

Margaret River Coastal Residents Association Inc (CRA)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021

The Common - Gnarabup
4pm Sunday December 5, 2021

1. MEETING OPENED

by CRA President Adrian Wilson at 4pm.

2. APOLOGIES

Margaret and Dave Leggott
Fernanda Gray
Courtenay Gray
Peter St Clair-Baker
Tim & Sally Campbell
Denise & Greg Clancy
Pam & Ed Jaggard
Peter Panegyres
Matthew Joyce
Jo Joyce
Ernie & Karen Bevilacqua
David Burt
Susie Anderson
Jeff Yeaton

3. ATTENDANCE

Adrian Wilson
Sharon Burvill
Ian Burvill
Ann Delroy
Michael Carr
Penny Watson
Mary-Eileen Scanlan
Linda McKeller
Joan Tilburn
Barry Walker
Denise Wilkinson
Natalie Bell
Janet Dufall
Barry Dufall
Clive Hodgson
Genny Broadhurst

Peter Murphy
Lyn Serventy
Sally Pyvis

4. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS AGM MINUTES 2020

MOTION

MOVED G Broadhurst

SECONDED N Bell

That the Minutes of the previous AGM 2020 be accepted.

VOTE – Unanimous

5. REPORTS

5.1 GNARABUP RESORT

Sally Pyvis spoke on the proposed Gnarabup Resort and said the community was standing by to see what level of assessment the EPA will carry out – result should be known by early next year (2022).

Not tested as yet but works were carried out.

5.2 PRESIDENT’S REPORT – Adrian Wilson

Introduction

CRA continues to be a “voice for the community” and a respected stakeholder that represents the best interests of residents and ratepayers in coastal infrastructure and decisions and management.

CRA collaborates with “Nature Conservation Margaret River Region” (NCMRR) and the Augusta-Margaret River Shire (AMRS) and other organisations to secure grants and provide valuable input into coastal rehabilitation from the River Mouth to Gas Bay. (See Report by Janet Dufall and Genny Broadhurst)

Effects of Covid 19 on Our Community

WA and the Margaret River region continues to thrive economically under the State Govt’s Covid lockdown strategy. WA visitor numbers have increased and the local boom, combined with little outside WA visitation, has put added pressure on hospitality operators - many of whom have reduced opening hours due to lack of staff. Rental property vacancies are virtually zero.

The increase in local tourist numbers has meant some property owners are letting their houses for more lucrative short stay accommodation instead of for long term rental.

East coast flights into Busselton announced in 2019 have not eventuated (due to Covid in other States) and are now scheduled to commence Feb 2022.

Development in Gnarabup

The proposed development of a 121 room five-star resort and beach village, comprising of 50 houses plus apartments... short-stay accommodation, residential dwellings and commercial premises on 5 separate blocks (total land area 7+ hectares) has been progressed by developer Luke Saracini's Saracen Properties Pty Ltd (representing 5 Star Margaret River Pty Ltd and The Beach Village Pty Ltd).

This development site has changed hands several times in the past 30 years and its development has always been opposed by the Gnarabup community.

This land is the only privately owned freehold land on the west side of Wallcliffe Road in Gnarabup and adjacent to the foreshore reserve. The site comprises a precious strip of largely intact coastal heath that is of high conservation value and sits within Busselton Augusta Biodiversity Hotspot No 9, which is one of Australia's 15 declared Biodiversity Hotspots.

In short, the current status of the proposed development:

- the developer has lodged a DA (Development Application) with the SDAU (State Development Assessment Unit).
- the SDAU was implemented as a Covid economic stimulus initiative by the State Govt in July 2020 and is designed to drive approvals (ie. approx 12-16 weeks from lodgement of a DA).
- legislative changes to the SDAU are planned for early 2022, however DA's lodged before 6 January 2022 will be assessed under the current legislation. The Saracini DA falls into this category.
- Preserve Gnarabup successfully lobbied the State EPA (Environmental Assessment Authority) to conduct a short 7 day public consultation period as to whether an EPA review of the development proposal was needed. The EPA received 1,200 public submissions, 1,000 (80%) of these supported an EPA review, the majority requested a PER (Public

Environmental Review) which is the highest level of EPA environmental review.

- the EPA Chair is yet to announce whether an EPA review will be undertaken and this may be slowing down the SDAU's assessment of the DA.
- Preserve Gnarabup is currently working to have the development proposal referred to the federal EPA, which is part of DAWE (Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment) under which the federal *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act) sits.
- The EPBC Act is the Australian Govt's central piece of environmental legislation that provides a legal framework to protect and manage nationally and internationally important flora, fauna, ecological communities and heritage places.
- ([More about the EPBC Act](#))
- the AMRS Council could resolve to refer the development proposal to the federal EPA and many residents are lobbying it to do so.

To conclude, there are so many unresolved issues relating to the proposed development, including

- coastal erosion and inundation
- problems with the Gas Bay WWTP (Waste Water Treatment Plant)
- increased fire risk...managing an extra 500? people unfamiliar with Gnarabup...
- matters of Aboriginal significance
- increased pressure on Margaret River's only safe swimming beach
- waste management, noise, pollution impacts on adjacent Ngari Marine Park
- traffic and parking impacts
- loss of amenity of local residents
- the overall carrying capacity of the development site and much more.

The Coastal Path (Gnarabup to Riflebutts)

AMRS plans for a boardwalk from Gnarabup carpark to Spindrift are on hold, pending updated data on coastal processes and erosion.

Gnarabup Boat Ramp

Initial boat ramp works were undertaken mid 2020, however major works involving sand bagging behind and under the boat ramp have been

completed.....due to sand build-up in the southern corner these have not been tested by a major winter storm event.

Gnarabup Lagoon

CRA has held meetings with AMRS about signs for “no spearfishing” , but so far, no action plan has been drafted.

Wallcliffe House Redevelopment

Works have commenced -including the successful relocation of Osprey (which were nesting in the Wallcliffe House chimney) to a pole supporting an engineered Osprey nest located just west of Wallcliffe House.

AMRS 2021/22 Community Development and Events Grant (Category 2)

CRA has secured a \$1,000 Community Development Grant for three banner flags to alert the public when CRA volunteers are carrying out dune work. This also serves to educate people about CRA’s coastal rehabilitation work and recruits new volunteers.

Dune Rehabilitation Work

Once again, an amazing effort by Genny and Janet and their team. This work creates important visual awareness for people using the coastal path. It reminds people of the fragile and dynamic nature of the dune system and highlights the outstanding work that CRA continues to carry out. These voluntary activities represent vast financial savings for AMRS and, ultimately, for ratepayers.

“Bike to the Beach” Event

Despite the success of this event in 2020, it was not repeated this October during WA Bike Week as WestCycle failed to advise CRA of the very short grant application window.

Additional Bike Rack & Landscaping at the White Elephant Cafe

This project is completed and initiation and coordination of this project has yielded pledges of ...

AMRS - \$2,000

White Elephant Cafe - \$1,500

CRA - \$500

Gnarabup Beach Carpark

Current contractor works (funded by AMRS) include landscaping and tree planting. Whilst the enhancement works are most welcome, it remains to be seen if the semi-mature casuarinas, with undeveloped root systems, planted at the start of summer in November, will survive the summer heat stress. The winter winds certainly took their toll on these trees and CRA considers

protective tree guards may be prudent for any future planting in the coastal heath zone.

The Margaret River Surf Pro Event

The 2021 event was cancelled due to Covid 19. CRA will pick up the baton re the proposed April 2022 event and liaise with AMRS and Surfing WA regarding ...

- eco toilets at Boodjidup
- \$2,000 promised by Surfing WA for coastal rehabilitation work
- parking issues

AMRS Management of Verges

Slashing has taken place which is great, but follow up slashing is needed as the bunny tail grass is high again and we are not yet into full fire season.

Shorebirds

Members have reported seeing a wonderful array of shorebirds in our vicinity over the past year.

As Gnarabup and Prevelly's resident and visiting human population increases due to development pressure and WA's economic boom, local beaches are busier and under increasing pressure.

Shorebirds of the Gnarabup coast (both visiting and resident) include

Hooded and red capped plovers

Sooty and pied oystercatchers

Sanderlings

Crested terns

Common sandpipers

Rockhopper penguins

Osprey

Dogs

In Sept 2021, the designated dog exercise areas along the Prevelly/Gnarabup coast was reviewed by AMRS. A trial of seasonal dog exercise areas at Longreef, Grunters and Gas has been announced by AMRS and this has been met by a vocal protest by dog owners. Currently, the only lawful designated dog exercise area is the long stretch of Gnarabup Beach from Spindrift to Riflebutts.

Unlawful use of other beaches by dog owners appears not to have been monitored or infringed by AMRS staff, with the resultant belief by many dog owners that these beaches are dog beaches.

Shorebirds, especially those that live and nest on the beach, are greatly disturbed by dogs and AMRS's process of formalising designated dog exercise areas appears not to be straightforward. Dog owners appear unwilling to comply with signage to keep dogs on leads on AMRS reserves between Bodmin rocks and the Gnarabup Headland.

CRA believes now is the time to put measures in place to protect wildlife for future generations and AMRS's proposed trial of new dog exercise areas is a good starting point. There is also the consideration that not everyone is a lover of dogs on beaches and non-dog beach goers are entitled to a relaxing experience along the coast.

(see link to recent ABC article <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-10-13/conservation-regulator-protect-hooded-plover-eggs-summer/100532126>)

Nature Conservation Margaret River - Forum

On 25 November 2020 CRA representatives joined other coastal user groups and stakeholders and attended a Forum convened by NCMRR to explore a community drive Capes Coastal Code (or Pledge) to foster respect and care for our coast. Unfortunately, CRA has not been advised of any action resulting from this initiative.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/travel/2019/10/24/can-tourism-pledges-help-keep-visitors-their-best-behavior/>

Foreshore Management Plan Gnarabup and Prevelly

On 28 May 2021, CRA submitted a Foreshore Plan to AMRS (thank you for drafting this, Genny). A copy will be attached to the AGM Draft Minutes but in short, it covers climate change; traditional owners; Gnarabup WWTP and Prevelly septics; coastal hazard risk; biodiversity hotspot; Marine Park status; car parking; public transport; population density; developer contributions; beach access routes; and playgrounds, ablutions and bike culture.

Western Ringtail Possums

The status of this species in WA is critically endangered fauna under Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016.

In the last three months, members have removed and photographed four dead ringtail possums from roads around Gnarabup and submitted Fauna Report Forms to DBCA.

It appears roadkill was responsible for three possums and the fourth possum may have been killed by a cat or died of shock. These deaths are significant and should be considered by DBCA in relation to the proposed development.

Carnaby's Cockatoo

This is a Threatened Species under State and federal Legislation. Flocks of Carnaby's are increasingly seen around Gnarabup due to land clearing, habitat loss, lack of hollow breeding sites and food shortages. Carnaby's are currently sighted on a daily basis on the Gnarabup development site.

CRA Website

The website continues to be improved since Clive has become webmaster. (see Report by Clive Hodgson)

Thank You

CRA relies on its dedicated members who volunteer (organised by Genny and Janet) on a weekly basis to undertake coastal rehabilitation work.

Thanks to all CRA Committee Members and to everyone for attending today's AGM.

ADRIAN WILSON

President - Margaret River Coastal Residents' Association
0409 990 727

5.2 TREASURER'S REPORT - ANN DELROY

FINANCIAL REPORT 2020/21

INCOME

Department of Transport grant (Bike to Beach event)	\$1361.55
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EXPENDITURE

Bike to Beach Event	\$1361.55
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AGM entertainment (drink)	\$185.50
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Bike Rack for White Elephant café vicinity (50% cost)	\$343.00
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PO Box Renewal	\$41.00
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First Aid Bandages x 3	\$36.00
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BANK BALANCE 1 JULY 2020	\$14,313.04 Cr
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Minus expenditure

605.50

BANK STATEMENT 30 June 2021

\$13,707.54 Cr

Ann Delroy

Treasurer

10 November 2021

5.3 COASTAL VOLUNTEERS REPORT 2021 – GENNY BROADHURST

We thought the year 2020 saw us experiencing a wonderful volunteer effort, but this past year went even further by adding an extra 130 hours, bringing the total contribution to 631 hours spent by the amazing volunteers on our dune system biodiversity.

These hours were spread over a variety of activities, including the final stage of the Coast West Grant which allowed for a group from the Chamber of Commerce to come to Grunters and brush and plant on the dunes there. The work was completed by our volunteers working with the Indigenous Trainee Ranger Program and the young folk were a delight to be with.

Included in our yearly efforts were 381 hours of weeding out the resilient onion weed, euphorbia and groundsel – all of which are beginning to loosen their hold on our dunes and making way for a richer biodiversity.

Many of the extra 130 hours can be attributed to the consistent efforts of Janet (Dufall) and Sally (Pyvis) planting a blanket of pigface in between Thursday commitments along the coast track. Their plantings have worked to stabilise denuded areas, but also, due to the high visibility of the work, they have increased our profile to beach users and thus increased the respect people have for both our work and the coastal ecosystem.

The remainder of the hours were spent planting, brushing, attending meetings and, of course, our educational program with Montessori. This “adopt a spot” program is allowing large numbers of children to experience what a dune ecosystem is, how best to protect it, and most importantly, why we should. That we now have the rhythm of one day a year of hard work, and one day a year of Indigenous interaction, is, I feel, a perfect balance for everyone.

So much so, that Tracy Muir has asked us if we would consider working in a similar manner with Thomas Moore Primary at the Rivermouth. We have tentatively said yes and look forward to how that unfolds.

We were not successful in our grant application for stage two of the Environmental Management Fund project for coir logs, brushing and planting on some of the high blow outs along the coastal path. However, this is not of concern as the Shire has offered to incorporate stage two into their works and Drew will be contracted by them next year.

So once again a great year and we pass on our many thanks to everyone who has helped. All that is left for this year is to hold a coastal workers' sundowner for some well-deserved back patting.

6. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS & COMMITTEE MEMBERS

PRESIDENT: Adrian Wilson (proposed S Pyvis, seconded D Wilkinson)

VICE PRESIDENT: Natalie Bell (proposed by G Broadhurst, seconded J Dufall)

SECRETARY: Sharon Burvill (proposed S. Pyvis, seconded G. Broadhurst)

TREASURER: Ann Delroy (proposed J. Dufall, seconded C. Hodgson)

COMMITTEE

Clive Hodgson (Web Master)

Janet Dufall

Genny Broadhurst

Peter St Clair-Baker

Denise Wilkinson

Barry Walker

MOTION

MOVED – L. McKeller

SECONDED – I. Burvill

That the new Committee be endorsed

VOTE - Unanimous

Business arising from the meeting:

Sally Pyvis: The big task is to make a submission to the EPA about the development of the Gnarabup Resort. Submissions need only be a few sentences.

Lyn Serventy spoke about the work that Preserve Gnarabup is doing on opposing the Gnarabup Resort. Preserve Gnarabup has engaged a planning lawyer, Margie Tannick, but money and donations will be required to fight the proposed resort. Regarding the EPA report, the more information about threatened species the better. The group is asking for as many submissions as possible.

Clive Hodgson proposed a vote of thanks to Adrian Wilson for all the work that he has done as CRA President throughout the year.

AW said Natalie Bell had also done a lot of work on shore birds and how they were negatively impacted by dogs on beaches.

Adrian Wilson thanked all for their reports.

Meeting closed by President Adrian Wilson at 16.35.