

## EUROBODALLA SHIRE COUNCIL

### PUBLIC FORUM

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

Ordinary Meeting of Council on 28 May 2019

Name	Subject/Comments
<b>Public Forum – 10.00am</b>	
Sue McKenzie	Petition – Batemans Bay Community Centre
Alan Russell	Petition – Batemans Bay Community Centre
David MacLachlan	Petition – Batemans Bay Community Centre

Notes when presenting petition re Batemans Bay Community Centre retention

Eurobodalla Council meeting - 28<sup>th</sup> May 2019

My name is **Dr Susan Mackenzie** *President of PerfEx Inc speaking on behalf of Perfex and the signatories to our petition.*

**I am speaking to Item no: PET19/001**

1001 including two extra sheets

This petition - to retain and maintain the Batemans Bay Community Centre for ongoing general community use - includes 983 signatures. Many more people have been appalled to hear of the Community Centre being under jeopardy, and I continue to receive more petition sheets (show). This petition represents just under **9% of the local area population** or 6.2% of the wider Bay population area (by the 2016 census\*\*).

Does the community want lose the present Community Centre in exchange for a pool and a theatre centre?

This petition suggests not.

Otium suggested the option of the disposal of the Community Centre and the tourism centre; Council accepted their proposal. Does the community agree to that trade?

This petition suggests not.

**We ask why you are going from a small family sedan to an SUV people mover so you can go camping twice a year, and then stop the kids playing local sport because you cannot afford the petrol to drive them there.**

There seems some very short term thinking going on here.

What if the population, mostly above 60 and being active retirees engaged in the community, increases at the 18% rate predicted, and the Community Centre is gone? What then?

What legacy is being left to the next Council and the ones after that?

The Community Centre reaches the wider, nebulous demographic of the community; the pool and arts centre focusses on a sizeable but specific demographic.

You have said: "We will not raise rates to pay for this centre. We made a commitment to that, and we won't sacrifice any of the elements because this facility needs to cater to everyone in our community," she said. Council newsletter Jan 2019

Yet that is precisely what you ARE doing.

We have already provided you with many practical reasons to keep and maintain the centre, including spreading traffic flow, public toilet accessibility away from the foreshore, affordability, access, etc

But as yet I have heard nothing from the Council other than to argue against keeping the CCentre, using the endless argument that it will increase costs to run four establishments – the pool centre, the arts centre, the tourist centre and the community centre.

How can you talk about costs when you have:

- an outdated business plan based on concepts plans that do not even exist any more;
- no final plan and
- projections of inclusions and costs that would exclude most of the community?

Council's role is to provide for a viable, ongoing, inclusive community.

Now is the time to rethink the whole complex and the wider community impact, before anything is finally set in stone, and time

to be more transparent with the community and its effects on them, now and into the future. This may require altering the aspirations of the Mackay Park facility.

Like the Bowling Club, ostensibly bought 'for the Community' in 2016, and quickly made saleable to all and sundry by shifting it to 'operational' status, will we weep over an empty plot of land sold off for cheap, short-term gains, or hold onto this quiet, vital piece of community property, built, it should be remembered, from community funds, not council ones?

We therefore **draw to the attention of the Council and Councillors**, the representatives of the community, that that community desire to retain the present Batemans Bay Community Centre along with the proposed Mackay Park Aquatic Centre and Theatre Arts complex and strongly assert our community voice to our representatives, to comply with this request.

We have \$51 million. The Otium business case is well out of date and, as yet, the business case the grant applications were based on, has not been released. A business that sells off its assets to pay running costs of essential services is not a viable concern.

It is well worth remembering the infamous quotation and its ramifications: upon hearing that the peasants had no bread: it was said: "Then let them eat cake"\*.

MPark Arts centre was supposed to be designed to become a thriving arts centre. Now it appears it may be an ivory tower, and silent.

\*\*"At the 2016 census, Batemans Bay had a population of 11,294, with surrounding communities including Long Beach, Maloneys Beach and the coastal fringe extending south to Rosedale bringing the total population of the urban area to 16,044"

\*Let them eat cake. "Let them eat cake" is the traditional translation of the French phrase "**Qu'ils mangent de la brioche**", supposedly spoken by "a great princess" upon learning that the peasants had no bread. Since brioche was a luxury bread enriched with butter and eggs, the quotation would reflect the princess's disregard for the peasants.. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Let\_them\_eat\_cake

BAS or the Moruya community were not required to give up a community asset. Nor should it be required of Mackay Park facility and the Batemans Bay community

Council has told us that the money come for the facility will come from Council's existing budgets, i.e. from the budget of the \$51 million, but now we are being told that does not include the ongoing maintenance and operational costs.

Mayor  
Councillors  
General Manager

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you this morning.

My name is Alan Russell. I live in Malua Bay. I wish to speak to the Batemans Bay Community Centre, Agenda item PET 19/001.

I am the Manager of Eurobodalla Meals on Wheels and it is on their behalf that I wish to speak today. I am also the President of the Rotary Club of Batemans Bay and I was the Head of College at St Peter's Anglican College in a previous life!

As stated, I wish to speak about the Batemans Bay Community Centre and its future in relation to the operations of Eurobodalla Meals on Wheels. I wish to support the petition which is to be lodged with Council this morning but more to ask the Council, and its staff, to think most carefully on this topic and will be making three particular points.

Over the last five years I have taken an interest in the function of the Council. This was particularly so during the last two years when Mayor Brown was in the chair and a number of community meetings were held on a range of topics from Fit for the Future to the bats in Batemans Bay.

After these large community meetings, which were sometimes very hostile events, I wondered what went on within Council which was causing unease in the community.

So, when the opportunity to join a Sunset Committee arose, I thought I would accept the opportunity to get into the tent and watch more closely the workings of the Council. I offered to be a community representative on the Mackay Park Sunset Committee. Today I take another step, and address you within the Chamber.

The Mackay Park Precinct Sunset Committee experience has been an interesting one. I am not here to discuss the mechanics of a Sunset Committee but to raise a few points on a side shoot of this development.

When the Mackay Park Sunset Committee was established it was made very clear to everyone at the first meeting held at the Catalina Club, that the Mackay Park development had to be sustainable.

I did note at the time, that this could hinder imaginative thought on how this corner of Mackay Park could, and would, be established. It was also noted then, and at subsequent meetings, that the Batemans Bay Community Centre could be sold to assist with the 'costs' so there is to be no ~~burden~~ great burden upon the Council from the construction nor the operation of the new facility. This was accepted as we believed that the uses of the Batemans Bay Community Centre would be accommodated within the new facility.

As time has gone on, and the designed for the Mackay Park has become more refined, there are a number of matters which I am concerned about but I wish to lodge my thoughts on one topic with you -retaining the Batemans Bay Community Centre after 2021.

I am aware that by the time the Mackay Park development is concluded, and that a final decision on the Batemans Bay Community Centre will be taken, there will be a different set of Councillors around this chamber who will finally decide the fate of the Batemans Bay Community Centre, but at least my few thoughts will be on the books.

First, as Manager of Eurobodalla Meals on Wheels, it appears that we could have to find a new home for our freezer. This may sound a small matter and one not really worthy of great time nor real consideration.

The Batemans Bay Community Centre is from where we conduct our northern operations and have done so for many, many years.

We already know that our freezer is not going into the new centre. So, I need to find a new location in two- or three-years' time. This will require some work now as it is not going to be an easy task if the Centre is not available through sale, or lease to another organisation.

This may seem selfish on our part, but we believe that our community group does provide a great service to our growing older population throughout the Shire, and would like our needs to be considered. This maybe selfish by a small organisation, but we provide a service, at cost -not for a profit, and would find it very hard to relocate and pay commercial rent.

For us, already hindered by Government funding questions, this will be a big issue and was part of our Strategic planning workshop yesterday. In our Consumer Directed Care approach to our clients, we have to look at their needs, and wants. We then tailor our activities to match, and I am sure Council could do the same.

Secondly, we have moved more of our operations to the Centre, and other Council facilities.

We use the Centre for our Group Social Support programme and I can not see within the plans for the Mackay Centre a space where we would be able to conduct such an activity, and prepare lunch in a reasonable kitchen, and do so at a very reasonable rate.

Thirdly, we like many groups appreciate the Council for the 'Not for Profit' rate which applies when groups such as ours use our Councils facilities.

We are most grateful to the Council for their consideration and encouragement, and ultimately their support of the small groups which do so much for the community.

However, I cannot imagine that such favourable rates will move to the new Centre. If the Mackay Park Centre is to be "sustainable", Council will not be able to provide such generous rates in the future.

A solution has been suggested. We could go to one of the other Centres. However, for us, these are not suitable (eg stairs at Hanging Rock, layout at Malua Bay), but we took this suggestion and have tried them when the Batemans Bay Community Centre has not been available. But where do we put our freezer?

The Batemans Bay Community Centre is not the most modern, and it does miss some amenities which we would normally expect, but we do not really worry about this as we can supply things to meet our needs.

What we, and many groups welcome is the space; which does not charge a lot, which is readily available, which has great access for the older person, has good carparking, is quiet and is big enough and flexible enough to meet a multitude of needs.

I am very excited about the new Mackay Park Centre. I am pleased that one suggestion I had has been agreed to, that the new Centre must be able to be expanded if and when necessary without too much disruption to what we are about to build, but I can not see, even with a bigger foot print that there will be enough spaces available for the small community groups of the Shire.

Denise and I are pleased to be part of this community.

We congratulate Council on how the Shire is looking for it is in good shape and so much work has been done throughout the Shire.

I congratulate Council on the future developments which are being planned and in particular the new centre at Mackay Park, but I do ask this Council, and the next one, to think carefully about the Batemans Bay Community Centre.

There is going to be a place in our community for the Mackay Centre, Batemans Bay Community Centre, Hanging Rock Centre and the Malua Bay Centre, and I really do think that the Council will be able to afford all of these, and be able to develop a Business Plan which caters for them all and still be meeting its sustainability guidelines..

As our community grows, and particularly as there is a need for facilities which are affordable and open to small groups which try to meet wellness and reablement aims for its members, the Batemans Bay Community Centre is, and will be, required.

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28 May 2019

Im going to speak to the motion regarding Batemans Bay Community Centre *PET 19/001*

I had a company which ran multi use ~~art~~ <sup>assist</sup> centres for profit. I offered my P&Ls to Council on a number of occasions to understand <sup>assist</sup> how profitable multi use venues are run.

I would like to address the business case referred to in this motion, I would also like to address the impact the BBCC will have on the outcomes of the new Arts centre in McKay Park.

At the last two Council held forums on Aquatic Arts Centre which was conducted for business, I requested Councils list of potential users for the new arts centre and I asked if the users included BBCC users so that informed input could be made. On both occasions I received a positive response that the request would be considered, though I heard nothing further.

At the last business forum <sup>few businesses</sup> I also asked if a business case could be furnished to enable informed input. The Council officer running the forums said that he would consider this and see if he could provide the business case in confidence to the Chamber. The architects in the forum then interjected and said there was no business case, though there was a list of potential users.

So, the architects had just told us that they had been designing a significant centre without a business case. Those present were gobsmacked by this revelation.

Much of the General managers response to this motion focuses on offsetting the new Arts Centre costs with BBCC costs. This rationale ~~raises real cost benefit and community benefit issues with the community, as it also signifies the change of use of the new Arts centre to more of an inevitable replacement for the Batemans Bay Community Centre.~~

I do not believe the people of the Shire will reconcile the new Arts centre becoming a glorified community centre. The community expects Council to provide what they set out to provide and that is an iconic arts facility which would provide significant entertainment and not be a white elephant.



The BBBTC has always said the new Arts centre at McKay park needs sufficient seating capacity and open space capacity to be multi-use, relevant and limit being a burden to the ratepayer.

Unfortunately when a design is born out of benchmarking loss making LGA run centres then the notion of reducing capacity to mitigate loss becomes OK, when in fact the opposite is true.

Almost 2 years ago I made public comments that 500 seats was small and would not attract national acts and have difficulty attracting popular acts. I said the venue could not expect to see shows such as the Wiggles. My comments were publicly negated by the Mayor who made reference to my Wiggles comment in a Bay Post article. The new Arts centre has now been reduced to a size that will definitely not hold the Wiggles or national acts, nor trade shows, nor large format events such as multiple Choirs and exhibitions.

The new arts centre is now too small to be leased or privately managed due to lack of financially viable seating capacity or open space, thus increasing rate payer burden.

If Council decides to sell the BBCC , then Council needs to reset peoples expectations about the new Arts centre and its purpose.

Council also needs to reset BBCC users expectations if Otiums business case including suggested rates is adopted – It was mentioned in the General Managers response to this motion that Council had adopted Otiums business case.

While Council has stated they have not made a decision on selling BBCC, I would hope this motion is passed by Councillors to simply acknowledge community sentiment about the BBCC and more importantly the community concerns about McKay Park outcomes and process.

Remember: Ulladulla has 450 seats and 1500 seats , Nowra has 900 seats, the Soldiers club has about 450 seats, why are we doing 350 seats with no multi use space?

Thank You

David MacLachlan