

# President's Address

on behalf of the

**2014/15 Bonny Hills Progress Association (BHPA) Committee**

## **Annual General Meeting, 17 March 2015**

### **1. Brief introduction to BHPA and its purpose**

The nub of our charter is to champion and protect the agreed community Vision for Bonny Hills.

### **2. So what did we do in 2014/15?**

Summarising under each of our community's four Vision themes:

- **Maintaining village character and quality of lifestyle**

Master Plans for Bonny Hills (BH) Reserves.

- A new public toilet facility was installed at the Hall Reserve, with funding from Community Building Partnerships Program (CBPP) and matching funds from Port Macquarie Hastings Council (PMHC).
- Revegetation is well underway along the northern end of the frontal dune at Rainbow Beach Reserve (RBR) to create a storm shutter<sup>1</sup> effect. This has been a fruitful partnership between Council and local volunteers including our local Landcare group.
- Playground rejuvenation at RBR – \$63k has been allocated for this project by Council, and BHPA is applying for grants for various items of equipment. Work has commenced on stage 1 but there will be a delay until after the school holidays before this is finished.

CBPP has allocated a grant of \$4,500 for a water bubbler.

- Draft plans have been drawn up for upgrading the picnic facilities at Bartlett's Beach Reserve.
- Representation of BHPA Committee members on the BH Hall Committee ensures a strong presence in order to maintain this amenity in good order for use by our community.

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<sup>1</sup> **Storm Shutter effect** - lifting the on-shore winds up and over the dune and the immediate area behind it – is achieved by strategic plantings of wind and salt tolerant species across the dune to protect it from all but the most violent storms and tidal surges.

Major developments.

The reason for focus on the really big developments in our vicinity is because of the potential flow on effects – both positive and negative, with some being unintended consequences.

Area 14 development continues with the Ocean Club Resort up and running, and the two portions in the NE corner being at a more advanced stage of development than the larger central portion.

The new Lake Cathie School was ready for the 2015 school year, and adjacent access road works continue. Development of the sports grounds is linked to the creation of a lake at the S end of Area 14, from which the spoil will be used to build up the area. Approval has been granted for this lake.

Eight submissions were made by BHPA during the year regarding:

- a. [Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan Feb 2015](#)
- b. [Urban Growth Strategy Dec 2014](#)
- c. [Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan Aug 2014](#)
- d. [DRAFT LATM Review by BHPA July 2014](#)
- e. [Draft Bike Plan May 2014](#)
- f. [Flora and Koala Mapping Project May 2014](#)
- g. [Community Participation Policy April 2014](#)
- h. [Operational Plan April 2014](#)

These are available on the BHPA website at – [www.bonnyhills.org.au/bhpa\\_actions.html](http://www.bonnyhills.org.au/bhpa_actions.html)

- **Conservation of the natural environment and wildlife**
    - The main areas that BHPA is directly involved in are attempting to protect the local fauna and flora from overdevelopment; protecting the corridors between the coastal littoral rainforest and the 'hinterland' on the W side of Ocean Drive; and Koala monitoring in Bonny Hills
    - PMHC mapping and biodiversity strategy
- BHPA has been closely monitoring progress on this project as it will result in the policy and implementation platform for the preservation of flora and fauna in our local area – a major reason why most of us like to live here. We have made a number of submissions and representations to Council on this issue over recent years.

We are pleased to report that Council has finally signed off on the mapping phase, which paves the way for the development of the Biodiversity Strategy for our LGA.

- **Water quality in our creeks and Rainbow Beach**

The following extracts are from presentations by Council staff at our AGM on Blue Green Algae (BGA), and possible faecal contamination.

What is being done about BGA?

- Regular testing is carried out
- Both water and sand are tested
- Council updates the Bonny Hills surf club and the Bonny Hills Progress Association with the lab results
- New signs have been erected in the car park
- Council's webpage is updated with warnings when needed
- Media releases are issued when needed
- Council is liaising with NSW Health and the North Coast Regional Algal Committee

When is it safe to swim?

- There are a number of risks associated with the use of recreational water, including exposure to infectious diseases and BGA
- Avoid contact with BGA blooms
- Warnings signs are put up if needed
- Generally, contact with water not visibly affected by BGA is not expected to cause health effects
- If people or animals come into contact with BGA the affected area should be rinsed immediately with clean water
- **Consult a GP if a child is affected** or if symptoms are serious or persist

Possible faecal contamination in Duchess Creek

Since the \$17m augmentation of the Lake Cathie-Bonny Hills Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) in 2009 the quality of water coming out of the plant has been very high with zero overflows being recorded following heavy rain events.

Weekly sampling of water from the Creek and the adjacent ocean is undertaken and there are occasional unexplained spikes in faecal counts. These are rarely recorded at more than one or two of the sampling sites and don't seem to tie in with any particular weather pattern. Despite much work conducted by Council staff and consultants looking at the possibilities of leaks, non-human sources of contamination, and underground movement of water from the effluent ponds, we appear no closer to an explanation.

BUT when the test data for Duchess Creek was compared to that of a number of other waterways that Council sample, it appears possible that we might be 'boxing at shadows' – local samples are at the bottom end of the range, with much lower spikes.

Despite this Council will continue to monitor ground-water between the ponds and the Creek and will be prepared to improve the lining of said ponds if there is any sign of lateral movement.

- **Ensuring safe roads for people and wildlife**
  - Following a presentation by John Hanlon, PMHC Engineer, at our last AGM, BHPA conducted a review of what we considered to be the major road, traffic and pathway issues in BH and provided these to Council.
  - The BHPA then met on site with the Mayor and General Manager, and separately with John Hanlon to plot a way forward for prioritisation and funding.
  - Our submissions regarding Council's proposed PAMP and Cycleway plans (see page 2) are part of what was required to develop priorities.
  - What is required now is to persist with getting the priorities for all components agreed and built into Council's 5-year roll-out plans
  - As a bonus it appears from a local newspaper report that our local State member, Leslie Williams, has secured funding for three pedestrian crossing facilities in Bonny Hills

### 3. Consultation and communication

- Public consultation  
Has been conducted regarding the upgrade of Rainbow Beach Reserve playground
- Discussions with Mayor, General Manager and Council Officers  
Meetings have been held on site in BH and at Council chambers, and email communication has been maintained in relation to the issues outlined above. In addition a number of our members are on Council's Community Reference Group.
- BHPA website  
The BHPA website [www.bonnyhills.org.au](http://www.bonnyhills.org.au) has been up and running for four years now with the primary aim of presenting the activities and communiques of BHPA as publicly available material.
- Bonny Hills Newsletter articles and Press releases  
Our Publicity Officer has delivered articles about BHPA activities on time for each issue of the BH Newsletter and has written press releases or articles regarding a number of the above issues. Thanks must go to Kylie Moss from Ocean Drive Realty for her efforts in supporting the BHPA and other community groups with this newsletter.
- Coast and Estuaries Committee  
BHPA obtains information on the outcomes of meetings by this PMHC Committee, which covers consideration of water quality issues in our creeks and ocean.

#### **4. Report Card**

Were BHPA's efforts in 2014/15 a useful contribution to Bonny Hills? We think so but we recognise that there is always more to accomplish.

And special thanks to:

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- my outgoing committee – Bernadette, Bill, Carmel, David, Florence, Joyce, Lucas, Pam, Penny, Phil, and Tami; and also to Jon and Scott.
  - the support of BHPA members
  - PMHC staff for all their efforts on our behalf over the last 12 months
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And also to our donors and volunteers viz:

- Community Building Partnerships Program
  - Jenny Daniel, Bill and Jake Shelley
  - HyTech, Dave Smith, Bonny Hills Nursery. Others who have offered their services will be acknowledged in due course.
  - Jon Slater and Kylie Moss of Ocean Drive Realty
  - Bonny Hills Friendly Grocer
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#### **5. Challenges for the incoming committee**

These will include:

- Bring the current suite of projects into being – viz RBR playground, Bartlett's rejuvenation, upgrade RBR revegetation.
- Develop priorities for the road safety issues identified in our review, an implementation plan and associated funding commitments.
- Continue to work on improved engagement and communication with the wider Bonny Hills community and other relevant organisations. A measure of our success here should be increased membership.

Roger Barlow  
President

On behalf of the 2014/15 BHPA Committee.