

MINUTES

Peak Tourist Season - Impacts on Hyams Beach Village

Meeting of Stakeholders

15 February 2018, 3pm, SEC Gallery

The meeting was opened the time being 3.01pm.

Attendees

Shoalhaven City Council Clr Findley Clr Gartner Clr Wells Clr Gash Clr Pakes Clr Kitchener Clr Proudfoot Clr Cheyne - arrived 4.09pm Russ Pigg Andrew McVey Melissa McCoy Phil Costello Paul Keech Kelie Clarke Kerry Thompson Michael Jarman Garon Irwin Jodie Parnell Tony Fraser Naif Ahmed Daniel Dunstan Shannon Perry-Hall Jessica Rippon Madelaine North	Agency Representatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspector Deb O'Reilly - NSW Police • Captain Moses Raudino - HMAS Creswell • Lynn Locke - STAG Chairperson • Mark Williams - RFS District Manager • Richard Phelps - NPWS Hyams Beach Villages Association <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morgan Sant • Lois Sparks • Kate Friis • Martin Gaffey • Mark Crowther • Ray Hyams Beach Business Owners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chris Alison • Dean Hargraves • Craig McIntosh CCB Representatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garry Kelson - Huskisson Woollamia Community Voice • Dawn Thompson - Vincentia Residents & Ratepayers Association • Bruce McKenzie - Vincentia Matters
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The General Manager, Russ Pigg, opened the meeting, the time being 3.01pm and provided a brief overview of the agenda.

1. Mayor's welcome.

The Mayor welcomed and thanked those in attendance for coming with an open heart and open mind in order to come up with a good result. The Mayor acknowledged the wishes to retain the village feel.

2. Video & presentation from Hyams Beach Villages Association.

Dr Morgan Sant, representing the Hyams Beach Villages Association, showed a video that was televised by A Current Affair. Dr Morgan Sant advised that he had edited the video shown, as he stated that A Current Affair had manipulated the footage, so it appeared that six people stood on the beach, whom did not, and with a plaque with the words “stay off our beach”.

Dr Morgan Sant stated that Traffic was the main issue. It is a seasonal problem that needs seasonal smart solutions with flexibility.

Dr Morgan Sant tabled a proposed agenda (Attachment 1) for all future meetings which included four key areas to continue to action:

- Stop excess traffic in village (what is capacity of the village - key number that solutions will hang);
- Continue traffic management - flows;
- Improve infrastructure for visitors and residents; and
- Strengthen authority for Rangers to act.

He also stated that the upcoming Easter period needs to specifically to be addressed.

Lois Sparks tabled an Assessment of What Worked, What Partially Worked and What Didn't work. Also tabled was “Suggested Options to Manage Congestion in Hyams Beach over Easter 2018 (Attachment 2)”.

3. Short address from each Council functional area (Compliance/Rangers; Environment; Traffic; Waste; Amenities; Tourism)

A PowerPoint presentation was provided by Phil Costello, Director Planning Environment and Development, in relation to the Rangers and Environmental staff's actions over the holiday period.

Tony Fraser, Works and Services Manager, provided information regarding the amenities and waste actions over the holiday period which included implementing larger bins (and more of them) which were collected once per day, however, it seems that the waste was collecting overnight. Cleaning and maintenance of the limited amenities that they have in Hyams Beach were undertaken daily.

Daniel Dunstan, Transport Engineer, displayed potential Traffic Control Plans (complete with highlighted potential pick up and drop off zones) which were discussed and potentially could be implemented for the Easter peak period. Daniel advised that there were 100 estimated parking spots to south and 400 to the north.

Shannan Perry-Hall, Tourism Investments and Events Specialist, advised of the roles that the Tourism and Visitor Services Staff played over the holiday peak period.

Shannan Perry-Hall did advise that the location of the Visitor Services team was changed (from near the car park to the park on the hill) from previous years which saw a significant decrease in the number of enquiries from visitors (approximately 50%). Tourism and Visitors Services do not have the operational budget to provide visitor services going forward. This summer's budget was allocated after a report to an Ordinary Meeting of Council.

Jessica Rippon, Executive Manager - Communications, gave an overview of the communications that were provided during the Christmas period. This included Facebook posts & media releases identifying that visitor capacity at Hyams Beach had been reached. Also promoted the 100 Beach Challenge as alternative option. Illegal camping and fire issues were also highlighted. All this was done using existing resources and platforms.

Jessica Rippon was asked if there was a Facebook Administrator monitoring comments on posts and in particular repeat offenders and inappropriate comments? Jessica advised that the media staff have the ability to hide and delete comments, however, it is resourced in own time and that will need to be factored in. It would not be monitored 24 hours per day.

The meeting was advised that Jerrinja are land owner of old tip site.

4. Short address from Government Agencies (Police; National Parks; etc)

Inspector Deb O'Reilly, Police, advised that during the peak holiday period the Police are responding to violence and other crimes, the Police will assist where they can, however the priority for Police are to respond to crimes.

The Highway Patrol Arm is separate to NSW Police and their focus during the peak holiday period is to stop road trauma and collisions.

To treat the peak days as an event and for the user to pay for police is something that can be looked at but not as a main strategy.

Mark Williams, Rural Fire Service District Manager, advised there were incidents where access was difficult, and this will be under consideration. Mark Williams also advised that beach fires in the middle of the beach are not a problem to the Rural Fire Service. It is an environmental issue for the Council.

The Rural Fire Service and State Emergency Service advised that the last major fire occurred in 1973 and the fire came down the hill. Other fires were from Creswell in the 80s and 90s. Lois Sparks commented that the fires that are occurring back from the dunes are a major concern for the residents.

Richard Phelps, National Parks and Wildlife Services, provided an overview of what is managed by National Parks. It was advised that Rangers are unable to manage the illegal camping on the beach. National Parks and Wildlife Services responded to calls from Rangers particularly in relation to camping on Seamans Beach, however, resources are limited. National Parks and Wildlife Services will speak with Rangers to ensure a better outcome for Easter. It was also advised that residents could possibly be engaged as volunteers, however this would not automatically delegate the authority to volunteer residents.

5. Address from village business representatives

Business owners advised that there are 250 homes in Hyams Beach and 190 of these are rentals and holiday homes.

It was stated that any strategy would need to be based on facts.

Dean stated that the businesses within the Hyams Beach area bring over \$500K into the local economy and therefore their views need to also be considered. The negative messages around the Christmas period peak can have an impact on these local businesses. Many of the houses in Hyams Beach are businesses and they also need to be consulted.

Chris stated that there was a need to fix parking spaces. Focus on the 20 days that it is a problem. The situation needs to be managed better, rostered in detail. If the situation is managed tightly and effectively, little things done well - signs change etc then the situation will improve. Need buy in and a will to get things done for things to change.

Craig provided a holiday letting insight outlining the wave that has occurred over the last 5 years. There has been an increase in population across the City and continued increases in visitation numbers, so it is not just event management. There is need for proper traffic management, infrastructure plan (external consultant could do it) and Master Plan for Hyams Beach.

Dr Morgan Sant advised that the Hyams Beach Villages Association are completely represented as absentee land owners can connect with the Hyams Beach Villages Association, they don't have to apply for membership and can own a property, however do not have to be a permanent resident.

There was concern raised at this being treat as an event management issue. Hyams Beach is continuing to grow as a destination. In the future the winter months may not be as quiet as have been in the past. Perhaps Council can engage a Town Planning Agency or Traffic Management Planner to be employed, i.e. a consultant to focus solely on the issue. A Master Plan could be created that includes toilets, bollards, parking and signage etc.

6. Workshop on Actions for Easter

A facilitated immediate actions workshop was help seeking actions that could be undertaken for Easter.

7. Next Steps

Russ Pigg advised that all the information will be collated and distributed, and the meeting would be reconvened in early March, no later than the second week. The discussion will continue regarding the long-term options.

Dr Morgan Sant thanked Russ Pigg for organising the meeting.

The meeting adjourned, the time being 5.10pm.