



## **Sandy Point Community Group's submission to South Gippsland Shire Council**

### **Re: Sandy Point Caravan and Camping Ground Site Investigation**

#### **Background**

The Sandy Point Community Group (SPCG) was initially alerted to the South Gippsland Shire's Caravan and Camping Ground site investigation by concerned residents who were seeking clarification and further information. The SPCG were extremely disappointed with the lack of communication and consultation from SGSC which showed a total disregard for our residents and property owners. Upon receiving a media release advising of an on-line survey and inviting submissions, Council was contacted and a "Drop-In" session was subsequently arranged to allow residents to question the Council officers present. The session proved seriously inadequate for many reasons but key areas of concern were:

- Failing to reach a broad audience of permanent residents and absentee owners,
- Not allowing the exploration of other alternatives to the Council's preferred site and
- A chaotic face to face session which appeared to be designed to inform rather than consult which resulted in most unable to get answers to their questions

A structured Public Meeting was organised with a commitment from Council to extend the deadline for submissions. Council officers were approached with a request to provide a wider notice of this important issue to all Sandy Point ratepayers but they declined. The SPCG strived to reach as broad a representation as possible through its membership database, reaching 174 current and past members via email posting, through Facebook page, placement of posters throughout the township and articles in the Mirror newspaper.

Members, residents and property owners were encouraged to make submissions directly to Council and/or directly to the Community Group. These latter submissions form the basis of our consolidated report.

## **Public Meeting held at the Sandy Point Community Centre 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2019**

The public meeting convened by SPCG and Council representatives Paul Stampton, Acting Director of Development Services and Lyndal Peterson, Strategic Planner was attended by approximately 175 residents and property owners. Everyone was given the opportunity to express their views either verbally or to put on post it notes which would be included in the submission. The event was facilitated by SPCG member Rob Mc Gauren who provided the following report based on the proceedings of the meeting.

There was acceptance of the following:-

1. The Vision for Sandy Point outlined in the Structure Plan and the Statutory Plan (Sandy Point Urban Design Framework & Structure Plan) should be relied on for decision making as no statutory process has been undertaken since its endorsement.
2. This Plan outlined a number of key principles that included the following:-
  - a. No major expansion of the town was supported with only a small expansion along Telopea Drive identified as possible subject to detailed further supporting science
  - b. Subsequent to the Structure plan and planning scheme being endorsed, highly detailed coastal modelling and fire risk modelling has placed further doubt on the potential of the expansion area and also the preferred caravan park site identified by council officers.
  - c. The Original Town Plan and the subsequent structure plan which was the subject of significant community input, continue to specifically denote the existing land owned by Mr Cope as a Caravan Park.
3. No coordinated caravan and camping plan has been provided for the municipality.
4. No justification for the proposed scale of the caravan park was put forward or how it was determined.
5. No details were provided for how the land could be acquired by the municipality.
6. No details were provided as to who would operate such a caravan park.
7. Nobody at the community meeting presented to support for an alternative view. Those that spoke or offered written submissions:
  - i. Opposed the proposed acquisition of the farmlands for a caravan park,
  - ii. Opposed an outcome inconsistent with the current plan for the Sandy Point Coastal township
  - iii. Sought evidence not provided to date by council that there was rigorous scientific evaluation as a basis of the viability of any of the sites identified measured against concerns raised around matters of:-

- flooding,
- environmental impact on habitat areas of high value,
- fire risk to people unfamiliar with the area and further distant from place of last resort,
- loss of amenity to adjoining neighbours by way of noise, inundation, loss of views and traffic ,
- traffic and parking impacts arising from more vehicles from the proposed expanded scale of 250 sites
- economic impacts on expenditure within the town core with the likely provision of a competing kiosk to service a remote park
- safety concerns arising from the likelihood of access of large populations to an unpatrolled beach and also concern from current club members of pressure for them to set up a remote outpost to service this new edge community
- Technical concerns arising from the large volumes of waste water and supply water required to service such a large facility.

8. Existing occupiers of sites within the existing caravan park raised concerns about their future.

9. A statement from Mr Cope's submission to the Community Group was read, confirming that he had no intention of closing the caravan park.

In these circumstances the haste in assessing and supporting subdivision must be challenged.

### **Aim of submission**

The aim of this submission is to report to Council the consolidated responses made to SPCG by community members of Sandy Point (see attached response table, compiled by Phil Cornwell)

### **Summary of Responses**

The Community Group received over 55 emailed submissions and 20 plus statements at the Public Meeting. In the submissions received there was a significant range of opinion expressed as concerns, statements, proposals and questions. Overall 100 plus "themes" were identified and these are presented in the attached table. However, the overriding and optimistic theme in the majority of submissions was to make the existing park work for all concerned; seeking an equitable solution that:

- Recognises the long term commercial interests of the existing owner
- Allows the redevelopment of the current park to meet the needs of the changing travelling demographic; prioritising short term stays
- Offers an equitable transition for existing long-term lease holders
- Preserves the amenity of all residents throughout the township

- Continues to provide a centralised focus to the town around existing infrastructure
- Protects the fragile coastal environment, dunes, beach, coastal reserve, from the inevitable increase in pressures posed by a large scale development.

## **Conclusion**

The community responses received by the SPCG via written submission and expressed verbally at the public meeting show an overwhelming majority do not support council's proposition or the further sub division of the existing park.

The contents of the responses speak for themselves and provide a diverse range of comment, proposals and questions, many of which remain needing to be addressed.

The SPCG, as the community representative, would like the opportunity to continue discussions with the administrators and be involved in an ongoing, consultative collaboration to facilitate reaching positive outcomes.

Anne Kinne

President, Sandy Point Community Group