



29 June 2015

Sue Wilkinson  
CEO  
Colac Otway Shire

Dear Sue

### **Meeting with WRSC Progress Association**

We appreciated your taking the time to meet with the Committee on Saturday 20 June and trust that the exchange of views and discussion of current and pending issues was beneficial for you, and it was for us.

We thought it would be helpful to record a number of the key issues and outcomes of our discussion with you:

#### **Riverwalk**

WRSCPA appreciated COS's role in securing an appropriate outcome with the Riverwalk project and noted that responsibility for completion and future management and maintenance rests with Otway Coast Committee and the principals of Big4.

#### **Otway Coast Committee**

Feedback from the foreshore caravan park users is that there isn't any communication that occurs to regular campers about any works / upgrades / changes etc except when rates are sent out. It is acknowledged that you haven't had an opportunity to meet the new CEO of OCC Anthony Alfirenko to date but will forward this feedback to him when possible.

#### **Parking**

It was generally appreciated the parking changes had a positive outcome over the summer by preventing overnight parking. COS will essentially undertake the same arrangement from December 2015 through to Easter and then review after two years of operation. Some issues need resolving for staff parking from the pub and store, as well as additional cars from the caravan parks permanently taking up remaining all day parks. One suggestion is to provide short-term drop-off park(s) on the beach side for families for COS to consider implementing. COS has budgeted to have an additional seasonal local laws officer for 3-4 months to patrol the coastline to ensure compliance.

#### **Harrington Park**

There are no proposals for any new works at this stage. Maintenance will occur out of depot just like all other council managed reserves. Community is invited to let COS know of any issues. WRSCPA would like to see some re-vegetation take place within the park.

Some discussion centred on the Community Garden where you strongly recommended that the current informal arrangement is maintained as a community asset that no individual owns or has an exclusive right to. You agreed to have a sign made up providing the contact details of how to become involved in the community garden and highlighting that it is a community park for all to enjoy.

It was also noted that no expansion of the community garden footprint is to occur; and that only COS has authority to effect changes to the park.

### **Rates & charges**

In the context of Council's budget for 2015 – 16, we noted the proposed increase of average rates of 4.90%, which Council highlights as "the lowest average rates and charges in more than a decade." While that is so, it remains the fact that over the same period our Council's rates and charges have doubled, and substantially exceed the average (and still very high) increase of some 80% across all Victorian councils.

We note COS's participation on the MAV task force which is reviewing the State Government's rate capping and variation proposals, to take effect from 2016. We understand the positions of the various stakeholders are continuing to evolve but note the MAV's statement that *"as a principle, the MAV believes that a rate capping framework should not be in place for local government."*

In our view, the arguments mounted against capping by reference to CPI are not persuasive and we support the general thrust of the May 2015 submissions by Ratepayers Victoria Inc. to the Essential Services Commission.

### **2015-16 Capital Works**

The PA notes the allocation of over \$17 million in carried forward and new programs, of which \$5.6 million is ear-marked for road works, including reconstruction, re-sheeting, resealing and safety upgrades.

This is a significant issue for our townships. Council itself cited the degraded road system 3 years ago when it proposed to discontinue individual household garbage collection by its contractors because of perceived OHS and road safety issues in Wye River and Separation Creek.

While that proposal was abandoned after vigorous community protest, it highlights the continuing issue of the poor state of roads generally – and unsealed roads in particular – in our townships.

The question is: How much of the budgeted \$5.6 million is allocated to Wye River and Separation Creek, and what is the process for having essential safety works in our townships included, as a priority?

Specifically, we request the installation of a metal safety barrier in Olive Street, Separation Creek immediately above the 2-metre deep open culvert and storm-water drain that discharges from the top end of Harrington Street/Bass Avenue. This is a significant traffic hazard for cars and larger vehicles and can be remedied easily, as has been done with the steel safety barrier at the Harrington/Bass Avenue intersection.

We will flag other road works issues for Council's attention in due course.

As noted at our meeting, the Progress Association wishes to maintain the constructive and mutually beneficial relationship it has developed with Council and other external agencies for the advancement of our communities' interests; and we look forward to continuing to meet with Colac Otway Shire councilors and officers on a regular basis in the future

We would appreciate continuing advice and feedback on these significant community issues from Council as they develop.

Yours sincerely

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