

SMITHS BEACHCOMBER ASSOCIATION INC 40TH AGM

2016 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It is a pleasure to present this report at this our 40th year of our Smiths Beachcomber Association.

We have reached this milestone because of the supportive membership and our hard-working and active committees over that time. This year is no exception. The old adage that says that "if you want to get things done, give the job to a busy person" applies to our Secretary, Noel Halford. He has convened meetings, kept Minutes and wrote numerous letters to members of parliament, our Shire, our Nature Parks and other relevant organisations.

Our Life Member Treasurer, John Steward has been associated with our SBA since its very first meeting in June 1976. He continues to keep our finances and membership list in good order and frequently reminds members to keep paying our annual subscriptions. Our major expense each year (usually over \$750) is for our compulsory Public Liability Insurance.

Other members of the busy committee this year, 2015-6 were Douglas Cousins, Pam Lamaro, David Green, Heidi and Heinz Demsky, Helen Dafner, Carolyn Plummer and John Graydon. Meetings took place on 2Feb, 15June, 19Oct, 30Nov, 3Jan and 8thFeb.

Our Churchill Ward Councillor, Phil Wright also kept us well-informed of Shire activities with articles in our SBA Newsletter and many emails.

David Van Dort has had our SBA website of smithsbeachcomer.com running for several years. The website recorded 840 hits last year. Useful links are available. SBA Membership forms may be downloaded to sign up a new member. David has completed the exercise of developing our SBA Facebook Page and will also act as its administrator. Soon you will be posting your contributions.

Our Annual Social Get-together was held at the home of Lyn and Ian Shand on Sunday 3rd January. Over thirty members and friends were brought up to date with an enjoyable and informative report of the year's activities. Excellent refreshments were provided and the opportunity to meet many of our Smiths Beach and Beachcomber Estate members followed.

Perhaps the major improvement for the year was the sealing of the road surface of Smiths Beach Road north. No longer do we have to 'travel gravel' in order to connect Back Beach Road to the dangerous Five Ways intersection. The SBA has sent letters to the Shire and VicRoads requesting a roundabout to be built there and also at the Back Beach Road and the Tourist Road t-intersection.

The area of land that stretches from Marlin Street to the Smiths Beach Road car-park is titled the Smiths Beach Drainage Reserve and was fondly known as our South East Parkland. The Bass Coast Shire Council re-named it to be the Smiths Beach Drainage Reserve Native Vegetation Offset Site. Also at the request of the BCSC, they have recently invited community members to form a new organisation to be called the Friends of Smiths Beach Reserve. First and subsequent meetings of those interested have been held and a committee of Friends has been formed. The SBA wish to play an assisting role in its activities and many of us could be members of both.

The Smiths Beach voluntary and professional lifesaver patrols have been busy with their duties on our beaches over the summer months. The Woolamai Beach Surf Life Saving Club have been working hard to get a rescue base built at our beach that will also provide the necessary shelter for them. They now have a design that has received conditional approval and public support. However, the structure required a builder that could construct this project. It has to be at a cost that the Club feels that the community could be asked to assist in fundraising. We are hoping for some progress soon.

The SBA joined with 14 other Bass Coast coastal townships to form an Alliance to support a seven metre height limit restriction (two stories) on buildings. They would only be for properties adjacent or very close to the coastline and is to protect the view-lines of others. The SBA made a further donation this year towards a consultant's report on height and design controls being prepared for the BCSC so that more prescriptive amendments can be put in place.

The YCW/Beachcomber Avenue Car Park Precinct Master Plan has been presented and passed by the BCSC in 2013. Since then there has been little activity to maintain and improve the chaotic car-parking on the most unattractive looking beach car-park on the Island. In January, our Ward Councillor used wooden sticks (later stolen) to mark boundaries so that car owners could park in a sensible fashion and pedestrians could walk safely. Sealing of the lower car-park with asphalt or permeable material is unfortunately not contemplated by the BCSC in the foreseeable future.

The Master Plan also is designed to re-vegetate all three levels. To begin this aspect of the project, a SBA Working Bee at the YCW car-park took place last September. Under the supervision of the BCSC Natural Resources Officer, we planted 250 indigenous plant tubes in its top-most area next to the St Bede's fence. All plants are doing well.

The Philip Island Nature Parks Key Area Planning for the South Coast of Phillip Island has begun. They have started developing the Cape Woolamai Coastal Reserves Master Plan. The outlining of the Issues and potential Opportunities for the Smiths Beach precinct will most likely follow.

Kally and Johan and Jenny and staff of the Smiths Beach General Store provide us with our daily milk, bread and newspapers to start our day. They have built up a fine reputation for serving quality coffee, food and drinks as well.

Last Easter Saturday, the SBA set up a table next to the Store noticeboard to chat with the passing pedestrian traffic. We handed out local information, SBA Newsletters, free tubes of plants and Easter eggs. We answered lots of questions particularly about the topic of when our roads are to be made. By explaining the usefulness and purpose of our Association, we also signed up new and old members.

Once again, our SBA Vice-President, Douglas Cousins had invited all members and friends to share the annual 'Clean Up Australia Day' on the first Sunday in March. The volunteers met at the Smiths Beach car-park and were provided with their gloves and bags. Recycled and waste rubbish was collected and we were pleased to become part of the many keeping Australia beautiful.

The issue of the four seasonal SBA Newsletters have been appreciated. There are 140 copies printed and are sent to local MP's, BCSC Councillors and staff, PINP and staff, Landcare, PI Conservation Society, The Advertiser, Parks Victoria, State and local libraries etc. It is placed on our noticeboard, website and Facebook. Copies are left at the Smiths Beach Store and Surf Shop. Thanks to John Steward for addressing and posting the Newsletters.

Heidi Demsky once again organised advertising space in our SBA Newsletter. Sponsorship was from the Phillip Island and San Remo Advertiser and from Cowes Priceline Pharmacy. Letters of thanks were sent to these valuable supporters and we encourage our members to give them our custom.

The 40th Anniversary Celebrations of our SBA are planned for Sat 11th June. Venue is to be decided.

Some current Smiths Beach issues not resolved

The unattractive appearance as you enter Smiths Beach. It should be more welcoming.

The proposed Town Square in the land opposite the Store.

Filling in the drains on either side of Smiths Beach Road to create more parking space.

Smiths Beach to Sunderland Bay walking track.

Primerseal dust suppressant surfacing on more streets.

Express Point viewing platform constructed.

Speed restrictions entering our car-parks.

Replacement of the east stairway from the toilet block straight down to the beach (really helps the Lifesavers too)

Finally, my personal thanks go to all SBA members and the Committee who have helped in the achievement of this year's tasks. I offer my best wishes to you all for a successful twelve months ahead.

Ian Shand