Hill, Long Beach Landcare	PSR19/025 Coastal Wattle Management, Long Beach Community Consultation Outcomes
Robert Legeay	PSR19/025 Coastal Wattle Management, Long Beach Community Consultation Outcomes
Trish Hellier	CCS19/042 Rating System Review - Local Government
Jeff de Jager	CCS19/042 Rating System Review - Local Government
Jim Bright	CCS19/042 Rating System Review - Local Government

Long Beach Community Association Statement for Public forum at

Ordinary meeting of Eurobodalla Shire Council 10 September 2019, 11am.

In regard to the ESC Agenda for above such meeting I would like to speak on behalf of some 240 plus current members of the Long Beach Community Association (LBCA hence forth) representing around 85% of those that have contributed to this discussion since concerns were raised in 2008 (E08/4). I have five points to make.

- 1) The LBCA wishes to thank the ESC and Council staff in their considerable an ongoing engagement with all interested parties on the issue of Coastal Wattle Management. This issue is still extremely important to us and we all need to remain vigilant in assessing, monitoring and containing the damage that Coastal Wattle has caused to this previously balanced ecosystem. We would like to see the Coastal Wattle be reduced to allow for natural regeneration of the original species that were there previously.
- 2) The LBCA wishes to thank Long Beach Landcare for their considerable and ongoing volunteer hours spent on the containment and removal of the Coastal wattle over many years. We appreciate all they have done in helping to control the spread of the Wattle and express our willingness to work alongside them to bring back biodiversity and the natural habitat that was there previous to the coastal wattle plantings.
- 3) The LBCA support the Recommendations made in the PSR19/025 COASTAL WATTLE MANAGEMENT, LONG BEACH E09.3157 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION OUTCOMES listed by the responsible officer, Lindsay Usher as quoted here

“RECOMMENDATION”

THAT Council

1. *Assist Long Beach Landcare and Long Beach Community Association to continue maintenance of the coastal wattle on Long Beach reserve by:*
 1. *(a) ongoing coastal wattle removal on the northern side of the walking track*
 2. *(b) ongoing coastal wattle removal in the wetland zone*
 3. *(c) coastal wattle removal 2m either side of the beach access tracks*
 4. *(d) maintaining the current line of 2016 containment of the coastal wattle*
 5. *(e) allowing natural regeneration of native species.*
 2. *Continue weed and pest animal control throughout the Long Beach reserve.*
 3. *Monitor and report to the community groups following any mapping and aerial review of the Long Beach foreshore reserve in respect to the coastal wattle and regeneration of native plant species.*
- 4) The LBCA in particular affirm recommendation 1. (a) and 4 (d) in terms of wattle removal and in particular controlling any new growth that occurs. In terms of recommendation 5. (e) allowing natural regeneration of native species.

We wish to re state the importance of allowing the natural process of regeneration to take place as Coastal wattle is removed. We do not wish to see introductions of new species to the area. The natural regeneration of native species to Long beach process has proved successful.

- 5) The LBCA would like to move forward with more practical assistance in the continued maintenance and control of the coastal wattle by providing volunteer manpower to support the ESC and Long Beach Landcare Group in achieving the recommendations. We request that you consider a “Coastal Wattle” specific volunteer group that can achieve the outcomes stated. In essence we want to help and assist in a practical way so would appreciate working out how we can become a part of the working group for controlling Coastal Wattle. Local residents have observed as recently as Sunday 8th September strong new growth of Coastal Wattle in the area adjacent Sandy Place properties.

From an environmental perspective we are disappointed to see no active management of the wattle planned at the Western end of the reserve, particularly given the encroachment on the spotted gum forest on Square head. Young coastal wattle are already to be seen spreading to this area and are visible on the escarpment. We would ask that this be monitored in the future monitoring arrangements, as it would be tragic to see the species invade the original native forest in the area.

Conclusion:

The LBCA represents a large number of residents and property owners who love and live at Long Beach. We wish to continue to work with the ESC and Landcare in collaborative and harmonious ways to bring about the best outcomes for protecting and caring for our precious Long Beach through Coastal Wattle containment to allow for the original native species to regenerate and be restored.

**PSR19/025 COASTAL WATTLE MANAGEMENT, LONG BEACH
COMMUNITY CONSULTATION OUTCOMES E09.3157**

Tuesday 10 September 2019

Presentation to Council by Long Beach Landcare

Good morning Mayor Innes and Councillors. My Name is Reina Hill. This morning I am speaking on behalf of Long Beach Landcare (LBL) I have been actively involved in the care and maintenance of the Long Beach dunes as a Long Beach Landcare volunteer for over 20 years.

It is of concern to LBL that there has been so much dissension on the issue of Coastal wattle management. Unfortunately most of the negative discussion has been based on personal opinion rather than on expert scientific knowledge. It has also been more about vested interests, rather than the health and role of the dune as a means of vital coastal protection.

Below are some points for councillors to consider when determining the future management of Coastal wattle on the Long Beach Dunes.

- Coastal wattle (subsp. *Acacia Sophorae*) is well recognised as a pioneer species for colonising and stabilising sand dunes. Its preferred habitats are coastal sand dunes, headlands, and adjacent alluvial flats.
- and yes, it can be propagated by animals and even be wind borne. It even grows in some coastal areas of New Zealand and it is certainly NOT endemic to New Zealand.
- Coastal wattle occurs naturally in coastal districts of southern NSW. To the best of my knowledge it is not a declared environmental weed, nor a declared noxious weed, in any state or territory government in Australia.
- The removal of Coastal wattle from two Illawarra beaches was not for environmental purposes, but rather to provide clearer views of the beaches for beach lifesavers.
- The Long Beach dune is not classified as a coastal heathland as claimed by LBCA. In fact, the cleared land at the western end of Long beach displays none of the characteristics of coastal heathland, but was cleared of its naturally occurring vegetation in the early part of last century by the Blair family for farming purposes.
- The land fronting new Sandy Place was heavily vegetated before it was drastically cleared for the development of the Long Beach Estate. I regularly walked along the track in the mid 1970s, long before the Estate was an issue, and have a vivid recall of the abundant naturally occurring vegetation there.

- The approval of the Long Beach Estate was conditional on the developer to implement and finance a dune management scheme for a minimum five year period in accordance with the plan devised by the then NSW Dept. of Conservation and Land Management (CaLM). This involved the planting of deep rooted and varied vegetation that would stabilise the dune and prevent erosion. Since then Council has been responsible for the management of the Long Beach foreshore, with the majority of dune maintenance undertaken by Long Beach Landcare volunteers.
- Despite claims to the contrary, Coastal wattle is not growing in 'open space'. The area currently zoned E2 (Coastal Environment) is the zoning which generally applies to important wetlands and coastal foreshores.
- Although Coastal wattle seed was broadcast on the dune as per the CaLM plan, seeds would also have been dispersed naturally by animals such as ants, birds and reptiles.
- Coastal wattle management was initially an approved management regime undertaken by Landcare.
- After a great deal of debate about the origins of the coastal wattle on the Long Beach dunes, the Eco Logical study was commissioned by Council and Long Beach Landcare and undertaken with the support of LBCA. This resulted in the Coastal Wattle Control Implementation Plan. The Study provided assistance in proceeding with a Property Vegetation plan (PVP) and was funded through the NSW Environmental Trust over a four year period between 2013-2017.
- The NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) Assessment of Long Beach Coastal Wattle Management Project evaluated the funding and significant Council resources expended to determine if the Project resulted in environmental outcomes consistent with best practice dune rehabilitation.
- The OEH Assessment was presented to the Ordinary Meeting of Council on 28 November 2018 (Motion 18/58) for consideration. The determination was for a deferral pending 'further consultation between the interested parties' outlining the outcomes for consideration, and contained recommendations for future dune and Coastal wattle management at Long Beach.

It is of major concern to LBL that these recommendations are consistent with the environmental and social values of the Long Beach community as a whole - not just those of a minority of vested interests. But most importantly that Councillors support the on-going protection of the Long Beach dunes, to be effective in their important coastal protection role for the benefit of all Long Beach residents.

LBL is concerned that the five motions as proposed by LBCA in their

presentation to Council on Tuesday 28 November, largely ignored the expert advice provided by OEH. Instead their motions focused on 'restoring' the area to an open heathland, free of Coastal wattle'.

Their proposal to plant only grasses and coastal heath vegetation, to the exclusion of canopy species, is scientifically unsound and clearly does not follow best practice dune management. It is also contrary to ecologically sustainable principles and would be totally ineffective in stabilising the dune and in preventing coastal erosion.

Furthermore, the proposal would be contrary to the original Long Beach Development approval condition – ***to implement a dune management scheme that would stabilise the dune and prevent erosion through the planting of deep rooted and varied vegetation.***

Long Beach Landcare has a high regard for the professional advice provided by the OEH in their Environmental Assessment of the Long Beach Coastal Wattle Management Program and fully endorse their recommendations for future dune management at Long Beach and more broadly across the Eurobodalla.

We trust that Councillors will adopt the recommendations as presented in PSR19/025 Coastal Wattle Management, Long Beach Community Consultation Outcomes E09.3157, namely, that Council;

1. *Assist Long Beach Landcare and Long Beach Community Association to continue maintenance of the coastal wattle on Long Beach reserve by;*
 - (a) *ongoing coastal wattle removal on the northern side of the walking track*
 - (b) *ongoing coastal wattle removal in the wetland zone*
 - (c) *coastal wattle removal 2m either side of the beach access tracks*
 - (d) *maintaining the current line of 2016 containment of the coastal wattle*
 - (e) *allowing natural regeneration of native species.*
2. *Continue weed and pest animal control throughout the Long Beach reserve.*
3. *Monitor and report to the community groups following any mapping and aerial review of the Long Beach foreshore reserve in respect to the coastal wattle and regeneration of native plant species.*

Thank you very much for your attention Councillors.

Reina Hill
Long Beach Landcare

I am Robert Legeay and have lived at Sandy Place Longbeach since 2002.

I am on the LBCA Committee . and today I talk as a Sandy Place Resident.

I want to Talk on 3 Status Reports as they are inter-related PSR19/ 023, 024 and 025

1. PSR19/023 Natural Resource Management
2. PSR19/024 Invasive Species
3. PSR19/025 Coastal Wattle management, Long Beach Community Consultation Outcomes

First : Coastal Wattle:

1. There seems to be a considerable consensus with LBCA and the Sandy Place Residents groups.
2. I am delighted to see that there will be continued and ongoing maintenance on the northern side of the track, but that does not do enough.
3. In the short term, many of us would prefer removal of the coastal wattle more than 2 metres on each side of the walking tracks especially at the Sandy Place Reserve, where we want greater access between the proposed playground and the beach. These larger access pathways are paramount in case of fire. Coastal Wattle grows fast in summer, and 2 metres is not enough.
4. We want clarification of what is meant by the current containment line, as obvious die-back has finally occurred. We were originally told that the plantings were to enable dune stabilisation and die-back would occur within 8 years, it is finally occurring after 20 years!. I well remember what the coastal wattle line was in 2002.
5. I am Delighted that there is consensus that **natural regeneration** should occur rather than revegetation and plantings. We also note that if any plantings were to occur, t taller species will not be being planted in front of houses. We remain concerned about the strangler type vines that have caused damage near the entrance to the Cullendulla Reserve, and are concerned as to the general tone in the staff comment *“There is no requirement to replant **except on the large bare areas where monitoring determines there is no native regeneration and to minimise coastal wattle regeneration in these locales**”*
6. . We are delighted that staff recognise that the information and results should be made available to all community groups, consequently We would like to have access via council’s website to the current aerial drone photography mentioned that is used for Monitoring and reporting
7. As the gardener for our family, I am tired of pulling up coastal wattle in the garden. It is now heavily propagating into friends’ properties on Blairs Road. Can this be included in the Invasive Species Controls?
8. To summarise, many of my friends and neighbours position is that we would be happier if the the recommendation by Clr Keith Dance many years ago would have happened. *“Bulldoze the lot and let nature and revegetation take care of the dune.*
9. It would have saved an enormous amount of resources: money to the council, and avoided an unacceptable amount of stress to the residents of Long Beach. Common sense should have prevailed.

Natural Resource Management

1. Like Council, I recognise that our natural areas along the beaches, estuaries and rivers are a highly valued community asset.
2. I have been delighted to be part of the greater community as volunteers aiding the NRM program in our area, in reducing the impacts and spread of invasive plants and animals. We understand that volunteer labour is costed at \$40/hour.
3. we would like to see an extended role for Long beach residents, and seek clarification as to how we can assist and do stuff when various residents do not wish to be members of LBCA or Landcare itself
4. On our daily walks many of us have a garbage bag in hand... especially when there have been parties by young people

Invasive Species

1. We note that the inspections at Longbeach for Biosecurity weeds, are for boneseed in particular.
2. As many of us spend time on our computers, We would like your recommendations on how to help you detect various weeds being sold and traded through Facebook, Buy, swap sell and Gumtree
3. With new developments at Longbeach, and people establishing garden ponds etc, we can understand how innocently someone could purchase Frog Bit. How can we help?
4. When is the "north" scheduled for the three year cycle in rabbit control.. How can we help with the 'non-targetable' rabbit infestations in our urban backyards during the interim 2 years?

Thank you for your attention.

Council Meeting Tuesday 10th September 2019

Good Morning Mayor my name is Patricia Hellier from Batemans Bay– today I am here to address item No. CCS19/042 Rating System Review –

Some of you would be aware I was the driver of the 2014/2015 petition against the Special Rate Variation that acquired nearly 11,000 signatures. During this period of time I spoke to a large number of Rate Payers of this shire I believe I know what the majority would feel about this major change.

I have to ask the question why is this very important item only appearing on today's Agenda when the General Manager received an email from Hon Shelly Hancock on the 21st June 2019 some 12 weeks ago and yet a submission is due in 3 days. I will quote a section of this email from Hon. Shelly Hancock “the full suite of recommendations, if implemented, could substantially change our local government system and impact directly upon communities”, yet there has been NO community consultation surely this quote on its own should have raised a “red flag”.

The General Manager is responsible for all matters that appear on the Agenda and given the ultimate affect this will have on the community without any consultation or any scrutiny by rate payers I believe this is showing utter contemptuous attitude to the Rate Payers of this shire.

Councillors can anyone honestly say they know what “Capital Improved Valuation” means and what will be considered as “improvements”, and what dollar factor will that have on a Rate Payer? If there is a change to the CIV who will actually access this value? None of this has been explained!!! So Councillor what are you actually voting for.

In 2015 I became aware that the then Mayor, Lindsay Brown without any community engagement or knowledge placed a submission to the General Purpose Standing Committee. At a Community Forum Meeting in October 2015 at the Batemans Bay Soldier Club a Rate Payer asked Lindsay Brown a question words to the effect “did he still support the submission he had put forward on the Rating Review” Lindsay Brown replied adamant “YES” the ratepayer then replied “Well we will have a problem then won't we”. 4 years later this problem has surfaced in a very clandestine manner.

I have a number of concerns with this proposal that is being put forward today without going into each and every point I have concerns with Council's responses to Point 3,4, 12, and 23, as Council “does not support these points” it is quite obvious that this council does not want IPART to have any scrutiny over a future Special rate Variation, Council want an “open ended opportunity to inflict more financial pain on the rate payers of this shire”.

Points No. 26, 27 28 Improve assistance for pensions – I understand that these items are “not for comment” and I realise that Council currently had a “hardship Clause” both my mother and mother in law lived 25 years longer than their husbands – they were both pensioners – they were very independent women who were “battlers” if they were unable to pay their rates after their husbands passed away and if they had to apply for a “deferral scheme with interest” then the facts are the Council could own a larger percentage of the home than the estate.

Many retirees take pleasure in their gardens will they be penalised financially due to their ascetic?

Perhaps the money that this Council is “plowing into the Botanic Gardens needs closer scrutiny” is the appearance of the Botanic Gardens anymore important than the appearance of a Rate Payers own home?

Recently had the opportunity to speak to a rate payer in Victoria and I was told that with the changes in their rating system their rates had dramatically increased and Victoria is now conducting another “review” into their system.

Councillors you are our elected representatives I ask that you as our elected representative unite and send the NSW State Government and IPART a very strong message against any proposed changes from Unimproved Rating System to Capital Improved Valuation and do not approve this proposal CCS19/042.

Trish Hellier
For and on behalf of the
Eurobodalla Concerned Citizens

Submission to Council 10 September 2109
CCS19/042 Rating System review – Local Government

The report before you today contains a letter from the Minister for Local Government dated 21 June 2019 which in part says the full suite of IPART recommendations “if implemented could substantially change our local government system and impact directly on communities”.

So it’s a big deal, eh?

The Minister, rightly, in her letter, goes on to say that “it is important that councils, community members and organisations representing the interests of local government should have the opportunity to fully consider these issues before the Government proceeds with a final response to the reports”.

But until the agenda for today’s meeting was published, very few if any members of the community were aware that such changes were being considered let alone knowing what impacts those recommendations might have or even that they could have access to a process to seek further information or make their views known.

I understand too that a briefing session attended by six of you last Wednesday was the first time some of you Councillors might have heard of the IPART recommendations or the Minister’s letter or the deadline for responses to be made to the OLG even though the IPART report has been available for yonks and the Ministers letter was 11 weeks old.

One of the headings to the report before you today is: Outcome - Innovative and Proactive Leadership. I ask you to consider carefully how you can ensure this noble vision can be achieved in the way you address this report.

The Recommendation of the report before you is that: Council submit to the office of Local Government responses to the recommendations raised in the IPART report “Rating System Review” as attached to this report. Councillors, you are Council! Are you willing to submit the responses as being yours after an initial briefing to six of you held on 3 September 2109, only one week ago, as said before yonks after the IPART report and 11 weeks since the Minister’s letter? Why weren’t you and the community involved months ago allowing time to properly seek the community members’ views.

Bearing in mind the Minister’s own concerns about the way the IPART recommendations could substantially change our local government system and impact directly on communities, please, Councillors, I urge you to defer this report until you and the community are fully informed and

that proper engagement and consultation with the community has occurred. The Minister would probably go along with this in the interests of good governance.

If you believe a deferment is not possible at this late stage, three days before the published cut-off date, would you please amend the recommendation before you to read –

That

Council agrees to -

- 1. Submit the staff responses in this report to the Office of Local Government, clearly identified as being the responses of the staff, that they are not necessarily those of Councillors nor they do not have the agreement or endorsement of Councillors until the Councillors are more fully informed and have participated in thorough community consultation (yet to be held).**

- 2. Immediately implement a process to -**
 - Fully inform the community of the IPART recommendations and any likely impacts they might have.**
 - Conduct comprehensive consultation and engagement with members of the community to obtain their views.**
 - Prepare and submit to the OLG a comprehensive Council submission incorporating the responses of the community and Councillors to the IPART recommendations.**

Jeff de Jager

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Eurobodalla Shire Council

Public Forum Presentation

10 September 2019

My name is Jim Bright. I'm a resident of Narooma.

I'm here today to make some comments on the agenda item regarding the rating system review.

I'll start by indicating my full support for the comments and recommendations made by Mr de Jager in his presentation.

I will now focus on some aspects of the relevant Staff Report that is contained on pages 119 and 120 of the agenda papers. My view is that the Staff Report is contrary to acceptable minimum standards of public administration for a number of reasons. Some of these reasons are as follows.

The report provides no obvious explanation to our councillors and our community for the apparent absence of any community consultation prior to the formulation of the proposed submission to the Office of Local Government. (The General Manager is proposing to provide that submission to OLG by the deadline of this coming Friday.)

The various guidelines and instructions, that have been issued by OLG over the past few months in relation to this particular matter, certainly identify the (unsurprising) need for community members to be given an opportunity to have input before any final position is adopted by the NSW government. This clearly reflects the fact that this is a matter that will be highly controversial throughout the community – with strong views on both sides of the debate.

However, as best I can ascertain, the overwhelming majority of the Eurobodalla community would still have no knowledge whatsoever about this State government review of the current local government rating arrangements. In my view, as a **minimum**, the ESC should have taken steps, shortly after being notified by the Minister in June, to bring the situation to the attention of the general community. Quite properly, the council also should have let the community know of its intention to make a submission to the government review and should have invited comments from the community.

It may be that there is a valid reason why these things did not occur (although I can't immediately imagine what that reason might possibly be). However, if there is a valid reason, it should have been spelt out to the community through the medium of this Staff Report – regardless of whether some explanation was given to councillors during one of their confidential Tuesday briefings.

Another substantial deficiency in the Staff Report relates to the organisation called the NSW Revenue Professionals that is referred to in the report.

The Staff Report attaches great importance to the consistency that exists between the views of our council's staff in their proposed submission and the views contained in the report of this impressive sounding organisation.

Now I reckon that there would be very few (if any) of the members of our community who would ever have heard of the NSW Revenue Professionals – and I reckon there's every chance that a number of our councillors would be in the same boat.

In such circumstances, the Staff Report should have provided councillors and the community with some background to that organisation if its views were to be put forward by our staff in support of their views. But the Staff Report made virtually no attempt to do that..

The facts are that that organisation is a ‘council staff’ association that is registered under the NSW *Associations Incorporation Act 2009*. Full membership is open to any council employees who work in the rating and revenue sections of NSW councils. There’s no membership requirement for any such employee to have relevant formal qualifications or a minimum length of relevant experience or anything else. You simply pay your membership fee and you become a member.

So against that background, it’s probably not too surprising that the views of the members of the NSW Revenue Professionals are not inconsistent with the views of our council staff - some of whom are quite possibly members. This additional background should have been contained in the Staff Report.

On page 120 there is a section entitled ‘Community and Stakeholder Engagement’. That section contains the following lone sentence.

“A copy of Council’s submission to the *Rating System Review* is attached to this report and will be made available to the public via Council website.”

The future availability on the ESC website of a finalised council report hardly represents any type of satisfactory community “engagement” - past or future.

As suggested by Mr de Jager, if a majority of councillors do decide to allow the General Manager to forward the proposed submission to OLG this week, it must clearly state that it does not necessarily represent the views of the body politic and that it does not reflect any community views flowing from a community consultation process in this shire.