

Mission Statement:

To support and develop a sustainable, thriving and resilient community through leadership and partnership.

HELD: Tuesday 12 April at 6.30pm

LOCATION: Beechworth Memorial Hall

NUMBER OF RESIDENTS: 73

Councillors	Council Staff	Community members
Ali Pockley - Mayor	Brendan McGrath - CEO	Rob Woodward – La Trobe Beechworth
Bernard Gaffney – Deputy Mayor	Roberta Baker – Manager Communications	Lisa Cartledge – La Trobe Beechworth
Peter Croucher	Mark Florence – General Manager Sustainable Communities	Robert Godfrey
Larry Goldsworthy	Frank Bonacci – Manager Finance	Peter Rue
Vic Issell	Ron Sneddon – Manager Civil Operations	Jason Dawson
Barbara Murdoch	Ray Henderson – Development Engineer	Maria Harvey
Peter Graham		Chris Kinnaird
		Julie Murray
		Felicity Leigh
		Betty Lawrence
		Peter Douglas
		Chris McNeill
		Anne Jovaras
		Meryl Johnson

COMMUNITY FORUM MINUTES

		Julia Smith
		Frank Bonacci
		Lorraine Kneebone
		Roger Humphris
		Graeme Bailey
		Jenna Holt
		Bill Bell
		Helen McIntosh
		Rob Ransom
		Greg Clydesdale
		Nerida Kerr
		Keith Harms
		Pamela Carlton
		Terry Kampf
		Sue Thomas
		Roger Thomas
		Marty Matassoni
		Leith McKenzie
		Marg McKenzie
		Marg Harms
		Judy Gadd
		Sandra Williams
		Garth Blackman
		Helen McIntyre
		Joan Simms
		Garry Jarvis
		Bruce Forrest
		D. Doron Gunzburg
		Mre Jan Gunzburg
		Marilyne Gladstone
		Harvey Anderssen



COMMUNITY FORUM MINUTES

	Christine Stewart
	Bob Bennett
	Robin McLeish
	Rob Holden
	Ian Vincent
	Judy Lazarus
	Owen Keylock
	Heidi Freeman
	Linda Martin
	Harry Thomas
	Pamela Thomas
	Barb Carey
	Chris Carey
	Betty Freeman
	Margaret Medcraft
	Val Voigt
	Iris Mannik
	Sven Mannik
	Mary Corrigan
	Wendy Stephens
	Bernard Bolan
	John Stewart Thom
	Robin Thom

ITEM NO	ITEM	ACTION
1.0	Welcome	
2.0	Apologies	
	Nil	
3.0	Closure of La Trobe at Beechworth - Rob Woodward from La Trobe University	
	<p>Rob Woodward outlined the process for the sale of La Trobe Beechworth Campus. He said it has been a privilege to work with the staff from La Trobe at Beechworth and paid tribute to the staff at La Trobe for putting in 110%, and to the community members involved with La Trobe.</p> <p>Community Consultation: Rob is looking for honesty from the community throughout the consultation process. He said the La Trobe Beechworth campus does not perform the functions of a University, and is running at a loss, so it is time for someone else to take over the site. The University doesn't want to "cut and run", but wants to leave the site in the best hands possible, and needs to work with the community to make this happen. Rob is committed to a community consultation process, involving not just talking, but doing.</p> <p>This month, a property report is being compiled as a starting point in the provision of information that would be relevant to prospective purchasers. The site will be listed on the Government Land Register for approximately two months, and community consultation will also begin.</p> <p>Next month, community consultation and work with the tenants will continue. They do not want to "move all people on", but to instead resolve the lease process and ensure that people who remain on site have safe conditions. The hotel and accommodation business closes on 23 May, with most staff finishing on 29 May. The outcome of community consultation will be presented to La Trobe to inform the Expressions of Interest process, should the sale go public.</p> <p>In June, information about the property will be developed, including Expressions Of Interest criteria and process, for potential buyers. La Trobe will continue to maintain the grounds and buildings for as long as it takes to sell the property.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the Expression Of Interest process will begin in July.</p> <p>A Community Consultation Coordinating Group (CCCG) has been formed, including four people from La Trobe, four from Indigo</p>	

Shire Council, Jason Dawson from the Chamber of Commerce, as well as representatives from Regional Development Victoria and DPCD.

There will be three key aims throughout the consultation process. They are:

- 1:** Community access. How will La Trobe ensure continued and safe access to the site?
- 2:** How might the economic impact, of business closure and sale, be minimized for the community and the businesses that may be affected?
La Trobe is committed to sustaining business and tourism in the area, and to helping staff find further employment. How is the social, family and cultural impact managed? How might a proposal be formulated to enable 'Opera in the Alps' to be staged at the La Trobe site in the future?
- 3:** Input into the Expressions of Interest process. La Trobe is seeking community input into the specific criteria for the EOI process so that the best outcome for the site is achieved, as the result of sale.

La Trobe need community feedback to get the best outcome. People are encouraged to approach members of the coordinating group to pass on any queries and concerns.

How do you express your view:

- Talk to people on the CCCG. These are Cr Ali Pockley 0448 803 411, Cr Bernard Gaffney 0419 181 234, Mark Florence - General Manager Sustainable Communities 02 6028 1100, Roberta Baker - Manager Communications 03 5728 8000, Jason Dawson 03 5728 2200.
- Talk to Rob Woodward (through Lisa) 5720 8010
- An email contact has been setup communityfeedback@latrobe.edu.au

Robert Godfrey: What, if anything, is proposed about the residential School of music? The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, La Trobe and another group each put up \$10,000 each, and the Shire \$5,000 towards the school.

It has not happened and will not happen. (Additional Note: The feasibility study did not lead the key players to that outcome)

Q: A good job as been done at engaging the community, but can more be done? Universities have many 'thinkers', and there were high hopes when La Trobe took over in 1996. The community will help with the process, but if a University can't run the site, who can?

The University has made all the effort it can to make it work, and it hasn't been able to achieve that.

Q: Can it be regulated, or could another university have made it work?

I (Rob) cannot speak for other Universities such as Charles Sturt, but La Trobe has not been able to make it work, and it is time for another group to have the opportunity to make it work. Times are different now than they were when La Trobe first took on the site. Funding is focused more directly on student numbers and the site has no students.

Bernard Bolan: What is the extent to which La Trobe will be seeking guarantees from potential buyers as to the criteria?

La Trobe is committed to supporting the interests of the Beechworth Community. The site will not be sold to a company with the biggest offer if it doesn't fit with the criteria of the sale or the Beechworth community.

Doren Gunsburg: La Trobe is committed to selling the business, what does this mean?

Clearly criteria will be put in place. If a developer came along, they would have to commit to meeting the criteria, which has come from the community itself and the consultation process.

Betty Lawrence: Heritage is not mentioned. What happens if a Government Department chooses to purchase the site, would they make it inaccessible to the whole of the community, or would they be able to change any of the heritage buildings or trees?

They would need approval from Heritage Victoria to change the heritage aspects. La Trobe will play a role in this, and will be in discussions with any potential buyers. The nature and identity of the site is critical to the people of Beechworth. La Trobe will do what they can.

Graham Bailey: Has the site been offered to any state or Commonwealth departments?

It has not been offered to anyone yet.

Will it be offered to Commonwealth as well as state departments?

It will primarily be offered to State departments. No State departments wanted it during 1995, and so La Trobe obtained the site as part of a broader land deal. Maintaining the buildings has not been as easy as expected, as this will be true for other prospective purchasers.

Frank Bonacci: The process of the sale, it is open for about 2 months on the Government Land monitor. Will it only go to Expression of Interest if no Government Department is interested?

It will go the Expressions of Interest and prospective purchasers will have to meet the criteria.

Will the sale be managed by La Trobe or the Department of Treasury, and will there be similar results that came about from the sale of the Gaol?

The sale will be managed by La Trobe, and the result will be different to the sale of the Gaol.

Greg Clydesdale: A statement: As an individual member of the Beechworth Community, I was propelled to act to contact the Department of Immigration to see if they would consider using the site as a processing and assimilation centre, as it is a perfect location for this purpose.

(Greg's full statement is attached.)

Marty Matassoni: If La Trobe cannot sell it, who will look after the buildings and gardens long term?

Contractors will be employed from June onwards for as long as it takes. (Rob and two others from La Trobe will take on the responsibility of overseeing this.)

George Buckman: Regards to finance and the heritage overlays, could the site have a negative net present value?

With an extension of the type of operations that currently run on the site, (the net value) will be positive.

La Trobe Beechworth's income comes from the Government, but how much of the sale proceeds will come back to education and training in this district?

A figure cannot be put on that. In the district, La Trobe in Wodonga has limited accommodation facilities, and (further finance could certainly be used to improve those and the general well being of students).

Margaret McKenzie: You mentioned safely issues, can this please be expanded on?

La Trobe has spent time assessing the site, and is concerned about areas (buildings) that are not safe, and there is a concern with the tenants that are left behind that their safety is maintained. It is the same for the community. We wish to make certain that the areas they have access to are safe. This may require some involvement from the community.

Road access as well?

It all has to be safe. Ghost Tours are a group that is of concern. Some areas are not absolutely safe, but areas used need to be as safe as we can make it.

4.0	Storm damage in Beechworth	Action/Officer
	<p>Ron Sneddon gave an update on damage from storms and floods from September 2010 to February 2011.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total cost of damage is in excess of \$3.4 million. • Council relies on State Government funding through the Natural Disaster Assistance Funding. So far \$1.6 million has come through. Council could not start repairing major damage without this funding. • Two bridges were repaired within 48 hours of the storms, a third one, Garvey's Road bridge, cost \$141,000 to repair and was now operational. • Two tenders have been advertised for the western and eastern parts of the shire, seeking contractors to do gravel resheeting and repairing surface drains. June-July start for work, will take about six months allowing for wet weather. • 23 people in our field crew, half look after parks and gardens, four permanently in machines, leaves small number of staff to do minor repairs. Staff have done a fantastic job. • In 2008-09 there were 980 work authorities, ie jobs generated from residents' phone calls and work identified by staff. Last financial, 2009-10, year there were 1544, and at the end of March this year, 2063 issues have been recorded. That's 11 new work issues every day – over and above what we normally do, which is grading roads, patching potholes and fixing drains. • Staff have completed 83% of them. Many are waiting on disaster assistance funding. • In Beechworth, there are 719 work authorities, about 80% completed. <p>Ray Henderson displayed a map of the Beechworth drainage system and the work that needs to be done. Need to look at where storm water retention basins can be placed and need to develop strategies to address this issue. Some pits don't let water into the system and need to be modified. With the historic drainage system in Beechworth, instead of peak flows running down the roads, they go through properties.</p> <p>Garth Blackman asked if it was optimistic to expect to be able to get contractors to do work. Ron Sneddon said Council is governed by procurement rules, and have been verbally advised we can use our own resources. They are stretched now but if we can cobble together some local contractors we may have a solution there.</p> <p>Toni Atkins mentioned gutters and crossovers, the overflowing and deterioration of the roadside that occurs. Council says it is a VicRoads issue but he has not seen any VicRoads staff. How do we address that? Ron Sneddon: We probably share your frustrations. Will take this up with VicRoads.</p> <p>Peter Rue referred to repair work in Barnard street. Gutters eroded - 3 ft deep and 2ft wide - subsequently repaired but he is</p>	<p>Ron Sneddon</p>

	<p>concerned about the quality of the fill. Ron Sneddon: We wanted to make it safer straight away and this was quicker than waiting for contractor. To provide a much better standard it requires a huge commitment and cost. Resident commented that residents can contribute. Mayor Cr Pockley said Council could look at a special charge scheme.</p> <p>Cr Pockley thanked Council staff for work on storm damage repair.</p>	
5.0 & 7.0	Council Plan and Community Survey	
	<p>CEO Brendan McGrath said a draft version of the Council Plan had been adopted that night. This is the third version, with some updates included to reflect currency of issues. It is out for public comment and is available on our new website and at customer service centres.</p> <p>There were 673 responses to the community survey. Draft copy of results just received. In general terms, the standard of service from council in some areas has improved, pretty confident in our consultation and community engagement processes, some dissatisfaction generally about overall performance, minor improvements in town planning but need for big improvement still. Lot of feedback about what people like about living in Indigo shire. Comments from survey will be reflected in the Council Plan if required. Report and summary will be available on Council's website in a month or so. Will also be publicised in the <i>Indigo Informer</i> as well as the <i>Ovens & Murray Advertiser</i> newspaper.</p>	<p>Roberta Baker</p> <p>Roberta Baker</p>
6.0	Fire brigade station in Beechworth	
	<p>CEO said Council refused the application for the CFA station in Victoria St at its February meeting. Discussions were then held with the CFA to try and find alternative sites, then go to the community with those to flush out any concerns before another application was lodged. But CFA have lodged an appeal to VCAT on Council's original refusal. Council has signaled they are keen on bringing emergency services together on one site and has discussed this with the regional CFA, but need to get others on board. If Council loses at VCAT, Council's role is to work with the CFA through the planning process. Only avenue for Council is to Supreme Court, but only on a technical issue. Difficult and expensive process.</p>	
8.0	2030 Long-term strategy	
	<p>Mark Florence, General Manager Sustainable Communities said the Council Plan shapes council's actions over a four-year period. Councils like to adopt a more broad vision. This involves asking the community to provide feedback on how they want to see Indigo in the year 2030. Looking for something different to a nice glossy book at the end of the process and will be asking people to produce some visual representation of their ideas. Might be story form, painting, art, music, DVD, and there would also be an opportunity for roundtable conversations. Want to capture ideas from all ages, especially those just starting with family now - what</p>	

	<p>are their dreams and aspirations. Also want to capture views of older people – what are the values older people have that they want to see replicated over time. Have appointed a project officer.</p> <p>Joan Simms said it was commendable to look to the future, but have to put down some building blocks in relation to demographics and statistics and referred to the Ballarat Community Foundation and work they had done. We want to produce something that is usable, forms basis of council plans going forward, a product that people can use to unify community and showcases Indigo talent and community input into that process.</p> <p>Cr Peter Croucher said he had spoken to young people recently at a school and got great ideas about their visions for the future for the shire and confirmed that young people will be involved in the 2030 process.</p>	
<p>9.0</p>	<p>Business signage review</p>	
	<p>Council has received over 100 responses to a survey as part of the review. There are issues around colour, font, size, location, A frames, banners, upper and lower case. Final report will come to council. More consultation to take place before then.</p> <p>Robert Godfrey said he would like the opportunity to speak to his written and supplementary submissions as did Marty Matassoni.</p> <p>Gary Jarvis mentioned safety signs in Ford Street, just needs to move 10m. Everyone blames each other and nothing gets done. Council says it is a VicRoads matter.</p> <p>Owen Keylock mentioned a business that suffered because they couldn't have a sign on the main street, and signs that are not fixed and lack of enforcement of guidelines.</p> <p>Garth Blackman mentioned non-heritage signs such as the one at the Anglican Church.</p> <p>Mark Florence said these issues have been picked up in the survey. The next part is the debate.</p> <p>Bill Bell was concerned about the lack of heritage look on the Yackandandah Public Hall. Mark Florence said the heritage part of that building, the front, was preserved. Rest was not classified as heritage. And under heritage overlay, old part can be demolished, and new part needs to be complementary. But pseudo heritage was to be avoided. There is a process under way to change the design of the side wall and the coloured tiles.</p>	<p>Mark Florence</p>

10.0	Community Strengthening Project	
	<p>Mark Florence said the project is being rolled out across the shire with communities identifying key projects they wanted to work on. Small working groups are formed to work on projects. The model used in other towns did not fit well with Beechworth. Beechworth is a very strong community as it is and the process has shown us that the way forward is to market what already happens here. The Beechworth project will probably bring together existing strengths with opportunities for further improvement. And that will be fed through to the community for your support.</p>	
11.0	Your Say	
	<p>Robin McLeish spoke about the draft roadside management plan. He mentioned tree limbs overhanging roads and road accidents, in particular four fatal accidents in the area controlled by Wangaratta and Indigo. He asked how many people were aware of and had read the draft plan. He counted 13 - six residents and the seven Councillors. One person said they had put in a submission to council on the plan. Robin also referred to the draft Rating strategy and the trust for nature section which would attract a \$10 per hectare rate reduction if your land was classed as Trust for Nature land. He asked people to let Councillors know if they felt this was unfair.</p> <p>Cr Pockley said the council meeting that afternoon had postponed the rating strategy until April 2012. The status quo remained except moving Residential 2 rate from 135% to 120% for short term accommodation up to 4 bedrooms, starting on 1 July 2011.</p> <p>CEO explained the Roadside Management Plan was one plan with a change in name and it rated roads as high, medium and low conservation values. The plan doesn't stop people from doing work on roadsides, but makes clear what work requires some formal approval process to do work. This is not a fire prevention plan.</p> <p>Discussion occurred on the old jail site and the crumbling state of the walls. CEO said Heritage Victoria had carriage of this and Council had made several representations to Heritage Victoria about that site and the level of maintenance. The matter will be raised with the planning minister.</p>	<p>Brendan McGrath</p>

As an individual member of the Beechworth community I have been aware of some of the circumstances of the Latrobe site in Beechworth including that the site was advertised in Newspapers as a 100 Hectare site for sale.

Without being privy to most of the discussions that have occurred or are occurring in relation to that site I was propelled to action in contacting the Minister for Immigration to question whether they were aware of this site and its potential contribution to migration processing.

While there have been many options and proposed solutions which have met with a variety of negative responses in other locations I have been encouraged by the support I have evidenced from a diverse number of community members who have indicated many positive attributes that I was unaware of in my initial contact.

There has been much coverage of the existing Immigration practices and handling of migrants and the deficiencies of processing which are leading to escalating problems. I believe that Beechworth has some attributes which can reduce many of the problems evidenced as difficulties encountered by the current and previous government.

Offshore and isolated facilities not only increase processing difficulties including costs but can contribute to lengthened periods of detention that do not assist assimilation. Beechworth is isolated but at a central location to large nearby population centres Wangaratta and Albury Wodonga. Beechworth is also well located to the Melbourne Sydney Canberra axis.

Beechworth has a long and proud history of welcoming migrants. William O Hara Burke when police commissioner here made it clear that "Beechworth would always be a safe haven for Chinese miners" at the time of the Buckland uprising. Beechworth has a rich migrant population that has added to the diversity and uniqueness of the community's activities.

The Beechworth community also has a rich diversity of skilled, professionals who can assist new migrants not only in housing and processing phases of migration but also in developing skills to assist employment assimilation. The Beechworth community with its welcoming and friendly manner can also assist in social and cultural assimilation phases.

The Beechworth Latrobe site has itself a rich history and much of the existing infrastructure which can provide a diverse accommodation and training facility. While there are many existing overlays which must be retained the site lends itself to skill development in building restoration, accommodation, and gardening.

The nearby regional communities can provide a wealth of employment and skill development opportunities with an existing seasonal agricultural demand. There is also an existing employment infrastructure which can be enhanced to administer the requirements of such programs

The Beechworth area has an identified tourism industry which can be enhanced and utilised with the sympathetic operation of a migration assimilation centre. The costs of developing such a centre would still be considerable but would be defrayed by the existing resource availability and some economy of scale advantages.

The economic benefit to Beechworth would be great but even more importantly is utilising existing infrastructure and providing many positive career opportunities to the North East region. I have indicated I would welcome and support the Immigration Department consideration of such a centre and ask all Beechworth and regional community members to add their support.

Greg Clydesdale