

# Old Bar Beach Sand Replenishment Group Inc

www.obbsrg.com

3/30 Old Bar Road, Old Bar

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PUBLIC MEETING – JULY 19, 2009 TO BE HELD AT THE CLUB

OLD BAR

WATERMAN STREET, OLD BAR

## PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Good afternoon all and I thank you for your interest and presence at our meeting. It is 3 months since our last meeting and we feel that we have an obligation to our members and our community to report every 3 months so we can also now give you the date of our next meeting, October 18, 2009.

Again I would like to say how fortunate I have been with the committee members who have joined me and who work tirelessly. Vice-president, Mark Searles who has an extensive knowledge of legal matters associated with our cause, prepares our plans and follows up on leads with specialists in the field as he speaks their language, Kerrie Curtis, Secretary, Anne Taylor, Treasurer, Beryl Nielsen, publicity officer, Bob Galvin and Joanne Turner.

During this quarter we were sorry to receive the resignation of Greg Barrass as his new appointment in Newcastle made it impossible to attend our meetings, but Greg is still very active with us in looking after our website. We thank Greg for his assistance.

Item 5 on our Agenda is a motion to have elected to our committee a young member of the community who grew up here in Old Bar and is offering to help. Katrina Carlon is now a fourth year "Environmental Law Student" and will no doubt assist us greatly with research. It is pleasing to have a young person join the committee as it assures us that the beach will still be protected a long way into the future.

In my last address I used the word "optimistic" – I am finding that harder and harder to say, however there is still one word constantly in my mind – **"POSITIVE"**. This is far too great a problem for any other thought and I ask you all to join with me thinking **"POSITIVE"**

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In our previous meetings we have discussed the history of the beaches along the coastline of New South Wales and Queensland - because of this history of success with groynes and the proof existing here on our own Old Bar Beach with the gabion wall installed by council in 1992 we are extremely confident that **the sand CAN BE replenished and the beach CAN BE preserved.**

As previously stated our group has researched many and varied methods and is continuing to communicate with council and those government bodies handling beaches and the environment. However, because of the delays in having work done, we are constantly having to change our plans and our endeavours are now concentrated on Groynes just to hold the sand – the current plan being 2 sets of 3 groynes, one at Lewis St. Beach and one at the Littoral Rainforest south of the school.

In four years since the erosion commenced we have lost 32 metres at the Lewis Street beachfront, and in the last storm period very serious erosion at the Littoral Rainforest and the beach in front of the school and a loss of many metres leaving a dangerous cliff, maybe 10 metres high. As we should be nearing the end of the storm season which starts in May and goes through to August I hope the very serious erosion we have suffered since April is at an end.

**Here are our plans** as designed by Tim Minty, local geological engineer and Mark Searles our local surveyor, both of whom have done work related to the restoration and preservation of beaches for many years. These plans and similar work on other beaches throughout the world will be explained by Mark Searles later.

- **Groynes** – We have requested permission from council to carry out under emergency measures “**1997 NSW Coastal Policy**” two sets of 3 groynes – one set on the Lewis Street Beach and the other set on Badger’s Beach, that is the beach in front of the school. The OBBSRG are working to get the funding for

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these groynes which are virtually all on the beach which is Crown land. But some of the groynes will be on private land, and we now have permission from the owners to carry out the work on their property. We also need the permission from the Department of Lands to carry out work on the beach and the Taree office has withheld permission pending the finalisation of the Worley Parsons Report so we have written direct to the Minister, Tony Kelly for permission.

- **Foredune protection** with ecofabric sandbags. That section of the foredune which is now on private property is the responsibility of the owners, but on the beach we have to again get permission from the Dept. of Lands and they will be responsible for the cost.

**The obstacles we are encountering** - Any work done has to have consent from Council and a Development Application has to be submitted. Since our inauguration in January this year we have made the following submissions to council

- January 5, 2009, enclosing Tim Minty's drawings, estimated costs and an application for funding from the Federal Grant which was being made to all councils – we did not receive a reply
- March 11, 2009, - In an endeavour to have our urgent problem included on an open Council meeting agenda, as president of OBBSRG I addressed a meeting of Councillors and Council officers and pointed out the urgency of our problem – we did not receive a reply
- April 28, 2009 At our last public meeting on April 19, Mayor Hogan, being faced with comments from people at the meeting, said that we had not submitted any plans and that we should do so and request to be included on the agenda of an open council meeting. We did as instructed – but no reply
- May 13, 2009 - 8.45 am-following up on not receiving a reply to the above I Phoned Council to speak with Gerard Jose and

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was connected to the General Manager's secretary who said she would pass on the message. 9.55 the Mayor phoned and advised that our letter of April 28 had been forwarded to the Director of Engineering for review and preparation of a report which will take about 6 weeks. Other advice was given by the mayor which is available here in a copy of that conversation. But at 10.05 am he again rang and advised to make a submission for consideration for funding in the budget. He also said "we should take pressure off the General Manager".

- May 31, 2009 - Doing good follow-up I sent a letter to Gerard Jose, General Manager GTCC, - no reply
- June - 2009 - I made a phone call to Greg Blaze and asked when the report referred to by the Mayor may be made available – he advised that nothing would be done until the Worley Parsons Report is finalised and that a reply to our letter of April 28 had been sent on May 28. However I have never received the original on GTCC letterhead – only a copy which arrived the day after my phone conversation with Greg Blaze.

Council will not communicate in any way regarding the erosion we have suffered on our beach until the Worley Parsons Study is finalised.

## **WORLEY PARSONS STUDY**

Here is a history of the WP study -

- **2005, June** we had the first of this unprecedented storm activity and at least 10 metres of foredune eroded
- **2005, August 25** – Greater Taree City Council, one would assume because of the extreme urgency of the situation, sent a letter to Dept of Infrastructure and Material Resources requesting funding to prepare a study for coastal erosion at **OLD BAR**
- **2006, April 10** - Funding was accepted

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- **2006, October 18** - Resolution of Ordinary meeting of council to have prepared the “*Coastline Hazard Definition Study*”. That is six months after the funds became available
  - **2007, December 12** - Coastal Hazard Definition Study Coastline Management Study and Coastal Zone Management Plan for **OLD BAR** was approved for issue in the form of a “Consultancy Brief” – Another 14 months lost.
  - **2008, April** - The Study was actually commissioned to Worley Parsons in April 2008.
  - **2008, December 11** - A meeting was held at Old Bar Surf Club for landowners directly affected by the beach erosion to be addressed by Dan Messiter of Worley Parsons on the progress made with the study, but at that meeting it was advised that a decision had been made to extend the study from Black Head in the South to Crowdy Head in the North and that funds had been allocated to cover the additional cost.
  - **July 2, 2009** – Worley Parsons submitted to Council a “*Black Head to Crowdy Head Coastline Studies Progress Report Position paper June 2009*”, in which they advise that data currently being sourced to augment completed studies:
    1. bathymetric survey focussing on detailed survey of ...particular section of coast between Wallabi Point and Manning Point
    2. Stormwater drawings for extended study area to be provided by council
    3. reports associated with demountable development at Black Head Beach
  - **July 19, 2009** - As a member of the Estuary and Coastline Management Committee I can tell you that we still do not have a date for the tabling of this study, the non completion of which is frustrating our every endeavour to obtain funds or have work done to replenish and hold sand on our beach.

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Our group feels that we as a community should be looking for the following answers:

1. Why did it take from April 2006 to October 18, 2006. to have a decision to have a study done????
2. How can preparation of a brief for an **Urgent Problem** take 14 months from October, 2006 to December 2007????
3. Why, when the study was instigated because of the urgency of the erosion at Old Bar Beach, was it extended to cover areas not suffering the severe erosion???? When I questioned the likely delay, I was told in a telephone conversation with Graham Schultz that it would not greatly affect the time for completion of the study as most of the work had been done already and it just meant that Worley Parsons would get paid for work they had done.
4. Surely all these things referred to in the July 2 WP report to council – relating to the initial consultancy brief (listed above) should have been called for in May or June 2008, when Worley Parsons were first given the work????
5. When will the Worley Parsons Study be completed???

We have to ask of the Council

- How can you have taken so long – from August, 2005 to July 2009 – 4 years in an urgent situation?
- How can you continually deny the community the right to protect its most valuable possession, when you have already provided proof that the proposed plan of groynes can work on our beach?.

I know the gabion wall at the end of Rose Street has been constantly monitored with interest by many of our residents and it is fascinating to see how it holds the sand and builds it up so there is something to be drawn down when the ocean is at its most tempestuous.

Now to inform you of the work we have been doing

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## **Submissions already made**

- Worley Parsons
- Draft Plan of Management- Manning Regional Crown Reserve
- Robert Oakeshott
- Greater Taree City Council
  - January 5, 2009
  - March 11, address to Councillors Committee
  - April 28, asking to have our plea for groynes submitted to a full council meeting
- State Government – “NSW Environmental Trust” for Environmental Restoration and Rehabilitation. This was forwarded to the Parramatta office by 5 pm May 29, 2009, and was acknowledged by them. We are still awaiting further confirmation.

## **Submissions we are preparing for**

- Federal Government – “Caring for our Country” –advised by Peter Garrett - unfortunately we missed out on getting our submission in time for the last closure on April 3, for these submissions are very complicated – We have spoken with Megan Tattersall the “Facilitator” for our area and she advised there will be another at the end of the year so we are now preparing for that.
- State Government - We are in the process of preparing a submission for a grant for non- profit groups in communities in a high unemployment area to create employment in the environmental field of social and recreational endeavours\_ We feel that we are definitely in that category.
- Development Application - We feel that a step we must take in obtaining our NSW ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST fund is submitting a Development Application and we should have this ready by July 23 – As advised earlier in this address we have obtained written permission from all the owners on whose land they will be placed, the only permission remaining to be obtained is the Department of Lands. As it is most unlikely we

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will have this by Friday. We will submit the Development Application anyway, for we can't delay any longer.

**Rob. Oakeshott** We have had great response from Robert Oakeshott who in writing - (House of Representatives Question No.604) asked three questions of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, in writing on Feb.12. These questions and Peter Garrett's response thereto are available here if anyone wants to read it in detail.

- **Summarised** Peter Garrett replied ----That he is aware of the group's concerns and has received correspondence from the group in Nov. 2008 and Feb. 2009. but that Planning and Management of coastal areas rests with State Government which in turn has devolved many aspects of day to day planning decisions to Local Government bodies and Taree Council has established an Estuary and Coastline Management Committee (which our group has been invited to join).. He again mentioned the "caring for our country" grant which we are following up on. There are several other government programmes which we will be pursuing. Peter Garrett states that he has advised our Group to liaise with the Council and engage a coastal engineer to identify the most appropriate method of approaching the sand erosion problem in this specific area – This we have done and the plans we are submitting have been prepared by Tim Minty.

## **CONTACTS MADE**

We have contacted John Turner, our local State member, Tony Kelly, Minister for Lands, Carmel Tebbut, State Minister for the Environment, Rob Oakeshott, our local Federal Member and Peter Garrett, Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts.

Our communications and submissions are not being ignored, but the reply we constantly get refers us back to Greater Taree City Council

We have been in communication with the council from the beginning. Their only answer is of no comfort - They will not allow us to carry

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out any work until completion of the Worley Parsons Study which comprises four parts

1. Coastal Hazard Assessment – which in December 2008 was extended from Farquhar Inlet – Wallabi Point to now cover from Crowdy Head to Black Head
2. Coastline Management Study
3. Coastline Management Plan
4. Review
  - a. Government
  - b. Public

**HOWEVER WE MUST CONTINUE TO STRESS THE EXTREME URGENCY OF OUR SITUATION AND THE TWELVE METRES OF FOREDUNE THAT REMAINS AS OUR ONLY PROTECTION FROM THE OCEAN**

We are now looking to you, our community which is so disastrously affected in leisure and commercially by the erosion, to join with us in our approaches to Council – write and ask for answers to the questions set out above or any others you may know of in relation to the erosion of our foredune.

**THESE MATTERS CAN TEND TO BE FORGOTTEN IN THE DAY TO DAY BUSINESS OF OUR LIVES UNTIL DISASTER STRIKES but OUR GROUP WILL NOT LET THAT HAPPEN**

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