

**WYE SEP RECOVERY GROUP
MEETING
31 January 2016, 10.00 am at the Station**

PRESENT: Mel Kohout, Carolyn Tatchell, Matthew Jackman, Ian Angus, Sandy Forbes, Andrew Hack, Roy Moriarty, Debra Hocking, Juliet le Feuvre, Peter Latham (*Chairperson*), Yvonne Sheppard (*Secretary*), Christine Shaw (*by telephone*).

GUESTS: Hon. Lisa Neville MP (*Minister for Environment, Climate Change & Water*)
Lisa Dundas (*Advisor to Lisa Neville*)
Craig Lapsley (*Emergency Services Commissioner*)
Tim Bamford (*Major Projects Victoria*)
Andrew Morrow (*Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning*)
Simon Kinniburgh (*DELWP – South West Region*)
Doug McNeill (*Colac Otway Shire – Planning and Building*)
Peter Kent

APOLOGIES: Terry Bracks, Richard van der Merwe, David Huggins, Rex Brown

Peter Latham opened proceedings saying that David Stirling from Marysville had offered to come and speak to the group about their experience of bushfire recovery.

Peter went on to say that the future of our Group depends on the make-up of the new *Community Resilience Group*, nominations for which will be considered this Wednesday 3rd February by CEO Sue Wilkinson and Craig.

Craig tabled a Governance Framework diagram of the planned Wye River Resettlement plan.

It specifies two main committee/groups:

1. *Wye River Resettlement Leadership Group* – comprising:

- Sue Wilkinson Colac Otway Shire CEO
- DELWP Sec
- Craig Lapsley Emergency Services Commissioner

Other agencies in Melbourne may participate - ie. Government Departments, DELWP etc.

2. *Community Resilience Committee* – comprising:

- Mayor Colac Otway Shire
- Community members

Sue and Craig will work through the applications this coming Wednesday 3rd February. It is hoped to use everyone in some capacity.

The issue of an independent chairperson was raised as there is local sensitivity about COS, and acceptance of the new Committee must be seamless.

It was unclear what decisions would be made by what committee, i.e would the Resilience Committee have authorities to embark on projects, or if it was more a think tank.

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The responsibilities around money have been deliberately not mentioned until the structure is in place.

It was suggested that a strict criteria be established at the onset, governing the conflict of interest between governments and council, and the Spirit Foundation..

The core purpose of the framework is to *Resettle and reconnect Wye River* which will require, amongst other things, vision and ownership by the community.

The connected components (in no special order) of this purpose are:

1. Community Connection
2. Community Wellbeing
3. Clean Up
4. Infrastructure
5. Planning and Building
6. Flora and Fauna
7. Business
8. Tourism

A general discussion ensued.

The Leadership Group

Will resolve issues, decide and direct. But, as issues arise, will they will be referred back to the community. There is concern that the Group will only listen to the vocal few representing only a small percentage of the community, and not the majority.

The new Community Resilience Committee

Craig said the new committee would now comprise a core group of six to nine members. Some members of the WSRG did not nominate because originally there was room for only five community representatives. In answer to a question from Peter, Craig said some could nominate today despite applications closing last Friday.

Craig will work through whether the main groups – CFA, SLSC and PA – will be allowed alternates when representatives are away, people need to lead their lives and not be dominated by endless meetings.

It is essential that the process is open to scrutiny.

The existing Wye Sep Recovery Group

Whilst the WSRG will continue until the new Community Resilience Committee is established, there was some discussion regarding a continuing role for a local advisory group. There needs to be feedback regarding community projects to be considered, ie. Paddy's Path.

The charities are waiting for directions. There are many sensitive, difficult decisions to be made. But there are things that are needed to do now to avoid frustration. As events progress, things change.

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The WSRG should continue to deal with the Spirit Foundation, until the new committees are operational, which is anticipated soon.

Craig said that the WSRG could perhaps continue under the auspices of the PA. However it was clear that it will, subsequent to the new committees operating, lose his endorsement as it is, in its current role.

This would effectively give the WSRG no forward mandate, i.e. it is not an elected body, and hence its authority to direct donated monies would be rescinded at that time.

Colac Otway Shire

A lack of confidence in COS decision making was exemplified in their decision – after three weeks - to withdraw permission for the Wye River water tank to be located in Harrington Park. COS needs to be more proactive and results orientated.

The Progress Association

The PA tries to engage with COS as a voice for the community on specific issues and helps everyone to have a say. It has responsibility for Paddy's Path and the Riverwalk.

The Spirit Foundation

It is believed that *Spirit Foundation* does not want funds to go to Government bodies.

Craig believes CFA, SLSC funding should come from the Government.

Communications

People feel left out of the communication loop, the Shire wants contact details but there is the privacy issue. The plan is for people to be able to go to a single portal for information, and that is being developed as a priority.

Conclusion

Peter and Andy will formulate a package of high priority projects. He thanked Sandy for all her efforts on behalf of the WSRG.

The meeting then closed.

The next meeting will be at 10 am on Sunday 14th February – at the Fire Station.