

**EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING  
9 JUNE 2015**

**Submissions on NOM15/003 Huntfest**

Two residents sent emails to Council over the June long weekend asking to speak in Public Forum at the Extraordinary Council meeting held on Tuesday 9 June 2015 regarding Huntfest.

Due to a problem with Council's email system over the June long weekend, their emailed requests to speak were not received by Council prior to the meeting. The Mayor was not informed by the two residents of their requests to speak.

At the Council meeting held on 23 June 2015, the Mayor agreed to include the residents' submissions on Council's website.

Speech prepared for presentation to the Extraordinary Meeting of The Eurobodalla Shire Council 9/6/2015

Good morning Mayor, councillors, and visitors in the gallery.

My name is Susan Cruttenden. I am a resident of Eurobodalla, and a member of the newly incorporated Stop Arms Fairs in Eurobodalla.

I am not a member of the Greens Party, and I find it quite insulting to assume that it is only the Greens who have a strong moral objection to Gun Proliferation. Our members come from across the board. Politicians frequently give lip service to opposing increased acceptance of a culture of guns in Australia, but when it comes to the crunch they adroitly pass the buck right back to the local council. And so the only party to lend practical support to this issue so far at our local level, has been the Greens.

Local council has a great deal of power not only over roads, rates and rubbish, but also over the reputation of the area, care of the environment, and concern for the social and cultural well-being of the community. Their authority however is limited by certain regulations such as the Environment Protection Act

Above all council has a responsibility to listen to the electorate, and not just to a powerful lobby group.

The good reputation of this shire has been carefully built up over the years and owes much to the hard work of councils, but now risks being trashed by a council which gave approval to a festival of hunting in the main street of a peaceful sea-side town. The big sign outside the Sports and Leisure Centre "Narooma Home of Huntfest" is offensive to those who believe that our reputation as the Nature Coast and "How Life Should Be" does not include killing animals for fun.

"Just an event" supporters claimed in defence of HuntFest, but within a short while it had morphed into a sale of guns, archery lessons, a shooting range, an interactive killing machine, and promotion of local safaris and safaris to Africa, without, according to the environmental Defence Office satisfying the requirements of the Environmental Protection Act or adequately consulting with the community.

The arguments put up by hunters and libertarians in newspapers, on radio, and in council have already been refuted, but the same responses keep coming back. Can anyone honestly believe hunters only kill feral animals, that the event earns \$1,000,000 for the town, and that it's necessary for children to see Bambi getting carved up to gain an appreciation of life, and an understanding of where their meat comes from?

The economic argument, is the one seemingly most favoured by council. The various extravagant amounts flagged by supporters of HuntFest are not only inaccurate, but fail to

take into account the numbers of retirees and holiday makers who won't want to come here now because of its growing image as a Hunters Headquarters.

Where is the cost/benefit analysis that should have been done when the HuntFest proposal was first raised?

Council can restore the faith people should have in their elected representatives by listening to and engaging with the community. You cannot in all conscience ignore the petitions, submissions, representations to council, rallies, demonstrations, and most recently our passive protest "Animals in the Wild" at the Bodalla Gallery.

Now, however, that we have been getting more publicity, and in view of growing opposition from both inside and outside the electorate, councillors really need to demonstrate transparency and accountability, to re-think their position, and to be open to Councillor Harding's proposal to initiate an unbiased review of Council's planning process.

There has been enough doubt cast over the planning procedure by eminent lawyers working with the Environment Defence Office to warrant an investigation.

Councillors who are beginning to doubt the legality of the license to Huntfest and the variation application to sell guns, should welcome the opportunity for an independent review to investigate fully so that deficiencies, if they are found, can be corrected.

This is the chance for council to redeem its poor reputation for listening by at least voting in favour of an independent external review. If you don't support the review it will look as if, like the Huntfest people, you have something to hide. (How outrageous that an ABC TV reporter and cameraman should be refused entrance to a public event held on crown land in the middle of town!)

Councillors who refuse to engage with the community will, in the words of one councillor, be "Tarred and feathered." (No we won't resort to violence, but we do vote.)

**EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL - 9 JUNE  
2015**

**ORAL SUBMISSION IN SUPPORT OF THE MOTION BY  
COUNCILLOR HARDING**

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

I'm here to support the motion that will be moved later in this meeting by Councillor Harding.

In that motion, Councillor Harding is seeking your agreement to the appointment of an independent expert - whose role would be to review the issues around the planning processes and legal matters associated with Huntfest's expanded activities.

Not for the first time, I will start my oral submission to this Council by bringing it's attention to this excellent and comprehensive document – the NSW Ombudsman's *'Good Conduct and Administrative Practice – Guidelines for state and local government (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)'*.

The basic standards of good conduct and administrative practice that the people of NSW are entitled to expect from local government officials are contained in these guidelines - guidelines that are based on administrative law and the work and experience of the Ombudsman over a period of about four decades, together with the relevant work and experience of other key accountability bodies in this State such as the NSW Audit Office and the ICAC.

This is a document that should be your first port of call whenever - as public officials - you might need advice and guidance on ethical issues and any advice on the accepted standards and principles of good conduct in public administration in this State.

On this occasion, in the brief time available to me, I'll take you to some of the important themes in this document that go to the question of your obligations with regard to legal advice – a key issue in the matters raised by Councillor Harding.

So, what are those obligations?

Well, unlike non government and private sector organisations, you as councillors - and the others here who are council staff – are required at all times to be “model citizens” and “model litigants”.

You are required at all times to act within “the letter and the spirit of the law”.

In situations, such as we have in this council, where you do not have your own in-house legal advisors, you are required to

“ensure that your private sector lawyers are explicitly aware that the council is obliged to be a model litigant, a model citizen and to act in the public interest as well as in accordance with any other standards set for public sector agencies and their employees”.

The council is also required, at all times, to make sure that those legal advisors are fully briefed so that they can provide sound and impartial legal advice. You are specifically directed not to seek “an opinion of convenience” and not to “opinion-shop”.

By now, hopefully all councillors will have had an opportunity to have perused the comprehensive, thoroughly researched, well presented, well argued and persuasive legal opinion from the EDO. With that in mind, I would now bring your attention to your responsibilities, as set out in section 7.4 of this document, in relation to legal proceedings.

“Given the costs, delays and long-term antagonisms which result from legal proceedings, it is in the public interest that public

officials do not resort to legal action unless absolutely necessary. This includes avoiding situations where contentious issues are left for decision by a court”.

The advice contained in this section of the guidelines also crucially advises that, where the likely outcome in court is not clear-cut, “alternative methods of resolving the dispute should be considered”.

Councillor Harding's recommendation for an independent review is clearly consistent with this principle and offers an alternative to the possibility of a protracted legal contest. It also offers the additional benefit of providing us with independent advice on whether this Council's existing legal advice framework is fully compliant with the arrangement that are spelt out in the Ombudsman's guidelines.

This is why I'm here to support the motion.

Thank you.

Jim Bright  
9 June 2015

10-10-10

Dear Mr. [Name],

I am writing to you regarding the [Topic] of your [Document/Project].

The information provided in your [Document/Project] is [Description].

I have reviewed the [Document/Project] and find it [Assessment].

I am sure that this [Document/Project] will be [Outcome].

I am sure that this [Document/Project] will be [Outcome].

I am sure that this [Document/Project] will be [Outcome].

I am sure that this [Document/Project] will be [Outcome].

I am sure that this [Document/Project] will be [Outcome].

I am sure that this [Document/Project] will be [Outcome].

I am sure that this [Document/Project] will be [Outcome].