



Frankston Beach Association Inc.

Preserving the beach for all to use

Sept. 2005 Newsletter

Contents:

FBA GRANTS
MEMBERSHIP FEES INCREASED
CHANNEL DEEPENING
SAFE BOAT HARBOUR
FORESHORE REGENERATION
PLANT NURSERY
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
"BAY DREDGING ON THE MOVE.."
"CALL FOR COUNCIL TO REVEAL
MARINA FACTS"
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

FBA Committee:

President - Barry Priestley
Vice President - John Curran
Secretary - Frank Hart
Treasurer - Kath Hassell
Committee - Olwen Bawden
Bob Graham
Margaret Grice
George Hassell
Helen Priestley
Eve Welch

Contact Details:

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For either work on the foreshore or the nursery, please contact Kathleen Hassell for further information.

Please phone 9783 1391 or email: kath.h@bigpond.net.au

Annual General Meeting

Please keep the 29 November 2005 free – we are seeking a person with coastal management qualifications as our guest speaker.

Time 7.30pm

Venue: Frankston Life Saving Club, Lower Wells Street, Frankston

Reg. No. A0031686R
ABN 68 874 762 644

FBA Grants

A total of \$108,000 has been received by the FBA in Commonwealth and State grants for Frankston foreshore regeneration projects 1995-2005:

- Frankston City Council was provided with \$71,000 from the grants for erecting protective fencing, removal of woody weeds (African Boxthorn) and maintenance spraying.
- FBA used the remaining \$37,000 for purchase of indigenous plants, weed mats, tree guards, stakes, etc.
- The 2 most recent Envirofund grants (received 2004/5 and included in the amounts above) involved a total of \$21,815. Both of these grants were used for regeneration projects between the boardwalk and Nepean Highway, stretching from 200 metres south of the children's playground to the Olivers Hill end of the boardwalk.
- A photograph of the results of these foreshore revegetation projects was part of a submission by Frankston Council for the Natural Heritage Award, which Frankston won jointly with the Warrnambool Landcare/Coastcare group.
- The FBA is currently applying for a Coast Action/Coastcare Group support grant, up to a maximum amount \$2,000, for the supply of 2,000 Spinifex, which will partially stop erosion where the boardwalk is threatened by wave action. Ideally, upwards of 6,000 Spinifex are required in order to have a real impact on the erosion that is occurring along this stretch of the beach.

No funding is available from federal, state or local government grants to cover the FBA's administration costs for any of the projects. These costs can be considerable, and include:

- Photocopying, printing, postage, GST and telephone costs.
- Purchase of maintenance items - watering cans, trowels, mattocks, gloves, propagation materials and implements, fertilisers, and morning tea for students and volunteers.

The FBA relies on our \$5.00 membership fee to cover these costs and over the past two years it has become increasingly difficult to cover expenses, which have consequently been covered by committee members.

Membership Fees Increased to \$10.00

FBA's Financial Statement as at the 30 June 2004 reported a loss, and members present at the AGM held 30 Nov. 2004, moved that membership fees be increased to \$10.00 from 30 June 2005. Membership fees are now due for the 2005/2006 year. See the Membership Form at the back of this Newsletter.

Channel Deepening

Independent Panel's Report

The Independent Panel's assessment (released March 2005) of the Environment Effects Statement (EES), developed by the Port of Melbourne Corporation at a cost of \$12million, concluded that the report was inadequate, too long, and contained basic unknowns and flaws that invalidated many of the studies reported.

Blue Wedge Coalition

- Blue Wedge is an organisation that has taken a leading role in opposing the Channel Deepening project on its environmental, economic and social impacts.
- The FBA is an active member of the Blue Wedge Coalition and has given financial support to them.
- Frank Hart, retired Westernport Harbourmaster, Master Mariner, and recently, FBA Secretary has acted as an expert witness for both the Coalition and the FBA at the Port Phillip Bay Channel Deepening EES Panel Hearing.

Frank Hart continues to take a leading role in Blue Wedge's opposition to the channel deepening project. He believes that the plan is flawed on the basis that *"Deepening the great ship channel from 14 to 17 metres without widening it increases the risk of larger vessels running aground on the shallower water alongside the channel, and raises the risk of an environmental disaster to an unacceptable level."*

Bay Dredging

Current media coverage on bay dredging has noted the arrival of the Queen of the Netherlands dredge. See page 4 of this Newsletter, *"Bay dredging – on the move again"*.

SAFE BOAT HARBOUR (MARINA) – UPDATE

FBA wishes to make it clear that we are in favour of environmentally sustainable boat launching and retrieval facilities at Frankston. Nevertheless, we are concerned about the recent move by Council to call for expressions of interest for the marina, despite the scope and nature of the development being unclear.

We are concerned that the ratepayers may be footing much of the bill through both the development and ongoing maintenance stages. Recent developments within Council illustrate their continued disregard for proper process towards the introduction of an environmentally sustainable marina. The brief history below illustrates this point.

The History of Planning Amendment C15

28/02/03 the Panel Report detailed 40 recommendations and stated that all 40 must be included in the incorporated document, Amendment C15 of the Planning Scheme, if the proposed marina was to proceed. Council accepted all 40 recommendations and on 20/03/03 Council submitted the incorporated document to the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE).

FBA wrote to the Minister (DSE) on 7 May 2003 regarding structural drafting flaws in the Frankston Planning Scheme relating to Amendment C15, primarily relating to the need to undertake **Physical Modelling for littoral drift studies relating to predicting sand movement along the shore, and for the maintenance dredging and beach restoration works to be the responsibility of the operator of the marina facility.** However, we received no reply and the Amendment C15 was submitted by Council, with the alleged flaws, and was formally gazetted on 22 October 2003.

On 24 October 2003, the FBA consulted an experienced planning barrister who advised that we should inform the Minister that **"there is an arguable case that the Minister having expressed support for the Panel Recommendations in her Assessment dated 23 October 2003, had approved the gazettal of Amendment C15, which failed to reflect that support."** On 29 October, the FBA wrote to the Minister detailing these concerns.

On 9 December 2003, following continued representation from the FBA to DSE and FCC regarding the alleged deficiencies, a meeting was convened by DSE, with officers from FCC planning department, FBA representatives and a DSE officer. At this meeting Council officers vehemently maintained that the version of Amendment C15, referred to above, fully complied with the Panel Report recommendations.

FBA representatives, supported by the legal opinion from their planning barrister, similarly maintained that the drafting of Amendment C15 was seriously deficient in the areas described above. During the meeting, the DSE officer requested FBA to draft appropriate changes and submit the draft to DSE. The draft was forwarded to DSE and the FCC the same day.

Planning Amendment C30

Correspondence received by the FBA from the FCC General Manager Market Development and Planning on 2 January 2004, stated that Amendment C15 and its physical modelling requirements were not deemed to be uncertain and ambiguous; however Council had referred FBA's concerns to DSE for closer examination. On 2 February 2004, our local MP, Alistair Harkness, who supported FBA strongly on this issue, advised FBA that the matter raised was receiving attention.

On 22 February 2004, the FBA wrote to Frankston City Council's new CEO to place before him our concerns. The revised draft planning amendment referred primarily to the fact that two responsibilities fell clearly on any proponent (ie. developer). They were the requirement for physical modelling of littoral drift and the cost of maintenance dredging and beach restoration.

FBA received a reply from the CEO on 18 March 2004, advising that Council Officers were generally comfortable with the changes proposed by FBA.

On 16 September 2004 Amendment C30 was incorporated into the Frankston Planning Scheme relating to the need to undertake Physical Modelling of the littoral drift and specified that the costs of dredging as well as sand bypassing be the responsibility of the operator.

Ernst & Young Study

FBA became aware on 27 April 2005 that FCC had commissioned Ernest & Young, to carry out a study into the market demand and financial feasibility of the safe boat harbour. The outcomes from this study were received by FCC as far back as August 2004.

On 27 April and on 12 May 2005, **FBA were advised by Council Officers that the financial feasibility study did not include costs associated with the requirement for physical modelling of the sand movement and dredging and sand-bypassing as required by the Minister, recommended by the Panel., and incorporated in Planning Amendment C30.**

In a reply to FBA's letter expressing concerns about these omissions, Frankston City Council's CEO stated that he would instigate a further feasibility study in order to address these deficiencies.

Regrettably, Council is currently claiming that the Ernst and Young (draft) study is commercial in confidence. Consequently, the FBA has been denied a copy of the report under the Freedom of Information Act 1982.

Council Meeting 22 August 2005

Councillors were provided with a report from Council Officers concerning the safe boat harbour (giving progress and seeking endorsement for the next steps). FBA wrote to all Councillors (21 August) in relation to a number of deficiencies in this report. Firstly, it excluded the need for physical modelling to determine sand movement, and the omission of any reference to the Minister's Supplementary Assessment and the C30 Planning Scheme Amendment. Secondly, the report quoted previous studies and reports, when in fact these have been superseded by later work. This results in misleading information, unless the more recent data qualifying the original reports is also stated.

Councillor Glen Aitken was the only councillor who responded and took action. Councillor Priestley was on leave and thus unaware of the concerns raised by the FBA.

Combined Frankston's Resident's Group

A Combined Frankston Residents' Group (CFRG) has been formed to address concerns regarding the marina (see Independent article "Call for council to reveal marina 'facts'" on page 4 of this newsletter).

FBA's Conclusion

- FCC continues to ignore proper planning process.
- The financial viability of the proposed Olivers Hill marina is unlikely without significant injection of government or local government capital.
- Sand movement, accretion and erosion will not be determined until physical modelling is professionally undertaken and maintenance dredging and sand bypassing evaluated, and
- Operating and maintenance costs cannot be confirmed until the physical modelling study has been carried out.

FORESHORE REGENERATION PROJECTS

In addition to our regular planting and maintenance projects, the FBA with the assistance of FCC, committed to accommodate 250 year nine students from Karingal Park Secondary College over five weeks commencing 27 July, as part of an educational and planting program. FCC officers and our work group assisted the students in

planting 2,000 indigenous species. The students were enthusiastic and did a great job.

Pat Bentley, Olwen Bawden, Eve Welch, Ann Graham, Muriel and Ole Petersen, Thelma Christensen and Kath Hassell provided the morning tea, with FCC Environment Department providing the drinks for the students.

PLANT NURSERY

Our plant stock in the nursery has increased considerably by the contribution of 3 groups:

- 40 Japanese students originally from Bunkyo University and now attending Monash University, propagated 1,400 indigenous plants. The FBA received a letter of appreciation from Monash University's English Language Centre stating "*the students and teachers really appreciated the warm welcome you provided... Activities like this add a depth of knowledge which we are unable to provide in the normal classroom situation...*".
- 12 students from Chisholm Institute Work Education Program and their horticulture teacher propagated 1,100 plants.
- 8 Skills Plus workers propagated 800 cuttings, as well as sowing seeds that will provide 400 seedlings.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Planting on the Foreshore

In order to continue our commitment to the vegetation on the foreshore, we need additional volunteers **urgently**. Come along any Wednesday from 9.30 - 11.30am and enjoy two hours on the foreshore planting new shrubs, as well as doing general maintenance.

Indigenous Community Nursery

We have a serious problem with our stock of mature plants requiring maintenance weeding. Due to a lack of volunteers, we have relied heavily on Kim Linley, FCC nursery supervisor, to weed 4,000 plants, as well as pot up 3,700 plants propagated by the 3 groups mentioned above. This weeding work should be the responsibility of the FBA, rather than Council staff. So why not bring a friend and make a regular commitment to helping out in the nursery— weekly, fortnightly or monthly – Tuesday 9.30am. -12 noon.

We also appeal for a group to work at the nursery either Saturday or Sunday, for 2 hours per month.

Morning tea is provided for all activities at the nursery.